

Women's Fund names new executive director at annual luncheon

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APPLETON -- In a healthy community, women's issues are everyone's issues. So goes the philosophy of the **Women's Fund** new executive director Shauna Walden Ejeh, who was formally introduced at the nonprofit organization's sixth annual luncheon on Thursday.

Ejeh, a Neenah resident with more than 14 years of experience working with nonprofit organizations, whose most recent job was with the National Association of College Stores in Ohio, reported to work Tuesday.

She becomes the first full-time administrator for the **Women's Fund**, a supporting organization of the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, celebrating its 10th anniversary.

"It's my goal for everyone to know, 'Hey, there's an organization for me, and I want to be a part of it,'" she said.

She replaces Jane Dwyre Garton, who retires at the end of the month, three years after she assumed a part-time leadership role.

The timing of the transition couldn't have fallen at a better time for Ejeh than at the sold-out luncheon, commanding an audience of 1,000 participants to mark the work **Women's Fund** does to bring grants to local groups and programs serving women and girls.

"It allows me to understand the scale of the organization ... Now the job is, how do we capture the energy from this event?" she said of transferring it to the community.

"We all have a responsibility to encourage and inspire others to do great things."

This year's speakers were Wisconsin's first poet laureate Ellen Kort Ray Durkee, a Kimberly-Clark Corp. retiree and father of three daughters and Dee Geurts-Bengtson, executive of special events for the Green Bay Packers.

Using a "What If" theme, each, through personal stories, motivated the 900 women and 100 men in attendance to feel good about themselves.

"Stop taking things seriously, and forgive yourself for the things you did not do," Geurts-Bengtson said. "Have a sense of humor."

Barbara Best said she was enriched at the luncheon. "No matter who they have,

they always have a message for you," she said.

Barb Klebba, Fremont, is on the staff of Fox Cities Community Health Center and is a repeat participant in the luncheon.

"I think it's a great opportunity to celebrate women and be proud of who you are," she said, "and the speakers were very inspirational."

The **Women's Fund** has high expectations for the rest of the year, said Garton.

The organization is within earshot of reaching a \$1 million fundraising goal, and the deadline is Dec. 31.

The program also set the pace for organizers to kick off the "Girlfriend" campaign, in which donors are asked to make contributions of \$25 or more and spread the word to their friends.

Given the wide success the luncheon has enjoyed in the past six years, Garton said, plans are in the works to offer a second event that can reach a wider audience.

Because the luncheon falls on a weekday, groups like teachers cannot participate.

"We just know there are people that enjoy brainy stuff, sentimental stuff," Garton said.

Shauna Walden Ejuh

Age: 40

Residence: Neenah

Education: Bachelor's and master's degrees in public communications from American University in Washington, D.C.

Occupation: **Women's Fund** executive director

Family: Married to David Ejuh. They have four children, ages 2 to 17.

Something you should know: Ejuh is a native of Quebec, Canada. A fan of home improvement programs, she said, "deep down, I want to be a carpenter."

On the Web

Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region:

www.womensfundfvr.org/donation.htm

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