



## The Women of Tuomey: Making Connections.

Photo: George Fulton, George Fulton Photo Imagery

**D**rawing upon the vast network of women who have graduated from Tuomey Fellows, or who are otherwise involved in the activities of Tuomey or the Foundation, the Women of Tuomey program is predicated on the ever-increasing importance of women as healthcare decision makers for their families.

“The idea behind the Women of Tuomey is to promote awareness of what Tuomey has to offer the women of our community,” explains Norma Stone, a Sumter resident and member of the five-person committee that organized the first Women of Tuomey event. To this end, each Women of Tuomey event will feature an educational section about some of the unique services and benefits Tuomey offers women.

This year’s event allowed each member of Women of Tuomey to host a table for seven women of their choosing at a special luncheon held at Tuomey. The women truly served as hostesses, decorating and providing the table settings for their own tables. “Each table had a very different dynamic,” observes Hayes Jones, Annual Fund Director for the Foundation. “Some hostesses

chose to invite family, others chose to invite friends... It created a group of varying ages and associations.”

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**Norma Stone**

This gave the event a very personalized feel, and perhaps made much stronger connections than would otherwise have been possible. “It brought a lot of new faces to the hospital, and it’s because people are more eager to come to an event when they are invited by their friend or family member,” Jones continues. “It’s building new relationships that stem from the strength of an existing network.”

The educational section of this year’s luncheon concerned a special service that is available at Tuomey for the women of Shaw Air Force Base. For pregnant women whose husbands are serving overseas, Tuomey is

able to use webcam technology to allow the husbands to see their newborn child immediately following delivery and for several days afterwards. “Even though they may be thousands of miles away, they are still able to share in the experience of the birth of their child,” Stone says. “It is a blessing no one should have to miss, no matter where they are.” Although the webcam technology has been available at Tuomey for less than a year, its popularity has been overwhelming; women call, write, and sometimes even email to ask to be involved with the service.

Inspired by the importance of the webcam technology for Sumter and Shaw, the Women of Tuomey at this year’s event donated enough money to maintain and expand the webcam service over the next year. This is especially significant because the purpose of the event was friendship and fellowship, not fundraising. In the coming years, the Women of Tuomey plan to host annual events, hopefully gaining new members each time. “It’s unique to the Foundation because it’s centered on women and women’s issues,” Jones says. “It promotes friendships, which we hope to see grow over time.”



The **Women of Tuomey** program is an exciting new form of outreach from The Tuomey Foundation intended to build relationships between the women of Sumter and Tuomey Healthcare System.