



**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca
bergen county
"y the w makes a difference"

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Women Embrace 'Knowledge is Power' Message at YWCA Conference

BERGEN COUNTY—Attendees at the first-ever "Knowledge is Power" conference were continually reminded to put themselves first and support one another in order to achieve satisfying, healthy lives. The day-long resource and networking event, presented by the YWCA Bergen County and Bergen Community College, featured 30 panelists and speakers who provided advice and encouragement to women intent on taking charge of their lives.

"We wanted to create an opportunity for women in transition to access the services and support they need, as well to network with others who are dealing with similar issues," said YWCA CEO Monica Roers. Panels of local experts addressed topics ranging from financial management, starting a new business, and navigating the current housing market to reducing stress and making decisions on health care options. Caroline Gundeck, Global Wealth Management Executive Director at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, kicked off the proceedings by holding up a sign that read, "It's About Me!" The morning speaker challenged the audience to be proactive and urged them to go after what they want. "It's absolutely up to you to make your life happen," she said, "and today is the day."

Keynote speaker Dr. Jennifer Ashton, medical correspondent for the national CBS News, expanded on this theme, adding that women need to look after themselves and their health for the sake of those they love. "We must acknowledge our importance as the center of the universe for families, and use it to generate a sense of empowerment," said Ashton. She and Gundeck emphasized the importance of being positive and supporting each other. "The key to success is connecting with other people and surrounding yourself with positive energy," said Gundeck. Ashton reinforced this point, saying, "Spin good karma and go out of your way to help another woman. You'll be rewarded in spades."

Other guest speakers included New Jersey Senators Loretta Weinberg and Gerald Cardinale; Nancy Ellson, Coordinator for the Center for Healthy Living at Holy Name Hospital; and Sylvia Lasalandra, author of “A Daughter’s Touch.” Attendees also took advantage of resume writing and interview skills workshops, as well as information and resources provided by an array of area businesses and service organizations, including sponsors BrightStar Healthcare of Greater Hackensack and The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Bergen/Passaic Chapter. “It was a great day,” said Roers, “and we look forward to building on the positive momentum to empower women in our community.”

About the YWCA of Bergen County

The YWCA of Bergen County (www.ywcabergen.org) is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We are the area’s largest provider of child care services, a recognized leader in health and fitness programs, and operator of the county’s only Rape Crisis Center. Celebrating nearly a century of commitment to our community, today we improve the lives of thousands of women, girls, and their families.

About Bergen Community College

Bergen Community College (www.bergen.edu) based in Paramus is a public two-year coeducational college, enrolling nearly 17,000 students at locations in Paramus, the Philip J. Ciarco Jr. Learning Center in Hackensack and Bergen Community College at the Meadowlands in Lyndhurst. The College offers Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degree programs and certificate programs.

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