The Women’s Fund of Western MA had a year of challenges and opportunities in fiscal year 2016, all of which we faced head on as we continue to grow and promote women and girls in our communities. The WFWM has always held firm the belief that partnering with others makes everyone stronger. One example of this was the WFWM collaborating with a few other local organizations serving women and girls for a successful Giving Tuesday initiative in December.

In 2016, your Women’s Fund took to the national stage with our collaboration with 20 other women’s funds from around the country to announce the launch of Prosperity Together. This national initiative has made a 5 year, $100 million funding commitment to help low-income women and girls.

We now have a national presence while staying focused on the work we do right here in Western MA. This has been possible only with the amazing support we receive from you, our generous donors. Thank you!

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FY16 Revenue and Expenses

Revenue

- Individual Contributions: 72%
- Grants Received: 8%
- Event Income: 8%
- In-kind: 18%
- Interest, dividends: 4%

Expenses

- Program Activities: 85%
- Management: 10%
- Fundraising: 5%
The Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact (LIPPI) provides women the tools, mentors, and confidence they need to become our region’s community leaders and elected officials. Our 6th LIPPI cohort came together in September 2015. We received over 30 applications and 26 women completed the requirements to graduate.

LIPPI grad Karolynn U. Sheppard believes leadership can be developed from learned experiences, mentorship, nurturing, and sometimes by force.

“I chose to attend LIPPI not only because two of my colleagues spoke highly of the program, but also because I wanted to learn to be a change agent, increase my leadership skills, and learn about political and public policy from strong women who lead by example.

Leadership has not come easily to me and true awareness of my leadership potential came by way of LIPPI. Every class was full of practical information that could be immediately applied in my professional life as well as my everyday roles as a woman, an aspiring activist, a volunteer, a mother and wife, and a community member. The impact LIPPI has had on my life, personally and professionally, is tremendous. The network that I became a part of since participating in LIPPI, along with the knowledge and skills that I learned in the program, have been a catalyst for me to experience new and greater leadership roles.

LIPPI has opened many doors for me. I now serve on a few boards of directors and I’ve participated on a city councilor campaign. I’ve even had a few keynote speaking engagements on the topic of leadership.

I credit LIPPI and the Women’s Fund of Western Mass for helping me to discover and actualize my leadership potential. I encourage every woman who wants to be a change maker in their community, or even the world – even if you think of yourself as being timid, shy or introverted – to experience the Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact, as it will expand your understanding the political processes and build on your personal and professional development.”

“True awareness of my leadership potential came by way of LIPPI.”

— Karolynn U. Sheppard
With your support, The Women’s Fund is committed to making multi-year grants to organizations working collaboratively to support women and girls in the four counties of western Massachusetts. In 2016, The Women’s Fund continued to support the partnership of Flying Cloud Institute and Rights of Passage Empowerment for a second year of a project called TurnUP! As part of TurnUP!, the partner organizations convened Berkshire Women in STEM to address challenges of adult women in STEM and continued to develop the Berkshire STEM Pipeline through an action plan and implementation. The program offered monthly professional development opportunities in STEM to teachers in grades pre-K through 2 and convened higher education and K-12 public schools to work toward the goal of gender equity in STEM from pre-K through college. They also trained a group of high school girls who are paid mentors in GIRLS Science Clubs and offered three 8-10 week after school sessions for 7 to 12-year olds in 9 different schools.
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Elizabeth Anema and Betsy Johnson
Catalina Arrubla and Camilo Rojas
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