

Women's Foundation 2010 Road to Equality to present findings Thursday in Grand Rapids

The public is invited to share thoughts on equality for Minnesota's women and girls during a free presentation Thursday, June 24, 9 to 10 a.m. at the Blandin Foundation in Grand Rapids.

This presentation will offer findings from a research study on the status of women and girls in Minnesota, an ongoing collaborative project of the Women's Foundation and the University of Minnesota's Center on Women and Public Policy.

During June, the Women's Foundation will convene community presentations in eight cities on its 2010 Road to Equality Tour: Warroad, Moorhead, Grand Rapids, Duluth, Rochester, Willmar, St. Cloud, and kick-off event in the Twin Cities.

The presentations are an opportunity for the foundation to hear from community members their thoughts on how well the new data represents the status of local women and girls.

The main goal the founda-

tion is to help women with issues from economics, safety and security, health and reproductive rights and power and leadership. The organization was launched in 2009. The project represents a unique approach to research by using a gender-race-geography-equity lens. Over 100 experts participate in working groups and review data on women and girls in Minnesota to identify the key issues outlined in the research, and offer solutions.

Here are some highlights from the study:

Economics:

While women in Minnesota now earn the majority of post-secondary degrees at all levels, the data shows that education often increases the wage gap. Minnesota women with professional and master's degrees face even larger pay gaps than women with less education, resulting in an estimated lifetime loss of \$2 million dollars in wages.

Safety and security:

By the time Minnesota girls graduate from high

school, about 12 percent report a date-related sexual assault. By the time they finish college, 29 percent of Minnesota females have been sexually assaulted. And by mid-life, 33 percent of Minnesota females have experienced a rape-crime, which is approximately one in three women.

Health and reproductive rights:

Breast cancer and cervical cancer incidence and lung cancer mortality are significantly higher for women in the northeastern region than the statewide average.

Power and leadership:

Women leaders in business are conspicuously absent. The data shows that none of Minnesota's Fortune 500 companies are led by women: 66 percent are human resources executive officers and 16 percent are chief financial officers.

For more results of the study or more information about the Women's Foundation, visit www.wfmn.com.

