

Foundation celebrates sixth year of giving

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III COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Burke County

The Burke Women's Fund, operating under the auspices of the Community Foundation of Burke County, celebrated its sixth year of giving March 28 at the First United Methodist Church.

This group of women, committed to improving the lives of women and their families in Burke County, has awarded \$190,511 in grants to local nonprofits and grown the Burke Women's Fund Endowment to \$91,480 since 2009.

During the celebration, Molly Hemstreet and Susan Pollpeter, co-chairs of the Burke Women's Fund Grants Committee, announced the following grant recipients for the 2014-15 year:

» Burke Charitable Properties – "Lighting Up For Safety" – \$2,832

» Burke County Literacy Council – "Literacy on the Move" – \$5,000

» Burke United Christian Ministries – "Collaborative Food Pantry" – \$7,000

» First United Methodist Church – Valdese – "Children's Feeding Ministry" – \$3,000

» Habitat for Humanity – "Woerner Way Gardens" – \$2,500

» St. Matthews United Methodist Church – "St. Matthews Baby Closet Supply" – \$5,000

» Southmountain Children and Family Services – "SPARCS of Light for Troubled Teens" – \$1,200

» Strategic Alliance for Burke Youth – "Burke Girls' Empowerment Summit" – \$1,000

» The Meeting Place – "Women's and Children's Shelter Staff Expansion" – \$5,500

» Valdese First Christian Church – "Dry Bottoms Diaper Ministry" – \$5,000

» Waldensian Presbyterian Church – "Burke County Community Garden Initiative" – \$5,500

The Burke Women's Fund also was proud to welcome guest speaker Mikki Sager, vice president of the Conservation Fund and director of the Resourceful Communities Program.

Since joining the Conservation Fund more than 20 years ago, Sager has helped low-income communities develop programs that generate economic, social and environmental benefits. She inspired the audience with stories of innovative and successful work being implemented by grassroots groups across the state of North Carolina.

Lisa Miller and Susan Pollpeter, steering committee members, announced the Honorary Members for 2015.

This award is given to women who have committed to service and to volunteer their time, talents and treasures to make a difference in the community.

The Honorary Youth Membership was awarded to Elizabeth Sebastian, who attends Western Piedmont Community College. She



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pictured are the 2015 Burke Women's Fund grant recipients.

has a passion for health care and works for Magnolia Lane Nursing and Rehabilitation Center as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Sebastian hopes to one day serve the community as a nurse. She has been an active member of St. Charles Catholic Church, was a member of the Carolinas HealthCare System Medical Explorers and has been a faithful participant of the Sweet Delights Bakery.

The Honorary Adult Membership was awarded to Nancy Ferguson Brown. As a retired dental hygienist she has been the driving force in insuring that low income and underserved children in Burke County have access to dental care. Brown represents the dental needs of Burke County children at both the local and state levels and works with local area dentists to see that needed dental care is provided. Brown is tireless in her efforts to address

access to dental care now and in the future and has established the Teeth In Need Endowment Fund with the Community Foundation of Burke County.

Nancy Taylor, steering committee member, recognized The Kitchen Connection as its first 2015 Corporate Sponsor. Locally owned and operated, The Kitchen Connection was founded in 1984 by Pam Saunders, with the support of her husband Keith, and is located at 309 Sanford Drive in Morganton. Pam has been a strong supporter of the Burke Women's Fund since inception and very much believes that the collective giving strength of women can make a difference.

For more information about the Burke Women's Fund, visit www.burkewomensfund.com; or www.cfburkecounty.org and click on the Burke Women's Fund tab; or contact Nancy Taylor at 828-437-7105.