



Mary's Pence

Funding Women. Changing Lives.

Mission and Vision:

Mary's Pence invests in women across the Americas by funding community initiatives and fostering collaborations to create social change. We envision a world where empowered women and their communities flourish in solidarity and justice.

Faith-based and Feminist:

Mary's Pence, a play on the Catholic charity collection Peter's Pence, was founded by a group of women religious and lay leaders in 1987. The women were frustrated by the lack of funding for women's ministries from traditional church sources. The women worked together to create an alternative source of funding for grassroots women's initiatives. With our distinctive foundation and our diverse board and staff we have created a unique and focused model of microfinance.

Board:

Katherine Wojtan, Executive Director - St. Paul, MN
Shelley Coppock - Oakland, CA
Tricia Cruz, SC - Cincinnati, OH
Karen Hurley - Cincinnati, OH
Bridgette Kelly - St. Paul MN
Katie Lacz, Secretary - Boulder, CO
Rita Lampe - Pittsburgh, PA
Judy Diaz Molosky, CSJ - Los Angeles, CA
Sr. Robbie Pentecost, OSF - Lancaster, KY
Luisa Maria Rivera Izabal - Chapala, Mexico
Andreen Soley - Los Angeles, CA

Since 1987, with the help of our donors, Mary's Pence has given more than \$1,500,000 in grants to fund over 500 women's projects for social change in 15 countries across the Americas.



Why 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.

Why in the Americas?

By working with women across the Americas, we collaborate with those whose policies and economies are directly linked. By giving close to home we can work in personal relationships with those who receive grants.

Where we work



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

Our work is supported by generous individuals from across the country. We are not a foundation. Instead we raise funds annually. You can help by:

- making a donation online or through the mail
- volunteering your time and talents
- sharing our story with your community

visit: www.maryspence.org

call: 651-788-9869

email: inbox@maryspence.org

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St. Paul, MN 55101

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Our Programs

Mary's Pence Grants

Through the Mary's Pence Grants program, women's organizations in the United States and Canada receive funds for projects that benefit women and create positive social change. They are start-ups or small non-profits that create lasting systemic change in their communities, but that often go unfunded.

The Mary's Pence Grants program is working to fill this gap in funding of worthy projects that improve the lives of women by:

- Strengthening community
- Amplifying women's abilities
- Creating strong leaders
- Challenging unjust systems
- Shaping public perception

Conspire Theatre received a Mary's Pence Grant three years in a row. They lead creative writing and acting workshops for women at the Travis County Correctional Facility in Del Valle, Texas. *Conspire Theatre* values the voices of women who have experienced jail or prison, and challenges stereotypes about who goes to prison and why. The Mary's Pence Grant helped fund their *Performing Possibilities* theater program, which was launched in 2013. Performers and facilitators participated in the process together, which builds a sustained sense of trust that allows them to work through difficult memories and challenges together.



ESPERA Program

ESPERA, which means hope in Spanish, stands for Economic Systems Providing Equitable Resources for All. The Mary's Pence ESPERA model is unique in the world of micro-credit or micro-lending, which is why we refer to what we do as community lending instead. Through the ESPERA program, Mary's Pence donates a pool of money to an established women's network. Mary's Pence supports the women as they disperse loans among themselves and use the money to start income generating projects such as agricultural production, shops, food preparation, and artisan crafts. The women never pay the money back to Mary's Pence. Instead they pay back the loans, with interest, to a community lending pool that they and other women can continue to draw from. Currently, Mary's Pence partners with over 890 women in nine networks in six countries: Mexico, Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras.



The ESPERA program is creating lasting, holistic change by:

- Providing access to financial resources
- Cultivating skills and expertise
- Fostering women's empowerment
- Deepening women's solidarity
- Creating an alternative, just economy



Red de Mujeres Moralenses por un Economía Solidaria in Morelos, Mexico is a network of women that consists of 22 member groups, including two indigenous communities. The representatives of each group meet every two months to share their experiences and to learn about various topics of interest. In 2008, two of the groups received an ESPERA Fund grant. The next year, 10 more groups received grants to start ESPERA Funds. One group started a community bakery with their grant, another started a produce cooperative, still others enabled individual women to start small shops selling ceramics, food, or clothing. This diversity of businesses within the network benefits all the women as they learn from each other.