Written by Steve Frank
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A woman's work is never done, as the saying goes. That statement is especially true for the supporters of the Appalachian Women's Fund. Now in their 5th year, plans for the annual Woman of Vision Luncheon are completed and tickets are on sale for the June 21st event at the Linville Ridge Country Club. The silent auction will open at 11:00.

In years past the AWF has chosen a worthy recipient of the Woman of Vision Award. Women from the public sector, the private sector and non-profit agencies have been honored. But this is a milestone year for the Appalachian Women's Fund. "Milestone celebrations are more inclusive of our friends and family. We want to share our vision with as many women as possible and give them the opportunity to honor a special woman in their lives," said AWF President Jean Brooks. In an attempt to honor the every-woman there is a twist to the award for 2012. Brooks has worked with the AWF since its inception five years ago. After working with disenfranchised women and children and the local agencies who support them, Brooks knows that there is a Woman of Vision for everyone; the Aunt or Grandmother who raised children that were not her own; the teacher who inspired a career; the neighbor who became family during a crisis; sisters who share bonds of love and support; cousins who are more like sisters; the employees your business could not do without; the oncology nurse who went the extra mile. Whoever she is to you, the 2012 Woman of Vision Luncheon is the time to honor her. A photograph of the honoree and personal message of gratitude will be on display throughout the event. A personal recognition will be given to the honoree as a keepsake, as well. "The women who make these lasting impressions on our lives never seek out the limelight. She would never expect an acknowledgement like this but that does not mean she doesn't deserve one," said Brooks. Past recipients of the Woman of Vision Award include Westglow Spa & Resort owners Bonnie and Jamie Schaefer, OASIS Director Jennifer Herman, local philanthropist Faye Cooper and Liz Murray whose story of a homeless teen was depicted in the movie "Homeless to Harvard." "Those recipients were chosen by a committee. This year you are the committee," Brooks added.

To honor the woman or women in your life, send a picture of the honoree along with your message of appreciation to the AWF office at P.O. Box 1838 Boone, NC 28607. You may also scan and email a photo to info@appalachianwomensfund.org. All photos will be returned after the event.

In four years more than $280,000 has been awarded by the AWF to non-profits that support impoverished women and girls. But knowing the increased need for funds placed on local crisis agencies due to the recession, the AWF Board recognized that it was a turning point for the organization. The time had come to hire a part-time Executive Director. Parker Stevens accepted the position last fall. "Parker has made an enormous difference in our outreach efforts in a short amount of time," Brooks commented. "Being an independent fund the AWF is not limited in terms of where we can fund programs that help women in need," noted Stevens. "We held a round table in Ashe County recently to explore ways that crisis agencies and the AWF membership can unite to create opportunities for the women and girls in that area. The plan is to have the same conversation in Avery County, which is one reason we are holding the Woman of Vision luncheon at the Linville Ridge Country Club," remarked Stevens. New outreach involvement for members and added visibility in outlying areas are at the top of Stevens' to-do list. If the past four years are any indication, year five will be among the most successful for the Appalachian Women's Fund.

For tickets to the June 21st luncheon or for more details on how to honor your personal "Woman of Vision," go to www.appalachianwomensfund.org or call the office at 828-264-4002.