



Joanne Hurley called the volunteers she directs in the peer counseling program at the Women's Resource Center "an absolutely outstanding group of people."



Having organized First Step to aid battered women, Debbie Benjamin hopes soon to add a permanent shelter for those who must leave a dangerous situation at home.



The contact she has with parents and children involved in special education programs in the Wayne-Westland school district makes the job worthwhile to Mary Ann Ellis.

Women's Exchange gets high marks on first anniversary

By Sherry Kahan
staff writer

If the size of the crowd was any indication, networking for women is working in western Wayne County.

About 98 women and several men attended the first-anniversary banquet of the Women's Exchange, a network founded by the YWCA of Western Wayne County to give employed women a communication and support system.

And to buttress confidence in women's competence to handle all kinds of work, the organization honored four women for jobs well done during the past year.

Joanne Hurley was singled out for her efforts as director of peer counselors at the Women's Resource Center at Schoolcraft College. Debbie Benjamin was applauded for providing help for battered women as director of First Step in Westland.

Betty Carter was given a plaque for the work she has done as a tax accountant at Peat Marwick and Mitchell in Detroit, and a similar award went to Mary Ann Ellis of the Wayne-Westland School district. Her job is special education.

"WE STARTED with 13 members," said Georgene Sloan of Livonia, president of Women's Exchange. Now the group numbers 95 and has a mailing list of 400. Mrs. Sloan already has

learned the practical value of networking.

"I have a new job which I got through contacts in the network," she said. "This is a place to talk over problems, get information and discuss issues."

Patricia Barrett appreciates the fact that through WE she meets women in working environments different from those at the Wayne State University Medical School. "You hear about jobs other than your own," said the Livonian. "I have also enjoyed the speakers. A career counselor spoke to us, and afterwards I went to him for counseling. It was very beneficial."

Said Eve Mouliso of Livonia: "Networking is something men have been doing a long time."

"It's a good way for women to get together," observed Carol Anderson of Canton, who is self-employed as a distributor of household products. "And someone might know about a job."

Sally Satko of Garden City turned up at the banquet because her director at First Step, Ms. Benjamin, was being honored. She is planning to join the group because she realizes that "it's important for women to work together and help other women."

MARY NOSAKOWSKI of Redford Township would like to see the group give more attention to job hunting through announcements at meetings

and listings in the WE newsletter.

Her daughter Gail Nosakowski of East Dearborn thinks WE should form more subcommittees. It breaks the large membership group into small sections where friends can be made more easily, she said. She thinks its emphasis should be on being a support group rather than a social one. WE is the first network that Joanne McCoy of Canton has joined. A social worker, she has noticed that "a lot of professional people have been pink-slipped or are experiencing narrow job opportunities."

She added: "I think this is a good place to let people know what you can do."

"MEN HAVE always done networking," said Mrs. Sloan in her opening remarks. "They do it socially over golf and lunch. Women are starting to do it because we see how helpful it is. We wanted a place to meet other women and talk about issues."

A counselor with the Displaced Homemakers Center in Westland, Mrs. Sloan pointed out that membership in the Women's Exchange is not limited to a certain occupation "so that contacts would be broad."

After accepting her plaque for outstanding work this year, Joanne Hurley drew a laugh from the audience by announcing she would put a chain on it and wear it around her neck.

She explained those who volunteer as peer counselors at Schoolcraft's Women's

Resource Center "are women who listen, and they care."

"That is very important," she added. "Their satisfaction is found in helping others. It's a case of women helping women."

These counselors must take a seven-week course and spend nine hours in on-the-job training. They must also

give a four-month commitment.

"We have a 94.7 retention rate of our volunteers," said Mrs. Hurley. "A lot of agencies have found that volunteers are an excellent source of skill and talent. We've seen our volunteers start at the center and go on to full-time jobs in helping professions. Peer counseling is a comfortable way to take the first step."

DEBBIE BENJAMIN was honored for her role in helping battered women take the initial move to improve their situation. As director of First Step, she has written budget proposals, structured the agency and formed and trained a staff to help the 85-95 families in western Wayne County which contact the organization each month.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Winners of awards from the Women's Exchange are Sloan. From left are Debbie Benjamin, Joanne Hurley, Betty Carter and Mary Ann Ellis.



Artist visits

Robert Kuester, portrait artist and magazine illustrator, will be the guest speaker for Farmington Artists Club Wednesday. The club meets at 7 p.m. in Farmington Hills Branch Library. Kuester will give a demonstration of oil portraiture after the meeting.

Jaycettes send open invitation

Farmington Area Jaycettes celebrate National Jaycette Week (Feb. 8-13) with an open invitation to their meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16, in Farmington Community Center.

"Being a Jaycette means meeting lots of new people with new ideas. It's never boring, always fun," said Mary Bills, president of the local chapter.

Requirements for membership is that one must be female and between the ages of 18-36.

The U.S. Jaycettes is an organization of 55,000 women geared to meeting the needs of today's woman by providing its members with individual development and leadership training.

Locally the community-oriented club raises money through an annual arts and crafts sale in November, a lemonade sale during Founders Festival days in July, the "Visits from Santa" program in December, and assisting the Jaycettes with that

group's haunted house in October.

THE GROUP has given money to aid in research for the Reye's Syndrome and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome foundations, and sponsored the "Kiss Your Baby" project, a public awareness program in cooperation with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Some who have benefited personally from the Jaycettes are those who have received food baskets in time of need; those who have received vocational scholarships; persons living in Sarah Fisher Home and Oak Hill Nursing Home, and those who rent the GM infant and child care seats in its program of child safety.

The Jaycettes meet the third Tuesday of every month in Farmington Community Center. "Persons interested in learning more about us can come to any meeting. Just stop by," Ms. Bills said.

She will take inquiries at 861-4724.

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