



Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Women of OU support university and community

By **Dawn Pauli**, contributing writer

For more than 20 years, the **Women of Oakland University** organization has provided its members networking, social gatherings and fun opportunities while supporting the university and community.

March is Women's History Month, and the organization is hoping to increase awareness and membership. Administrators, staff, faculty, students, alumni and friends of OU are eligible to join Women of OU.

The mission of the organization is to build a spirit of community among all OU women and provide service to the university. At one time, there were nearly 200 members, but in recent years, that number has dwindled because people have more job responsibilities and more competition for their time, said Sheila Carpenter, office assistant for the University Communications and Marketing Department and chair of Women of OU.

"The organization is more important than ever," Carpenter said. "We're all so busy. We seem to hole up in our offices. We offer a way to network and meet people from throughout campus. And, at the same time, we contribute to the university and the community."

One of the most important contributions of **Women of OU** is the endowed Critical Difference Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to a single head-of-household whose undergraduate education was interrupted for at least one year. Up to four scholarships are awarded each year, ranging between \$500 and \$2,500.

"We want to help those who might not be able to continue their education," Carpenter said. "Many times family obligations or finances make it hard for single head of household to attend college."

The deadline for the WOU Critical Difference Scholarship is Friday, April 1. Application forms are available in the Financial Aid Office, 120 North Foundation Hall.

In addition to the Critical Difference Scholarship fund, Women of OU also supports Lighthouse of Oakland County and HAVEN, a local women's shelter. The group raises funds through a holiday greens sale and participation in the All-University Fund Drive.

Four times a year, the Women of OU hosts a Brown Bag Lunch. Past topics include identity theft, driving safety, and balancing work and family.

The **Women of OU** meet twice a year, in the spring and fall. The next general membership meeting is Monday, April 5, at noon in the Oakland Center Rooms 127-128. Those considering membership should RSVP to cemikola@oakland.edu. Dues for a one-year membership are \$15.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, March 23, 2004
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, March 23, 2004
Article Start Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2004