



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shown at the United Way of Northwest Georgia's Women's Leadership Council Spring Symposium are, from left, Sandee Hooper, United Way board member; Celeste Creswell, United Way volunteer; Becky Burleigh, University of Florida women's soccer head coach; Amanda Burt, United Way president; Lynn Whitworth, United Way board member and WLC co-chair; and Dixie Kinard, WLC co-chair and United Way volunteer.

## Florida soccer coach speaks at women's leadership event

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UNITED WAY OF  
NORTHWEST GEORGIA

"One of the best parts of Women's Leadership Council is the opportunity to connect with other women," said United Way of Northwest Georgia board member Sandee Hooper. "I am so excited to announce that WLC has grown to 321 members investing over \$1.12 million annually to improve lives in Whitfield and Murray counties."

Recently at the United Way of Northwest Georgia's Women's Leadership Council Spring Symposium at Walnut Hill Farm, 145 attendees heard from Becky Burleigh, the women's head soccer coach at the University of Florida. The theme of the event was "Designed to Go Far" and featured a chat with Burleigh facilitated by Celeste Creswell, United Way volunteer.

"It is inspiring to see so many women in our community here today who are passionate about making an impact on the lives of others," said Amanda Burt, United Way president. "By harnessing the collective power of a diverse group of volunteers, philanthropists, business leaders and community builders through Women's Leadership Council, there is nothing we can't accomplish."

Burleigh has been the head coach for women's soccer for the University of Florida since 1995. She believes there is more to winning in life than winning games. Her career victories and winning percentage rank her third among the NCAA Division I active coaches. She is in the USA South Hall of Fame and has received national and SEC Coach of the Year honors.

Burleigh spoke with the group about the importance of character building with her athletes.

"I realized we needed to be teaching important life skills, like how to deal

with setbacks and how to use them to move forward," Burleigh said. "We have to let go of things that are out of our control and work on developing the things that are in our control: our attitudes and how to be authentic. Whether you're on the soccer field or in a corporate setting, your character is what's most important."

Burleigh relayed a story of inspiration that her team used as a rallying point.

"We watched the story of Denziel, a star athlete in high school who experienced the sudden loss of his father," Burleigh said. "Denziel talked about how the golf ball originally had a smooth design. As golfers kept hitting the ball it became dented. They found that those dented balls went farther than the smooth ones. That happens to us in life. We get dented, we experience setbacks, but we can use those experiences to move us farther than we thought possible."

After the Spring Symposium, Burleigh visited Coahulla Creek High School and spoke with the girls soccer team. She inspired the team as she encouraged them to remember "You're not in control of the outcome. You're only in control of how you respond to it. Other people may only want to know if you win or lose, but what really matters are the life skills that you gain and the bonds that you make with your teammates."

Burt knows the power of a successful team.

"Dixie Kinard, Karen Townsend and Lynn Whitworth launched Women's Leadership Council in 2012 and they continue to provide vision, leadership and hard work in growing this powerful movement in our community," Burt said. "The council is a dynamic force that has responded to United Way's call to action to 'Live United' by giving, advocating and volunteering."