The feeling of fall is in the air with crisp nights, and soon the days will feel brisk, too. That can only mean Christmas shopping is right around the corner, and where better to start than at the 10th annual Festival of Trees?

Join us on Thursday, Nov. 10, at Weymouth Country Club for a delicious dinner, networking with some of the hardest-working women in Medina County, and fun galore. Mark Klaus from Castle Noel will be our emcee for the evening, helping to get everyone into the holiday spirit. You'll also have the chance to bid on unique gift baskets and holiday décor for that special person in your life. Best of all, while you're having a fun and festive evening, you'll be supporting the women and children of Medina County.

We have already received many generous sponsorships for the event, including our five (yes, five!) Tree Topper sponsors: ABC Therapy Ltd., Hunter Insurance Agency/Grange Insurance, Summa Health System, Therapeutic Associates of Medina and Western Reserve Masonic Community. Other sponsors include ComDoc, Huntington National Bank and Vintage Vanities Jewelry.

Many wonderful items have been donated for the auction, including a barbecue dinner for six from Buehler's, a vintage toy train, tickets to the Polar Express, a week at a condo in Florida, and a night at the Wooster Inn, among many others. There will also be a photo booth provided by inFocus Photobooths so guests can capture memories from the evening.

If you want to get involved, there's still time to decorate a tree, donate an auction item, or make a gift to support the Festival of Trees. For more details, call Mary Isaac at 330-242-1350 or Diane Meckes at 330-472-0458.

In addition to contributing to a great cause, you will be promoting your business to hundreds of members of the community.

Tickets to the event can be purchased online at www.akroncf.org/FestivalofTrees. See you there!
The BEAT (Brunswick Educational Access Television) Video Program is a unique backpack journalism program run by an ambitious group of young people. Backpack journalism is an emerging form of journalism that requires a journalist to be a reporter, photographer and videographer, as well as an editor and producer of stories. Supported in part by a grant from the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund, the BEAT program has about 40 student participants ranging from sixth through 12th grades.

First-year participants attend classes every other Saturday led by Alexis Gemelas, a junior, and Jonathan Yokiel, a sophomore, to learn the basics of journalism. Gemelas and Yokiel, in their sixth and fourth years respectively, are the journalism managers who oversee the journalism aspect of the program. There are about 20 sixth- through eighth-graders who have all had to fill out an application and go through an interview process to be chosen to participate.

Second-year students learn how to operate the equipment behind the scenes and how to conduct an interview on camera, alternating Saturdays in class. By the third year, they start applying what they have learned in the first two years. The technical aspects of the program are taught by Allison Rhoades, a senior who has been in the program for seven years and is the technical manager.

Allison is a very talented young lady who earned an internship with the Akron Rubber Ducks, where she worked in every aspect of the Creative Services Department, which directs the MLB broadcasts of the Ducks games. Allison is planning to continue her passion by studying video production in college. She is currently training fellow student Riley Haas to take over her position when she graduates.

Students in the BEAT Video Program gain valuable experience by covering football games, school board meetings, basketball games, concerts and more. The students who take on these assignments, as well as the managers, get paid for their work and also gain useful work experience. In addition, they submit content to local publications such as the Medina Gazette, The Post and many other outlets, averaging about 250 articles a year that get published. It is evident how much these students care about what they are creating through their work in the BEAT Video Program. Even if they may not pursue a career in journalism or video production, they will have gained many life-changing skills through this program, including assisting other schools in developing similar programs.

These student journalists are an absolute delight, and they are grateful to MCWEF and the many businesses that support the program annually. BEAT is totally self-funded and receives no money from the school district or the broadcast of its content. Learn more at thebeat22.com and watch their programming on Time Warner channel 22.

A $2,000 grant to the Brunswick Educational Foundation this year supported the BEAT Video Program, which trains students to become “backpack journalists” in their community. Students in the program learn to write stories, conduct on-camera interviews and shoot news videos.

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Community volunteer, professional fundraiser join board

This summer, MCWEF welcomed two new community leaders to its advisory board. Rebecca Alspach and Crystal Sabol were both appointed to their first of two three-year terms.

Rebecca is a longtime community volunteer and Medina resident. In addition to her work with MCWEF, she also serves as a food pantry volunteer for the Medina United Methodist Church and is chair of the H.G. Blake Elementary School PTO Restaurant Fundraiser Committee.

She previously served as the president of the MOMS Club of Medina, East Chapter. Rebecca has a background in business management and previously worked as the director of operations for Digital Rocket, a digital marketing company.

She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri and a master's degree from Grand Canyon University.

Crystal, a Wadsworth resident, is the assistant director of development for the Summa Foundation, where she specializes in identifying major gift prospects by strategically engaging the hospital's patients and stakeholders.

She previously served as the director of business development for the Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Crystal is active in the nonprofit community, having volunteered with Stewart’s Caring Place, the United Way, RENEW Akron and the Kiwanis Foundation. She has a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Akron.

Read about all of our board members at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFboard.

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Gifts

Thank you to the following businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated an auction item for this year’s Festival of Trees.

If you would like to donate a basket, service package or another item, please contact Mary Isaac, event co-chair, at 330-242-1350.

All Fired Up: $40 gift certificate for the Fairlawn location
American Greetings: Basket of cards, wrapping paper, gift bags and tissue paper for all occasions
Antiquation: Ohio-themed wall art
Buehler’s Fresh Foods: Barbecue dinner for six
Castle Noel: Holiday statue
Chill Ice Cream: Homemade ice cream, sundaes cups, spoons and toppings
Cleveland Botanical Gardens: Four general admission passes
Decadent Delights: Decorated tree
Deerpass Golf Club: Two passes for 18 holes of golf with a cart
Dino Maria’s Hair Salon: Basket of grooming and fashion products
Linda Garrett: A week’s stay at a Florida condo
Garth Andrew Interior Decorators: Gift certificate for a two-hour design consultation
Half Moon Yoga: Gift certificate for five free classes
Ted Halkovich: A vintage electric train set that’s ready to go around your Christmas tree
The Harp: Gift certificate
Made in the Shade: Window coverings
Medina County Park System: Complimentary rental of Allardale Lodge
Medina Raptor Center: A behind-the-scenes tour of the raptor center
Nancy Pound: Four tickets to the Polar Express
Something’s Popping: Limited-edition Cavaliers championship tin filled with popcorn
Therapeutic Associates of Medina: Decorated tree
Title Boxing Club: Gift certificate for one month of free boxing, a boxing bag, boxing gloves and wristbands
Wooster Inn: Overnight stay for two and tickets to a wine event
Working Women Connection of Medina: Decorated tree

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Gifts to MCWEF

June 1 — Aug. 31, 2016

ABC Therapy Ltd.
Judy Hardesty
Huntington National Bank
Therapeutic Associates of Medina
Vintage Vanities Jewelry LLC
Western Reserve Masonic Community
Robert & Bonnie Zukerman
Women Moving Millions offers lessons in finances, charity

Over half of the private wealth in America, estimated at $14 trillion, is held by women. Women are also the breadwinners or co-breadwinners in two-thirds of households in the United States, and 80 percent of women outlive their spouse.

These statistics validate the need for careful, comprehensive planning for women at every financial level. Yet women are often overlooked by financial advisors, who tend to direct their advice toward men. That’s why financial planners like Heather Ettinger and Emily Drake from Fairport Asset Management are trying to change the conversation.

On Sept. 19, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund partnered with Akron Community Foundation and Fairport to present “Women Moving Millions,” a financial and philanthropic education program designed just for women.

During the program, Ettinger and Drake, along with moderator Virginia Albanese of FedEx Custom Critical, discussed how women can build a financial plan that supports their whole life plan through investing, estate planning and strategic philanthropic giving.

They noted that many women get divorced and find themselves unprepared to take on the financial planning for their household. Or, in other cases, women may feel that they are not wealthy enough to need a financial plan, so they wait until a crisis happens before delving into the details of their family’s finances.

To avoid this common scenario, the panelists recommended that women get involved in their family’s financial management now and develop a relationship with a trusted advisor.

Advisors can help families learn how to use charitable gifts to offset their tax liability and create a long-term financial plan for a secure future.

The Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund is another valuable resource when considering the role of philanthropy in financial planning. If you are interested in exploring some of the charitable giving options discussed at the event, including donor-advised funds, gifting appreciated assets or life income gifts, contact Margaret Medzie, vice president and chief development officer, at 330-436-5610 or mmedzie@akroncf.org.

For more information about women and finances, download free materials at www.akroncf.org/WomenofWealth.