

Gail Webster, Woman of the Year 2004



"Passionate about helping people." "Uses her wonderful sense of humor in handling difficult situations." "A calm, tireless leader." "Dedicated to giving something back to her community." "An articulate advocate for those who have difficulty speaking for themselves."

These are just some of the phrases that have been used to describe Gail Webster, our honoree for AAUW Woman of the Year. She has served since 1991 as the Executive Director of Hudson River Housing (HRH), a non-profit organization that has done a great deal to provide a continuum of housing opportunities for area residents.

When she became the director, HRH had a staff of three and focused on running a successful homeless shelter, Gannett House. Under her direction, the staff has grown to 100 and the organization oversees eleven projects including a teen shelter, family shelters, transitional housing, rental or home ownership projects, and numerous educational programs. They have obtained grants from various organizations, including Housing and Urban Development and the Dyson Foundation, and have poured millions of dollars into community revitalization projects. The organization understands that job skills, along with knowledge about home ownership, are keys to success. Their goal is to make their guests self sufficient, and they have relied on many community experts to help residents obtain jobs, learn to maintain a home or apartment, and develop money management skills.

Ms. Webster fulfills the AAUW mission of promoting lifelong education and creating positive societal change. She works in a quiet, unassuming manner and has been very effective in making our community a better place. We are proud to honor her this year!