



For more info: LINDA GROSS
(941) 907-9507 or linda@advice-inc.com

(BACKGROUNDER)

LATEST GRANTS TO SARASOTA ARTS AND HUMAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS BRING *DESIGNING WOMEN BOUTIQUE* TOTAL TO \$900,000

SARASOTA, FL. Sarasota's *Designing Women Boutique* has announced its grants for 2008. They go to the Asolo Repertory Theatre, the DWB Scholarship Program, the Ringling College of Art and Design Scholarship Program, Sarasota Ballet of Florida and the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. The Boutique also funded, for the sixth year, the Airport Marketing Initiative, a \$60,000 program supporting 42 arts organizations and the Sarasota Arts Council.

The 2008 donations bring the charity's total to almost \$900,000 to more than 50 recipients. Other recent grants include First Step, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Salvation Army, Sarasota Youth Opera, Sarasota-Manatee Holocaust Center, Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation/Malkin Young Ambassadors Scholarships, the Hermitage, the Wellness Community and the YMCA Scholarship Program. The shop is now donating merchandise to the Pines of Sarasota in addition to ongoing recipients such as the Salvation Army, Resurrection House, SPARCC, Suncoast Workforce Development and Goodwill. (A complete list of grant recipients is attached.)

Open since November 1, 2002, *Designing Women Boutique* is a 501 C-3 charitable organization with a mission to meaningfully grow the funding for arts and human services through innovative marketing of unique couture apparel and fine home furnishings, and estate liquidation services. It has set a new standard for fashion consignment with merchandise, presentation and service that are unique in the consignment category.

Major initiatives in 2008 included the establishment of a Couture Salon to display and sell the *crème de la crème* of the shop's fashion merchandise; Victoria Leopold and Jackie Rogers were the leaders of this project. At the outset of 2009, DWB became the sole Sarasota representative for renowned designer Joan McGee, and will offer a selection of her creations. The board and management are tackling a new, long-term strategic plan, working in collaboration with experts from the Gulf Coast Foundation of Venice. They are also, under the leadership of Senator Robert Johnson, expanding and refining the shop's approach to handling estate liquidation and downsizing relocations, working with estate planners where appropriate and custom-tailoring arrangements to the needs of each individual or family.

The shop's furniture marketing activity is an important, recent strategy for making more money to give away. In 2007, *Designing Women* acquired 1000 square feet of additional space and created a home furnishings showroom adjacent to its main selling space in the Roskamp Center for Arts and Humanity. The Boutique now accepts donations or consignments of beautiful items for the home – antique, vintage or new, singly or by the room or house full. Another recent accomplishment was the launch of

the Designing Women Boutique website, www.designingwomenboutique.org in November, 2007. The site was designed by Sarasota's Design Marketing Group.

One of Sarasota's most exciting and most creative charitable endeavors, Designing Women Boutique is the brainchild of Jean Allenby Weidner, Diane Roskamp and Margaret Wise. They conceived it as a way to create an ongoing revenue stream to benefit the community – an alternative to the one day (or night) events that populate the Sarasota social calendar. Jean Weidner served as president from the outset until she was succeeded by Diane Roskamp in March, 2009. All three "founding mothers" are actively involved with the business which is run by Executive Director/Store manager Pamela Day supported by a corps of talented, committed volunteers. The boutique also has an active volunteer group, the *Ambassadors Guild*, Ida Zito, president

Originally located in rented space on Fruitville Road, the boutique acquired its own space in the Roskamp Center on North Tamiami Trail in April of 2005. The new location has twice as much selling space and the shop is winding up its Capital Campaign to pay for it. Owning the property is the shop's growth strategy. According to founder and President Jean Weidner, "It means that we – not a landlord – can direct our future. It makes it possible for us to give more dollars to the community. And that's what we're all about, after all."

Designing Women Boutique's specialty is the widest selection of designer clothes in town at prices that are hard to beat. Designers typically in stock may include Armani, Burberry, Chanel, Escada, Fendi, Ferragamo, Louis Ferraud, Donna Karan, Dana Buchman and that Sarasota favorite, St. John. Another strong suit is new fashion merchandise purchased in New York especially for its customers.

The boutique has very high standards for what it will accept; it takes donations at any time during business hours. Consignments (fashion and furniture) are by appointment.

Designing Women Boutique is known for its events. Its fourth annual Fashion Week, *The Jewels of Sarasota*, took place December 15, 2008 at the Asolo Theatre. It featured a calendar celebrating Sarasota charitable organizations, entertainment by local arts groups and a fashion show featuring Sarasota's liveliest and loveliest. More than 300 attended. Plans for the fifth annual event call for a dinner and fashion show on February 25, 2010. The *Salon Series* is a monthly luncheon with a featured speaker and a mini-fashion show; at only \$14/person, it has become a local favorite. Jewel Ash, Joan Campo-Liga and Carol Phillips co-chair.

In addition to founders Jean Weidner, Diane Roskamp and Margaret Wise, the board of *Designing Women Boutique* includes Jewel Ash, Chris Currie, Linda Gross, Senator Robert Johnson, Marcy Laughner, Victoria Leopold, Shelley Lister, Orion Marx, Gloria Moss, Lee Peterson, Carol Phillips, Mary Ann Robinson, Ed Schaye, Molly Schechter, Valerie Terris, Barbara Wright and Ida Zito.

Designing Women Boutique is located at 1226 N. Tamiami Trail at 13th Street. Phone 941-366-5293; FAX 941-373-9563; email designingwomenboutique@comcast.net. The shop is open Monday through Friday, 10 to 5; Saturday 10 to 4. www.designingwomenboutique.org.

(List of Beneficiaries Follows)

**Designing Women Boutique Beneficiaries 2003 – 2007
GRANTS**

Arts & Endowments

A five year marketing initiative at
Sarasota Bradenton Airport benefiting
The Arts Council and 42 arts
organizations *
Art Center Sarasota-Speakers Bureau
Asolo Repertory Theatre Company
Endowment Grants & Foyer
Refurbishment *
Circus Sarasota-Laughter Unlimited
Community Archives-
History of Theatre Documentary Video
Players Theater-“Neighbors”
World Premier
Ringling College Of Art & Design-Faculty
Exhibition, Scholarship *
Sarasota Ballet of Florida
Sarasota Opera-Youth Chorus
Uniforms *
The Hermitage
Van Wezel-School Time Performances
West Coast Black Theater-Administration
Challenge and Marketing Grants
WSLR-LPFM Community Radio

Human Services

Children’s Haven-Summer Program
Community Aids-Women’s Examinations
DWB Educational Grant
First Step
Forty Carrots Family Center-Early
Childhood Development Equipment
First Step
Girls Inc. & Sarasota Ballet Dance The
Next Generation Program
Habitat For Humanity-
2005 Women’s Build
Jewish Family And Children’s Service
Malkin Young Ambassadors Program
Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation
Pines Of Sarasota Foundation-Arts
Expression/Alzheimer’s Program
Resurrection House-Milk Program
For Homeless
Salvation Army-Faith Program
Sarasota-Manatee Holocaust
Education Center
SPARCC-Transitional Housing Program
The Wellness Community
YMCA Scholarship Program

OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

Ongoing Redonation Program

Goodwill
Pines of Sarasota
Resurrection House
Salvation Army
SPARCC
St. Martha’s Migrant Works Program
Suncoast Workforce Development
Trinity Thrift shop
YMCA Youth Program

**Benefit Style Shows & Community
Events (2003 – Feb. 2009)**

Art Center Sarasota Style Shows*
Asolo Angels luncheons*
Fifth Third Bank
Beth Israel Women
* = Multiple grants or events

Benefit Style Shows, etc. Cont.

Bird Key Yacht Club
Guardian Ad Litem
Manatee Community College/
Dress for Success Program
Northern Trust Bank “Investing with
Style” *
ORT America Sara-Mana Chapter*
PEO (Philanthropic Educational Org.)*
Pet Therapy
Planned Parenthood
Sarasota Bay Club *
Sarasota Yacht Club
Sarasota Winefest
Selby Gardens
University Park Country Club