

100 Women project to raise scholarship funds

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NEWTON -- It didn't take long for Lorraine Parker to get a response to her public announcement that a 100 Women project was being launched to raise scholarship money for students at Sussex County Community College.

Parker, who serves as vice chair of the college's Board of Trustees, spoke at Monday's board meeting and, she said, "Before I got out of the room, at least three women gave me their card saying they wanted to be first."

The goal of the project is simple: Sign up 100 women to each give \$100 per year for the next five years, each year endowing a separate scholarship.

The math is also simple: 100 women times \$100 equals \$10,000.

The 100 Women makes a neat "catch phrase," Parker admitted, and is not meant to be any sort of limit on how many women can join up.

"It'd be neat if we can get 500 women," the retired Superior Court judge said. "Imagine how many scholarships that can endow."

As an endowment, the money gets invested with the interest each year going to fund a scholarship -- one scholarship for each 100 women and an additional scholarship each of the five years. A total of 500 women would mean a total of 25 scholarships after five years. "And all those people's lives will be affected," Parker said.

The scholarships will be geared for women, with a steering committee setting up guidelines for awarding the scholarships.

"It might be one for a returning woman, one for a single mother," Parker said. "It will be up to the committee to set it, but it's definitely for women."

The steering committee will hold its first meeting Oct. 10 at the college and get a tour of the school and a chance to meet with college President Paul Mazur and Karen DeMaria, the new director of the college's foundation, which will have administrative and financial responsibility for the program.

Parker noted that later in the week DeMaria was meeting with a local group and mentioned the program.

"As she walked out of the room, she had several women handing her cards, too," Parker said. "I think that's a good sign. The eight members of the steering committee were recruited from business and professional women in the county.

"Having a group of smart women put their heads together will generate great ideas," Parker said.

Members of the committee are Parker; Dr. Pamela Alberto, a Sparta oral surgeon; Ardelle Bigos, chief nursing officer at Newton Medical Center; Newton attorney Colleen Cunningham; Julie Killen, Coldwell Banker Realtor; Sara Megletti, owner PB&J Stores of Newton; Karin Meyer, Weichert Realtor; and Sara Roskowsky, vice president of marketing for Sussex Bank Corp.

Those interested in participating in the project can contact DeMaria at kdemaria@sussex.edu or Parker at lparker@sussex.edu.