



**For Immediate Release**

Contact:  
Carole Rogers, 973-455-0485, cagrogers@optonline.net

**LOCAL NJ WOMEN AWARD \$244,000 IN THREE HIGH-IMPACT GRANTS;  
HELP INNER CITY SCHOOL CHILDREN, AGED-OUT FOSTER YOUTH AND  
SENIORS**

(Morristown /November 4, 2016) Hector, son of a single mom, has been bullied at school and struggled socially. But he has a passion for the viola and now has what he calls his “viola family.” Melissa has a long history of physical and sexual abuse by her biological family and spent many years in the foster care system. Now 22, she is now working full time and has gone back to school. Fully 34% of seniors in Morris County face constant food insecurity. Many do not drive and live in locations not served by food pantries. They will soon have a mobile food pantry that brings nutritious food to where they live.

These were just three of the stories Impact 100 Garden State members heard as more than 200 of them gathered at the Olde Mill Inn on November 2 to select their three 2016 grant recipients. Anticipation was palpable as seven finalists took turns at the podium to describe their mission. “I fell in love with all of them,” said Christine DiCesare, Co-Chair of the Grants Committee. The members listened to all the presentations and then voted.

Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts received a \$44,000 grant for The Paterson Music Project, an out-of-school program for children of diverse backgrounds, that uses music to empower children through the communal experience of ensemble learning and performance. The program is modeled on the highly successful El Sistema, the national program of Venezuela that has produced Conductor Gustavo Dudamel, renowned music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The Impact 100 grant will fund free weekly programming that will include additional opportunities, such as a city-wide orchestra for students like Hector and an intergenerational choir for students as well as their families, teachers, and other members of the community.

Executive Director Emily La Iacona fought back her tears as Roots & Wings, based in Denville but serving aged out foster youth throughout our counties, was awarded a \$100,000 grant. Aged-out foster youth are among the most underserved, disconnected and statistically vulnerable segment of our society. “We are on cloud nine,” La Iacona said. “This grant will allow us to double the capacity of our outreach program providing hope and possibilities to these youth who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn.”

The Interfaith Food Pantry, located in Morris Plains, also received a \$100,000 grant. Clients of the Food Pantry are the working poor, senior citizens on fixed incomes, single parents, the disabled (mentally and physically), the unemployed, the homebound and others in crisis. Impact 100 funds will set up a Healthy Choice Mobile Pantry Program, providing not only for the purchase of a refrigerated vehicle but also for a supply of fresh foods and outreach to existing food providers.

Rosemary Gilmartin, Executive Director, said, “As the escalating rents have driven people further from local food pantries, we need a Mobile Pantry to bring food to these residents where they live.” Citing the fact that 34% of seniors in Morris County are below the self sufficiency index and have no good means of transportation, she noted, “We plan to bring services to where the need is rather than expecting everyone to come to us.”

She added, “The decision for Impact members must have been extremely hard. Each of the finalists had such exciting and important projects. It meant so much that the members believed in our mission and chose to become a partner with us.”

An additional highlight of the evening was the keynote speaker, Wendy Steele, who created the first Impact 100 in Cincinnati in 2001. Impact 100 Garden State follows that model and there are now 39 other Impact 100s globally. By the end of 2015, Impact 100 women had funded more than \$33 million in high-impact transformational grants in their local communities and they are on track to significantly increase those amounts in 2016.

Steele spoke of how she originated the concept of Impact100. In warm and personal terms, she told of losing her mother as an adolescent and how the community rallied around her father and two sisters. It wasn't just an occasional casserole, but rather the ongoing support of friends and family that became a formative experience for Steele. “Community activity was always important to me because of what happened. Giving back was very important.”

And she motivated the women in her audience to act as the new membership campaign opened. “Impact 100 Garden State is poised to break the million dollar mark in their collaborative giving in 2017. They need you, women of Garden State, so that they can make even more transformative, dream-big grants in your communities.”

Founded five years ago, Impact 100 (<http://impact100gardenstate.org>) is a unique organization of women dedicated to improving the lives of New Jersey residents by supporting nonprofit

organizations that serve Morris, Passaic, Somerset, and Sussex counties. Each member contributes \$1,000 toward membership and the entire amount funds grants for nonprofit programs that will transform their communities. Since its first giving year, in 2012, Impact 100 members have contributed \$769,000, offering at least one \$100,000 grant each year.

Impact 100 is a Special Project Fund of the Community Foundation of New Jersey (<http://cfnj.org>), which supports charitable giving focused on making NJ communities stronger.