WINGSPAN

WOMEN IN NORTHFIELD GIVING SUPPORT | WWW.WINGS-MN.ORG | NOVEMBER 2026

A Conversation with our WINGS President



Members of the WINGS Communications Committee recently had the opportunity to sit down with President Kathy Olson for a conversation about her role, her experiences, and what makes serving WINGS meaningful to her.

What does it mean to serve as president of WINGS? From her responsibilities as president to her personal perspective on the organization, Kathy shared insights that gave us a closer look at the work happening behind the scenes. We're excited to share some of the highlights and takeaways from their conversation with you!

You served as board president previously. What made you answer the call to step up and lead a second time?

Kathy: Sometimes I wonder! Ha, ha. The second time around, there was a structured succession plan, so I didn't have to jump right into the presidency. I served as an at-large member for half a year, then vice president, making it a staggered three-year commitment.

Even though it's a lot of work, I get a great deal of energy from the board and the women we work with on our committees. When you truly believe in an organization, you feel like, "I can do this." The president's role is different—the committees are really the engine doing the day-to-day work.

You've handled some major initiatives during your term—the 25th anniversary, a major legacy gift, and a joint meeting of the board and committee members. Could you elaborate on those?

Kathy: Starting with the 25th anniversary: I love a celebration, so that was fun for me. My leadership style was to form a committee and empower them to run with it. They did a phenomenal job. Because WINGS members don't gather as a large group very often, having an event like that brings a lot of energy.

Regarding the legacy gift, we received a $50,000 bequest from a member's estate. I leaned heavily on the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation for guidance through that process. The donor's representative wanted to make sure her wishes were honored. Half of the gift went to the endowment and half to the annual fund.

The board decided to reserve the annual portion for the next "Dare to Dream" grant. In the past, we focused heavily on building a foundation for legacy giving, and now we are seeing the results of that long-term trust and donor education. People may have designated WINGS in their estate plans, but we don't always know in advance of their plans.

The idea for a joint board and committee members came up organically because board members wanted to connect directly with the broader network of women running WINGS behind the scenes. We brought everyone together for a joint meeting focused on relationship-building and reconnecting with our shared purpose. It was a great reminder of how many hands make this work possible. It was designed as an informal gathering to help members build relationships across the organization. The event helped attendees reignite their enthusiasm for their work. We hope this meeting serves as a model we can repeat in future years.

What do you wish more people understood about WINGS and philanthropy?

Kathy: I wish people knew that philanthropy is life-changing for everyone involved. Giving whatever you have—whether it's time, talent, or financial resources—matters. Supporting women and youth right here in Northfield makes a tangible, visible impact. You can see the difference you make locally.

Women are strong and capable, and when we pool our resources, we make things happen. WINGS provides a structured way for women to build that collective impact together.

– Kathy Olson



YOUTH ON BOARD

"We have had a phenomenal experience with our Youth on Boards members. The students have been engaged and are valuable participants who offer great suggestions. This year, Peyton and Maddie are serving on the Board."

~ Kathy Olson

SAVE THE DATE!

The WINGS annual meeting will be held on

Tuesday January 26, 2027
6:00-7:30pm

at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield

WINGS Membership

Anyone can join WINGS by donating. Members who donate $120 or more can vote on grant distribution. Go to wings-mn.org to keep your membership current.

Donate online to the WINGS Annual Fund to make a difference in the lives of women and youth over the next year.

Donate online to the WINGS Endowment Fund to help build an endowment so women and youth can be supported far into the future.

Or mail a check to:

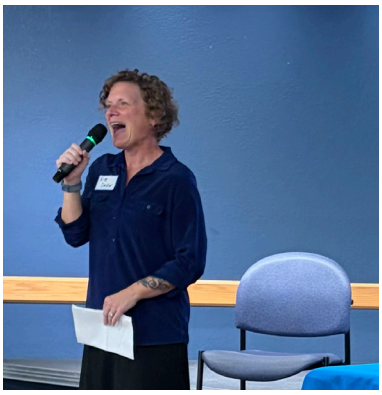
WINGS
P.O. Box 845
Northfield, MN 55057

WINGS VOTING MEMBERS ($120+ January 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026)

Connie Albers
Amy Lynn Allin
Barbara Alstaetter
Cynthia J Anderson
Mari T Aylin
Maren Bahler
Erin Bailey
Lois Bakko
Anndora Barvir
Elizabeth J Behrens
Katy Berglund
Elizabeth and Dennis Berry
Mary Bleckwehl
Emily Blumhoefer
Valerie Bollinger
Susan Boxrud
Kim Briske
Martha G Brown
Evelyn M Burry
Jan Ellen Burry
Mary S Carlsen
Charlotte Carlson
Mary B Carlson
Nancy C Carlson
Susan Carlson
Alice Carson
Natalie Chell
Elizabeth Child
Deb Christensen
Elizabeth Ciner
Christie Clarke
Judith D Code
Carol L Cole
Rachel Coltvet
Ellen Connolly-Eckhoff
Kathleen H Costa
Carol Cowles
Laurie Cowles
Ruth Hanold Crane
Gwen Daniels
Chris Daymont
Kim Decker
Angela Dee
Connie L DeGrote
Ijilmurun Detert
Sharon Detert
Vicki Dilley
Mairi Doerr
Kathleen Doran-Norton
Jacqueline A Dorsey
Mary K Douglass
Norma J Driver
Mary L Dunnewold
Martha Easter-Wells
Jennifer Edwins
Rachel Egeberg
Gay Eggers
Gretchen D Ehresmann
Diane M Enebak
Jan Ensrud
Elise A Eslinger
Kristine M Estenson
Shirley A Evans
Susan C Evans
Jill Ewald
Regina B Fineran
Bonnie Jean Flom
Meleah Follen
Catherine Fortin
Tracy A Fossum
Pamela Franz
Jodine K Friedow
Marie Gery
Cynthia F Gilbertson
Candace M.R. Godfrey
Theresa Golden
Paula Goode
Leota R Goodney
Ann Gosack
Clarice Grenier Grabau
Mary Lewis D Grow
Jayne Hager Dee
Mary Hahn
Cheryl Hall
Marilyn Hanson
Emily Hazlett
Julie Healy
Nancy J Hegland
Lou A Heng
Alyssa Melby
Joan Higinbotham
June Marie Hiza
Brianne Hoffert
Sara Hoffman
Carolyn Hogan
Patricia A Hohertz
Kristi Holden
Susan M Hollinger
Kelly Irvine
Katie Jean Jacobi
Barbara Jenkins
Carla Johnson
Margit Johnson
Pat Johnson
Elizabeth Kallestad
Judith Karlson
Judith Khanna
Becky Koenigs
Carolyn M Koziolek
Cynthia H Kreis
Patricia J Kriesel
Diane O Kuhlmann
Kari Kust
Dianne Kyte
Hope Langston
Leone M Larson
Rosemary Larson
Sally Legrand
Lois A Lindbloom
Virginia Lorang
Mary Loven
Diane M Lyman
Joyce Mace
Karen Olson Mader
Carol B Marshall
Judith F Mason
Rachel Matney
Amy McBroom
Lin McLaughlin Bruce
Katrina Meehan
Abigail L Meierbachtol
Constance Merrell
Anne Meyer Ruppel
Sue Middleton
Kathy Wiertsema-Miller
Jane Turpin Moore
Connie Nelson
Kari E Nelson
Elaine Nesbit
Jeannie Ness
Annette Nierobisz
Debra D Nitz
Jean M Noack
Katherine M Norrie
Sue Norstad
Mary Lynn Oglesbee
Meg Ojala
Elizabeth K Olson
Kathleen L Olson
Patricia G Ophaug
Rebecca M Otten
Pat Lamb and Elle Hansen Charitable Fund
Claire Pfau
Patricia A Pflaum
Jeanne Pumper
Linda Quaas
Susan Quinnell
Elizabeth Raleigh
Lana Reich
Leah Rich
Maria Richert
Laura Riehle-Merrill
Jane S Rinehart
Amy Ripley
Patricia A Robertson
Kimberly L Rohr
Kathryn Runzheimer
Connie Ryberg
Viola Ryder
Susan N Sanderson
Mary E Savina
Jennifer R Sawyer
Donna Rae Scheffert
Lori Schmidt
Grace H Schroeder Scott
ReJean Schulte
Kirsten Scott
Susan E Sharrow
Nancy Shaw
Janet R Shoger
Jo Siemers
Susan Singer
Corinne Smith
Kay Smith
Linda Stadler
Margaret Glynn Stary
Margaret Steen
Mary Steen
Vicki L Stevens
Shelley Strobel
Alice Strom
Ann Sullivan
Julie Sullivan
Sarah E Swan McDonald
Alice A Thomas
Merrell Thornton
Linda Tickle
Pam Tidona
Meredith Tietz
Marian L Tise
Linda Tollefson
Jennifer Tonko
Laura Turek
Pam Vig
Roberta Jean Wakely
Virginia Walsh
Frank Weaver
Eve H Webster
Doris Welke
Ramona Weselmann
Elizabeth Wicks
Karen N Wingate
Margaret Witt
Lynne Young
Julie Zaruba Fountaine
Barbara M Zaveruha
Kathryn Graham
Becky Zrimsek
Margit Zsolnay
Karen Zwolenski

WINGS Fall Event

Embracing the Great Wealth Transfer



On Monday, October 12, WINGS members and guests gathered at the Northfield Community Resource Center for an inspiring fall event about the transformative role women play in legacy giving. The evening opened with social time and light refreshments before WINGS Board member Kim Decker welcomed attendees and introduced the evening's guest speakers: Chanda Smith Baker, President & CEO of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation, and Jennifer Vickerman Akaolisa, Gift Planner at the Foundation.

During the discussion, Chanda highlighted the remarkable trajectory of WINGS, noting that since its founding in 2000, the organization has grown to more than 215 members and granted over $1.6 million. Jennifer praised the members' collective commitment, stating, "Starting as a small group of women giving what they could and growing to $1.6 million in impact shows the value women place on helping one another succeed."



The central focus of the talk was the unprecedented scope of the Great Wealth Transfer. Jennifer explained that over the next 20 to 25 years, an estimated $50 trillion to $84 trillion will be transferred nationwide. Because women in Minnesota live over five years longer than their male partners on average, women are positioned to inherit, control, and direct more financial resources than ever before in U.S. history.

Bringing the data home to Rice County, Jennifer shared research from University of Minnesota Extension showing that household net worth in Rice County totals $21.7 billion, with $736 million expected to transfer over the next decade. She pointed out that if just 5% of those transferred assets were designated for local endowment funds, it would create $36.8 million in perpetual support for the Northfield community. She encouraged members to begin open values-based conversations with their families and explore non-cash assets—such as real estate, stock, or farmland—as powerful tools for philanthropy.



Chanda concluded the discussion by emphasizing that estate planning and open family dialogue are among the kindest ways to care for one's community and loved ones. "Philanthropy is ultimately about joy, clarity, and community," she noted, thanking WINGS members for their enduring dedication and investment in Northfield's future.

Attendees shared their enthusiasm about the event and the casual format in which the information was given in layman's terms. If you have questions about the great wealth transfer or would like more information about your giving options please send an email to president@wings-mn.org.

Women in Northfield
WINGS
Giving Support

WINGS | P.O. Box 845 | Northfield, MN 55057

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WINGS (Women in Northfield Giving Support) educates and expands the number of women in philanthropy, builds and strengthens community through pooled investments, and improves the lives of women and youth in the Northfield area through focused giving.

Please mail your check (P.O. Box 845, Northfield, MN 55057) or donate online (wings-mn.org/donate) by Nov. 30. Send your tax-deductible gift soon. Thank you!

Stay informed about WINGS! E-news is sent to WINGS members and friends monthly. If you are not receiving e-news, please check your email spam folder. If you have questions, contact communications@wings-mn.org.

WINGS Forever
Leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Thank you for considering making your legacy gift to WINGS. For more information, contact Kathy Olson; president@wings-mn.org.

WINGS is an affiliate of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

SAINT PAUL
& MINNESOTA
FOUNDATION

2026 WINGS GRANT RECIPIENTS

WINGS awarded $115,000 in this year's grant cycle.
WINGS has granted $1,756,087 to date.

Community Action Center Car Repair Fund

Community Action Center Diaper and Hygiene Bank

Community Action Center Housing Stability Emergency Fund

HealthFinders Collaborative Healthy Families Northfield: Medical Access for Women and Children

HealthFinders Collaborative Healthy Minds Northfield: Behavioral Health Access for Women and Youth

Healthy Community Initiative Northfield Community College Collaborative: Addressing Urgent Student Needs

Healthy Community Initiative Northfield YouthBank

Healthy Community Initiative Supporting Early Childhood and Elementary Learning in Northfield

Healthy Community Initiative SY26-27 Youth Sports Scholarships

HOPE Center Hearts and Homes

HOPE Center Safety Supplies Fund

Northfield Arts Guild Arpillera with Esperanza en Acción

Northfield Public Schools BC2M: Every Conversation Counts

Northfield Public Schools Northfield High School Civil Rights Trip Scholarships

Northfield Union of Youth Mental Health Support at Northfield Union of Youth

Project Friendship Launching Strong: Fall Retreats and Mental Health Capacity Building for Youth Mentoring

Rice County Habitat for Humanity Heading Home: Preparing you for homeownership

Ruth's House of Hope Strengthening Recovery: Funding for Sustaining a Dedicated Case Manager for Lasting Impact

This Is Me Building Belonging for Youth in Foster Care in Northfield

Three Rivers Community Action Locally Designed Family Childcare Model

TORCH at Healthy Community Initiative TORCH Staff for Student Support