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## **Impact 100 Chicago: Women Empowering Change**

In Its Inaugural Year, Organization Makes an Extraordinary Impact of \$126,000

CHICAGO, IL -- April 2011-- *Impact 100 Chicago*, a new philanthropic organization in its inaugural year has raised \$126,000. Of the money raised, 100% will be awarded to five Chicagoland nonprofits.

The primary goal of Impact 100 Chicago is for at least 100 women in the Chicagoland area to join as members; each member makes a tax-deductible donation of \$1000. The resulting \$100,000 is awarded to a local nonprofit organization. After a thorough review of the grant proposals submitted by area nonprofit organizations, five finalists will be chosen this spring. Each finalist represents one of five Focus Areas: Family, Education, Health & Wellness, Environment and Arts & Culture. The grant recipient will be selected by membership vote to be held on June 14, 2011. The grant winner will receive a \$100,000 grant; the remaining four finalists will split the additional \$26,000.

The Impact 100 model began in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2001; Barrington resident, Marybeth Lernihan, began Impact 100 Chicago in 2010 with the help of co-founders Michele Polvere and Nonie Brown. The women behind Impact 100 Chicago are all volunteers, and the primary benefit they receive is having a voice in changing the lives of others. Lernihan stated, "Women want their voices heard when donating philanthropic dollars; by having a vote in selecting the grant recipient, women are empowered to make a difference."

The membership period is one year, and is renewed on an annual basis. Each member can dictate her own involvement within the organization. Responsibilities vary from making a donation and casting a vote for the grant recipient, or becoming actively involved in a variety of committees. The organization was pleased to welcome 126 members this year, ranging from women in their 20's to its oldest member at age 82. The organization hopes to grow its membership to at least 200 in 2011, in order to award two grants of \$100,000 each. The women of Impact 100 Chicago come from many different backgrounds and live throughout the Chicagoland area.

In addition to its membership program, Impact 100 Chicago also welcomes *Friends of Impact 100 Chicago*. Friends of Impact 100 Chicago make donations of any amount to support the organization's operational costs. For more information or to become a member please visit the website at: [www.impact100chicago.org](http://www.impact100chicago.org).

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