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» LOCAL CHAPTER OF 100 WOMEN WHO CARE LAUNCHING ITS THIRD YEAR

# Group looking to build up grants for charities

BY JILLIAN AUSTIN

The local chapter of 100 Women Who Care will launch its third year of fundraising next week, and organizers hope to attract new members.

The first of four meetings will take place Monday at 7 p.m. in the George Brockie Fellowship Centre at Brockie Donovan Funeral and Cremation Services.

“We’re still trying to reach our hundred members,” said Laura Kempthorne, general manager of Brandon Area Community Foundation. “It would be lovely to be able to say to an organization, ‘Here’s \$5,000’ ... We haven’t reached that yet, but it takes time, and we’ve done some great granting out to the community in the last two years.”

In its first two years, the Brandon and area chapter provided more than \$27,000 to eight local charities. Last year, recipients included Westman Aphasia, Project Linus, St. John Ambulance Dog Therapy Program and Rapid City First Responders.

In the group’s inaugural year, recipients included Crohn’s and

Colitis, The Women’s Resource Centre, Helping Hands Centre of Brandon and Special Olympics Manitoba Westman Region.

Kempthorne said one of the main goals of the organization is to create awareness about the various local groups doing important work in the community. Every organization in the Westman area that is a registered charity is eligible.

“We’re learning more about the organizations that really speak to individuals,” she said. “And it’s not always about the operational cost, it’s really what that organization is doing in the community from more of a personal side.”

Westman Aphasia received a grant of \$2,900, which proved to be a big help for the organization. The community-based group will mark its 10-year anniversary this fall. Westman Aphasia is dedicated to addressing the needs of individuals and their caregivers who are living with a chronic communication disorder.

“We’re the only program of its kind in Manitoba, and we’re actually the only program of its kind in Western Canada,” said Brenda Rust, speech

language pathologist and program clinician.

Rust said they provide services to people who have moderate to severe aphasia, which is described as an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. This is due to strokes, brain injuries, brain tumours, etc.

Thanks to the grant, they were able to offer a second full day workshop, called “Let’s Talk Aphasia,” make some much-needed updates to their website and further develop workshop materials.

“The rest of the funds have been held back as we have never had a donation like this which would allow us to have a few extra dollars in our bank account,” Rust said. “We’ve never had more than a few hundred dollars in our bank account at the end of the year and this gives us some breathing room.”

This also gives them the ability to take some time and decide what worthwhile items they could spend the remaining funds on, Rust added, such as a special session on “Aphasia and Depression” next fall for

their group members and caregivers. Another idea is to further develop their community outreach program, which provides followup to individuals in the community who require additional support or find it difficult to leave their home to access the support and information they need.

The way 100 Women Who Care works is women sign up and pool their charitable donations to make a big impact. To become a member, there is an annual \$100 commitment fee, which goes to the Women’s Endowment Fund of the Brandon Area Community Foundation. The Women’s Endowment Fund provides grants for women and children’s projects, as well as education and environmental safety.

“The more we grow our endowment fund, the more dollars we can grant out to those projects,” Kempthorne said.

Each member is asked to donate another \$200, broken down by \$50 at each of the four meetings. The members each suggest an organization that could benefit from a donation. At each meeting, three

charitable organizations are randomly drawn, and following a brief presentation on each, are voted on by members. The winning organization receives that quarter’s donation.

In 2016, there were 82 members, and 64 in 2017. So far, the group has about 30 members registered this year, and they are hoping to see that number grow.

“We will take registrations any time — any questions please give us a call,” Kempthorne said. “We’re finding the organizations that we have given to in the past are so appreciative and they’re just so glad that we’ve started this up in the community. We hope that we can keep going on for years to come.”

For more information, visit [bacf.ca](http://bacf.ca) or call the foundation office at 204-571-0529.

“If they don’t want to register right now, and just want to see what it’s all about, they can still attend our meeting on the 19th,” Kempthorne said. “We’ve had many women in the past just show up to see if it’s a good fit for them.”

» [jaustin@brandonsun.com](mailto:jaustin@brandonsun.com)

» Twitter: @jillianaustin