

Initiative supports feminist causes

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Helen LaKelly Hunt is looking for wealthy women willing to donate \$1 million apiece to support feminist issues. She and her sister have already done their part, donating \$10 million to support foundations focused on women's rights.

The Tenafly resident is a feminist author and founder of several non-profits that underwrite programs focused on women's and children's rights. Her sister, Swanee Hunt, was ambassador to Austria during the Clinton administration. Both are heirs to the H.L. Hunt oil fortune.

Last year they used their own money to create an initiative called Women Moving Millions. Reaching out quietly to other women, the campaign has raised an additional \$60 million.

Now it's going public, asking wealthy women for minimum donations of \$1 million apiece. Its goal is to raise \$80 million more by April 2009. The money will go to women's funds around the world for work on issues ranging from domestic violence to access to quality education. The funds don't run programs, but rather provide money and guidance to non-profits that do.

In the past 25 years, such women's foundations have raised \$900 million, Helen Hunt said, and she's determined to push that number past the \$1 billion threshold before the end of next year.

"For the last 25 years, in response to the lack of money for programs for women and girls in traditional philanthropy, women have been pooling their assets into women's funds," said Hunt. "From one fund 25 years ago, there are now 130 funds around the world."

The decision on which fund gets the money would be up to each individual donor, she said. Hunt's goal is to convince wealthy women that they can make an impact.

"There are a great number of women in Bergen County really isolated in their homes and they have access to family money," she said. "We're hoping to form a network among high-wealth women so that they can come together and talk to each other about what inspires them."

Among the groups already benefiting from the campaign network is the Women's Fund of New Jersey in Union.

"Here's what's different about women's funds: We are totally about social change," said Myra Terry, chief executive officer of the New Jersey group.

"It's not about taking care of more battered women; it's about how we stop the cycle of violence. Those are the areas that we are holding our organizations' feet to the fire on. We're about to create a policy institute to bring together reproductive health groups that are led by women of color, to decide what the topics are in New Jersey that are most important to work on."

Unlike large non-profit funding institutions like the Ford Foundation, the board of each women's fund must include women affected by the issues it addresses, Hunt said.

Women Moving Millions plans to hold various events for potential donors. Hunt said one is already planned for March at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

The group has also established a new Web site at [http:// womenmovingmillions.org](http://womenmovingmillions.org).

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