



## From Our Director

**Kate Fentress**  
*Executive Director*

### Council's Generosity Inspiring

I continue to be amazed and impressed with the accomplishments of an all-volunteer "staff," otherwise known as the Advisory Council. Because of their successful efforts, along with your generous support, we have increased capacity to fund projects and underwrite worthwhile programs for women and girls. We can now make a difference in a much more significant way, in our two areas of major interest – **educational attainment** and **career-track workforce training**. Both are necessary if women in Bristol County are to succeed and thrive.

Our Action Fund (formerly called the Program Fund) has just awarded **\$10,000** to the Keith Middle School After School Program to assist Paula Benedetti in providing programming and materials, as well as to help articulate and evaluate her work so that it may be considered for replication in the other New Bedford middle schools. We have also awarded **\$9,000** to Star Kids, for scholarship and mentoring for girls from at-risk families. In addition we continue to provide **\$5,000** in scholarship money for urban youth to attend the annual **Bioneers Conference**. There are other projects in the works, but I will save them for another time.

If you haven't already, you soon will be hearing about another wonderful resource being launched in New Bedford. Our Sisters School, a New Bedford middle school for girls, is slated to open in September 2008. This school will signifi-

cantly contribute to raising expectations for all young women in New Bedford, not just the ones who will be students there. Initially our Action Fund will fund a scholarship for this program, and we are delighted that if all goes well, New Bedford will soon have **free, single-gender school for inner city girls**.

With greater ability to fund projects comes increased responsibility to run a tighter ship, to articulate clearly our rules and procedures, our Advisory Council and committee structures, functions, terms, and succession. As a funder, it is critical that our grant-making supports our mission and our core values. It must also fulfill our vision of a future for our community that ensures that women and girls are well-educated and prepared to be independent and self-sufficient. This fall, we will undertake our first long-term strategic planning process. We will look down the road and establish goals and indicators to enable us to let all of you know **where we plan to be in three to five years**, as well as how we plan to get there. We will speak with some of you as part of this process – it is *only together* that we can succeed in strengthening women's voices and being a catalyst for positive change in our region. Stay tuned!

Finally, don't miss the article in this issue about the September "Women as Change Agents" conference – It had all of the elements we stand for – inspiration, vision, transformation! **Powerful stuff!**