



Wednesday, November 9, 2022

Five Women-Owned Businesses Each Awarded A \$5,000 Grant Totaling \$25,000

Sponsored by The Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Baird Private Wealth Management and Griffiss Institute



Rome, New York - Today, five women-owned businesses in Herkimer and Oneida Counties were each awarded \$5,000 to support the growth and development of their businesses. A total of \$25,000 was awarded to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of The Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties. The Women's Fund was created by women to support economic, educational, and personal growth opportunities for women and encourage their advancement and full participation in their communities. Sponsorship was also supported by Baird Private Wealth Management and Griffiss Institute.

"We are thrilled to be awarding these grants to enterprising women in our communities," stated **Diane Wolfe, president of the Board of Directors of The Women's Fund**. "We launched this initiative in late August hoping for more than a dozen applicants. We received 58 applications!"

The applicants had to be 51 percent women-owned, located in Herkimer or Oneida Counties and in business for a minimum of one year. The applicants represented 19 cities in Herkimer and Oneida Counties with a range of businesses including fitness, retail, restaurants, manufacturers, and service providers. The field included sole proprietors and larger women-owned businesses.

“Our grant initiative, Women Investing in Women, was developed to support women in our community,” said **Ellen Rainey, Women’s Fund board member and chairperson of the program.** “The incredible number of applicants demonstrates how many women are working to make a difference in our area. It both energized and inspired our judges as they worked to identify the five recipients. It was difficult narrowing the field to just five. We hope to continue to provide this opportunity in the future as there is truly a need out there.”

“Nearly thirty years ago, as a young woman just out of college, I began pursuing my career to be a financial advisor,” said **Michele Sheridan, Director and Certified Financial Planner at Baird.** “It wasn’t an easy path as it was a traditionally male-dominated field. I understand the barriers women can face as they work to become successful business owners. In the same spirit of how we champion our clients, Baird is committed to changing the lives of women in our area. We are excited to partner with the Women’s Fund and Griffiss Institute for this exciting endeavor.”

The award winners are:

TRM Environmental Consultants, Rome – Catherine Dare - TRM’s team of engineers provides clear and concise summaries of field conditions associated with horizontal construction activities and ensures that a quality product is the result of the scope of work.

Hilltop Marketing, Frankfort- Leigh Ann Dillon - Founded with the goal to help small businesses and nonprofit organizations tell their story with a modern website. Hilltop specializes in WordPress web design, small business marketing and digital communications.

The Cremeria, Clinton – Maria Macrina - An authentic Italian gelato shop located in downtown Clinton. They also provide event catering for public and private events including Farmer’s Markets, weddings and graduations. The Cremeria is rooted with a respect for Italian traditions and a desire to relate back to a time when local community and commerce was at the center of daily life.

New Beginnings Academy, Herkimer – Janel Hearn – (Formerly Little Hearn Playskool) Childcare facility in Herkimer County that offers daycare services for infants to children five years of age. The program works to fill the void of childcare disparities throughout the rural region and plans to expand to include afterschool care for children up to 12 years of age.

A-List Salon and Beauty Bar, Utica – Alisha Gaines-Porter – A Black-owned hair salon that provides haircare services to individuals unable to find a stylist, who is very familiar with ethnic hair. The salon also provides booth rental to other stylists in the area.

Community leaders also expressed praise and support for the initiative.

“For 25 years, the Women’s Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties has been helping women entrepreneurs strengthen and grow their businesses,” said **Oneida County Executive Anthony J.**

Picente Jr. “I congratulate the well-deserving women who are being honored this year and I am certain that they will use this funding to make our community and the region a better place.”

“Women Investing in Women is a great opportunity for women entrepreneurs to be recognized for their achievements in starting and maintaining small businesses,” stated **Mayor Jacqueline M. Izzo**. “The Innovare Advancement Center provides a highly collaborative business environment offering a multitude of resources to assist business owners in their quest to being business operations and/or expand them. These women businesses identified today are the inaugural participants concentrating on business models designed to enhance women in business, and as a small business owner I am honored to recognize them and thank them for their investment in our community.”

The award ceremony was held at The Griffiss Institute in Rome, New York. The Griffiss Institute attracts, develops, and supports tech startup businesses in the Mohawk Valley. **Heather Hage, President and CEO of Griffiss Institute** said, “It is encouraging to see so many women-owned businesses thriving in the Mohawk Valley, and it is an honor to partner with the Women’s Fund to support and celebrate our community’s entrepreneurs.”

“Small businesses like A-List Salon and Beauty Bar are the backbone of Utica’s economy and they create the culture that makes Utica unique,” said **Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri**. “The drive and talent of our entrepreneurs is unmatched and cannot be duplicated. I congratulate Alisha Gaines-Porter for winning this grant and Women Investing in Women for providing it. I have no doubt that with the right support, our creators are among the best in America.”

“The Women’s Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc., in cooperation with the Griffiss Institute and Baird are playing a pivotal role in helping women entrepreneurs through the Women Investing in Women Awards,” said **Vice Chairman for County Planning and Development of Herkimer County Bob Hollum**. “These valuable grant awards will continue to enable women entrepreneurs to expand and grow their businesses which will in turn contribute to the economic growth the Mohawk Valley Region is experiencing.”

The Village of Frankfort would like to extend their congratulations to all the winners and especially to their very own Leigh Ann Dillon of Hilltop Marketing in Frankfort! The economic empowerment of women creates tremendous dividends for their community. We look forward to learning all the ways this year’s winners grow their local economies and inspire future women-owned businesses.

The award recipients will also be honored by the Women’s Fund at their upcoming 25th anniversary celebration and profiled more completely in the coming months. Members of the Women Investing in Women Committee along with the Women’s Fund Board of Directors will be following the progress of the grantees in the coming year.

The Women’s Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties is a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit which is funded by donor contributions. The Women’s Fund has gifted more than \$600,000 to individuals and organizations in their 25 years of service to Herkimer and Oneida Counties. For more information visit the Women’s Fund at www.womensfundhoc.org.

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Photo, left to right: Elyssa Amone-Earl, Janel Hearn, Joanne Moskal, Kathy Hartnett, Catherine Dare, Debra Altdoerffer, Denise Flihan, Aileen Townsend, Alisha Gaines-Porter, Flossie Mitchell, Ellen Rainey, Patrice King, Janet Richmond, Leigh Ann Dillon, Jan Corn, Michele Sheridan, Diane Wolfe, Maria Macrina, Edie Weintraub-Danovitz

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