



# SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS WOMEN'S FUND

## 2023

*Media Kit*

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At the Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund (SOS), we pool our resources, invest as a group and award grants to smaller St. Louis-area non-profits. By investing collectively, we achieve greater impact.

We are a diverse group of women from nearly every corner of the St. Louis region. Since our founding in 2006, SOS has been a quiet but mighty force for change, delivering over \$3.4 million in focused and informed grants to more than 106 small nonprofits throughout the community.

SOS is a component fund of the St. Louis Community Foundation and a member of Philanos, a growing international movement of women-powered philanthropy.



## OUR MISSION

The Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund (SOS) educates and inspires women to engage in informed, collective grant making by investing in Greater St. Louis' small nonprofits to positively affect change in our communities.



## OUR PURPOSE

To support vital work that creates safer, healthier and equitable communities.



## OUR CORE VALUES - OUR HOW

- ✦ JOINING TOGETHER as EQUALS in giving and voting. One woman - one vote
- ✦ Actively WELCOMING to all individuals and communities to engage at your desired level
- ✦ Investing with ACCOUNTABILITY to impact
- ✦ RESPECTING that grantees know their communities best
- ✦ Providing DISCOVERY opportunities
- ✦ EMPOWERING members to create new connections
- ✦ Continuously EVALUATING our approach

TURNING GOOD INTO GREATER GOOD, ✦ **THAT'S WHY WE GIVE TOGETHER**



# How We Work

Everyone gives an equal amount of money. Everyone has an equal voice. Our members commit to an \$1,200 annual contribution. \$1,080 of each member's annual contribution goes directly to make grants and \$120 to help support our educational programs and operations.

EQUAL *contribution.*  
EQUAL *voice.*

## OUR GRANTMAKING PROCESS





The Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund (SOS) grants are awarded annually in May and are selected by a thorough internal vetting process and a final vote of the SOS membership.

SOS focuses its grant making on smaller nonprofits. **In this way, SOS acts as an incubator for promising programs that help the most vulnerable among us and supports efforts to sustain and beautify our natural environments.**


**SOS believes that a healthy community requires strong programs and services in a variety of areas. SOS currently funds grants in each of five focus areas:**

 arts & culture

 education

 environment

 health

 social services

Grants range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Since 2017, SOS has awarded two multi-year Impact grants, each totaling \$100,000 over a three year period.

The vast majority of our grantees over the past ten years have been working in the area now designated as the St. Louis Promise Zone.

Many agencies credit early funding from SOS as a critical component of their long-term success including Home Sweet Home, Saint Louis Story Stitchers, St. Louis HELP, Lydia's House, The Soulfisher Ministries, The Little Bit Foundation, Mildred Brady Eye and Rena Martin Charitable Eye Foundation, and CHADS Coalition.




To learn more about our past grantees and the impact they are making in the Greater St. Louis community, view our interactive impact map.






# Collective Giving FAQ

## COLLECTIVE GIVING: A GROWING MOVEMENT THAT'S CHANGING PHILANTHROPY

### DONORS IN *giving* CIRCLES...

-  Give more, give more strategically, and are more engaged in their communities.
-  Gain greater knowledge of philanthropy and a better understanding of the nonprofits operating in their communities as well as an understanding of the issues these nonprofits face in serving their constituencies.
-  Are more likely to believe that giving has a positive impact on the health of a community, and support the idea that the government should do something to reduce income differences to ensure that everyone has a decent standard of living.
-  Describe themselves as feeling “more capable to participate in community change,” that an individual can have more of an impact, and that they were having a bigger impact than they would individually.

### *giving* CIRCLES...

-  Serve as a path to developing women as leaders, offering members more meaningful work in a democratically-run organization.
-  Prioritize member equality through equal monetary giving, equal voting on funding decisions, and cycling on and off various committees, which can make a leadership role seem less intimidating due to the absence of an entrenched hierarchy.
-  Are increasing in number, with studies documenting at least 225 giving circles in 2005, growing to more than 500 today, which distribute more than \$1.29 billion annually.

**Over half of the giving circles in the U.S. have been identified as women-only groups. Women who participate in a philanthropic network are four times more likely than women who do not participate in a network to volunteer or offer other involvement with a nonprofit.**



*grantee* **IMPACT** *story*

## IFM COMMUNITY MEDICINE



Mandela, 12, arrived in America suffering from a severe kidney infection. He was afraid to go to a doctor, based on his experiences at home in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Fortunately, Mandela found the medical care that he needed at school through daily trips to the nurse's office. Wheelchair-bound with a neurological disorder, the boy received specialized medical procedures twice daily thanks to IFM Community Medicine, which delivers healthcare services to the uninsured, under insured, and under served throughout St. Louis.

As a 2018 SOS grantee, IFM Community Medicine received \$14,000 to provide a school-based nurse practitioner to offer free general healthcare to recent immigrant and refugee children.





# grantee **IMPACT** story

## HOMWORKS!



Angela could feel her daughter slipping away. Her grades were worsening. Her attitude was changing. At a struggling public high school, there was a slippery slope between under performing in school and striking out in life and Angela didn't like where her daughter was heading.

Everything changed when her daughter's school became involved with the HOMEWORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program. The nonprofit connects teachers to parents with home visits and Parent-Teacher Workshops that involve and empower the entire family. That seemed to be the magic ingredient for Angela's daughter. The school staff rallied around the tenth-grader, the teacher became a close friend to her mother, and all of a sudden the girl was looking at a 3.5 grade point average instead of a 0.9. "Now, she's back," her mom said.

As a 2017 and 2018 SOS Grantee, HOMEWORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program received \$20,000 for teacher home visits, and \$10,000 to add 100 under performing students and their families to the

TURNING GOOD INTO GREATER GOOD,  **THAT'S WHY WE GIVE TOGETHER**



# grantee **IMPACT** story

## ANGELS' ARMS



As a foster child, life wasn't easy for Erica. After the girl was involved in a traumatic car accident, life became demonstrably harder. She was unable to return to college and would need around-the-clock care and support. With no family and mounting needs, this set of circumstances could have destroyed the girl.

Luckily, she already had a home at Angels' Arms, which supports and provides for foster children until a forever home is found. Her path forward was through the organization's Launch Pad program, which prepares foster youth for a successful transition to adulthood through mentoring, life skills training, individualized support, and community-building. Suddenly, she had all the support she needed with volunteers, therapy, transportation, adaptive devices, specialized counseling, and more. Erica recovered, was able to find work, and re-enrolled in school to become a nurse.

Angels' Arms is a 2007, 2010, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2021 SOS Grantee. With \$115,000 in SOS funding over the years, the organization has received steady support for its Launch Pad program and others, as well as funds for clothing, lessons, camps fees, musical instruments, and tuition assistance. The most recent SOS grant helped pay down a mortgage to keep a set of siblings together in their foster home.



# *grantee* **IMPACT** *story*

## **MIGRANT AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT**



Juan, who had suffered serious abuse from his father in his home country, was able to reunite with his mother on a trip to the United States. His safety hinged on his ability to stay with his mother permanently.

Enter The Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project (MICA Project), which offered a life line for the duo. The MICA Project, which uses legal services, organizing, advocacy and education to help low-income immigrants, was able to get the mother full legal rights over her son. This made him eligible to apply for a Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa, which was also approved. With The MICA Project's help, the boy was now in line for a visa, the next step for obtaining permanent resident status - a green card. This is something that had seemed unthinkable to the mother and son on their own. The organization also helped Juan find a bilingual therapist with expertise working with children. He now has a sense of purpose in life, and is no longer anxious or afraid of the future.

Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project is a 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2022 SOS Grantee. With \$120,000 in SOS funding over the years, MICA Project has received assistance for its Crisis Response Fund and Children's Immigration Advocacy Project, and other initiatives that help eligible low-income immigrants to apply for citizenship, work authorization, and U.S. visas. The most recent grant went toward equipment and supplies for a new attorney to extend one of their programs.





# Community Recognition

(PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME NAMES AND DETAILS MAY HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON FEATURED.)



**2022 PHILANOS SPOTLIGHT  
AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF  
DREAM BUILDERS GRANT  
AWARDED BY SOS**



**EYE THRIVE'S VOLUNTEER  
ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR**



**GIRLS IN THE KNOW" COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT CHAMPION"**



**THE ASSOCIATION OF  
FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS  
COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY  
AWARD**



**THE LITTLE BIT FOUNDATION'S  
15TH ANNIVERSARY AWARD**



**SOULFISHER MINISTRIES  
PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION  
AWARD**



**NIAGARA FOUNDATION PEACE &  
DIALOGUE AWARDS COMMUNITY  
SERVICE AWARD**



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