Hand to Hand makes an impact in the lives of women and girls in San Diego County by directing resources to programs that empower change and self-sufficiency.

In 2009, Hand to Hand membership was 19 women and we granted just over $15,000 to four organizations. By 2015, Hand to Hand grew to 60 women and we’ve more than doubled our annual grant dollar amount.

Since our inception, Hand to Hand has granted over $200,000 to 16 different organizations impacting the lives of hundreds of women and girls in San Diego County.

Hand to Hand Grants 2015 Program Year

- Girls Rising – $10,000
- Just in Time for Foster Youth – $10,000
- New Entra Casa – $3,000
- Welcome Home Ministry – $9,828

Read about each organization in this issue of the Chronicle

www.handtohandsandiego.org
Welcome Home Ministry

During program year 2014, Welcome Home Ministry received a Hand to Hand grant to analyze and quantify data to prove their programs were efficacious. For program year 2015, Welcome Home Ministry applied for a grant to expand their program. This program is the first of its kind and provides critical support for formerly incarcerated women to positively reenter the community. The purpose of the 2015 grant was to set up an office with supplies, recruit mentors, and create training materials for the mentors. These mentors are themselves recently released inmates.

Unfortunately, WHM hit a significant bump in the road with their program. The new jail administration would not allow Welcome Home Ministry to meet with the inmates before they were released. The Executive Director, Carmen Warner-Robbins needed to change tactics. With the much needed help from her assistant, newly elevated to a paid position, the program and materials developed switched the focus to post-release. The collaboration process now begins when the women are released with emphasis on transition into the community and great peer support. The training still meets the client’s individual needs and creates a solid foundation for success. One of the keys to the success of the program is the peer support in the form of the mentors and genuine camaraderie.

Welcome Home Ministry website is www.welcomehomeint.org

Girls Rising

Girls Rising received a grant from Hand to Hand to keep a full time salary Program Coordinator in place for the entire year so the organization might decrease the time it takes to find Big Sisters and to work on the growth of the group they serve. The Girls Rising program is a mentorship between Big Sisters and Little Sisters focusing on increasing self-esteem through workshops, one-on-one mentoring, field trips, and group experiences concentrated on education and empowerment. In 2015, Girls Rising helped 60 girls in their program. Although Girls Rising originally targeted 70 Little Sisters; they realized an increase to 70 girls was not sustainable without an increased effort in finding and training new Big Sisters. They instead focused on the quality and longevity of the current 60 matches in the program. When Girls Rising started in 2013 they had 30 girls, so the 100% increase in 3 years is significant and a testament to the benefits the community sees in their program.

The average Big Sister/ Little Sister match at Girls Rising is 3 years in the program, which is far higher than most other mentoring programs. They are seeing an increased sense of self-concept in 100% of their girls each year. This translates into zero teen pregnancies, high school graduation, college admission, employment opportunities, and an improved and positive life trajectory for the Little Sisters.

More information on Girls Rising at their website www.girlrising.com
New Entra Casa

New Entra Casa’s motto is “a safe harbor from a restless sea.” Founded in 1972 by the Wesleyan Service Guild, a group of business and professional women in the United Methodist Church, New Entra Casa is a residential facility for ex-offender women. The warm and inviting new Entra Casa home provides a place for women to live while they receive counseling and learn basic life skills.

When Hand to Hand visited in 2015, a new floor had recently been installed in the kitchen, the result of an in-kind donation by Kiwanis. In past visits, we’ve had the pleasure of talking with residents as they plan menus and make grocery lists for weekly shopping and cooking family-style meals, providing a stable and structured environment for residents who often never experienced such a family atmosphere.

To be successful, women living at New Entra Casa need the safe and comfortable living environment it provides along with frequent and ongoing counseling and life skills training. The Hand to Hand grant was used to retain a part-time counselor for the residents of New Entra Casa. This staff position had been previously reduced or eliminated due to lack of funds.

According to Kim Kelley, New Entra Casa’s Executive Director, the small size of the program is key to its success since each resident is given individualized attention to her specific needs. For women who stick with the 6-9-month program, the full spectrum support program provided by New Entra Casa results in a success rate of greater than 90%. Success is measured by absence of recidivism and ability to live independently and be a contributing member of society.

The H2H grant makes a real difference for a program such as New Entra Casa. For some testimonials, check out their new website at www.newentracasa.com

Just in Time for Foster Youth

Just in Time for Foster Youth helps ease the transition of foster youth into the world of young adulthood with mentoring and the tools to become self-sufficient. With help from the Hand to Hand grant, Just in Time graduated 15 young women from its 2015 Career Horizons program.

Designed to assist young women who have timed out of the foster system to build the skills needed to find meaningful jobs, Career Horizons offered monthly workshops and mentoring opportunities. Participants complete a strengths assessment, explore career options, and receive coaching to help determine their career goals. With increased knowledge of their strengths and goals, the young women work with mentors to craft resumes, shop for professional clothing and practice interviewing skills.

Just in Time offers networking activities for the Career Horizons’ mentees, volunteer coaches and the alumni of the program, connecting the participants with nearly 100 professional women from San Diego County. The participants have the opportunity to interact closely with several coaches before choosing their personal mentor. In addition to career workshops and training, the women also learn about nutrition, physical fitness, stress management and techniques to help them with work-life balance.

Victoria is an excellent example of the program’s success. Victoria, a freshman at San Diego State University, is a Career Horizons graduate who developed skills, confidence and connections that will help her pursue a career in public service.

You can get more information at their website www.jitfosteryouth.org
Girls Rising

“Having a Big Sister as a constant in my life made me realize that not everyone I loved was going to leave me.”
Girls Rising Little Sister graduate

Welcome Home Ministries—Mentor Program

“Having a big sister as a constant in my life made me realize that not everyone I loved was going to leave me.”
Girls Rising Little Sister graduate

Just in Time—Career Horizons

“I am grateful for the interviewing and networking skills I have gained during this time because I can already see they are tools I can use to help me on my career path,”
Victoria—Just in Time for Foster Youth

New Entra Casa

“I am so glad to be with New Entra Casa because they have provided me with life skills and the ability to live a new life with my children.”
Claire, New Entra Casa resident

“Our mentoring program offers an outpouring of community resources, gentle guidance to meet individual goals, and what I personally believe to be one of the utmost importance, genuine camaraderie within our peers.”
Annie—Program coordinator