

MAYOR'S COUNCIL FOR WOMEN – EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE
FULL COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 11, 2017

The Education Committee wrote three white papers in which we identified issues that were impeding girls' and women's efforts to attain post-secondary education or credentialing.

The committee looked at these various impediments and decided that one solution would be to create an online resource tool that girls and women could access to find solutions, or at the very least, starting places where they could go to address their particular and varying needs – childcare, housing, legal aid, clinics, technological training – to name a few.

After much discussion, it was decided that the group of women that we would try to reach first would be college-aged women as that category spans the gamut from teenagers to middle-aged women. (We had created the following groupings: Teens/Girls; Women over 40; International/Diverse Women; and College-Aged Women). To assist us in determining the best way to proceed, we invited a member of the mayor's staff who specializes in public relations to attend one of our meetings. She provided us with an excellent blueprint that outlined how to effectively make the online tool a reality.

A list of resources was compiled by a subcommittee, after which the entire committee vetted the list and made a few additions. Members subsequently identified locations such as Youth and Development centers and other community organizations with which they were personally affiliated where they would publicize the existence of this online resource. Another group developed a script that could be used in these interactions, and will also lead the committee in other ways of notifying women in the community of the existence of these resources – for example using social media and flyers.

The biggest challenge with the online resources tool was determining its permanent location and its maintenance. I am extremely happy to share that Lesley Scarce, CEO of United Way Chattanooga, agreed to house the online resources tool on the United Way website with its own specific link. The link to the resources will also become a part of the menu on their 211 line. The list of resources has been sent to Ms. Scarce along with brief descriptions of each resource, and will be found on the United Way's website in the near future. Since the online list of resources will be accessed as a link on the United Way's website, it will also be maintained by its staff. On behalf of the Education Committee I would like to thank Ms. Scarce for agreeing to house the online resources for us.

The ultimate success of this online tool will be determined not only by tracking how many women log on to the link, but also by how many women actually contact and use the services listed. Once the link is functional, the Education Committee will

determine how best to contact these resources in order to ascertain that information.

The Education Committee is currently exploring ideas for our next project, and a few have already been suggested. We will decide on our next goals at our upcoming meetings.

The Education Committee generally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month from noon to 1pm, in the Verandah Room at City Hall. You are welcome to join us as we strive to make a positive difference in the lives of other women in our city who need our help in overcoming the challenges that they face daily as they seek to improve their lives and that of their families.

Thank you.