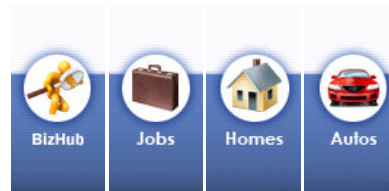


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Downturn creating opportunity for women, funds' CEO says

Friday, May 8, 2009

PORTSMOUTH — The current economic downturn is actually an opportunity for women to take the lead in trying to make things better, according to Christine Grumm, president and CEO of the international Women's Funding Network, an association of 140 women's funds on six continents.

Grumm, who lives in San Francisco, stopped off in New Hampshire recently to spread the word, as she sees it, of today's opportunity for women to gain a "seat at the table" of economic reform.

"I see this as a window opening for women that was not available before," she told a small group of women at a luncheon hosted by Ellen Fineberg of Portsmouth, a board member of the Women's Fund of New Hampshire. "The time is really ripe."



Christine Grumm

One problem the country must overcome, she said, is that the people trying to fix the system are the ones who broke it. With more women involved, solutions will fall into place.

"We're about community building," she said. "The question is how do we spread that. We need to ratchet it up."

Grumm thinks big. With a cheery smile but firm resolve, she asks donors for big bucks. She wants to change the world. She described her campaign as "transformative philanthropy," an effort to remake the image of women as victims into a new reality — women of influence, women as leaders, women with solutions to problems, women as community builders.

"Now," she said, "is a very exciting time ... It's absolutely phenomenal what Women's Funds are doing, and what they can do."

She described a "Women Moving Millions" campaign that started in Texas with a \$10 million donation and is on its way to a \$150 million goal worldwide.

In New Hampshire, with its relatively small population and tradition of business entrepreneurship, she said the Women's Fund can be a significant force for social change with a lot less money. Here, one million dollars goes a long way toward aiding women and girls. Even half a million dollars, she said, would have an enormous impact.

This fundraising initiative has already resulted in a major gift to the Women's Fund of NH that enabled it to increase its grantmaking and look deeper into research on the well-being of women and girls in NH.

Grumm, the daughter of Lutheran missionaries in Hawaii, has an impressive resume. She was executive director of the Chicago Foundation for Women and deputy general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva Switzerland before joining the women's funding network in 2000.

Women's Fund of NH executive director Marianne Jones welcomed Grumm's insights, and commented: "If you think big, big things can happen."

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