

An opportunity for independence

Special to the News Herald

In the fall of 2012, more than 140 members of the Burke Women's Fund voted to fund a focus grant entitled "Project Independence."

The purpose of this grant was to provide an opportunity

"This project exemplifies what is achievable when people and organizations are willing to come together for the greater good."

Susan Pollpeter,
co-chair

for young Hispanic women to learn a skill and develop and manage a part-time bakery business. Included in the grant terms was the obligation to use the net proceeds to create an educational scholarship fund for a young woman in the Hispanic community.

The grant was awarded to Burke United Christian Ministries, a nonprofit agency that is



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Opportunity for independence offered through partnership.

responsible and accountable for the oversight and development of the project. BUCM Executive Director Jill King said, "This has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my

career. The commitment of the young bakers, the dedication of the Master Bakers who teach the art of baking, and the willingness of community partners to support this program has been

inspiring."

St. Matthews United Methodist Church's "Open Hearts Bakery" serves as the inspiration and business model for this project. Master Bakers include

professional bakers and caterers Suzanne Belada, Anne Bourg and Ophelia Hart. Vince Loflin, a business educator with Olive

See **DELIGHTS**, Page 3D

Delights

From Page 1D

Hill Economic Development Corp., works with the young women and has helped them develop a business and marketing plan, an operating budget and an inventory control and purchasing process.

First Presbyterian Church of Morgantown generously provides the kitchen for the bakers to do the actual baking which occurs Thursday and Friday of every week. St. Charles Catholic Church utilizes its significant reach into the Hispanic community to assist in identifying the youth now involved in this project.

The young women of Sweet Delights sell their products every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot in front of

Doug Briggs' Accounting Office at 902 West Union St., located directly across from McDonald's. Their products include homemade breads and rolls, pies, cakes and cookies. All proceeds go to Sweet Delights Scholarship Fund.

Susan Pollpeter, former BUCM board member and BWF co-chair of the Grants Committee, stated "This project exemplifies what is achievable when people and organizations are willing to come together for the greater good. This project is a lesson in possibilities and an example of the promise of our youth."

To learn more about the Burke Women's Fund or the Community Foundation of Burke County, please contact Nancy Taylor at 828-437-7105 or go to www.cfburkecounty.org.