

Minnesota P.E.O. Home Fund Annual Report 2016-2017

Written by Jennifer Lanthier, Home Fund Chairman 2016-2017

About 15 years ago, I was sitting at a P.E.O. State Convention when I first learned of the MN P.E.O. Home Fund. While I was well acquainted with P.E.O.'s mission for the education of women, I was not at all familiar with this unique Minnesota state project. My personal journey with the P.E.O. Home Fund began.

The Minnesota P.E.O. Home Fund was founded as a state project originally to build a P.E.O. Home. However, when the Minnesota P.E.O.s realized that this wasn't feasible, it changed into something much more impactful. The P.E.O. Home Fund exists to help those most in need: the aged, the disabled, the infirm; that are in need of medical treatment or care, or housing assistance and have exhausted other sources of funding.

The Home Fund board meets 4 times per year (quarterly) to award grants. The board does not entertain emergency grant requests and isn't an emergency source of funding. The Home Fund is intended to be a short term solution for situations for which there is no other source of funding and should not interfere with other sources of funding, including other P.E.O. projects. Our reach is much broader than women and education, and we are careful not to offer assistance in areas where the other P.E.O. projects are intended to help. We prefer to pay vendors rather than individuals.

Who serves on the Board of Trustees? The Home Fund Board of Trustees is made up of 5 appointed board members, and 2 ex-officio officers from the Minnesota State P.E.O. board. Each appointed board member serves a 5 year term, holding 3 different offices during this time: Program Chair then either Administrator and Treasurer, or Secretary and Chair-woman. Serving on the board in 2016-2017 are:

Jennifer Lanthier – Chair
Sarah Hellekson – Treasurer
Jill Seinola – Secretary
Christine O'Hotto – Administrator
Sue Sailer – Program/Courtesy
Kimberly Jackson – Ex-officio
Lauri Cushing – Ex-officio

Where does the money come from? The Home Fund is funded directly from contributions from P.E.O. dues, memorials, and bequests. Home Fund money is invested in a portfolio managed by Wells Fargo Investment Services. The Home Fund Board, in conjunction with Wells Fargo works to insure that our investments are made in a way that represents the values of the P.E.O. Sisterhood. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, donations totaled: \$66,361.84. This included \$3,811.00 in chapter dues, \$39,123.44 in gifts and memorials and \$23,427.40 in grants from the Mary B. Patton trust. In the 2016-2017 year, the Home Fund paid out \$149,906.67 in grants. Some examples of the awards include: hospital beds, motorized scooters and power chairs, lift chairs, vehicle chair lifts, assistive devices, hearing aids, utility and grocery assistance.

We are called to care!

As P.E.O.s, we are called to care, from the time of our initiation and through each meeting. We profess a desire to express a “loving concern for each sister”. The P.E.O. Home Fund is a tangible expression of that desire, allowing sisters to reach out, not just to each other, but also across our communities, to express a loving concern to those in need. We care because that is who we are and who we are charged to be.

And does it make a difference? Absolutely.

One recipient wrote:

Thank you so much for the grant to purchase my scooter.... It allowed me to attend my daughter's college graduation, drive on our Mother's Day walk, attend my 35th wedding anniversary party and talk to everyone. I drove the scooter down the aisle at my son's wedding and at my father's funeral.... And the list could go on and on. Your grant for this purchase had given my life a huge uplift!

Another wrote:

This gift is truly life enhancing for me and I wish to convey my deepest and most sincere thanks! Through your generosity, I have been given new vision in a literal sense! I so deeply appreciate this gesture of good will towards me. By helping someone who has been hurt so much and so profoundly during my life, you have helped heal even those wounds in my heart. You give me faith that there is good in P.E.O.ple... you P.E.O.ple for sure!

And finally:

Thank you for your generous gift. I was very surprised when I opened it. I believe that the heart of God shines love through his P.E.O.ple. I pray that you keep serving the Kingdom of God this way. God bless you all.

Now you may be saying to yourself, I don't know anyone who could benefit from the Home Fund's help. That may be true in this moment, but keep your ears open. Perhaps you will hear a colleague at work relating a story of someone in need, or you will be praying for someone in church that is fighting a disease. When you hear these stories of need, ask yourself if the Home Fund may be able to help.

I leave you with Matthew 25:40: *The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'.*

If you are interested in being part of the Home Fund Board of Trustees in the future, please remember to fill out an interest card, or let a state officer know.