

## Focusing on WIF Values

**Education:** We believe in providing compelling education opportunities to our members, creating a membership of knowledgeable and effective philanthropists who are inspired to strengthen our community.



*By Vida Harvey*

I am an oddity, an outlier here in the Queen City: a native Charlottean! I strayed from home for college and law school, and by the time I found my way back home Charlotte had undergone a sea change. No longer a sleepy town with big city ambitions, I came back to find a Charlotte that was a small but thriving urban center. To find my footing in the new Charlotte, I began looking for ways to get involved and engaged in the community. My colleague, Dianne Bailey, introduced me to the Women's Impact Fund and accurately billed it as a group of smart, engaged and conscientious women, dedicated to making a positive impact on the Charlotte community through collective giving. The pitch would have been enough to get me to join, but WIF's focus on *informed* philanthropy and its demonstrated efforts to educate its members on the critical needs and emerging issues of the Charlotte area set it apart from other organizations.

I joined the Grants Committee in my first year as a member and intentionally signed up for a work team (Arts & Culture) that would provide me the opportunity to learn more about a facet of life in Charlotte that had exploded in my absence. The deep dive that the Grants Committee work teams take into local current events and issues was a perfect way to get a finger on the pulse of the city. Between the Grants Committee's in-depth research process, the Wine and Wisdom events, and the platform that WIF provides to connect with women who are active participants in the community, I was reacquainted with the city of my youth and introduced to Charlotte 2.0, if you will.

WIF's emphasis on education has also allowed me to expand my notion of community beyond our familiar neighborhood boundaries and social circles. It acquainted me with parts of the community I don't typically see and focused my attention on community issues that are not necessarily sexy or attention-grabbing, but are real issues nonetheless.

Education is critical to WIF's mission of impactful giving not only because it allows us to be responsible stewards of our collective contributions, but also because it gives us the tools and vision to be better citizens. The old adage "out of sight, out of mind" is true, and only by making concerted efforts to *see* what is going on in our fair city can we understand the needs of the community and truly be impactful.