

AWC accepting applications for 2012-13

Written by George Browning
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Awareness Washington County is accepting applications for the class of 2012-13, according to co-directors Debbie Mildenburger and Marji Morris.

Awareness Washington County is a community leadership organization that began in 1983. Over 500 graduates have participated in the class and continue to take an active role in the community.

The class meets one day a month, starting with a two day overnight retreat in October and continuing through May. Participants learn about the community and develop their personal leadership skills. Class members will actively explore the county's history, economics, arts, and government. While guest speakers are a part of the class, the emphasis is on hands-on learning, discovery, and reflection. AWC builds on the leadership capacities that class members already have and prepares them to go out and make whatever changes in the community that they think are important.

The class will select and implement a project, based on the members' interest and perception of community need.

Past projects include such areas as county beautification, improvements to CenterPeace, downtown revitalization, historic preservation, leadership expansion, Lake Salinda development, and programs of benefit to youth, such as the establishment of a local Big Brothers/Big Sisters chapter and Partners in Education. The class project for 2004 was to establish a local affiliate called Rebuilding Together Washington County. In 2005, the class founded the Friends of Beck's Mill which led to the complete restoration of that site.

Other classes have endowed a scholarship to honor community service and encourage young people to return to Salem after furthering their education. The 2003 class organized "Unify to Beautify Washington County," a campaign to involve all parts of the community in cleaning up roadside dumps, streets and highways, and even creating a play area at the community park in Livonia.

Mildenburger and Morris encourage adults of all ages and backgrounds to apply for the class. "We would like to see the class reflect the diversity of the community," Morris stated. "The greater the mix of people involved, the more successful the program will be."

Morris and Mildenburger will contact those who apply in order to set up an interview during the summer. Between 25-30 people will be selected for the class.

Applications are available on the website at www.awarenesswashingtoncounty.org and should be submitted by Sept. 6. For further information, call 883-6760, 896-1515, 812-216-6505, 812-752-2278, or 812-786-2016 and leave a message. Or you can contact the directors via email at mlmsoar@hotmail.com or dmildenburger@gmail.com.