The Sheltering Arms Foundation Names New Trustees and Board President

New trustees join from Bloomington, Minneapolis, Oakdale; Ann Nerland of St. Paul elected president

MINNEAPOLIS, September 10, 2015 — The Sheltering Arms Foundation is pleased to announce that four women leaders have joined its board of trustees. The 2015-2016 class of trustees includes Julianne Brauninger of Minneapolis, MerLynne Rickgarn Byrne of Bloomington, Shelly Gill Murray of Minneapolis and May Ko Thao Yang of Oakdale. The foundation’s newly elected board president for fiscal year 2015-2016 is Ann Nerland of St. Paul, a member of St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church who teaches Sunday school and volunteers in her Summit Hill neighborhood where she previously served on the environment committee and was a co-chair of the Summit Hill House Tour.

The new additions bring the Sheltering Arms’ board roster to 22 trustees. Trustees, who serve up to two three-year terms, are women members of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota who volunteer their time and expertise to guide the foundation. Board members are selected for their diverse skills, backgrounds and experiences, and represent congregations throughout Minnesota. They are responsible for being the fiduciary and strategic leaders of the organization.

“Our predecessors on the Sheltering Arms board were in the vanguard of children’s issues in their day. Today, not only is it important for Sheltering Arms to remain in the forefront of what’s happening for children, it is also critical we stay current in how we communicate with our constituents, donors, and partners,” said new board president Ann Nerland, who has a degree in journalism from Drake University and has served on Sheltering Arms’ grants committee since 2010. “We are in a very dynamic environment – and society’s modes of communication are shifting also. Our board this year will delve into social media and dig into how we can leverage its abilities to share information and connect with our constituents in an up-to-the-minute manner. With the advocacy work Sheltering Arms does and the work our grantees do, social media can be a valuable tool as we all work to effect change benefitting Minnesota’s children.”

Julianne Brauninger, resident of Minneapolis and member of St. James on the Parkway Episcopal Church, is a lay Eucharist minister for her church and serves on the Altar Guild. She also volunteers at her children’s school, in particular helping with fundraising events. With a degree in elementary education from St. Catherine’s University and passionate about making a difference for people who are marginalized and disenfranchised, she is currently the associate director of development at Pillsbury United Communities where she oversees the agency’s grants program.

MerLynne Rickgarn Byrne, resident of Bloomington and member of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Edina, volunteers extensively in her church and with the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, focusing much of her service on children and youth. With a degree in child psychology from the University of Minnesota, she is currently working toward a Master of Public Affairs in nonprofit management at the Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs. She is also the part-time interim minister of youth and
families at St. Martin’s by-the-Lake Episcopal Church. Previously she was the director of organizational management for Homeworks for Students, Inc.

Shelly Gill Murray, resident of Minneapolis and member of St. John’s Episcopal Church, serves in her church on the adult education committee. With degrees from Luther College and the University of Iowa Law School, she donates her time and skills extensively in the community. She was a guardian ad litem and volunteered for two decades with the Cornerstone Advocacy Center as a support group facilitator, domestic violence educator, and more. She currently volunteers with Missionaries of Charities in multiple capacities, including an after-school program, with the La Semana Culture camp for adoptees from Latin America, with Minneapolis Children’s Hospitals and with LifeSource organ and tissue donation services.

May Ko Thao Yang, resident of Oakdale and member of Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in St. Paul, volunteers at her church and was an at-large member of the Bishop’s Committee, serving as fundraising chair, women’s liaison, and more. With a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and 17 years’ experience as a Systems Analyst/Oracle programmer, she is the manager of the Enterprise Systems Services team within the Information Technology department at the University of St. Thomas.

The new trustees and board president assume their positions as 40 nonprofit organizations supported by Sheltering Arms’ 2015-2016 grants work to meet the needs of at-risk children. The foundation is investing $455,000 this year in programs that serve Minnesota’s most vulnerable children – focusing on direct service programs in early childhood and out-of-school-time youth development, as well as statewide advocacy campaigns designed to improve Minnesota’s policies that impact children and their families. Areas served by this year’s grantees include Duluth, Fergus Falls, Golden Valley, Grand Rapids, Maplewood, Minneapolis, Plymouth, Roseville, St. Charles, St. Paul, Stillwater, and Winona.

The Sheltering Arms Inclusion Statement
The Sheltering Arms Foundation celebrates the diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, class, religion and geographic location of the children and families it serves across Minnesota. We seek to create equal access to resources in order to build a just society in which all children may reach their full potential.

About the Sheltering Arms Foundation
The mission of the Sheltering Arms Foundation is to invest in the lives of children and help them reach their full potential. Based in Minneapolis, the foundation funds nonprofit organizations and supports policies that benefit Minnesota children and their families who have the least access to resources. Since its inception as a grantmaking foundation in 1983, the foundation has provided more than 1,050 grants totaling over $14 million. The next deadline for grant applications is in January 2016, with grant applications from Episcopal congregations due on April 1, 2016. For information about submitting a grant request, volunteering, or donating to the foundation, visit http://sheltering-arms.org or call 612-871-9210 (toll-free: 866-871-9210).