

# Our Helping Allies

Womentorship year-end event

PHOTO BY IVAN DIEREMA

DIRECTOR RACHELLE BROCKMAN (RIGHT) LISTENS TO A KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The second year of the Betty-Ann Heggie Womentorship Program drew to a close in style at the Saskatoon Willows Golf and Country Club on June 2nd. The year-end event, Our Helping Allies, brought in national and international speakers, each with a connection to the women of Afghanistan.

Keynote Barb Stegemann spoke on women affecting change in Afghanistan and other war torn nations through their buying power. Her company, The 7 Virtues Beauty, Inc. sources organic oils from countries experiencing turmoil to support the economy and build peace in new ways.

Stegemann is a strong believer in the mentorship process and its relevance in all stages of life. "Mentorship is really powerful," she says. "I always suggest people look around their own lives to assess who would be a good mentor. None of our ideas make it to light without others lifting along the way. And the wisdom of those who guide us lives on in us and we must pass that torch on to others."

Stegemann considers one of her current mentors to be her investor and business partner, W. Brett Wilson. "He believes in me. He backs me. He pushes me to be my best. And he is a friend," she says.

Former PotashCorp Senior VP Betty-Ann Heggie established the Womentorship program in partnership with the Edwards School to ensure more women receive professional support. "If you ask successful women, 98% of them say they've had a mentor so it says to me that mentorship is very important," she explains. "We need

more women at the decision-making table and the way we'll get them there is to have mentorship programs for women."

Other speakers included human rights activist and founder of two chapters of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, Lauryn Oates, as well as founder of the Afghan Institute of Learning, Dr. Sakena Yacoobi.

"Women tend to think as a network and reach out to everyone that they can involve and think about how to find support from other people," Oates says. She and the other guest speakers demonstrated this community-thinking at the event, learning from each other and continuing to network.

"Every conference I go to, everywhere I go, I learn. And I know these people are my mentors," Yacoobi says. "Like today, I learned from Barb. I am an entrepreneur and I try to create businesses for the women of Afghanistan because I believe that people should not just depend on somebody else to support them."

Heggie has been working with Yacoobi, as well as Womentorship organizers Rachelle Brockman and Maryann Ross, to extend the program to Afghan women. "We haven't been able to get visas so far, but we think we'll get them this fall," Heggie says. "We're looking for entrepreneurship opportunities for them and that's part of the reason we have Barb here. She's been able to talk to Sakena about having Sakena's women grow oils in Afghanistan that Barb could buy, so we're trying to make these connections." 🌱

To read the full interviews with each of the guest speakers, go to: [www.edwards.usask.ca/womentorship](http://www.edwards.usask.ca/womentorship)

***Our sincere thanks to Director Rachelle Brockman for all her hard work with the Betty-Ann Heggie Womentorship Program this past year and a warm welcome to new Co-ordinator Maryann Ross!***

For more information about the Betty-Ann Heggie Womentorship program, contact Maryann Ross at: [ross@edwards.usask.ca](mailto:ross@edwards.usask.ca)