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Strong Women Strong Futures Campaign Launched

New initiative encourages East Tennessee's women and girls to pursue education beyond high school

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – The Women's Fund of East Tennessee (WFET) and a network of eight East Tennessee nonprofit organizations announced the launch of **Strong Women Strong Futures**. The new grassroots and social media campaign aims to show girls and women in East Tennessee that post-secondary education is a critical and viable option. The launch coincides with International Women's Day – celebrated around the world.

The campaign addresses a pressing need. According to Think Tennessee, "Nearly [one in six women](#) in Tennessee live in poverty and half of Tennessee families depend on a female breadwinner." Additional education after high school can lead to economic security, higher income, more stable employment, and job benefits.

"The vision of the Women's Fund is 'every woman self-sustaining.' However reaching that end often requires additional training. Consequently, we want to encourage women and girls to enroll in post-secondary education, whether that be a four-year college or university, two-year community college, technical or occupational trade school, or certificate program," said Katharine Pearson Criss, Chair of the Network Building & Grant Making Committee of WFET. "Young women should have the freedom to choose what their future holds. Education will make more options possible."

The campaign will be driven by eight nonprofits already committed to improving the lives of young people throughout East Tennessee. The group includes: Boys & Girls Club of Elizabethton/Carter County; Boys & Girls Clubs of the TN Valley; Centro Hispano; Children's Center of the Cumberland; Girls Inc. of the TN Valley; Project GRAD Knoxville; The Restoration House; and YWCA of the TN Valley. This network of organizations completed extensive research to understand the current regional narrative around post-secondary education. Based on this research, they worked to develop tools and resources to reach the young women, caregivers, and staff they serve. More about this project can be found at www.strongwomentn.org.

The Women's Fund of East Tennessee is a public nonprofit organization based in Knoxville, Tennessee. WFET's mission is to transform the lives of low-income women and girls across 25 counties in East Tennessee by providing financial support to organizations that support this demographic and advocate for change.

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