

The Saturday Club Story – Women with a Purpose

Wayne, PA - The women of **The Saturday Club's** have been providing leadership and effecting change in the greater Philadelphia region for 122 years. *The Saturday Club* broke with convention by even forming a women's club. The motto of "Dare to be Wise" gives a clue to what ladies of the late 1800s faced when attempting to widen their horizons. From the end of the 19th century through today, the beginning of the 21st century, Saturday Club members have tirelessly raised funds and worked countless volunteer hours to improve the lives of thousands of local women and children. As Pennsylvania's oldest women's club, and possibly the country's, **The Saturday Club** has long been a standard bearer for social change and innovative charities, with a special focus on initiatives helping sick and underprivileged children and women in need.

When it comes to taking action **The Saturday Club** has been a standout leader in the community providing solutions in the areas of women's issue, children's advocacy, education and health. Early examples of Saturday Club members identifying local problems and presenting concrete solutions include: sponsoring a 1907 resolution for child labor regulations in Pennsylvania, creating the first local kindergarten in 1915, campaigning for separate facilities for women in the county jails in 1916, and transforming the Clubhouse into an emergency hospital during the influenza epidemic of 1918.

The Saturday Club has always had a particular interest in the care and treatment of sick children. Today we deal with avian flu fears, but the 1918 influenza epidemic was a true health crisis. During the epidemic, area hospitals were filled to overflowing and were short staffed due to World War I. When hospitals could accept no more patients, The Saturday Club converted their Clubhouse into a 60+ bed Red Cross Emergency Hospital with a separate children's ward. Saturday Club members themselves worked as nurses and cooks caring for the patients.

Fast forwarding through our history to the present, last year we provided assistance to eleven local groups with our primary beneficiary being Dragonfly Forest, Inc. Dragonfly Forest offers children with such diverse illnesses as autism, hemophilia and sickle cell anemia the opportunity to enjoy a free overnight camp experience in an environment designed to meet their physical and medical needs. Other recent beneficiaries of the Club's efforts include the Children's Crisis Treatment Center, the Center for Autism, Children's Village, Mommy's Light Lives On, Kid's Smiles, Inc., Fresh Air Fund, Laurel House, Family Support Services and White-Williams Foundation. Our financial philanthropy is possible due to the success of our primary fundraiser, The American Girl Fashion Show, which takes place this year on March 7, 8 & 9, 2008.

The women of **The Saturday Club** believe the "American Girl" series is a poetic fit to our work. The lessons of independence and charity the characters in the American Girl series learn create a foundation for taking action in their own times and their own communities. We invite you to learn more about us by attending our annual American Girl Fashion Show or a Saturday Club monthly meeting.

For questions please contact the V.P. of Communications – Marla Neeson of Wayne, PA at 610-688-6291 or mpneeson@comcast.net.