

## Westfield Nurses Association Endowment



*Eleanor Cavanaugh and Mary Boscher, both former members of the disbanded Westfield Nurses Association chat with William Harmon, chairman of the Endowment Committee of the Citizens Scholarship Fund. The women presented a check to Harmon to establish a scholarship for students entering the nursing or medical field*

The Westfield Nurses Association was founded in the early 1940's to improve the working conditions of nurses. The group met monthly at the Red Cross Chapter home on Broad Street. Nurses of the 1940's worked in an atmosphere much different from today. In some hospitals, nurses worked under quasi-military rules of conduct and sixteen hours a day was common.

As unions took over the association's core responsibilities, the group gravitated toward promoting continuing education for its members. By the mid 1980's, the 40-year-old organization began to suffer from its own success. Unions were handling workplace conditions and compensation negotiations, and professional development had become a nearly standard part of a nurse's working life.

The association disbanded about 18 years ago as membership began to decline and fewer members wanted to take on responsibility for operations. Funds collected over the years through scholarship dinner dances had remained in the association's account since the group disbanded. Some of the money was used for scholarships over the years. In June of 2001, a meeting was held by the last of the members and it was decided to put the money to use. Some was donated to Grandmother's Garden, the Center of Hope, and Noble Hospital. The balance was designated to go to Citizens' Scholarship Foundation to fund a scholarship for students looking for a career in nursing or a related medical field, with a preference for a non-traditional student. In December 2001, a check was presented to Mr. William Harmon, Chairman of the Endowment Committee for CSF.

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