



Empowering the future

Chamber, Glenbrook South partner to support aspiring young businesswomen

Nine years ago when his tenure started at Glenbrook South High School, John Blix, then the school's junior accounting teacher, had maybe two girls in a section of 28 students. That number is now around 8 or 9.

"I'm seeing growth in those numbers every year," said Blix, a career and technical education teacher and senior project coordinator, "and a club like ours just amps that up."

That club is the Women in Business (WIB) club, which "aims to help empower young women at GBS to see a business career as a possible future endeavor and to achieve their ambitions and goals."

The group started three years ago when a group of five of Blix's students asked if he would sponsor the club. Blix was thrilled that the Women in Business Breakfasts – a meet-and-greet, round-robin event with GBS students and local women business professionals that started three years earlier – had encouraged his students to start a club.

Club membership has already grown to about 100.

"That says something about an unmet need," Blix said.

The Glenview Chamber of Commerce has been highly supportive of Blix and the WIB club, as chamber executive director Meghan Kearney has referred several women business owners to Blix

over the years to participate as guest speakers during the club's Thursday morning meetings and to attend the Women in Business Breakfast the club organizes each December.

"The program is just a great learning opportunity for these girls," Kearney said. "To have a better understanding of the business world and how to be prepared."

The young women are also learning the importance of helping others.

Last year, the group helped collect more than \$600 to support Sarah's Circle, a Chicago nonprofit that helps women with a variety of support services to end their homelessness, during a fundraiser at Mingle Juice Bar, a women-owned business in The Glen.

And just this past February, the WIB club helped raise funds again for Sarah's Circle during the 31st Winter Walk: A Mile in Her Shoes Event at Uplift Community High School in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood.

From freshmen all the way up to seniors, the young women of the WIB club have created a strong bond that is making them leaders at school and in the community.

"It's rare to have all four years (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors) represented in a club," Blix said. "Our club is different. There isn't any sort of social clique dynamic. I just love it."




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