

*Excerpts from Remarks made by Holly Sloan, past president of the Giving Circle  
Spring Celebration May 9, 2009*

► The Giving Circle pools our collective philanthropic resources – money, time, expertise, and creative leadership to contribute to the success of Alexandria’s Children.

► We invest our contributions -- \$, time, expertise -- in a focused, sustained and proactive way – we don’t wait for someone else to tell us how to spend our philanthropic dollars. We get out in the community: we learn from leaders, partner with service providers and families – parents who are trying to make good things happen for their kids but run into obstacle after obstacle. We set priorities and stick to it until we feel the job is done -- we are seeking to make a lasting positive change in the lives of Alexandria’s most vulnerable families. -- **to sustain change we must sustain our commitment.**

Our focus or *Priority* for the past four years has been to support parents. Children cannot succeed without the involvement and love of a parent or permanent primary caregiver. We have learned so much about what parents’ need, the obstacles they face and the devastating consequences these obstacles can have on the wellbeing of children.

► Why do we do this? because we believe our quality of life in this community is linked with every one who lives here – all our cities families -- share neighborhoods, schools, parks, sidewalks, offices, halls of worship, places of community building and recreation, – we are interdependent.

We invest in the wellbeing of others because it is an investment that comes full circle.

So Invest – invest more - often and as much as you can...be conscious of how philanthropy fits in your life – make it a priority.

Our collective financial investments have contributed over \$332,000 to vital and innovative initiatives -- and this total amount has cumulated as a result of individual donations ranging from \$100 annually – to \$8,000. All investments make a difference all are needed.

***What We Have Accomplished***

Through our shared investment we are helping to build a multilayered support system for parents for Families – resulting in children who are happier, healthier, ready to learn and successful.

- For Families with the most serious of problems and with few resources to overcome those problems we have invested in \$164,000 in Healthy Families Alexandria and as a result more of our community’s most vulnerable first time parents receive supportive, educational and sustained home visits from skilled family support workers.

- Our investment in HF – led us to understand the importance of broad outreach that provides opportunities for isolated parents and children to socialize and learn about parenting and connect with resources – so we have invested 93,000 in Developmental Playgroups....and now building on the work of SCAN, HFA and Hispanic Committee of Virginia – the Center of Alexandria’s Children is poised to take the lead on a citywide expansion of developmental playgroups.
  
- But it is not only our most vulnerable that need support – our continuum must include families that do not qualify for public assistance – who are working – often multiple jobs -- sometimes while going to school, Families who understand the value of a good education, and frequently their resiliency and work ethic make it is easy to overlook the burdens this families bare and their fragile economic circumstances. So we have also made a \$40,000 Investment to support the work of Hopkins House as they provide educational services to these families. Our investment in HH’s parent leadership programs has taught us much about the needs and barriers of providing meaningful support to these amazing families. (story) (putting on a leadership conference for women investing in their own education.....We must continue to work with leaders and service providers to hone and create a supports for this often forgotten group of families.

I hope our investments continue to build a continuum of services that provide comprehensive support for all parents in our community.

Our circle could not have made these investments and made them as strategically as we have without talented volunteers – When you are ready, when you have the time -- Your circle offers you the chance to Engage. It is not necessary or expected that all of us will have the time to volunteer – but we are unusually blessed with a steady stream of women who can and choose to give generously of their time and expertise. And regardless of the time you can give you can share in the pride and share in the contribution of their work – because together we provide a platform for their action – together we provide credibility and access for creative volunteer leadership in our community. When I really think about why investing in the Giving Circle is a good deal – it comes down to the value our volunteers add to our financial contribution – your financial investment is leveraging community leadership.

*(End excerpts)*