FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Looking back on 2017, so many occasions served as vivid reminders of the challenges that farm and ranch women face and the strength of our wide network that empowers them to face the challenges successfully.

In spite of difficult economic times, or perhaps because of these times, we saw a rise in programming. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, costs were kept down, dipping below recent years’ costs per participant. In this report you will read about the trainings that prepared facilitators and trainers to deliver programs. The excitement with which the trainings were received are an indicator of the dedication of our volunteers to provide tools for change to the women they serve.

New courses that were developed and offered as a result of Annie’s Project increased and were found to fill topic-specific needs beyond the basic course. Kudos to those who developed and offered such programs. We look forward to more being added.

In September, the Board developed a strategic plan that will guide our growth and development through 2020. The dual goals of our vision – well-being for rural women, and our mission – to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information, guided the plan. Our focus areas are designed to ensure continued quality, expansion and program support. The quality of programming is supported through initial trainings, quarterly follow-ups as well as a quarterly newsletter. The first step in expansion is always training and that remains dependent upon funding.

We are thankful for the numerous long-standing relationships we have with individuals and organizations such as Nationwide and Compeer (formerly 1st Farm Credit Services) interested in supporting our mission. Whether through their financial support or in-kind services, farm and ranch women benefit. We look forward to working with our most recent supporter, Simply 7. Thank you all for your ongoing support and interest in Annie’s Project – Education for Farm Women – we couldn’t do any of this without you.

Seated next to Britney Hervey Farris at a FarmHer event in Des Moines, Iowa, it was a thrill to see first-hand the impact Annie’s Project can have. You can read about her experience at the link provided in this report. We hope that reading it will encourage you as much as it does us. May it inspire others to catch our vision and be part of it!

WHO IS ANNIE?

Annie Kohlhagen Fleck grew up in Northern Illinois. Her goal was to marry a farmer and she did. She spent her lifetime learning how to be an involved business partner with her husband. Together they did great things, but it wasn’t easy. In honor of her memory, Annie’s Project is taking her experiences and current information and sharing them with today’s farm women. To read more about Annie’s Story, visit www.anniesproject.org/annies-story/
WHAT IS APEFW?

APEFW is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) organization established for the purpose of providing educational and other opportunities to woman farmers and ranchers to enable farm women to become effective owners and partners in farm businesses. Programs offered through APEFW are called Annie's Projects.

The classes APEFW has developed, address the variety of issues confronted by female farmers and ranchers. The basic Annie’s Project course addresses topics from the five areas of risk as identified by USDA. The Managing for Today and Tomorrow course addresses the areas of retirement, succession, transition and estate planning. Delaware and Maryland Farm Service Agency has contracted with APEFW to provide Borrower Education.

Several years ago a need to offer a changed format was identified. Two states piloted an Annie’s Project Retreat. Unlike the traditional program which meets six times over the course of six weeks, this format addresses the needs of women who are either too far away to travel to the course that many times, or those who cannot free themselves from their responsibilities that many times. Since that time, four additional states have offered the program in this format, with two developing one for 2018.

Over the years, additional excellent programs have grown out of the basic program. Based on specific local needs and interests, new programs were inspired by Annie’s Project and follow its methodology. These programs were so successful that they grew into their own identity and brand. Congratulations to all those who developed these new Annie’s Inspired courses.

All the courses are typically localized and conducted in small groups. Women are provided a safe harbor to learn in a stress free, open environment. They are encouraged to contribute their life experiences to facilitate learning from each other. Course facilitators who organize and guide the event provide professional guest speakers and the leadership needed for the educational process to blossom.

APEFW courses have been offered for fifteen years with a significant impact across the country. Pre- and post-evaluations performed across our training network indicate that beyond learning, these experiences lead to changed behavior and greater confidence.
Dear Friends,

Having been raised on a family farm in Minnesota and recently completing a 41-year career with the Cooperative Extension Service, I continue to have a lifelong passion for the profession of agriculture and feel a close connection to people involved; especially those involved in farm/ranch businesses. During most of my career, however, participants in educational programs for farmers and ranchers were attended primarily by males. For the betterment of the future of agriculture, this trend has changed significantly in recent years as more women have become involved in the managerial side of agriculture.

Having been involved in Annie’s Project since 2006 in the capacities of a facilitator, state coordinator, board member and facilitator trainer, I believe that this program is one of the most successful educational experiences available to women to help them develop a more successful future for them and their families. It is also one of the most rewarding experiences that most educators participate in during their careers. This, I believe, is because of the unique and proven methodology of the design and delivery of this program. The core values of: Safe Harbor, Connection, Discovery and Guided Intelligence as being the “pillars” of this program.

As a facilitator and state coordinator I have had the opportunity to be part of a state program that has impacted over 1,000 women since its introduction to our state. In that capacity, I have personally seen the impact and lifelong changes it has made for many of its participants. I have also seen the enthusiasm, excitement and sense of accomplishment that most of the facilitators achieve from being a part of this program as they witness the positive impact this program has had on their participants.

As a board member, it has been very enlightening and rewarding to be part of the team that is dedicated to continue improving and expanding this program to reach more women throughout the country. There are many challenges to accomplish this. These include: funding, training, policy establishment and developing partnerships to help the program grow. I am confident that the board members have the wisdom, passion and commitment to accomplish this.

As a certified trainer, I have had the opportunity to help conduct training programs in seven states during the past two years. In addition to being a very enjoyable experience, that has helped me better understand some of the logistical challenges faced by different states as they work to develop and deliver a successful Annie’s Project for their respective states. It also strengthens my belief that the foundation for any successful Annie’s Project is dependent on two very important factors.

First, a successful training program that clearly prepares the facilitators with the history and understanding of Annie’s Project and the methodology to design and deliver an educational program based upon the four “pillars” of the Project. Further, that the program inspires participants to utilize this program as a “spring board” to higher levels of achievement in their businesses and community.

Next, the leadership of Annie’s Project at the national level (APEFW) that continues to provide training, policies and protocols that are effective and consistent throughout the country in helping states develop and deliver high-quality Annie’s Project programs.

Sincerely,

Willie Huot,
APEFW Board Member
OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information.

OUR VISION

Well-being for rural women.

PURPOSE – WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Dr. Jason Johnson, an Executive Board member explained it best when he wrote: “Annie’s Project doesn’t create farmers and ranchers, we make better agribusiness managers and partners, so family legacies can be created, maintained and transferred to future generations.”

The feedback we receive from participants during and after the program, as well as third-part evaluations, testify to our success.
CAPACITY – HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO

METHOD

- Curriculum was developed from research-based information
- Trained facilitators and local practitioners deliver the program
- The environment facilitates learning and fosters mentoring

LEADERSHIP

- National, state and local program facilitators are trained to identify and recruit learned and capable local professionals to deliver curriculum materials.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- The Board that supports and governs Annie’s Project – Education for Farm Women is made up of people with experience, innovation, and passion for this work. Their leadership supports the mission of the organization and the work done by state coordinators and facilitators around the country.

STATE COORDINATORS

- State coordinators serve as liaisons between APEFW and local Annie’s Project program providers. Additionally, they provide leadership to facilitators in their states.

TRAINING

- Facilitator training programs are offered to assure adequate opportunities for states to have those interested in offering APEFW programs trained.

VOLUNTEERS

- Subject-matter experts donate the time they spend presenting to and working with the participants.
- Our volunteers have donated more than 6,600 hours in 2017.

PARTNERING

- National, state and local businesses and organizations often partner in providing resources for women to attend the courses. Their sponsorship is based on APEFW’s national reputation for consistently delivering outstanding programs for farm and ranch women.
- National, state and private grants are sought and utilized to underwrite and/or augment program funding.
FOCUS ON 2017 AND LOOKING FORWARD

This was a year to focus on training both facilitator trainers and new facilitators, developing a new category of trainings to support local needs and interests, and developing a new program. This was also a year of being focused on by a variety of magazines.

TRAINING TRainers

Looking forward, a priority identified by the Board of Directors was to build the organization’s capacity to train those interested in becoming Annie’s Project facilitators. At the time, the training staff consisted of only five individuals.

As a result, a strategically-located and well-qualified group of facilitators, who also serve as state coordinators, was selected and invited to be trained. The training was hosted by Nationwide Financial in Columbus, Ohio.

There they completed an eight-hour intensive facilitator trainer training. To complete their certification, each individual then co-teaches at a facilitator training class with a master trainer.

Three master trainers conducted the training and five Board members also participated. The training and co-teaching components were designed to maintain the consistency and the integrity of the program. The expanded training capabilities of the organization have already resulted in numerous additional facilitator trainings.
FOCUS ON 2017 AND LOOKING FORWARD

WEBSITE
A flexible tool to provide constantly updated information, the website continues to add support to serve both the public as well as trainers and facilitators.

The public uses it to find courses they seek and have used the “contact us” feature to inquire about the program and express their interest in specific locations. Over two hundred requests were received through this feature in 2017.

A public resources section has been added that provides informational materials and tools to aid in business, estate, retirement and succession planning.

A trainer resource page was added this year to support the work of certified facilitator trainers as they offer facilitator trainings around the country.

FOCUS ON ANNIE’S PROJECT
This year numerous magazines focused on telling the story of Annie’s Project, its graduates and the impact that the course had on them. The impact was amazing. Inquiries poured in and Facebook pages began buzzing. A link to one such article is included here: https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/news/livestock/article/2017/10/30/heart-farmer

ANNIE’S INSPIRED
Over the years, additional excellent programs have grown out of the basic program. We’ve begun the task of documenting programs based on specific local needs and interests that were inspired by Annie’s Project. They meet the needs of farm and ranch women and are offered by trained APEFW facilitators. The Board identified this new category of programs as “Annie’s Inspired.”

A separate yet compatible logo was developed for APEFW by Meyocks Group advertising agency to express the nature of the Annie’s Inspired brand.

NEW CURRICULUM IN 2018
Women are more likely to broach the discussion about low revenue and slim profitability times. They are more likely to reach out to lenders and accountants to communicate their financial situation and design a plan for moving forward. The newly-developed Know Your Numbers Know Your Options program helps assure that women have the skills and information needed to design that plan.

Nebraska state coordinator Jessica Groskopf explains: “Keeping the financial books for a farm or ranch is a little like driving a pickup. As long as the going is smooth, one hand on the wheel might be enough. But both hands are needed when the going gets tough. The first hand on the wheel is good financial record keeping. The second is being able to analyze and use this information for effective decision making.”
FOCUS ON OUR VOLUNTEERS

This year, with a 25% increase in programs held, additional volunteers stepped up and donated 6,650 hours. These volunteers – APEFW certified facilitators – are the strength of the organization.

Volunteers for Annie’s Project spend many thoughtful hours in preparation to provide participants with the high-quality experience that has come to be associated with an Annie’s Project course. They are key to the success of the program. Additionally, their work in providing local information makes this program pertinent to women in the many varying agricultural areas served. They train, plan and promote programs, seek and vet guest speakers and satisfy record-keeping and reporting requirements.

Another group of certified facilitators have taken on the additional task of being their state’s coordinator. They also provide programming, but additionally they serve as the program manager and main point of contact for their state or region.

As state coordinator, their primary role is to facilitate Annie’s Project programs in their state and coordinate communication between APEFW headquarters and their local facilitators. Often they also spend many hours writing grant proposals to fund state and local efforts.

Typically, it is the state coordinators who work with their team to evaluate the specific needs in their state and how those needs can be met. In some cases it may be the timing of the program or an additional focus area that requires developing an additional course that is topic specific. These topic-specific courses are known as “Annie’s Inspired.”

Another group of volunteers is the guest speakers. They are professionals in their field. The time they donate is invaluable. Their local expertise being shared in the Annie’s Project method of both sharing information as well as answering questions and encouraging discussion makes them an important part of each program.
FOCUS ON FACILITATOR TRAINING

Eight facilitator training events were held in seven states this year resulting in 94 trained facilitators. As these newly-trained facilitators work to develop their training network and offer programs, farm and ranch women are already anticipating the courses that will be offered as a result.

Participant comments:

“The goals of Annie’s Project make it a worthwhile program to be involved in without having to say a word about it, but the enthusiasm that they [trainers] had about Annie’s Project and what it can do and the impact it can make... Wow! I don’t think anyone left training without understanding how unique and rewarding Annie’s Project can be.” Jessica, AL

“The APEFW was a great use of my time and the college resources. I found it to be well organized and taught efficiently. I learned specifics in being a better facilitator. Whether it is Annie’s Project, or another program, I now have the tools to facilitate well. Northeastern Junior College’s Annie’s Project Level I class started last week. It went very smoothly because of the training received. Other Ag organizations could learn from this model. Great job and thanks!” Kelly, CO
IMPACT ON FEMALE FARMERS AND RANCHERS

There are many stories illustrating the passion of our founder, Ruth Hambleton, but nothing sums it up like the lives that have been changed year after year as a result of this program.

“The information in the Annie’s classes is very powerful and allows me to make a large “TO DO” list! There is a sense of direction and a voracious need to learn more.

I have told my daughter about Annie’s Project and am encouraging her to plan to attend.”

ALUMNA IMPACT STATEMENTS

“It was Annie’s Project that gave me the confidence to know what I could bring to the farm. It helped me see my skill set and have the network and resources in place to solve problems. Because of that program, I knew how I could truly contribute.” Amy Lehenbauer, MO

“We were working way too hard, and we were going about things the wrong way. We were learning as we went, and we weren’t always making the best decisions. Annie’s Project was the turning point for our business.” Britney Hervey Farris, WV


“This was a life changing experience.”

“Totally exceeded expectations.”

“Best thing I have ever attended.”

“…wanting to give you a BIG HUG for telling me about Annie’s Project”

Participant, Texas
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The average cost of a course per participant in 2017 was $329. Cost increases continue to be off-set by subject-matter experts donating their time to assist in the delivery of the classes.

State and local coordinators determine registration fees. They typically range from $50 to $125 depending on the location. Program costs in excess of registration fees are paid through various sources such as grants, class sponsorships, and generous contributions from national, state and local businesses and organizations.

APEFW makes every effort to maximize the impact of funding and in-kind services received from those who share in our mission.

In 2017 a total of 79 programs were delivered across the country. Of those, 51 were Annie’s Project, five were Managing for Today and Tomorrow, 13 were Annie’s Inspired and 10 were training courses. Together they served 1043 farm and ranch women.

Past annual reports and other financial disclosures are available on the website at http://www.anniesproject.org/about-us/public-disclosure/
ANNIE’S PROJECT – EDUCATION FOR FARM WOMEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women is overseen by a diverse board of talented, knowledgeable and influential people. The Board of Directors is our strongest advocate for Annie’s Project programs. As the organization has transitioned to a 501(c)(3), the Board of Directors has focused on strategic growth. This emphasis will assure the continuation of quality programming as the various initiatives expand and new programming is developed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ruth Hambleton, President
Kelvin Leibold, Vice President
Jason L. Johnson, Treasurer
Lynn Heins, Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Karisha Devlin
Toni Dunker
Willie Huot
Angie Kazakevicius
Doris Mold
Wesley Tucker

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
Claudette Roper
Numerous generous individuals

Funding for Annie’s Project classes relies heavily on the generous in-kind support of industry and educational institutions. Individual registration fees cover approximately 16% to 25% of the class costs. The remainder of expenses are covered by combinations of grants, sponsorships and in-kind contributions.

Annie’s Project – Education for Farm Women is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.