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## Nonprofit invites peers to town

Austin Business Journal - 10:15 AM CDT Tuesday

**Impact Austin** -- a local nonprofit that pools women's money and grants it to other charitable groups -- is hosting the first ever "Impact Conference," a meeting of similar groups around the country.

The group is holding the conference on Sept. 22-23 at St. David's Episcopal Church downtown. Attendees will represent groups from Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Florida and Oklahoma who will share their best practices.

Guest speakers include Wendy Steele, who founded Impact 100 in Cincinnati in 2001. Impact Austin founder Rebecca Powers modeled the local group after Steele's, becoming the first in the country to mimic the giving organization. Since then, five other Impact organizations have started, though the groups have no legal connections.

The conference will also feature Colleen Willoughby, co-founder and president of the Washington Women's Foundation, a collective giving group founded more than 10 years ago. That foundation has granted more than \$6 million since its inception.

"The power to write a check is the power to change the world," Powers says "There is more than just a trend going on in the country regarding women's giving circles. It's more like a joyful epidemic. Women are now discovering the impact and power that collective giving can make in a community."

This year marked Impact Austin's third round of funding. Women join the group by giving \$1,000, which is then pooled for grant money. In June, it announced three local nonprofits as this year's grant recipients: the **Children's Wellness Center**, **EmanciPet Inc.** and **Literacy Austin**. Each group got \$108,000.

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