Women band together to aid charity

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SANDUSKY — Erie County charities are about to get a new ally.

Four local women are organizing an Erie County chapter of 100 Women Who Care, an international group that raises money for good causes.

The group will meet four times a year, with each member asked to provide $100 at each meeting for a good cause, said Martha Miller, a Perkins Township woman who came up with the idea.

Women who want to aid the effort are invited to the first meeting set for 6:15 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 13 at the Sandusky Yacht Club, 529 E. Water St. The meeting will be preceded by a social hour that begins at 5:30 p.m.

Miller has been joined by three other local women — Mary Anne Baxter, Linda Ziegler and Pat Babiuch — to form the local chapter. Shelly Chesbro and Mark Advertising have helped with the group’s website. The goal is to have 100 women. Even more would be great, Miller said. She explained when the group meets, a member is invited to put the the name of a charity she is passionate about into a hopper. The names of three charities are then pulled from the hopper.

For the next 30 minutes, the advocate for each charity speaks on behalf of the charity. A question and answer time of five minutes follows. Members then vote on which of the three to support, with each member providing $100 to the cause.

Miller said there are a couple of rules for a charity to be considered. It must be a 501(c)(3) charity recognized by the IRS, to ensure contributions will be tax-deductible and that it's a bona fide charity, Miller said. In addition, whether the charity is local or is a local branch of a national group, the charity must be willing to keep all of the donated money here in Erie County, Miller said.

The group's new website, [www.100womenwhocareineriecounty.com](https://www.100womenwhocareineriecounty.com/), says the group is ideal for women who don't have much time to volunteer but who want to make an impact. It's also a good way to make sure donations stay here, it says. The website has an application form for new members to download and fill out.

Miller got the idea for the group in 2012 when she read an article about 100 Women Who Care written by Regina Brett, a Cleveland Plain Dealer columnist, author and inspirational speaker. She clipped the article and carried it with her.

She didn't feel ready right away to take on forming the new chapter, but she didn't forget about it either. "Little by little, I kept thinking about it," Miller said.

Eventually, she decided to get started and recruit her friend, Baxter, and the other two women.

"We have been working on this since January and feel passionately that it can make a huge impact in the Erie County community," Baxter said. "We want to send a loud message to the community that everyone is welcome to join and be part of making an impact on the community."