

Half the Sky Giving Circle

Half the Sky Giving Circle, established in 2010 by fifteen dedicated women with an interest in philanthropy, supports nonprofit organizations that improve life for women and their families in El Paso County. The name comes from an ancient Chinese proverb “Women hold up half the sky” and our group recognizes that women must take an active role in philanthropy and education to sustain those who need help in our community.

Our guiding principles are clear: We promote the sustainability of women and their families through pooled monetary resources of community-minded women. We educate, inspire, and increase the number of women committed to philanthropy in Colorado Springs. We learn about the spectrum of services and organizations that share our mission, and, we provide monetary grants to be used for specific projects or for general operating expenses.

We have given to a wide range of nonprofits, from large organizations which use our grant for a specific women-based project, to very small ones who may need operating help. In 2020, our grantees are Homeward Pikes Peak / Bloom Recovery Home, giving housing and care to homeless pregnant women with addiction issues; Westside CARES, providing emergency help specifically to women with our funds; Sue’s Gift, offering financial aid to women with gynecological cancers; and Youth Documentary Academy, funding four diverse young women filmmakers as they document their paths through our challenging times this year.

Nonprofit agencies are chosen by our Agency Team (open to all members). This Team gathers information about the organizations nominated by members, typically ten to twenty per year. The Agency Team vets and chooses four appropriate nonprofits and offers those four to the members for approval. Half the Sky members then determine the amount of the grants for each agency, based on our budget for that year. Our fiduciary agent, Pikes Peak Community Foundation, disperses funding.

Membership is open to any woman who contributes \$132 per year. During these last ten years, we have grown to more than ninety members. We typically give to four nonprofit organizations per year but are flexible and able to respond to emergency situations, as

we did this year with an extra grant to the PPCF Emergency Relief Fund to support organizations responding during the COVID-19 pandemic. We meet five times annually (in person or virtually) and hear presentations from our four annual grantees at those meetings, as well as enjoy each other's company, make new connections, and learn about many nonprofits serving our community.

For more information, please contact

Virginia Carlson, President

vcarlson.4@comcast.net