



Mary's Pence

Funding Women. Changing Lives.

For 25 years, Mary's Pence donors have lived their faith by supporting women who live in poverty to have a say and a hand in how poverty can be alleviated and social equity achieved. We have pooled our resources to fund women in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean who are working for social justice.

We do this because everything we have in excess belongs to the poor. It is theirs.

Funding Women

Worldwide women make up 70% of the poor, and 66% of the illiterate. We know that when women have resources they invest in their families. When families are healthy communities are healthy, and the world is better off.

Funding for Social Change

We fund projects that foster human dignity, where everyone has access to what they need and has a say in decisions that affect their lives. This is social justice. We fund projects that educate communities about injustice, build skills so people can advocate for themselves, and help groups organize so they have a strong voice in their community.

Funding in the Americas

We fund initiatives across the Americas and the Caribbean; these are our neighbors. We give at home, in North America, because there is need. We give internationally because there is even greater poverty, because our policies and economies are linked. And we give in the Americas, close to home so we can work in relationship with those that receive grants.

Ministry Grants

Mary's Pence offers grants of up to \$4,000 to creative start-up projects or organizations with budgets under \$150,000. We invest in projects that support women's well-being – physical, social and economic. We look for models that foster women working together, to enhance learning, mutual support and creativity.

Giving women a safety net and a supportive network will always be essential. Several of our grantees this year focused on exactly that. This year we helped fund Beloved Community, Women's Empowerment Project in Asheville, NC, Casa Guadalupana House of Hospitality in St. Paul, MN, Hagar's House in New Orleans, LA, and Reflect and Strengthen, Sisters Rising Project, Dorchester, MA.

Each of these wonderful organizations works to make women's lives better through education, community or shelter. Each also works for social change in some way. For example, Casa Guadalupana opens its doors to churches and community groups to learn about immigration issues. Reflect and Strengthen provides leadership development, community education through theater, and support for women in prison. Hagar's House provides training on advocacy and members of the house community form action teams to work on local issues.

Social change is the core mission of some of the groups that received grants. We helped fund a meeting of the Women's Caucus as they planned for their participation in the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit. Common Law, Inc. provides legal support to membership organizations in New York City, strengthening community organizations. Still Point Theatre Collective in Chicago provides part-time creative work for formerly incarcerated women, and uses theater to educate the community about issues faced by these women. La Casita Center in Louisville provides awareness of community resources and a vital space for Latina women to gather and support one another.



We also fund education expenses for women as they prepare for ministry within the community.

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ESPERA Funds

An ESPERA Fund is a grant to a women's network to create a lending pool in their community. Funds are loaned to women in the network for income generating projects. The women own the funds and manage the funds. Mary's Pence provides additional support during the first few years, including resources for training, money for travel and meals, and sometimes a coordinator's salary. We accompany the group on this new enterprise by visiting with the women 2-4 times per year. Started in the fall of 2008 ESPERA Funds have grown to 6 Funds in 5 countries. Our current focus is Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. We are ready to replicate this model in new communities. Here is a little bit about two of the ESPERA Fund groups:

Concertación de Mujeres de Suchitoto, Suchitoto, El Salvador



Concertación is a network of 14 women's groups near the city of Suchitoto. The women have worked together for many years on human rights issues. The groups elected a coordinator for the Fund and have 5 representatives on their board. During the first year the women were able to provide loans to 35, 14 to individuals and 5 to collaboratives involving 21 women. The average individual loan size is \$297, and \$1156 for collaboratives. Loans supported the purchase of animals and agriculture supplies, stock for vendors, and production of candles, shampoo and cleaning products. Collaborative businesses included egg incubation and chicken production.

Mothers' Club of l'Artiboliere, Jeremie, Haiti

In October of 2010 we established a new ESPERA Fund in a remote rural community in Southwestern Haiti. The community of Artiboliere has had a mothers group for a number of years. Here women get together on a regular basis to discuss issues of concern to them, and more importantly to support each other in the difficult circumstances they confront daily.

"If it was not for the ESPERA Fund grant, I would not be able to send my children to school," says Dieula Paul, 38-years-old, and mother of four. With funds from a loan she buys corn and beans or whatever is in season from the farmers, and sells these items in the city of Jeremie. For 46-year-old Dominique Yanik it is simple, without the loan which allows her to sell wood for house construction, her four children would still be walking around barefoot. But with the profits from her business she has been able to buy shoes for all of them.



Support Mary's
Pence and be
part of the
solution!

Mary's Pence is supported by generous individuals from across the country.

We are not a foundation and raise funds annually. You can help by:

- ***Making a donation on line or through the mail.***
- Connecting us with grantees and resources across the Americas.
- Volunteering your time and talents to support our efforts.
- Signing up for our eNews on line to stay informed of our work.
- Sharing our materials with your friends, family and faith community.

Please contact us. We'd love to get to know you as we work together to support women and justice.

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