

Women's Giving Circle issues nine grants

BY DEBORAH MOON

The Women's Giving Circle of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has awarded \$26,300 to nine grant recipients. Now in its seventh grant cycle, the Women's Giving Circle has granted a total of \$148,965 in 46 grants.

The WGC gives Jewish women the opportunity to be fully engaged in the process of philanthropy. The Circle's mission is to empower women and girls, to support Jewish continuity in myriad forms and to help activate projects that drive justice.

"I adore WGC for all the reasons above, including my deep value of imbuing our deeds with Yiddishkeit," says Giving Circle Chair Sharon Pollin. "It is truly moving to see the impact of our combined contributions. Additionally, WGC provides an opportunity to learn more about the creative initiatives that are happening in the community, as well as to form friendships with like-minded women."

Several of the grants use the term "women" to refer to cisgender women, transgender women and non-binary people who are comfortable in female-centered spaces.

The largest grant, \$4,000, went to Real Light Films to expand distribution of "Monument," which tells the story of the filmmaker's first visit to a monument his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, created in memory of her Hungarian hometown's former Jewish population.

While WGC has often provided seed funding for programs in the arts, the funding for "Monument" is different.

"We are funding at the end of the project," says JFGP Chief Development Officer Wendy Kahn, who both staffs and participates in WGC. "We are providing the opportunity for this artist and local Oregon resident/filmmaker, Michael Turner, to share his grandmother's incredible story. We understand that we do not have the capacity to fund an entire project like



Filmmaker Michael Turner visits the memorial his grandmother, Lici, a Hungarian Jew whose parents and sister were killed in Auschwitz, created in Sarvar, Hungary. The Women's Giving Circle awarded a grant to Real Light Films to aid in distribution of the film "Monument." A seven-minute clip from the film will be shown at the Eastside Jewish Commons as part of Art/Lab's Exhibition opening event at 6:30 pm, June 1 (see page 11), and will be available to view until June 28 as part of the exhibition.

Michael's, but we do have the capacity to help him complete his vision."

"Monument" is being submitted to various film festivals, universities, Oregon Public Broadcasting and other independent media outlets.

"A major goal of this project is to explore ideas of identity and belonging in the face of erasure," says Turner. "While the film is set in Hungary and deals with active Jewish erasure in that country, we are explicit in the film about our own country's (and our own personal) avoidance of acknowledging peoples and cultures that have been erased through genocide, racism and forced assimilation. We hope that the film tells this story in an intimate, introspective voice that honors my grandmother's efforts and acknowledges the complexity of finding ourselves involved in the fallout of a genocide."

Congregation Shir Tikvah received \$2,130 to help recruit more volunteers for the Women's Torah study at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

(Read more about the project at jewishportland.org/jewishreview/jr-stories/torah-study-in-prison.)

WGC participant Joni Miller was very impressed by the impact of the project. She says the Torah study helps the female inmates "feel a connectedness with their outside culture, which can provide strength in their unusually stressful environment."

Other grant recipients are:

- Beit Am, \$3,600, to fund an intergenerational Rosh Chodesh program to build Jewish identity, trusting relationships and meaningful community. Through art, movement, meditation and sharing, Jewish women will have an opportunity to access a monthly feeling of retreat-like peace and fulfillment.

- Tisch PDX, \$3,600, for an Alumni Support Program, which last year's grant from the Women's Giving Circle helped launch. This year, the program will serve 22 young organizers and community builders from marginalized populations in Portland.

- Chabad Jewish Center-Hillsboro, \$3,000, to help the Center's Jewish women's group add community volunteering and partnership to its intergenerational Jewish Women's Weekly Club and Rosh Chodesh programs.

- Oregon Hillel/Greater Portland Hillel, \$3,000, for a collaborative retreat to empower female-identifying students that are connected to both PDX and Oregon Hillel to be mentored by our professional staff and to take on leadership roles as they lay out the vision, programs, conversions, workshops, and the spiritual and religious experiences throughout the weekend.

- Jewish Family & Child Service, \$2,600, to support mental health in Jewish day schools. JFCS will provide consultation and training for teachers and offer therapeutic parenting interventions through the SPACE (Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions) treatment model for parents.

- Mittleman Jewish Community Center, \$2,370, for free self-defense sessions for three age groups (13-15, 16-18, adult). Each session will include overall safety and prevention information as well as physical self-defense skills to empower female-identifying individuals with practical, hands-on knowledge and skills.

- Eastside Jewish Commons, \$2,000, to subsidize a six-session yoga class for 15- to 16-year-old girls. The overarching goal of the sessions is the creation of a supportive, intentional young women's community modeled on mutual support, respect, confidentiality and consent.

For more information on the Giving Circle, contact Sharon at slpollin@gmail.com or Wendy at wendy@jewishportland.org or 503-892-3015.

"We would love for any women interested in finding out more to reach out to either Wendy or me for coffee and to learn more about being a WGC member," says Sharon.