

Minnesota Women's Foundation announces at least \$30,000 in grants to benefit Northwest Minnesota's girls

**Emily Mekash
Reporter**

Nobody ever said that growing up was easy. The typical pressures of growing up, combined with the modern day pressures of drug use, teen pregnancy, increased violence and media consumption has led many people to believe that making it to adulthood is more difficult than ever.

However, one Minnesota foundation is doing everything they can to make growing up just a little easier for girls in the state.

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota is the oldest and second largest statewide women's foundation in the United States today. They believe in helping women and girls in Minnesota to achieve economic justice, safety and security, have access to adequate health and reproductive care, and to be more well represented politically.

According to the organization's website, "The Women's Foundation of Minnesota is a community foundation that grows equality for women and girls in Minnesota by funding innovative social change programs, building women's philanthropy, conducting and reporting research, and educating the public about the successes and challenges of Minnesota's women and girls."

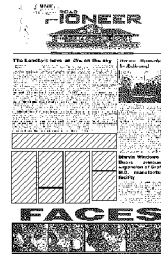
These beliefs, along with a host of other ideas and principles: make up the core of the organization. The people who make up this organization feel very strongly, that "research without action is pointless," said Women's Foundation communications director, Mary Beth Hanson.

Their most recent research project was regarding the status of girls in Minnesota. The organization was making a statewide tour to report on their findings. They stopped at the Warroad Safety Center on Tuesday, June 4. Community leaders, school employees, and several others attended the meeting.

Research showed that Minnesota's girls "are full of potential and promise", but the study also identified three key barriers that girls are facing: poverty, racism, and sexism. The meeting discussed top issues that are facing girls and young women, and then the floor was opened for group discussion and questions. The information gleaned from the stops on the tour would help provide further "real-life" research; community feedback is a crucial.

Some of the most exciting news that was presented was that the Women's Foundation will be awarding a minimum of \$30,000 in grants to communities in northwest Minnesota in order to increase its investment in that region of the state. The grants would be offered to help create and fund programs that shift attitudes and behaviors, or change public policies or institutions. The goal is that the money will help promote social change for women and girls. Priority for the grant money will be given to applicants in Roseau County.

Craig Oftedahl, of the Warroad School District, was present at the meeting and had this to say, "I think that schools and other community programs need to focus on the whole person, not just the academ-



ics. All students need health and character training, too; among other things. It's not just for girls, but all students. The whole society needs to change. It'll be a challenge, but it really needs to be done."

And the Women's Foundation of Minnesota is doing their best to help bring about that change, to benefit both women, and men.

More information about the Women's Foundation of Minnesota and about the grant money for northwest Minnesota can be found at www.wfmmn.org or by calling 1-888-337-5010