

WJA Foundation Announces \$30,000 in Grant Awards

(February 28, 2022) The Women's Jewelry Association Foundation (WJAF) awards grants each year to support professional women in the jewelry and watch industry through business development and education. WJA Foundation awarded \$30,000 to grant recipients across its Carelle Grant, Jewelers Mutual Veteran Grant, and Member Grants in 2021.

Dawn Grady - WJA Carelle Grant Winner

WJAF has awarded Dawn Grady, Designer and Owner of Junebug Jewelry Designs, the 2021 Carelle/WJA Member Grant in memory of Brooke Tivol McGrath.

The Carelle Grant was established 10 years ago in honor of Brooke Tivol McGrath, an innovative leader in the jewelry industry. Brooke was the driving force behind the successful launch of the Carelle brand and understood the value of belonging to WJA.

In celebration of the grant's 10-year anniversary, Carelle has generously increased the 2021 grant to \$7,500 and shifted its focus to reflect the legacy left by Brooke - by supporting an established jewelry professional (in business for at least 5 years) in innovating their business through technological advancements, including investments in e-commerce, digital education and machinery.

Dawn is a mostly self-taught designer who fell in love with creating mixed-metal jewelry using both ancient and modern metalsmithing techniques. After absorbing countless books and YouTube tutorials, she took classes with master metalsmiths to hone her skills. It's been just over ten years since Dawn designed her first necklace and earring set.

Today, Dawn works primarily with copper, Argentium silver and semi-precious gemstones to deliver a signature look that embodies both strength and femininity. She loves to contrast the metals against one another to give her pieces depth and interest. There's a story behind every Junebug piece, every piece Dawn creates makes a statement and is a work of wearable art made for women who were born to stand out.

You can find Dawn's jewelry by visiting <https://junebugjewelrydesigns.com> or stopping by her brick-and-mortar store in Cincinnati, OH.

Rikiesha Metzger - WJA Veteran's Grant Winner

WJAF has also awarded Rikiesha Metzger, Owner of Rikiesha's Adornments, the 2021 Veteran's Grant.

This grant was created in partnership with Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group to be awarded to a deserving US Military Veteran. This \$5,000 grant is intended to be used towards professional development within the jewelry and watch industry.

Currently, Rikiesha is a Ph.D. student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts. She received her M.A. in Community Arts from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2009, a B.A. from Morgan State University (Fine Arts, 2007) and a B.S. from NC Agricultural and Technical State University (Electronics Technology, 2003).

Rikiesha is a veteran who has traveled extensively, first as a military child, and more recently as an artist interested in experiencing and collaborating with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. She is a multifaceted community artist, student, teacher, and sculptor—of which includes jewelry making.

Out of all the materials she works with, wire is her favorite. Rikiesha has been making jewelry close to

fifteen years, which she began making while pursuing her master's degree. Her jewelry pieces include earrings as well as small figurines she calls *Little Inspirations of Hope*. Rikiesha's artistic background makes it possible for her to experiment with different techniques in her jewelry-making process, helping to bring a different perspective to how she defines jewelry-making.

You can learn more about Rikiesha by visiting <https://www.rikiesha.com/>

WJA Member Grant Winners

One of the many benefits to being a WJA member is the opportunity to apply for an annual Member Grant. Funds for Member Grants are provided by the national organization and WJA chapters around the United States.

A portion of proceeds from the WJA's *Conversations on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* series funded six additional WJA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Member Grants specifically designated for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color) and/or LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, +) applicants.

2021 grant winners are listed below by WJA chapter:

- Austin: Hima Yalamanchili
- Boston: Martha Seely
- Chicago: Nancy Hudson, Viviana Langhoff, Nora McCarthy
- Dallas: Gayla Moores
- DC/MD/VA: Catherine Rudacille
- Las Vegas: Michele Walden Fink
- Los Angeles: Bevelyn Esparza*, Lauren McCawley
- Miami: Tracey Arrington, Tiffany Joachim*
- NY Metro: Brecken Branstrator, Olga Gonzalez, Jih Ha, Jodi Innerfield, Elyssa Jenkins Pérez*, Delphine Leymarie
- No Chapter Nearby: Benicia Broeker, Heather Younger Morton
- Northern California: Kate Eickelberg, Olivia Shih*, Alisa Thorp, Creek Van Houten
- Ohio/Kentucky: Katherine Cotterill, Andrea Koenig
- Philadelphia: Carly Kent
- San Diego: Jennifer DeMoro, Niki Grandics*, Christine Lopez*, Charlyn Olver
- Seattle: Megan Martin, Jolica Taguiped
- Twin Cities: Dawn Bruggeman, Liz Stingl-Griggs

*Indicates recipient of WJA DEI Member Grant

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Questions about the Women's Jewelry Association can be directed to WJA Executive Director, Jennifer Markas at jennifer@womensjewelryassociation.com.

About the Women's Jewelry Association Foundation

The WJA Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation created to support WJA's mission of providing educational and business opportunities that help students, small business owners, and rising leaders in the industry reach their full career potential. The Foundation's forward-looking vision and multidimensional framework focuses on three pillars of grant making: General Education & Business Development, Responsible Sourcing & Sustainability Education, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

To learn more and make a donation: <https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/foundation>