



What is the BPW & how can it help you?

by Katie O'Sullivan

BPW stands for the Business and Professional Women's Foundation, originally founded in 1919. Although the organization has transformed over time, the legacy and vision remain intact.

The non-profit, non-partisan organization works to create successful workplaces by focusing on issues that impact women, families and employers.

Successful workplaces embrace and practice diversity, equity and work life balance. Through its groundbreaking research and unique role as a neutral convener of employers and employees, BPW Foundation strives to redefine today's workplace.

Today's BPW Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) research and education organization. The work of BPW Foundation supports workforce development programs and workplace policies that recognize the diverse needs of working women, communities and businesses. Nationally, BPW comprises a network of 80,000 members who belong to 2,800 local chapters in 53 state federations.

Locally, there are two chapters of BPW on Cape Cod, whose members are dedicated, involved working women helping other women.

The Mid-Cape chapter of BPW <<http://www.bpwmidcapecod.org>>meets on the third Thursday of each month at local restaurants. The mission stated on their website is to "ensure pay equity, equal educational and economic opportunities at all stages of life, support pension and social security reform; and promote affordable quality dependent care to help ensure economic self-sufficiency for women."

The Lower-Cape chapter of BPW <<http://www.bpwlowercapecod.org>>meets on the second Tuesday of each month at local restaurants. Members of the Lower-Cape chapter reside and/or work in Brewster, Harwich, Orleans, Chatham, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro and Provincetown.

Through monthly dinner meetings and other activities the local chapters provide programs which address women's and family issues. They also offer contacts and networking opportunities, training in public speaking, educational assistance and scholarships, recognition of outstanding working women and advocacy at state and national levels. Ellie Fisher, an elementary school teacher in Orleans for 30 years, is a long-time member of BPW and past president (1965-1967). She received a special citation from the Massachusetts State House for her 91st birthday.



Ellie Fisher with State Massachusetts Representative Sarah K. Peake

How did this organization first take root? Would you believe the U.S. government planted those first seeds while mobilizing for World War I? A Women's War Council, financed through a federal grant, was established by the War Department to organize the resources of professional women.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs was founded on July 15, 1919. The organization later filed to "do business as" (dba) Business and Professional Women/USA (BPW/USA).



Working to achieve equity for all women in the workplace through advocacy, education and information.

Learn more, or get involved with the mid-Cape Cod BPW, <http://www.bpwmidcapecod.org>, the lower Cape Cod BPW <http://www.bpwlowercapecod.org> or visit the national BPW <http://www.bpwfoundation.orgorganization>.

The BPW Foundation was incorporated in 1956, creating a branch to provide research, information, career development programs and scholarships to disadvantaged women, as well as workshops and other training opportunities. After working hand in hand for many years, BPW/USA merged with BPW Foundation in July 2009, combining financial resources and pooling their considerable talent.

Over the last 90 years, three major issues have shaped BPW's legislative agenda: elimination of sex discrimination in employment, the principle of equal pay, and the need for a comprehensive equal rights amendment.

Members of BPW have been involved in campaigning for every major legislative change that relates to these core issues during the last century, and plan to stay involved well into the future.

Images on this page were taken from the BPW Lower-Cape website <http://www.bpwlowercapecod.org>