

Firms help two charities combine due to economy



Andrea S. Kramer

Lisa M. Kaderabek (right)

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As another sign of the troubled economy, two law firms helped two Chicago charities for women combine into one.

The Eleanor Foundation — which started as the Eleanor Club in 1898 to offer affordable housing to "independent women who worked in the city for low wages" — brings its \$7 million in assets to the Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW), a joint announcement says.

"This is probably the beginning of what we're going to see a lot more of in the not-for-profit world with federal and state grants shrinking and the need to take every dollar and use it as efficiently as possible," said [Andrea S. Kramer](#) of McDermott, Will & Emery LLP.

Kramer is the chairwoman of the board of CFW.

[Lisa M. Kaderabek](#) of McDermott, Will & Emery and lawyers from Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, & Flom LLP handled the legal work for the combination of the two groups for pro bono.

"The Eleanor Foundation and the Chicago Foundation for Women are joining forces because together, we can do far more to help female-headed households reach the middle class than we can alone," said [Nicholas Jay Brunick](#), chairman of the Eleanor Foundation.

Brunick is an attorney with Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen P.C.

Brunick will become "our first male board member," Kramer of CFW said. "This is a very important diversification issue for us."

Six board members of the Eleanor Foundation will join the 30-member CFW board.

"One of the exciting things we offer to them," Kramer said, "is that the Eleanor name is going to go on forever."

"Whenever the Chicago Foundation for Women gives a grant out for economic security," it will be from the Eleanor Network at Chicago Foundation for Women, Kramer said.

"It's just an opportunity to show the work that they've done for 100 plus years," she said. "It's a way of maintaining the legacy."

The Eleanor Foundation website says that by 1914 the organization ran six Eleanor Clubs that provided affordable housing in the city to working women with low wages. The group opened its last club at 1550 N. Dearborn Parkway in 1956.

It sold its last residence in 2001 and switched from a direct service provider to a public grant maker. In 2006, it formed the Eleanor Network of programs to advance women's economic security. In the last five years, the Eleanor Foundation has awarded at least \$6 million in grants for this purpose.

The joint announcement says The Eleanor Network chose to join with CFW "because of common missions and CFW's 27-year fundraising track record."

CFW maintained an annual budget of about \$2 million before this combination, Kaderabek said.

Before the combination, CFW has been awarding 60 to 70 grants a year at about \$22,000 each, for about \$1.3 million in grants, Kramer said. Those grants have been to support programs for women's economic security, access to health care and freedom from violence, the joint announcement says.

CFW's grants get vetted by its staff of 10 and by its grant-making committee that consists of board members and others from the communities that CFW serves, Kramer said. CFW also educates groups that receive grants.

Now CFW's goal is to expand its grant-making to \$3 million a year within five years, the joint announcement says.

Of that, "for the next three years, we've agreed to give at least a million a year to economic security for women," Kramer said.

CFW's annual luncheon is at noon, Sept. 27, at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave. The speaker will be Anita Hill, who played a pivotal role in the Senate hearings during the confirmation of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas in 1991.

