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Dining for Women: changing the world one woman, one girl, one dinner at a time

By Sora O'Doherty



Members of the Lamorinda chapter of Dining for Women enjoy an Indian pot luck meal while donating for an Asian Initiatives project to benefit women and children in Northern India. Photo Sora O'Doherty

around the world. Participants can choose a typical regional recipe suggested by the organization or bring one of their own choosing. The projects are selected by the national organization, and diners watch a video about the project at the dinner.

The selected projects are designed to educate girls, teach women a skill, help develop markets for their products, and fight the prevalent gender inequality in the world. According to its website, Dining for Women aims to give a hand up, not a hand out. The grant selection committee vets scores of organizations every six months, ultimately choosing 12 a year as recipients of grants of up to \$50,000.

The local chapter meets the second Wednesday each month, although in February this year they will meet on the third Wednesday. At the January meeting, participants said that they enjoyed the fabulous program, calling it so much fun, and citing the powerful relationship of women to food.

Over dinner, the women discussed some favorite past projects, such as one that manufactured eco-friendly sanitary pads out of banana leaves to combat the problems of girls in Africa who cannot afford commercial pads and consequently may miss school on days that they have their periods. Another popular project taught women to build stoves. The women agreed that they liked the fact that the organization is very transparent, has few paid employees and keeps administrative costs low, and noted that the subtext is, how do you create change from within?

More information about Dining for Women is available <https://diningforwomen.org/>.

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