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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Mary's Pence Announces Latest Grantees**

**St. Paul, Minn. – Sept. 16, 2015** – Mary's Pence is pleased to announce its latest grantees, all working on issues of justice affecting women.

St. Paul-based Mary's Pence is an international granting organization that funds grassroots women's initiatives across the Americas that increase the economic security of women and amplify women's voices in their communities. The organization invests in projects that support women's well-being – physical, social and economic – and models that foster women working together to enhance learning, mutual support and creativity. Since its inception in 1987, it has granted over \$1,500,000 to 500 projects in 15 countries.

"We are pleased to fund this group of grantees. Each grantee is addressing an intractable problem in their community with compassion and creativity. Each grantee is working in relationship with others to create social change. It is especially inspiring to see the work of young women working for social change," Mary's Pence Executive Director Katherine Wojtan said.

**Bridges: Re-entry Preparation Project for São Paulo Women Prisoners, São Paulo, Brazil**  
*Bridges* works with incarcerated mothers and pregnant women in the final stage before their release. *Bridges* combats recidivism by facilitating support groups for mothers and children and helping the women plan for their re-entry into society. *Bridges* began last year and Mary's Pence looks forward to a second year of funding *Bridges'* efforts to foster agency and advocate for prison reform.

#### **Just Economics, Ashville, NC**

*Just Economics* implements training that empowers women, people of color and other marginalized populations to use their voices for positive systemic change. A Mary's Pence grantee for the past two years, *Just Economics* works in solidarity with both low-income people and people of privilege to advocate for issues of systemic change as they arise in the community. *Just Economics'* work includes advocacy for living wage and a program to improve the local bus system.

#### **The Justice Project, Kansas City, MO**

*The Justice Project* provides grassroots support for women in poverty and advocacy work to improve the social services and justice systems. Mary's Pence is pleased to fund *The Justice Project* for the second year running, as they continue to provide court advocacy, medical assistance, and education on justice issues impacting the community. *The Justice Project*

promotes self-sufficiency and systemic change, led by the belief that food, housing, dignity and independence are inalienable rights for all.

**Kateri Tekakwitha Fund, Chimaltenango, Guatemala**

This project of *Kateri Tekakwitha* supports career development for indigenous Guatemalan women. Mary's Pence is funding a second year of internships for high school graduates. In addition to their internship placements, the girls will focus on writing resumes and practicing interview skills. This program teaches essential job skills and helps with job searches, so that the girls can put their education into action.

**The Kitchen Table, St. Louis, MO**

*The Kitchen Table* is a startup social enterprise born out of a support group at Epiphany United Church of Christ for women who were generally considered unemployable, some of whom were homeless or in subsidized housing and most of whom had mental health issues. The women wanted something beyond the traditional support group format, so they created *The Kitchen Table* together. At *The Kitchen Table*, women work toward economic independence as they prepare and serve food in a sustainable local business.

**Sacred Valley Project, Ollantaytambo, Peru**

*Sacred Valley Project* is a community-oriented boarding school for girls in rural Peru. *Sacred Valley Project* provides accommodation, meals and educational resources for indigenous young women from remote rural areas, empowering them through access to education. This year is *Sacred Valley Project's* third grant from Mary's Pence, and will enable the project to hire tutors to implement supplemental educational opportunities for girls in areas specific to their language, environment, community and culture.

**Youth Rise Texas, Austin, TX**

*Youth Rise Texas* provides leadership development for young women of color in Texas affected by parental incarceration or deportation. This startup organization offers a paid internship program that encourages young women to grow as leaders while they create and perform monologues to raise awareness about the effects of familial deportation and incarceration. *Youth Rise Texas* uses creative arts to bring individual stories into the public discourse, with the ultimate aim of provoking social change.

**WomenNC, North Carolina**

*Women NC* creates a network of young leaders in North Carolina who develop leadership and advocacy skills as they focus on issues related to violence and poverty affecting women worldwide. For the second year in a row, a grant from Mary's Pence will support young women leaders from North Carolina colleges as they present their research on issues vital to the equality of women and girls at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

**About Mary's Pence Grants**

Mary's Pence chooses grantees twice a year, with August 1 and February 1 deadlines. Awards are a maximum of \$4,000. Organizations must have a budget of under \$200,000. A recipient can receive a grant up to three times. Organizations in the United States and Canada are eligible for funding. Organizations in Latin America who have received a grant in the past may reapply. For more information, visit <http://maryspence.org/grants-apply.html>.