

Spring Luncheon 2014

July 3, 2014

The Women's Fund of Portage County held its annual Spring Luncheon on Friday May 9, 2014 at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point. There were almost 200 community members attending the event, which announced the Woman's Fund grant awards for 2014, celebrated the SPARK award recipient Mary Berard, and updated supporters on their endowment. The event also kicked off the United Way 2014 Diaper Drive.

Over \$41,000 was allocated in 2014 to agencies and projects that improve the situation of women and children in Portage County. Those agencies and projects include:

Very Young Composers of Central Wisconsin, an afterschool program that, with the help of volunteer UWSP music majors, provides 4th and 5th graders the opportunity to compose original music.

Sexual Assault Victim Services, a CAP Services project that provides replacement clothing to female victims of sexual assault when they are at the emergency room for reporting/evidence collection. Their clothing is normally secured for evidence.

The Boys and Girls Club provide summer breakfasts to eligible school age children.

Portage County Health and Human Services emergency nutrition and cribs for newborns and supplies for Happy Smiles.

Cap Services Skills Enhancement Program for working-poor women seeking improved employment

Community Partners enrichment activities for special-needs SPASH student

UWSP scholarships for single moms with financial need

Central Wisconsin Children's Museum reduced entrance fees for low-income families;

Operation Bootstrap energy payment assistance to at-risk families and housing assistance for single moms.

The Woman's Fund also allocates endowment earnings to Saint Michael's Ministry Kids Fit Program, Ministry Dental Center 0-3 Program and YMCA Camp Glacier Hollow Outdoor Pavilion.

Mary Berard, the Spark Award recipient for 2014, was honored at the luncheon for her community activity - which has touched many people. Mary Berard has been involved in the Women's Fund since 1998 when she joined the steering committee. She was the chair of the Steering Committee from 2004 to 2006 and was always at the head of efforts to make the Women's Fund financially able to make a difference in the community. She was a Founder, Legacy Leader, and a SPARK donor - taking a leadership role in all of those efforts.

Mary leads not only in visible positions, but also encourages interest in the Women's Fund through constant personal efforts. She donates all her pottery sales at ARTS Night back to the Women's Fund. She has negotiated support from local businesses, written countless thank you notes, and enthusiastically put forth information about Women's Fund to everyone she knows.

Mary is also involved in other community organizations, including the YMCA Foundation and Saint Michael's Foundation, our partner organizations. She and her husband are past chairs of the United Way campaign. Mary is also active with the Family Crisis Center's Take A Step 5K fund raiser and is passionate about their mission. Mary is dedicated to the mission of the Women's Fund; through her actions, words, and sense of humor, she has provided leadership, guidance, and inspiration. The Women's Fund of Portage County is very fortunate to have had Mary's support throughout the years and appreciates her continued commitment to our organization.

At the luncheon it was announced that the Women's Fund of Portage County dramatically increased its ability to help women and children in Portage County during its 24-month SPARK the LEGACY Campaign which ended December 31, 2013, with their endowment total well over the \$500,000 goal.