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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Business Women's Giving Circle Grants \$53,000 to Support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Leadership and Entrepreneurship programs

Community Foundation for Northern Virginia's Giving Circle Supports Local Women's Philanthropy

December 12, 2017 (Oakton, VA) – The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia's Business Women's Giving Circle (BWGC) announced the winners of its fourth annual grant cycle today. A total of \$53,000 has been awarded to five nonprofit organizations and schools that provide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Leadership and Entrepreneurship programs to girls and young women in Northern Virginia. To-date the BWGC has awarded \$178,000 in grants.

The BWGC will celebrate the 2017 grantees on Tuesday, January 30, 2018 from 6 – 8 pm at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030. Community members interested in joining the BWGC are welcome to attend. Please RSVP at <https://www.cfnova.org/register/2017-2018-bwgc-grantee-celebration>.

The BWGC is comprised of accomplished women who are community leaders drawn together by a passion to empower girls and young women through collective philanthropy.

"It is so exciting to see the growing number of organizations that have responded to our call for applications. This year we received 28 applications, up from 21 last year. Thanks to the work of a very dedicated group of women in the BWGC, after considerable deliberation, we selected five organizations we believe will inspire young girls and women to acquire new interests, build their confidence and help them to realize their full potential. We look forward to working with and growing our relationships with these organizations!" said Lauri Isbrandtsen, retired Lockheed Martin Human Resources Director, and co-chair of the Grants Committee.

The winning organizations are as follows:

George Mason University Foundation – FOCUS Academy: \$20,000

Serving all of Northern Virginia

The grant will help with the establishment of a new residential FOCUS (Females of Color Underrepresented in STEM) Academy on the George Mason University campus for high school students using the educational framework of the successful FOCUS (day) camp for middle school students.

Hillsboro Charter Academy: \$13,000

Serving Loudoun County

Funding will continue to support Girls in G.E.A.R. (Guiding Engineering, Aerospace, and Robotics), an exploratory STEAM leadership program where 4th/5th grade girls are facilitators to all students (K-5), including implementing new Boys & BOTS STEAM workshops using engineering, aerospace and robotics for hands on lessons and real world application.

“We have had many 4th grade girls that have never had to talk to others outside of their peers. Girls in GEAR gives them the confidence to not only talk to other students in the school, but also to connect with others in the community. I was extremely impressed with the growth of self-confidence and communication skills for some of my more "shy" female students. Having the opportunity to teach others at HCA and also at STEAM events throughout Northern Virginia was invaluable to these girls,” said Megan Tucker, STEAM Specialist, Hillsboro Charter Academy.

Space of Her Own, Inc. (SOHO): \$10,000

Serving Alexandria and Arlington

Funding will enhance and evaluate mentoring programs by providing fun and engaging STEM projects to 36 vulnerable 5th grade girls and STEM-related activities for 80 middle school-aged girls and mentors.

“We are so excited that you are making it possible for us to create amazing things and develop unique designs for our bedroom makeovers. This year we will build our self-esteem and our STEAM, thanks to each of you!” Linda Odell, Executive Director, Space of Her Own, Inc.

Wesley Housing Development Corporation: \$5,000

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Funding will support at-risk elementary and middle school girls with a STEM-focused summer fashion design program that teaches in-demand creative, technical, and professional skills needed for their futures.

“Wesley Housing is delighted to be a recipient of a grant from the Business Women’s Giving Circle,” said Director of Resident Services, Darryl Leedom. “This grant will help us provide a unique summer program to low income girls, inspiring them to think about a future life outside of poverty.”

Year Up – National Capital Region: \$5,000

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The grant will support service delivery of Year Up’s research-validated, career training program, specifically in the specialty tracks of Information Technology and Software Development to young women, ages 18-24.

“Having just wrapped up our fourth Business Women’s Giving Circle Grants cycle, I continue to be amazed by the collaboration of our membership in reviewing the applications and working through the grants process. These organizations embody what it means to be forward thinking in the STEM community as it relates to educating and providing quality STEM, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership programs to girls and young females. The BWGC hopes to continue to make an impact in our community by supporting these organizations,” Mara Desmedt, Senior Regional Sales Director of PlanSource, and co-chair of the Grants Committee.

Annual membership in the Business Women’s Giving Circle is \$1,100, and includes a vote in the annual competitive grant cycle. All contributions are pooled for a greater collective impact. To learn more about the giving circle, please visit the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia’s website www.cfnova.org/bwgc, or contact Sari Raskin, Director of Grants and Community Leadership, at (703) 879-7641 or sari.raskin@cfnova.org.

About the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia:

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia grows philanthropy to respond to critical need and seed innovation in the region. Comprised of donor advised funds, permanent funds, giving circles, and other charitable endowments, the Community Foundation connects donors to community, and helps meet community needs with community resources.

In 2017 the Community Foundation awarded more than \$4.7 million in grants and scholarships and reported \$47 million in managed philanthropic assets.

For more information please visit us at www.cfnova.org, on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationforNOVA/>, Twitter [@CFNova](https://twitter.com/CFNova), and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/communityfoundationfornova/>.

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