

MEDIA RELEASE

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UTAH'S NEW SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOL

Connecting Professional Women Across the State

March 24, 2009 – Down to only five people, the board of directors for the Utah Animal-Assisted Therapy Association is looking for new members. “Like many other nonprofits, we’re challenged by finding individuals with the right mix of knowledge, interests, and skills,” said executive director Gaelyn Derr. “Say that we wanted an attorney with a background in mental health, or a physical therapist that has helped with fundraising events. Where do we even begin to look?” The answer might be right at her fingertips.

March 31 will mark the official launch of Women Leaders Utah (WLU), a new online registry with the mission of linking nonprofit, private, and government entities to the expertise of Utah women. Found at www.womenleadersutah.org, WLU is a web-based networking resource that allows women to create profiles, specifying their leadership interests, areas of professional expertise, and types of community service in which they would like to participate. Entities seeking board members, volunteers, or speakers can browse WLU profiles for women that fit within their defined search criteria. And, thanks to contributions from generous sponsors, this valuable resource is completely free of charge.

“Women Leaders Utah and other innovative programs are ushering in a new era for women in our State,” said Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. “This registry will certainly be a useful resource, leading to greater opportunities for women who are in leadership positions and those who wish to pursue leadership roles.” Corroon is just one of the prominent individuals scheduled to speak at the March 31 WLU launch. The launch, beginning at 3:00 pm in the University of Utah’s Goodwill Humanitarian Building, 395 South 1500 East, is free and open to anyone interested in learning more about WLU.

To date, more than 100 women have added their professional profiles to WLU, said Helen Graber, the Belle S. Spafford Endowed Chair at the University of Utah College of Social Work, and the driving force behind the development of WLU. “Most of these women are well-established and well-respected leaders in our community,” said Graber. “But Women Leaders Utah can also provide younger women – those just beginning their careers – with important contacts, as well as opportunities for professional development through participation.”

As the Utah Animal-Assisted Therapy Association presses on with their search for qualified new board members, Derr seems optimistic about the possibilities WLU offers. “It will be so much simpler for us to find both fresh and seasoned individuals who would be interested in our mission. So far, this appears to be a very promising resource!”

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