



ANNIE'S PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

ANNUAL REPORT | 2016



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

The past year has been a year of many changes. The inaugural year of Annie's Project—Education for Farm Women has gone well. There are still several challenges for us as we go forward. I thank all of our educators and sponsors for their ongoing support and dedication to proving women in agriculture with a highly needed and greatly appreciated source of information.

Updating files and logos is an ongoing challenge for us with our small staff. I appreciate the work that is done by our Director of Administration, our web designer and our online store manager to help deliver programs around the country.

Farm Credit, at all levels of their organization, continues to be a great supporter of farm and ranch women across the United States. The work done by Amy Durand and her team at AgStar Financial Services in Minnesota is just one example where the US Farm Credit System Agricultural Credit Association has provided funding, delivery, recruitment and speakers for programs.

Looking ahead to 2017 we are excited about our new sponsor, Nationwide Financial. Their assistance and expertise in reviewing and editing the Managing for Today and Tomorrow (MTT) materials was very valuable in 2016. I hope that the newly revised materials help us deliver better quality programs reaching more participants.

As our programs grow we need to build capacity to train and deliver. For me, as the founder of Annie's Project, it is a bittersweet time. What I've carried in my head, put down on paper and will now entrust to a new group of certified trainers is daunting and exciting at the same time. That feeling of transition is universal no matter if it's between farming generations or a fledging 501(c)(3) growing our capacity to deliver. I look forward to providing assistance to the development of new trainers to make the Annie's Project methodology and materials even more available and applicable to all states.

And a big thank you to the board members and Director of Administration that give guidance and vision for APEFW and uphold the integrity of the program. Each one of the ten members of the APEFW board and the Director of Administration, has a mind and a heart for the facilitators delivering programs for farm and ranch women across the U.S. I greatly appreciate their wisdom and ideas as we continually try to improve the programs. Finally, I want to specially thank all of those of you that help plan, coordinate, recruit, teach and deliver these programs. You are what makes this organization work.



WHO IS ANNIE?

Annie Kohlhagen Fleck grew up in Northern Illinois. Her goal was to marry a farmer and she did. She spent her lifetime learning how to be an involved business partner with her husband. Together they did great things, but it wasn't easy. In honor of her memory, Annie's Project is taking her experiences and current information and sharing them with today's farm women. To read more about Annie's Story, visit www.anniesproject.org/annies-story/

WHAT IS APEFW?

APEFW is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) organization established for the purpose of providing educational and other opportunities to woman farmers and ranchers to enable farm women to become effective owners and partners in farm businesses. Programs offered through APEFW are called Annie's Projects.

APEFW has developed a series of classes that address the variety of issues confronted by female farmers and ranchers. Starting with the basic series of six classes, Annie's Project educational programs address topics from the five areas of risk as identified by USDA through succession planning. Assistance is even available in the form of a Borrower Education program.

Programs are localized and conducted in small groups. Women are provided a safe harbor to learn in a stress free, open environment. They are encouraged to contribute their life experiences to facilitate learning from each other. Local specialists provide the skilled guidance needed for the educational process to blossom.

APEFW programs have been offered for fourteen years. The programs are demand driven with a significant impact, assisting women to develop skills in the areas of information management, financial documents, land ownership and leasing, and marketing commodities. Annie's Project program graduates have learned about estate planning, value added agriculture, and management processes and decisions needed to manage operations and make successful farm or ranch transitions.



Classes have been delivered in 33 states through our training network. The trained educators receive direction and support from their state coordinator. The state coordinators have received the quality training in the materials and program delivery that has become synonymous with Annie's Project. Impact surveys have shown that 94% of the attendees identified the all-women learning environment was important. 76% of the women used their notebooks and material when the class was over and 63% accessed on-line resources provided in the course. Most importantly, 89% shared information garnered through the classes with spouses.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information.

OUR VISION

Well-being for rural women.

MY VISION – KARISHA DEVLIN, Ed.D.



Dear Friends,

This year, I was working on a dissertation and had the opportunity to interview Annie’s Project participants in three states. I left those interviews feeling excited, energized, and proud. It is exciting to see farm and ranch women across our country being empowered and becoming better business managers and partners. It energizes me to continue to reach out and educate other women, and it makes me proud to be a part of Annie’s Project.

The importance of education was instilled in me at a young age. I watched my mother struggle to work full time and go to college while raising three children. We were living hand to mouth at that time, and my mom was the breadwinner. She realized the only way out of the situation we were in was to better educate herself. I witnessed firsthand how education can be a change agent in your life, and that lesson has stayed with me. My passion in life has been to educate myself and others. I firmly believe that no matter where you are in your life, what your situation may be, there is always room to learn something new and grow from it.

In 2004, I was drawn to Annie’s Project for several reasons. One, I’ve already mentioned, was to help others continue to learn and be empowered. The other was that I saw some of Annie in myself. I had recently married a farmer, and although I had two college degrees in agriculture I did not grow up on a farm. I had the “book-learning” background, but I received another type of education by marrying into a farming family. I could relate to some of the challenges Annie had and realized the importance of having a network of other farm women.

Besides educating farm and ranch women in the five areas of risk management, Annie’s Project creates a community. This community is a supportive network of other farm and ranch women, professionals, and educators. There is an African proverb that I have always liked that goes “When you educate a man you educate an individual, when you educate a woman you educate a community.” Annie’s Project equips participants with the knowledge and confidence to take what they have learned and share it with others. By sharing information, participants are empowering and strengthening their communities, families, and businesses. To me, this allows Annie’s Project not only to impact the well-being of rural women but those around them as well.

Sincerely,

Karisha Devlin,
APEFW Board Member

PURPOSE – WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

These photographs are the best answer to the question of why we do what we do – women – women who manage farms and ranches either solo or with a partner or spouse are our motivation.

A crucial step in the success in agriculture is identification and management of the five areas of risk management:

- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Human resource
- ❖ Legal
- ❖ Market
- ❖ Production



Because women have unique learning preferences, they are often not served through traditional farm management education programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines women farmers and ranchers as an underserved audience.

Dr. Jason Johnson, an Executive Board member explained it best when he wrote: “Annie’s Project doesn’t create farmers and ranchers, we make better agribusiness managers and partners so family legacies can be created, maintained and transferred to future generations.”

The creation of legacies that can be maintained and transferred to future generations are the focus of the

Annie’s Project Managing for Today and Tomorrow (MTT) program. Key topics are:

- ❖ Succession planning
- ❖ Business planning
- ❖ Estate planning
- ❖ Retirement planning

Women are often the ones to broach the difficult discussions related to retirement and estate planning.



CAPACITY – HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO

METHOD

- ❖ Curriculum was developed from research-based information
- ❖ Trained facilitators and local practitioners deliver the program
- ❖ The environment facilitates learning and fosters mentoring

LEADERSHIP

- ❖ National, state and local program facilitators are trained to identify and recruit learned and capable local program specialists to deliver curriculum materials.

PARTNERING

- ❖ APEFW has developed a national reputation for consistently delivering outstanding programs for farm women and ranchers. National, state and local businesses and organizations often partner in providing resources for women to attend the courses.
- ❖ National, state and private grants are sought and utilized to underwrite and/or augment program funding.

STATE COORDINATORS

- ❖ Currently 33 states have coordinators who serve as liaisons between APEFW and local Annie's Project program providers.

TRAINING

- ❖ Facilitator training programs are offered to accommodate new educators both nationally and locally.

VOLUNTEERS

- ❖ Subject-matter experts donate the time they spend presenting to and working with the participants.
- ❖ Our volunteers have donated in excess of 5,300 hours this year.



A volunteer presenter discusses estate planning at the Scottsbluff Annie's Project retreat.

FOCUS ON 2016 AND LOOKING FORWARD

This was a year to focus on strengthening operations and resources to provide outstanding support for the facilitators in the field.

THE COMPLETED MANAGING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW (MTT) UPDATES

The MTT workbook, instructional PowerPoint presentations and supporting resources were all updated. The workbook was also restructured for ease of downloading and printing, even in low-bandwidth areas. All materials were uploaded to the facilitator pages of the website in December.

NEWSLETTERS AND TELECONFERENCES

The APEFW quarterly facilitator newsletter and teleconferences have been well received. Each includes updates, timely tips and information. The teleconferences have been an excellent opportunity for interaction. New information is shared, ideas are exchanged and responses to challenges are forged. Considering how busy APEFW facilitators are, the teleconferences are also posted to a private YouTube link for facilitators who missed the call or wish to watch it again.

APEFW WEBSITE

Last year, we reported that the website, which is designed for both the public and as a resource for program facilitators, was valuable to both sets of users. It is a flexible tool providing constantly updated information.

The public has found courses they seek and have used the “contact us” feature to inquire about the program and express their interest. Well over a hundred requests are received through the contact us feature yearly.

A resources section has been added that provides informational materials and tools to aid in business, estate, retirement and succession planning.

Recently a facilitator commented on the amount and depth of resources available and the user-friendly design of the site.



“The materials are well organized and easy to find.”

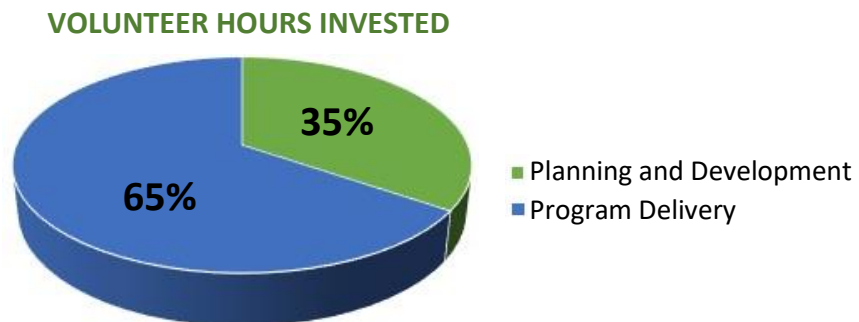
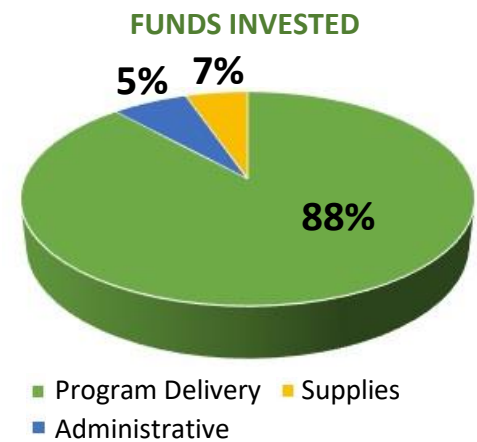
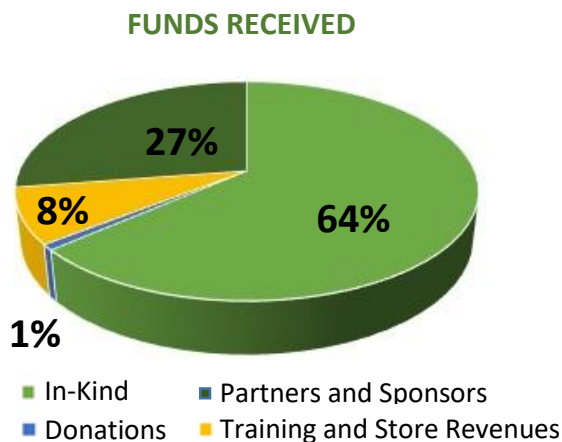
ADDING CURRICULUM

The need for adding Level II curriculum was based on state coordinator and facilitator requests. At least one potential curriculum has been identified. It was initially developed for use in one specific region. Now customization to apply to other regions and types of agriculture will begin. Both the existing curriculum as well as wider-reaching pieces will be supplemented with PowerPoint presentations and region-specific resources and teaching aids. Completion is anticipated before the end of 2017.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Despite rising costs for many educational classes, the average cost of a course has remained approximately \$383 per student. Cost increases continue to be off-set by subject-matter experts donating their time to assist in the delivery of the classes. State and local coordinators determine registration fees – typically ranging from \$50 to \$125 depending on the location. Program costs in excess of registration fees collected are paid through various sources such as grants, class sponsorships, and generous contributions from national, state and local businesses and organizations. APEFW makes every effort to maximize the impact of funding received and expertise available from local practitioners, businesses, agencies and partners who share in our mission.

In 2016 a total of 52 programs were delivered across the country. Of those, 43 were Annie’s Project Level I courses and five were Managing for Today and Tomorrow courses. The remaining four courses that were presented were Annie’s Project level 2. Together they served 689 farm and ranch women.



Past annual reports and other financial disclosures are available on the website at <http://www.anniesproject.org/about-us/public-disclosure/>

FOCUS ON OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the strength of the organization. They train, plan and promote programs, seek and vet guest speakers and satisfy record-keeping and reporting requirements. Volunteers implement the curriculum that was developed, but not without first spending countless hours in preparation to provide participants with the high-quality experience that has come to be associated with an Annie’s Project course.

Additionally, their work in providing the pertinent local information that makes this program successful in the many varying areas of the country is invaluable. All guest speakers are professionals in their field. The time they donate is an important part of a successful program.

FOCUS ON STATE COORDINATORS AND FACILITATORS

State Coordinators are the backbone of APEFW. The state coordinator role may vary somewhat from state to state. However, all coordinators are expected to uphold the APEFW mission, core values and best education practices and all coordinators receive continual support in planning, implementation and evaluation from APEFW.

Generally, the state coordinator serves as the program manager and main point of contact for their state or region. The primary role is to facilitate APEFW in their state and coordinate communication between APEFW headquarters and their local facilitators. Many state coordinators spend many hours writing grant proposals to fund state and local efforts. They also assist the local coordinators in securing materials and quality speakers.

Additionally, some State Coordinators look at creative solutions to reaching the women in their state with this much-needed program. Two coordinators found similar creative solutions to barriers in course attendance. In a third case and in a drastically different demographic, a course facilitator with the support of her state coordinator came to a similar conclusion. One barrier was that women could not devote six evenings over six weeks away from their responsibilities. Another was that in sparsely-populated areas, the distance participants had to drive for six evenings was too great.

As an answer to this problem Jennifer Boyles, Amy Durand and Jessica Groskopf offered their solution: an Annie's Project retreat. Women could devote a weekend (Friday afternoon through Sunday) more easily than multiple evenings. For those covering great distances, they only made one round-trip with a hotel stay. Not only did these ladies provide the minimum required hours, they found the time spent together after class in their downtime, forged stronger relationships and support systems. Each retreat varied, addressing the needs of the women in their local area and considering the funding that was available.



FOCUS ON FACILITATOR TRAINING

This year facilitator training events were held in Illinois, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming. APEFW certified trainers conducted the 8-hour trainings at the request of state coordinators in their respective states.

Participant comments:

"The training provided a relaxed atmosphere that allowed participants to understand the background and purpose of APEFW, and then prepare them to offer the APEFW program in their counties. Hands-on activities, exploration of the Annie's Project website, and questions/answers inspired attendees to go home and offer the program." – Joel Lemer, ND 2016

"We haven't even started offering the program and we are already receiving calls from women who want to participate. What a great beginning to building new relationships." – Jennifer Anderson, MT 2016

The Nebraska "Managing for Today and Tomorrow" training gave me the tools and resources to host an MTT class. More importantly, it taught me new ways to connect with farm and ranch women on a deeper level. – Jessica Groskopf, NE 2016

IMPACT ON FEMALE FARMERS AND RANCHERS

There are many stories illustrating the passion of our founder, Ruth Hambleton, but nothing sums it up like the lives that have been changed year after year as a result of this program.

LONG RANGE BENEFITS:

This alumna appreciates the Annie's Project network. *"It's exciting to see awareness of women in agriculture come into the spotlight since the advent of Annie's Project. The network of women begun by Annie's is flourishing."*

Jennine, IA



ALUMNA IMPACT STATEMENT

"One of the biggest things I got out of the class was that I really needed to get operating procedures down for the dairy and also to get them in Spanish, so our Latino workers could understand them. That was probably the biggest accomplishment and dealing with some of the legal issues, just having more knowledge on legal issues that were going to affect our farm.

Employee evaluations are probably the most beneficial to us. I really think that the employees enjoyed doing that. They like to hear that they are doing a good job and they could express what they thought we could do different, so it was a good communication thing... Annie's Project is a great resource and networking opportunity." Gayleen - IA

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:



"My husband told me to go and learn, and that he "wished that everyone would quit assuming that the men always know this stuff."

"Annie's Project was an amazing learning experience."



"I have met so many people and would like to have more meetings in the future."

"I had a life changing weekend with an amazing group of women who want to know more about agriculture in South Carolina."



ANNIE'S PROJECT – EDUCATION FOR FARM WOMEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women is overseen by a diverse board of talented, knowledgeable and influential people. The Board of Directors is our strongest advocate for Annie's Project programs. As the organization has transitioned to a 501(c)(3), the Board of Directors has focused on strategic growth. This emphasis will assure the continuation of quality programming as the various initiatives expand and new programming is developed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ruth Hambleton, President
Kelvin Leibold, Vice President
Dr. Jason L. Johnson, Treasurer
Lynn Heins, Secretary



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OUR GENEROUS FAMILY OF DONORS

SILVER SPONSOR



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ADDITIONAL SPONSORS



Numerous generous individuals

Funding for Annie's Project classes relies heavily on the generous in-kind support of industry and educational institutions. Individual registration fees cover approximately 16% to 25% of the class costs. The remainder of expenses are covered by combinations of grants, sponsorships and in-kind contributions.

Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.