



THE
PEW
CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Help Across Generations (Summer 2013 Trust Magazine)

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Author: **Tom Infield**

07/15/2013 - On a second floor above Main Street in Philadelphia's Manayunk neighborhood, a dozen women, many in their 50s, some older, sit on a ring of plastic chairs for the weekly meeting of a support group for grandmothers giving full-time care to their grandchildren. It's a place that offers "a shoulder to cry on," says Genetta Yates, who is raising two grandchildren, ages 9 and 10, for a daughter who has struggled with drugs. "It was my second time raising kids; I didn't know what to do."

Around the circle, heads nod.

The grandmothers meet at the offices of SOWN, the Supportive Older Women's Network, one of about 100 nonprofit organizations in the Philadelphia region that receive funding from the Pew Fund for Health and Human Services. These organizations can also receive assistance from Pew to strengthen their operations and management to be more efficient and effective.

The Pew fund awards grants in three categories: support for disadvantaged children and their families, programs to assist vulnerable adults, and services to address the needs of the frail elderly. "Our goal is to provide support to organizations that help improve the prospects for independence and self-sufficiency of vulnerable individuals and families," says Frazierita Klasen, who oversees the fund and is a senior director of Pew's Philadelphia program.

Klasen helped develop the Pew fund and has worked with it from its inception in 1991. Since then, it has awarded approximately \$180 million in organizational assistance.

Pew sets a high bar for selecting grantees, which are determined after an intensive review process conducted with the help of experts in each of the areas the program provides support. The organizations funded are those that have the experience and track record, the knowledge of research and best practices, and effective management to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve. Support is awarded for three years, providing a measure of stability to organizations often scrambling for funds.

Pew grantees working with youth include Philadelphia Futures, which helps low-income students enter and succeed in college, and the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, which offers diverse arts education programming and gives young artists a public venue for their talents. Grantees working with vulnerable adults include groups helping people with complex problems such as long-term homelessness and chronic mental health challenges.

A Pew grant also offers a stamp of approval that can encourage additional donors, says Merle Drake, founder and president of SOWN. "The Pew name gives us credibility. We have been able to raise dollars around their

support.”

SOWN’s work is primarily aimed at building small support groups for isolated elderly women who, besides needing companionship, often require help managing life decisions. SOWN has 40 groups that meet in 25 locations around Philadelphia, in churches and synagogues, libraries, and senior centers. With its grandparents program, it reaches across generations.

“Our focus is to help the elderly remain in the community, which is what most elderly people want,” Klasen says. “And to help sustain and improve their quality of life.”