

The Beaver Dam Women's Club

2002 Friend of Education

The Beaver Dam Woman's Club is the first organization to receive a Friends of Education Award. Since its beginnings in 1898, the club has been a strong influence on education in the Beaver Dam schools. In 1899, the club was highly instrumental in establishing manual training and domestic science classes at the Beaver Dam High School and also paved the way for the introduction of singing groups in the schools. In 1913, the club began its continuing support for the Beaver Dam library, including the institution of a children's hour reading program, and, later, donations for the building of the new library and its landscaping.

As a result of the first Women's Clubs Convention in Beaver Dam, the local club formed the first Parent-Teacher Association. The club's vigilance for education also was a major force in establishing the first kindergartens throughout the state. Other programs initiated by the club through the years include the milk program in the schools, a city nurse for the schools, the first Beaver Dam Girl Scouts, and the Helen Mears art contest for students.

Since 1950, when local members pumped gas to raise money for the Beaver Dam High School Scholarship, the club continues to contribute to the high school scholarship program as well as to the Beaver Dam Scholarship Foundation. It also helps finance the Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation, a leadership training workshop; sponsors the Second District Health Scholarship; and supports a number of additional scholarships and grants for education.

On the legislation level, in the interest of children, the Woman's Club has addressed problems of literacy, mental health, motion picture and television codes, tobacco advertising, learning disabilities, habitual truancy and more. To the present, well over one hundred years from its founding, the Beaver Dam Woman's Club continues to support many community projects and programs that focus on education. Members also take the "hands-on" approach in Beaver Dam by participating as volunteers for the District's Project AWARE and Partners in Learning programs, and by serving as docents at the Seippel Homestead and Center for the Arts.