

The Women's Leadership Council is pleased to present the following grant awards:

1. The Aiken Civic Ballet is awarded \$2,000 for its expanded dance instruction outreach program to area schools and Children's Place. They plan to target schools with higher poverty rates, providing a minimum of six visits to each school, hoping to reach at least 2400 children. They will enhance the summer dance program currently offered at Children's Place. They also plan to provide a free school performance at the Etherredge Center.
2. The Aiken Center for the Arts is being awarded \$1,000.00 for its Joy in the Journey Program to benefit women with dementia. The program works with dementia patients to create an original piece of art. A therapist works with the participants through mneme therapy. The art work is displayed at the Center and will be available for purchase. Proceeds are invested into the program.
3. Blessing Boxes with the motto (Take what you need – leave what you can) is being awarded \$1,500.00 to purchase materials to build and initially stock three additional blessing boxes to be located on the property of area schools and other locations in the County. Volunteers build the boxes and fill the boxes with nonperishable foods and toiletries.
4. The Calidonia Missionary Baptist Church is being awarded \$2,000.00 towards the purchase a Smart Board for its summer enrichment program. The program benefits 40 children ages 4K – 8th grade who live in the Wagener/Salley and Ridge Spring/Monetta areas for Aiken County. The program relies on 12 volunteers, its church bus and the Aiken County Feed a Kid Program.

5. The Cumbee Center is awarded \$2,700.00 to purchase luggage for departing clients from its domestic violence shelter. Cumbee Center services over 187 victims of domestic abuse annually. These suitcases will make their transition from the shelter easier.
6. The Joann Tillman Ministries is being awarded \$500.00 to help start a Youth Basketball Program for 20 – 30 children, ages 7-18. The program uses a cradle to career program to decrease the incidence of school to prison statistics. It improves educational outcomes and reduces crime rates by engaging children, parents, schools and communities.
7. Mental Health of America of Aiken County is being awarded \$2,000.00 to provide an “Understanding More” retreat for victims of trauma from its Nurture Home Shelter. The day long retreat for 8 – 10 women will be supplemented by up to six individual sessions.
8. Project Graduation is being awarded \$500.00 for its annual graduation celebration at the Odell Weeks Center for local graduates. The goal for the event is to provide a safe, incident free, alcohol free celebration for up to 400 graduates.
9. Saratoga Warhorse is being awarded \$2,300.00 to provide treatment for a local female veteran from its post-traumatic stress therapy equine program. The focus will be on victims of military sexual trauma. The equine treatment program does not involve riding horses, but uses often buried senses to non-verbally communicate with the horse – a connection that can lead to life changing actions to encourage healing. Additionally, the community is

involved in the program by holding program graduation dinners. The community involvement is important to show the participants they are understood and accepted.

10. The USCA Research Foundation is awarded \$2,722.00 for snacks to be provided to 30 children from Aiken Middle School as part of a Youth Safe Haven/Police Mini Station After-School Program for Crosland Park residents. It is a three prong approach of tutoring, mentoring and community policing to reduce crime while building trust and promoting academic success. Volunteers from the USCA Departments of Education and Sociology as well as local Aiken Public Safety officers will implement the program.

United Way of Aiken County and our Women's Leadership Council are very happy that we have the opportunity to invest in our community by assisting these wonderful programs!