

Rochester Women’s Giving Circle grants \$175K to nonprofits empowering women

Hailie Higgins News10NBC
Updated: June 21, 2023 - 5:02 PM
Published: June 21, 2023 - 4:59 PM

[anvplayer video="5182196" station="998131"]

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Wednesday morning, over \$175,000 was given out to eight local nonprofits by the Rochester Women’s Giving Circle. News10NBC’s Hailie Higgins went to their award breakfast to see how the money will be used.

The Rochester Women’s Giving Circle has been helping women and girls escape poverty for sixteen years. They have invested over \$2.3 million in their mission. It’s a network of women in the area whose individual donations are lumped together — maximizing their impact. Thursday, News10NBC got to see firsthand how that money helps.

Melinda Andolina has been with the Rochester Women’s Giving Circle for more than a decade. Wednesday morning, Andolina helped announce their eight grant awardees for 2023. Each nonprofit has one thing in common: helping women in need get to self-sufficiency.

“When we empower women, not only do they flourish, but their children, their families, and the communities do as well,” says Melinda Andolina, Chair of the Rochester Women’s Giving Circle.

Their money has affected women like Lisa Buscemi. She’s the director of the Jennifer House.

“I have lived experience,” Buscemi says. “Jennifer House — I went through. For me being able to give back to the women that come through, there’s no words to explain it.”

The \$23,000 given to the Jennifer House will help more than 60 previously incarcerated women facing homelessness.

“[Current and former residents] can come to the Jennifer House for whatever they need: clothing, food, bus passes. Anything that we can help them with, we are always trying to provide that for them,” Permanent Supportive Housing Coordinator DeShawn McLamore said.

Another awardee is Green Visions — a workforce development program for young people in the Josana and Joseph Avenue neighborhoods. They were given \$25,000. Site manager Katherine Davila Stotts helped accept their money Wednesday.

“I was actually a participant about eight years ago,” Davila Stotts said. “It just helped me grow as a person, keep me out of trouble, have me doing something positive.”

For the Rochester Women’s Giving Circle, success is collaborative. They donate together and encourage grantees to work together.

“It’s overwhelming to think about our disparities that we have in the city, and how one person can make a difference,” Andolina said. “But when I pool my money with other women — others who believe in the same thing — we have a greater impact.”

The following eight nonprofits were awarded grants:

- **\$25,000 to Agape Haven of Abundance:** Urban Youth Empowerment Program
- **\$25,000 to Center for Teen Empowerment:** Young Women’s Leadership and Employment Project
- **\$20,000 to Friendly Senior Living:** Staff Training & Education Program
- **\$25,000 Friends of the Garden Aerial:** Green Visions: Growing Healthy Futures
- **\$25,000 Judicial Process Commission:** Women’s Legal Action Project and Employability Project
- **\$23,000 Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach:** Women Empowerment Program

Andolina tells News10NBC that the Rochester Women’s Giving Circle is always looking for new members. To learn more about how to get involved, click [here](#).

For Related Stories: [Rochester NY](#)

- [Watch](#)[News](#)[Decision 2026: Primary Election](#)[First Alert Weather](#)[Freedom’s Frontier](#)[Sports](#)[Contact Us](#)
- [Contests](#)[Community](#)[Careers](#)

- [News Team](#)[Closed Captioning Information for WHEC-TV](#)[Contact News10NBC](#)[Public Files](#)[About News10NBC](#)[FCC EEO](#)[Terms of Service](#)
- [DMCA Notice](#)[Hubbard Television Group Privacy Policy](#)[Your Privacy Choices](#)[Cookie Preferences](#)

Any person with disabilities who needs help accessing the content of the FCC Public file should contact Anthony Kahl at Anthony.Kahl@whec.com

This website is not intended for users located within the European Economic Area.

© 2026 WHEC-TV, LLC
A Hubbard Broadcasting Company