

# Women's Giving Circle Launches

*"Women reaching out to do together what*

Last year Carrie Fellon was strolling among the booths at the Lehigh Valley Women's Summit 2017 when she stopped to inquire about the Good Shepherd Women's Giving Circle with Michelle Landis, a member and former chairwoman. This year at the 2018 summit at Cedar Crest College, Carrie was on the other side of the display table as a Women's Circle representative answering questions, not asking them.

"I never really understood what the Women's Circle was all about," says Carrie, a certified financial planner. "I soon realized that it was

a chance to come together with women of generous spirits to pool our dollars and decide where to give the money, and to learn more about community and philanthropy."

The Women's Circle philanthropic mission, and Good Shepherd's, resonated with Carrie who became one of the group's newest members this year and also is a member of the core team. A very personal chord was struck when she toured Good Shepherd and heard a presentation at her first group meeting for support of a children's playground at the inpatient pediatric unit in Bethlehem. "We have a four-year-old special needs grandson," says Carrie, who imagined him being able to benefit from just such a playground. "When I took a tour of Good Shepherd I was able to under-



*Outgoing chair Marilee Falco (left) with incoming chair Anne Baum who has set a goal of increasing membership to 100.*



*Carrie Fellon*

# Into Its 10<sup>th</sup> Year

*we could not do alone.”*

stand more fully the kinds of therapy Parker undergoes and I was able to better identify with the equipment he considers toys.”

The Women’s Giving Circle began with eight women and has grown to 65. An annual membership fee of at least \$1000 is collectively used to support up to three Good Shepherd programs which members choose by voting. In the last nine years, \$500,000 has been raised to support such things as the Needy Patient Program, nursing and therapist scholarships, to purchase a bus for Good Shepherd’s long-term care residents to use on community outings, the technology lending library, wellness coaching, and more.

Carrie sees many benefits in belonging to the Women’s Circle. In addition to the networking opportunities with other successful career women and community volunteers, Carrie likes knowing that her donations are staying here at home. She also likes having a vote on choosing program recipients, being able to ask questions of project presenters and getting updates on project outcomes and the people benefiting from the services.

Anne Baum, the newly-appointed chair, says she has set some lofty goals of increasing the group’s membership to 100 in this its tenth year. “That would be amazing,” she says. “What we could help Good Shepherd do with that money gives me chills to think how wonderful that would be...It’s a really inspiring group to be a part of. One of the most rewarding components is knowing that we really do make a difference for the people Good Shepherd serves.”

## Women’s Circle Chairs – Past and Present

|                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2010 (Charter)<br><b>Marna Hayden</b> | 2014<br><b>Michelle Landis</b>      |
| 2011<br><b>Cathy Leiber</b>           | 2015 & 2016<br><b>Mary Evans</b>    |
| 2012<br><b>Jane Koehler</b>           | 2017 & 2018<br><b>Marilee Falco</b> |
| 2013<br><b>Pat Lockard</b>            | 2019<br><b>Anne Baum</b>            |

*Good Shepherd’s Women’s Giving Circle is for women who want to make a philanthropic difference while experiencing the joy of camaraderie. The group is open to all women who like to support the mission of Good Shepherd, improving the lives of children and adults with disabilities, by giving at least \$1,000 annually. Members meet five times a year at homes or other venues and serve as co-hosts.*

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