



Purse Strings

An update from the Women's Leadership Initiative
 of United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley



A Change in Leadership

After two years as WLI Chairman, Katie Loeb-Schwab officially transitioned her leadership responsibilities to Pat Beldon.

Katie joined WLI soon after its founding and has served on its Council almost from the beginning. Her energy, involvement and passion in WLI were evident from her first Council meeting; her interest in spreading WLI's message and in making WLI a more involved, community-sensitive organization led her to embark on a program of engagement with other local organizations, especially those serving women, children and, particularly women of color.



One of the many positive and very successful results of these efforts is the Emerging Leaders group. Designed to bring new members, their energy and their ideas to WLI, this initiative has targeted younger women - mainly in their 20's and 30's. "EL's" have been active in a number of WLI efforts; this year's Women-in-the-Lead planning committee was spearheaded by two young women from this group. (*Change, page*)

Signature Project Update - Spring 2009

The spring brings to fruition the hard work of the first Bachelor's degree cohort funded by WLI in partnership with T.E.A.C.H., NCC, and ESU. The graduates - Diana Kocon, Robyn Lee, Karen Klein, Lynn Ziegler, Michele Nelson, Alyza Commareri, Marie Andrew, Tiffany Stofko, and Linda Frederick - will continue their work in early childhood and elementary education, armed with what has been an extraordinary experience - a "sisterhood," as one graduate called it. The graduates expressed their deep appreciation at the May 20 "Women in the Lead." In the words of Alyza Commareri, "This program has made me a better mother, teacher, and woman!" What more could WLI hope for?

Meanwhile, cohort two is gearing up for student teaching, which will begin in the next school year, and cohort three is already one year old. This spring also brings to a close the sixth course offered on-site

at the Northwest Children's Centre in New Tripoli. Early childhood educators have been taking classes leading to an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education through LCCC, funded by WLI.

In addition, for the fourth consecutive year the Signature Project Committee has overseen the selection of Frances Hesselbein and WLI Scholarship winners. This year's Frances Hesselbein Scholarship winner, Leslie Douglas, a Dean's List student at NCC, plans on a career in social work. WLI scholarship winners include Amy De Jesus, also majoring in social work at Cedar Crest College, Carmen Geldres, a psychology major at Kutztown University, and Phuong Huynh, an education major at Moravian College.

WLI is indeed making a difference in the lives of women and children in the Lehigh Valley. We look forward to celebrating many more graduations!

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Exclusive Sponsor



WLI Members Honored at Recent Local Events



Anne Baum was recently honored by SUITS for her excellent work in human services, and for developing leaders within the Lehigh Valley community.



Wendy Body was recently honored by Girl Scouts of Eastern PA for her courage, confidence and character whose leadership makes the world a better place. Wendy, along with Greg Butz, also received The Morning Call Silver Bowl Award from United Way on June 4 for their outstanding leadership as Tocqueville Society Co-Chairs in the 2008 United Way campaign.



Meloney Sallie-Dosunmu was honored by Just Born and Girl Scouts of Eastern PA for her 10 years of service and for her her courage, confidence and character whose leadership makes the world a better place.



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A Change in Leadership

As WLI Chairman, Katie also undertook the structural reorganization of the Council and its committees, an endeavor which led to a better defined relationship among its members, a system for setting of goals and objectives, and a rational path to achieving them. Katie helped WLI streamline its processes so the organization works smarter and makes better decisions with its available resources.

By using her head, heart and quite a bit of hope, Katie guided WLI in its efforts of expansion of members and new faces, envisioning an organization inclusive of all. She is thrilled with the progress the organization has made over the past two years and WLI is stronger because of her leadership.

Katie will remain active with WLI. We will be hearing more about her as she continues to lead the board of Casa Guadalupe and serves on Casa's capital campaign committee, which is sure to be a success!

Pat Beldon is a founding member of WLI and has been on Council since its inception; she has served as ongoing chair of the Power of the Purse annual fundraising event, served as treasurer for the past two years, and recently initiated the Project Review Committee. Pat's main goal for her term as WLI Chairman is the development of strong ties between WLI members and the projects WLI supports, assuring that members are committed and connected to projects they understand and value. She hopes to accomplish this through volunteer opportunities, informative member engagement events and frequent communication on the progress and results of our projects. Pat also plans to see WLI membership grow, both in numbers and in pledges, and feels current member enthusiasm for what we are doing will be a powerful force in attracting new leaders.



Supporting Sponsors



Signature Project II Update - Spring 2009

We are pleased, proud and excited to introduce WLI's second Signature Project - a Community School Partnership with Central Elementary School, one of seven local United Way COMPASS (Community Partners for Student Success) schools. As we know, many students at city public schools are challenged by a variety of situations and conditions outside the school that impact academic performance. COMPASS links community-based organizations with schools to create a web of programs and services that remove barriers to learning and offer students opportunities to maximize their learning potential. Each COMPASS Community School is partnered with a lead agency- called a "Lead Partner"- who employs a full-time staff member (called a "Community School Coordinator") and acts as the fiscal agent for the school. The Boys and Girls Club of Allentown has been functioning in this capacity since 2006.

Services at Central include a fully-staffed, full-time health clinic (with partner Lehigh Valley Health Network), educational and recreational after-school and summer programs, a food pantry (partnering with Second Harvest and student volunteers from Muhlenberg College), and a family center (supported by the Allentown School District). GED and ESL programs and family entertainment nights help turn Central into a true community center, while encouraging and cementing the commitment parents and other family members have to the school and to its educational mission.

WLI's partnership with Central's administration, faculty, existing partners, and, most essential, its 820+ students will provide funding to support positive youth development and parent engagement activities for after-school and summer school programs. Our initial grant of \$10,000 will add an hour of cultural enrichment (theater, art, music) four days a week to the 120 students scheduled to participate in this year's summer school. WLI continues to work with the school to determine which target programs will receive the \$25,000 three-year grant, beginning with the Fall 2009 school year.

We will identify ways in which opportunities for our members can to participate in this program in ways more personal than your financial contribution. We'll keep you posted about volunteer opportunities, ways you or your business associates can expand the dream horizons of our students, and other volunteer opportunities to make this WLI project a success through the success of the students at our Partner School.

Watch this space for further news, including a regular posting of items we will be collecting for the school, its food pantry or another of its partnership programs.



Get Your Gear and Show it off!

LIVE UNITED shirts now available for sale at the United Way office.

Only \$10.00 each
Cash or check only

Emerging Leaders Organization Meeting

On Tuesday, July 21, 2009, the Emerging Leaders giving program through the Women's Leadership Initiative held its first organizational meeting at The Edge restaurant in Bethlehem. With 24 Emerging Leaders in attendance, along with 7 WLI Committee chairs, this dynamic group of young women received the program overview from the EL's new chair, Maureen Connolley, and learned a variety of ways to get involved.

To be considered an Emerging Leader, contributors must:

- ◆ Give a personal contribution of \$250 or more annually
- ◆ Designate herself as an Emerging Leader
- ◆ Makes two of the following three annual service commitments:
 - ◆ Serves on one standing committee within the WLI
 - ◆ Serves on a planning committee or volunteer for one WLI event
 - ◆ Serve as an active volunteer with a WLI signature project
- ◆ Set a personal goal to emerge to full membership at the \$500-\$1,000 level

In return, Emerging Leaders enjoy the following benefits through WLI: Professional leadership coaching events through Vision Accomplished throughout the year, mentoring opportunities, opportunities to share and advance ideas and organizational skills through event planning, engagement endeavors, and project cultivation, evaluation and implementation, and connect with WLI volunteer opportunities through the Signature Projects.

For more information on the Emerging Leaders program, please contact Maureen Connolley at (610) 758-6172 or Sarah Brown at (610) 807-5704.