

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002

### **A Forum on Welfare's end: Where are Women on Assistance Going?**

New York, NY Feb. 18 – Term limits have recently ended welfare assistance for many women, so what are they doing now? Trained and in jobs with a future? In their own homes, with food, good childcare and other support? Have they been helped by welfare's reform, or are they just one less number on the poverty rolls?

Women effected by welfare's changes and women providing help will be answering these questions at the New York Women's Foundation's third annual public forum on Wednesday, February 27, 2002, from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm at the Tishman Auditorium of the New School University. Panelists discussing this major shift in the nation's poverty assistance philosophy will attempt to describe what works and what doesn't in the aftermath of welfare's reform.

"Few people have asked me how I'm doing since my assistance ended, my college education stopped and my job is cleaning up a park for minimum wage," said forum panelist Leslie Monroy, a former welfare recipient and present member of Brooklyn's "Make the Road by Walking," one of the many community support groups awarded grants and technical help by the New York Women's Foundation (NYWF).

"There are many more women – and their children – like me whose life didn't get better, easier or more self-sufficient when the term limits ended our assistance last year. I might be off the welfare rolls, but I didn't leave poverty," she added.

Joining Monroy on the panel will be Shami-e-Ali al-Jamil, a counselor at the Urban Justice Center, and xxxx xxxx, a member of the local support group the Welfare Rights Initiative. James Parrott, Deputy Director and Chief Economist for the Fiscal Policy Institute will add his voice and expertise to the discussion, aimed at furthering this city's education and debate regarding the upcoming Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization Act, the five-year term limits ending for many welfare recipients, and the impact of these changes for women struggling to overcome poverty and get permanent jobs and career opportunities.

Noted welfare expert Frances Fox-Piven – award-winning author and Political Science and Sociology Professor at CUNY Graduate School and University Center

– will kick off the forum’s discussion as keynote speaker. Moderators for this event, from the Urban Justice Center and the Daphne Foundation, will lead the talk with pointed questions and help field questions from the audience. A reception will follow.

“As an organization helping the city’s low-income women and girls, we see what it’s like in the ‘trenches’ of poverty and the impact of welfare’s changes,” said Miriam Buhl, NYWF’s executive director. “Before TANF legislation is enacted; before more women lose their assistance and self-confidence; before another poverty stereotype is created, NYWF believes it’s imperative for the public to see what we see. We are proud to help get as many people as possible – from policy makers, welfare administrators and reporters, to government officials and New York’s citizens – educated and involved in this debate.”

Providing a voice and a force for change for the city’s low-income women and girls for the last 15 years, NYWF continues to be the only non-profit providing grants and support to women-run community groups helping these women in all five boroughs.

As co-sponsors of this timely event, the Center for New York City Affairs and the Nonprofit Management Program at the Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy, New School University, “are pleased to also be hosts as part of our ongoing series of dialogues about the impact of changing welfare policies,” said Andrew White, Director of the Center for New York City Affairs at the Milano Graduate School.

“With more than half a million New Yorkers leaving the welfare rolls last year; with a new mayor, many new City Council members; a new relationship being forged with Albany and Washington and new welfare legislation just around the corner, we need to learn the grassroots impact of these government decisions towards welfare. As future policy makers and program directors, our students, along with the rest of this city, need to take advantage of the tremendous educational opportunity this forum offers,” White added.

The New York Women’s Foundation identifies, provides grants and gives continuing technical support to the city’s start-up, neighborhood non-profits run by women and aimed at providing self-esteem and self-sufficiency to low-income women and girls. Strictly through donation since its inception in 1987, NYWF has raised and distributed from \$50,000 the first year to over \$1 million this year. In total, the

Foundation has awarded \$6 million to over 150 neighborhood groups, and continues to provide support to many of these non-profits today.

WHAT: New York Women's Foundation Third Annual Forum "Women on Welfare ... Where Are They Going?"

WHEN: Wednesday, February 27, 2002/6:30 – 8:30 pm/Reception to follow

WHERE: Tishman Auditorium at New School University 66 West 12th St./between 5-6th Avenues

THE FORUM IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For information and reservations, contact: Miriam Buhl at (212) 226-2220 x13