

# Mothering the community

Mother's Day is the perfect time to stop and reflect on the ones who have taught us so much. As I look around, I see so many caring women who have raised children and inspired our community in the process.

I recently had the privilege of witnessing two wonderful mothers of our community receive the Women of Distinction Award from the Girl Scouts. Billie Little and Ida Minor became co-leaders for their daughters' Girl Scout Troop and as a result, they mothered many other young girls over their tenure as troop leaders.

Hearing stories from their children, neighbors and friends was a testament to the fact that the time they spent investing into the lives of those young girls truly impacted their futures and molded them into strong, confident women. Past local honorees include Dottie Boring Shaw, Sis Brown and Dixie Kinard. They, too, have dedicated their lives to

mothering our community. These extraordinary women are just a few examples of women who have guided others, but many more examples can

be found in United Way's Women's Leadership Council.

Our Women's Leadership Council is filled with many community mothers. Our co-chairs Dixie Kinard, Karen Townsend and Lynn

Whitworth are all mothers who have done a wonderful job of raising their children as well as serving as positive role models to so many young women. They instill in the women of the Women's Leadership Council the same character and values they passed along to their children — to care for those in need and unite people to create the greatest possible impact. Women's Leadership Council provides hope to children and young mothers throughout our community through volunteer events like Bags of Blessings, which

provided handbags and toiletries to the unstably housed. This and other acts of kindness inspires hope and helps create a brighter future for all of us.

As mothers, we often do not realize the impact we've made on our children, but sometimes we can see exactly what they learned from us. Minnie is a participant at RossWoods Adult Day Services, a United Way Community Partner. Her daughter, Connie Cox, fondly recalls watching her mom, Minnie, care for her parents and in-laws. She spent so many years caring for others and she showed Connie how to help those in need.

A few years ago, it became Minnie's turn to be cared for. Connie cared for her mother Minnie daily when she came to live with Connie and her family, but she soon realized she needed help. She remembered learning about RossWoods on a United Way tour, and she reached back in her desk drawer at work and found the brochure. She called RossWoods and now Minnie is able to live at home with Connie and be cared for during the day

by the wonderful staff at RossWoods. Minnie set the example all those years ago of how to care for others. Connie was watching, and when it was her turn to be the caretaker, she knew what to do — care for her mom just as she had cared for others.

When I think about the many women who have raised up our community as they raised their own children, I think of Sis Brown, Billie Little, Dixie Kinard, Ida Minor, Karen Townsend, Lynn Whitworth, Dottie Boring Shaw, Minnie, Connie and countless other women who have devoted their lives to serving others. I also think of the many teachers and coaches who mentor and inspire our children every day.

They are on the frontlines educating our children and helping shape them into the people that will one day lead us into the future. The example that they all have set is one that has built a brighter future for the next generation of community mothers.

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