



## WOMEN'S GIVING NETWORK OF WAKE COUNTY

### SAVE THESE DATES!

#### **Educational Events:**

**Diaper Bank: March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

New Leaf Behavioral Health: May 11<sup>th</sup>

The Caring Place: September 13<sup>th</sup>

Dear WGN Members,

With the Super Bowl behind us and the crepe myrtle budding ahead of us, I am starting to feel the renewed hope of spring. Perhaps it is the story of one young woman, Elizabeth, that I shared at our Annual Member Meeting on February 1, that has inspired me. You can access the recorded event [here](#).

In 2018, Elizabeth and her son arrived at a church in Raleigh. They were homeless. Elizabeth's son had severe Down Syndrome and she was unable to leave him in order to work. They had been living in their car, and then inside Walmarts, moving from aisle to aisle, so as to not be discovered and sent into the cold and rain.

The church connected them to the [Catholic Charities Family Circle Program](#) (a 2018 WGN grantee.) The Family Circle Program helped them find housing for a year and a support group to help them with budgeting, health care, day care for her son and job searching for Elizabeth. They also connected her with [The Green Chair Project](#) (a 2019 WGN grantee) who helped Elizabeth furnish her new home.

Elizabeth learned the importance of budgeting. She also connected with [Alliance Medical Ministry](#) (a 2020 WGN grantee) and found health care and referrals to a program that could provide her son day and respite care. Through [Step Up Ministry](#) (a 2020 WGN grantee) Elizabeth updated her resume, honed her interview skills, and found not one, but TWO jobs.

Fast forward to today. Elizabeth moved to Johnston County and purchased her own home last year. Her son is involved in a great day program there which allows her to work. If that is not amazing enough, Elizabeth was awarded a grant to teach budgeting to folks in the county who find themselves in a situation similar to hers, several years ago.

Even though so many of you joined us at the Annual Member Meeting I just could not resist sharing this remarkable story with everyone, because it illustrates how your gifts impact not just one person, but a family, future generations, and an entire community!

At the Annual Member Meeting, we learned a bit more about the state-wide [Women's Fund of North Carolina](#), to which a small portion (\$50) of annual dues for each member are contributed.

We also shared committee updates and opportunities to get involved. This can take the form of participating on a committee, helping with one-off projects, inviting friends along to our events or simply continuing your

financial support. If you are interested in getting involved, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our new committee chairwomen listed in this newsletter. In either case, we are grateful for your ongoing commitment to WGN. We look forward to meeting again in person, when safe to do so!

Finally, this newsletter includes new sections! Be sure to check the SPOTLIGHT, GOOD NEWS, and the relaunched our You + Two campaign to encourage members to invite two friends to any WGN event.

We continue to do our best to provide you with INSIGHT and INSPIRATION with the hopes that our collective efforts drive a greater IMPACT than we could have done alone!

Yours in service,

Amy Pirozzolo

WALTER



INTRODUCING  In the Spotlight

The graphic features the word "Spotlight" in a large, white, serif font, with "In the" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font above it. Two spotlights are positioned above the word "Spotlight", casting a yellow glow on the letters. The word "INTRODUCING" is in a teal, sans-serif font to the left.

Beyond the financial impact we make to support WGN's mission, the opportunity to learn about our community needs and meet other amazing women are great benefits of being a WGN member. Unfortunately COVID continues to hinder our in-person opportunities. Therefore, this year we are going to **"Spotlight"** members and past grant recipients to help us remain 'connected'. **We encourage you to reach out to connect 1:1 as you wish.**

## Members

In this edition, **Karen Johnson**, WGN's 2021 Communication Committee Chair, starts to feature committee members! We hope this helps you learn a little more about these **amazing women**. THANKS Karen!

Few people can say that their life's motto is inscribed on a college campus bench. "Make a Difference" are words to live by for **Jenny Eury** and she hopes to inspire others to do the same. Since her retirement from IBM, she enjoys spending time pursuing her numerous passion projects, which include supporting WGN and her alma mater Salem College. It's on this campus that you can see that Jenny's actions and words align. If you ever get to Winston-Salem, don't miss visiting the legacy bench she commissioned with the inscription "Make a Difference", a call to serve. While serving as Secretary of the WGN Leadership team, it's her focus on details when generating meeting minutes and reviewing documentation that reflects the nickname she earned at IBM - "Jenny Eagle Eye" (in reference to her initials JEE). In addition, Jenny is a talented dress designer and in her spare time she makes her own intricate evening gowns for fundraising galas and events she attends. It is Jenny's attention to detail and intent to make a difference for Wake County women and children that make her a valued member of the WGN team. (Photo of Jenny in one of her gowns.)





She's a lady of the land and makes puppets for the hand! Yes, it's **Anya Gordon**, owner of The Well-Fed Garden and puppet maker! She's a spitfire with a head for marketing and a heart for Mother Earth. Anya and her husband Arthur sold their locally famous Irregardless Restaurant a few years ago and now focus on nourishing the 1.5-acre urban garden near NCSU. She and Arthur met at a spiritual meditation gathering in Colorado when she was working at a non-profit in Canada. After some long-distance romancing, Anya moved to Raleigh and they have worked and played together since. They share a love of biking but it is a new endeavor for them both. After a friend urged them to try it, they slowly began pedaling the greenway and now they bike 20-25 miles a week. They are setting their sights on a trip to Israel later this year where they will bike 30 miles a day. During the pandemic Anya's creativity blossomed in a new direction and she began making hand puppets for children and as teaching tools. Her love of learning and teaching fit nicely with Anya's role co-chairing the Education Committee. She is a multi-talented lady who knows no bounds! (Photo of Anya and her Purim puppets)

Did you know that **Sandy Pearce**, WGN's former co-chair of the Education Committee, has gone to Vietnam and literally tracked down the father of her godchildren and then helped him come to America to reunite with his children? She has a novel inside her if she ever decides to write her story. Thirty-five years ago, Sandy answered an ad in the newspaper (remember those?) to be a "Big Aunt" to refugee children, ages 2-9. She took that role to heart and became a bit of a surrogate mom taking the children to their first movie, to their first visit to the park and later helped them through school. Today, those little children have kids of their own and they are scattered around the country giving Sandy and her husband Tom the opportunity to travel. Their love of travel extends beyond our borders and in May they are traveling to Portugal for nine days to explore and enjoy a new adventure. Sandy, like so many of our WGN members, has many irons in the fire. Her big project for 2022 is being an advocate for the organization One Wake with a focus on affordable housing. When Sandy sets her sights on something, it seems she can make it happen. (Pictured are four of Sandy's six godchildren)



A self-described "driver", **Kristen Kiernan**, Marketing and Communication Chair of WGN's leadership team, believes listening to her gut and acting helped her find her destiny in North Carolina. Originally from Long Island, NY she spent a spring break at Wrightsville beach where the sun, people and sea spoke to her soul. During that trip something shifted inside for Kristen and she knew she was meant to live here. After working for a few years after college, she quit her job, packed her courage and moved to Raleigh. The move proved to be successful. She established her career in healthcare and met her husband, Rick. They share a love for rescue dogs, the beach, and NC State basketball (in that order 😊). Kristen enjoys historical fiction and is currently reading *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict, which she highly recommends. Kristen is driven to shine a light on the good work that isn't often seen and to make a positive impact by volunteering to help animals, raising awareness surrounding a rare genetic disease in her marketing role at Grifols and helping to amplify WGN's mission. (Picture of the Kiernan's Christmas at the beach)

## Education Event

Hopefully you marked 3/22 on your calendar for the first of three Education Events, **The Diaper Bank**. During this time, they will **highlight a critical need we may not traditionally think about** - providing female hygiene products and the impact this important service makes to women on daily bases. We will be hosting a virtual event in light of continuing COVID cases and will hear from their Executive Director and a volunteer about the impact they have on the community. Be on the lookout for a **Save the Date the week of February 21!**

## WGN Committees

As you may have heard on 2/1, WGN has a lot of exciting committees that work on a range of projects. If you are interested to learn more about them, please contact the committee chair and/or click [here](#) to visit NC Community Foundation's (NCCF) website.

- Education Committee – Anya Gordon ([anya@wellfedgarden.org](mailto:anya@wellfedgarden.org)) or Hannah McGrath ([hannah.mcgrath@ampf.com](mailto:hannah.mcgrath@ampf.com))
- Grants Committee – Meg Croxson ([margaretkcroxson@gmail.com](mailto:margaretkcroxson@gmail.com))
- Marketing and Communications Committee – Kristen Kiernan ([KristenTKiernan@gmail.com](mailto:KristenTKiernan@gmail.com))
- Membership Committee & Jr. Membership Committee – Brittany Constance ([Brittany.Constance@gmail.com](mailto:Brittany.Constance@gmail.com))

INTRODUCING



**GOOD NEWS** exists so let's celebrate! If you have updates, good news, milestones, accomplishments, etc. to share, we want to hear about it! Send them to [KristenTKiernan@gmail.com](mailto:KristenTKiernan@gmail.com).



**Families Together** developed preliminary designs for its first cottage court development of 10 affordable cottages which will serve extremely low-income families. Stakeholder sessions were recently held to gather input toward creating a shared community vision for the housing. The goal is to break ground on the project in about a year. **“WGN’s 2021 grant helped us move forward with this important initiative!”**

Future WGN members are in the works (and something may be in the Education Committee's water)!

- **Hannah McGrath**, Education Committee Co-Chair, and her husband are **excitedly expecting their first child**, a girl, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>! Her name?? Well, that is being kept a secret for now. If you want to reach out, please contact her at [Hannah.Mcgrath@ampf.com](mailto:Hannah.Mcgrath@ampf.com).
- **Allison Costanzo**, Education Committee Member, and her husband Paul are **expecting** on May 10<sup>th</sup>, **and it's a girl too!** If you want to reach out, please contact [allisonnalley@gmail.com](mailto:allisonnalley@gmail.com).

We wish them both healthy and happy babies and look forward to seeing pictures!

**Beth Benzing** volunteered to join the Marketing and Communications Committee! Beth joined WGN as a junior member and along with **Carolyn Fendelman** will be **connecting with past grant winners** to share, via our newsletter, their continued positive impact to support women and children since receiving WGN's grant.





Curious about what goes on in-between our events or how you can connect, **even just a little**, especially since we can't meet in person yet? Maybe you are thinking you have a skillset or a few moments to help on a special project?

No matter how long you have been a member, **it's never been easier to find out!** Simply reach out to any committee member!



You + 2 in 2022

**Growing our membership means we can make more of an impact!** We encourage you to share your support for WGN with others. Below is suggested text to share with your personal network through email and on your social media account.

### EMAIL

Your Greeting,

I am a part of the Women's Giving Network (WGN) of Wake County, which is a giving circle of the North Carolina Community Foundation. ***Our mission is to support charitable organizations serving women, children and families in Wake County.*** We seek to provide members with insight and inspiration and hopefully drive greater impact for our community through the power of collective giving.

It is a fabulous group of women I think you would really enjoy. I would love to have you attend our upcoming TO BE FILLED IN with me on DATE to learn more! I will share the invite for our EVENT NAME as soon as it is available.

In the meantime, you can read about us in this WALTER magazine article [WALTER Magazine, featuring WGN's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#).

Your signature

### SOCIAL MEDIA

You likely know non-profits continue to struggle to provide services. Like me, you may also prefer to donate for a project vs. operating expenses (overhead, utilities, salaries, etc.). I ask you to consider shifting your view and read this [article](#) . Non-profits continue to experience unprecedented waves of departures and rising vacancy rates as their salaries fall further behind their for-profit counterparts. Result: it is more difficult to deliver need services.

And/or include:

If your 2022 plans include learning how to support vetted charitable organizations that serve women & children to make a positive impact in Wake County, let me know or google "women's giving network of wake county". I'd be happy to share more about our impact! #Women'sGivingNetwork.