

Appalachian Women's Fund raises over \$70k

Written by Ashley Wilson
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The Appalachian Women's Fund 6th annual Women of Vision Luncheon was a smashing success, raising over \$70,000. Held at Linville Ridge Country Club on June 27, the luncheon was attended by more than 220 people.

The luncheon celebrated women and girls in the mountain communities and served as a fundraiser for the Appalachian Women's Fund (AWF), an organization devoted to helping fund and support programs through local nonprofit agencies working for positive change on behalf of women and girls.

At the luncheon, AWF honored Leigh Cooper Wallace with the 2013 Woman of Vision Award. Leigh was a hero to many. A runner, a coach, a powerhouse of a spirit, she inspired so many to reach within and tap into their greatest potential.

Leigh graduated from Appalachian State University in 1992 where she was a standout distance

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runner. She taught Healthful Living and physical education at Watauga High School (WHS) from 1998 until the present and coached track and cross country for over ten years. She helped establish women's lacrosse as a varsity sport at WHS and was the first head coach in this sport. She was inducted into the Watauga Sports Hall of Fame in 2006. Leigh became a symbol of strength and courage for many after she survived a kidnapping and sexual assault as a junior at ASU. She shared her experiences for years at ASU's Walk For Awareness, and her story was shared on several television programs.

Leigh was instrumental in bringing Girls on the Run to the High Country and coached the first group of 15 girls. In 2013, Girls on the Run presented their first ever Leigh Cooper Wallace Making a Difference Award to a deserving coach that embodied Leigh's spirit and inspiration.

Leigh passed away unexpectedly on December 17, 2012. As a parent, teacher, and coach, Leigh's spirit, inspiration, and memory live on. She truly was a Woman of Vision and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.