

# LOCAL NONPROFITS BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL CHANGE COURSE

Philanthropist Doris Buffett of Sunshine Lady Foundation talks to members of the Philanthropy and Social Change course during a gift-giving ceremony on April 26. Buffett's \$10,000 gift made it possible for the class to dole out \$15,000 in grants to local nonprofits.

**April 27, 2011** –Students enrolled in Georgetown's Philanthropy & Social Change course handed out \$15,000 to local nonprofits April 26.

The course had the students examine the history, context and future of philanthropy, write grants on behalf of charitable organizations and then decide which ones to fund.

## LIFE-CHANGING

"This course has been life-changing and has made me realize my passion for social issues and how our negligence of a large portion of our population has created such an unbalanced world," Michael Giansanti (B'12) said.

Kathy Kretman, Director of Georgetown's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership, and Luisa Boyarski, the Center's Assistant Director, are teaching the sociology course this spring for the second year in a row.

"This class is one of the best teaching experiences of my career," Kretman said. "To be able to give students the opportunity to explore their own values, test their assumptions, make difficult decisions – all in the real-world setting of our D.C. community – it doesn't get any better than that for me."

## HUMBLING EXPERIENCE

Sophomore, juniors and seniors from the College, the School of Foreign Service, the McDonough School of Business and the School of Nursing & Health Studies participated in the course.

Dividing up into two "foundations" that reviewed grants written by their peers, the students also made several site visits to local nonprofit organizations to evaluate the best way to use the funds.

"The experience was so humbling because as I was sitting there reading [grants], I was asking myself, 'who am I to dismiss these organizations as inferior to one another?'" Giansanti said.

The funds were made possible by a \$10,000 gift from the Sunshine Lady Foundation (developed by Warren Buffett's sister, Doris) and \$5,000 from the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation.

## FOUR RECIPIENTS

The students ended up dividing the \$15,000 among four local nonprofits:

- Latino Economic Development Corporation, which provides the skills, knowledge and access to capital for Latino entrepreneurs to build a better future for their families – \$5,015.
- Community of Hope, which provides healthcare, housing, educational opportunities and spiritual support to low-income families – \$2,485.
- For Love of Children, which provides one-on-one tutoring and after-school workshops to students in the Shaw/Columbia Heights neighborhood – \$3,750.
- Life Pieces to Masterpieces, which combines art instruction with human development for young men living in Washington's public housing projects – \$3,750.



## SOCIAL CHANGE AGENTS

“To say that this class changed my perspective about the impact and the process of philanthropic giving utterly understates the enlightening experience I gained this semester,” Caitlin Simard (C’11) said in her essay. “I came into this classroom knowing I wanted to learn more about how to make a difference, and I feel like I will be leaving with the skills and tools to strategically analyze nonprofit organization and what it means to be a cross-sectoral leader.”

Kretman said the course gives students a chance to learn firsthand about making a difference.

“What better way to educate our students about philanthropy’s impact on society, and their own efficacy as social change agents, than by this real-time learning by giving experience?” she said.