



At Heritage Fund We Help You Do
Your Philanthropy. Your Way.



Women's Giving Circle
of Bartholomew County

In 2011 a group of women experimented by reaching out to other women to see if there was interest in creating a “giving circle.” Lisa Shafran and Mary Ferdon, Heritage Fund employees at the time, carefully crafted one that joined together like-minded women who wanted to do something good for their community and have a bit of fun.

The experiment worked, and the Women's Giving Circle quickly engaged women in philanthropy. WGC was also easy – annual membership was \$100, and, even better, there were only two meetings a year. The event “*Chicks with Checks*” was a fun throwback for some of us who recalled the term “chicks” being used as we infiltrated the business world.

I was part of that group. We also felt strongly that the fee should never be a barrier to women's ability to join and participate. A few women paid in quarterly installments, and others wrote larger checks. More importantly, together we were able to make grants that supported women, children and families.

In 2022, WGC is still going strong. Some of the founders have moved on to other philanthropic endeavors, making way for younger women to join the circle and bring their ideas to improve the lives of women in the community. Despite changes, WGC is still about women helping women in a very democratic (lowercase d) process. Katie Glick and Emilie Pinkston, past and present chairwomen, have steered the program toward grantmaking based on research.

The 2021 Report Card for Women highlighted that a significant barrier faced by women seeking employment is the lack of available, affordable, quality childcare. So, WGC forged a new partnership between Heritage Fund, United Way of Bartholomew County and Community Education Coalition to fund an Early Childhood Learning Coordinator.

Women helping women is a unique approach to using philanthropy -- in this case a giving circle that unites women with shared interests, pooling donations for greater impact and making joint decisions about grants. WGC is yet another

example of how Heritage Fund connects people who care with opportunities to make a difference in their community.

Tracy Souza is president and CEO of Heritage Fund – The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County. Contact us at 812-376-7772 to learn more about how we can help you do Your Philanthropy. Your Way.

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