

DAVIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Article #3

By Jane Simpson, President & CEO

Pearls

of EMPOWERMENT

Women Helping Others

PEARLS of Empowerment was started in 2009 by the Davie Community Foundation. In this article I will answer:

- * What is Pearls of Empowerment?
- * What do they do?
- * How can I get involved?

Pearls of Empowerment is a women's giving circle organized to improve the lives of women and children in Davie County. Members range in age from 20's to 90's, and are diverse in race and geography. Each member of the circle gives \$1 per day to the Pearls Fund. Of the \$365 given each year: \$300 is used to make grants; \$35 is added to the Pearls endowment fund; and \$30 is used to operate the circle. Members can be individuals, mother and daughters, businesses or community and church groups.

Pearls accepts applications from non-profit organizations in August for grant money to pay for projects that improve the lives of women and children in the county. Pearls has a Grants Committee that meets with each applicant to ask questions and learn more about the proposed project. They also assess the quality of the organization asking for the money. All Pearls members are given a summary of the requests and are asked to vote on which projects they think will be the best use of their donation to do the most good in helping women and children. In November, Pearls of Empowerment hosts an annual meeting to give the checks to organizations with the highest vote of the membership. With the 2015 grants, Pearls will have awarded more than \$170,000 for Davie projects since 2009!

In addition to giving away money, Pearls gives women the opportunity to serve as leaders in a variety of ways. Pearls of Empowerment is governed by a Leadership Team of 15 women who guide the organization. Committees to carry out the work of the organization are also led by women. Current committees include: Grants Committee, Education Committee, Membership/Marketing Committee, and Events Committee. Each gives women a different opportunity to meet women from around the county and work together in their area of interest.

Of course, you can choose to be a Pearl and not participate on a committee at all. Busy women may simply decide to make their donation each year and cast their vote. That is another part of the beauty of Pearls; women can be as involved as they choose.

Pearls girls have education sessions with speakers on topics that relate to women twice a year; they have social gatherings in addition to their annual meeting; and they volunteer during the summer to help one of the organizations receiving grant money. They are truly women helping women and children!

Join us! Getting involved is easy. Simply contact Debbie Koontz, program manager at the Davie Community Foundation, for a membership brochure or download one from the Foundation website. Once you make the decision to join, you can be as involved as you want to be. Regardless of your level on involvement, you will be joining with women from all around Davie County to make a positive difference in the lives of women and children!



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