

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

9-29-2011

Gardner-Webb to host the founder of Angel Tree Ministries

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb to host the founder of Angel Tree Ministries

 webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-to-host-the-founder-of-angel-tree-ministries/

Office of University Communications

September 29, 2011

Mary Kay Beard to Share the Ultimate Redemption Story

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – The Dimensions Program at Gardner-Webb University welcomes Mary Kay Beard, the former fugitive turned philanthropist who founded Angel Tree Ministry, which has reached millions of prisoners' children with the love of Christ. The program takes place Tuesday, Oct. 4 at 9:25 a.m. in Paul Porter Arena.

Tracy Jessup, vice-president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister at GWU, said he is honored that Beard will be a guest speaker at Dimensions. Jessup noted that a relationship between GWU and the ministry started long ago.

"The Office of Christian Life and Service made us one of the first campuses in the U.S. to incorporate Prison Fellowship Ministries into our student ministry," Jessup said. "Each year, our students purchase gifts and host a Christmas Party for the children of incarcerated parents through Angel Tree Ministry."

Angel Tree started in 1982 in Alabama when Beard, a former bank robber and most wanted on the FBI's infamous list, received permission to erect Christmas trees in shopping malls to recruit shoppers to purchase presents for prisoners' children. That year 556 children received gifts. The next year, Angel Tree branched out to twelve states and later became a church-based program. Today the ministry is nation-wide and also in 90 other countries around the world. According to its website, in its 29 years of existence, Angel Tree Ministry has served nearly six million children.

Gardner-Webb University's Dimensions programs are free and open to the public. The goal of Dimensions is to enhance the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural life at the University and also to promote a sense of community. Dimensions programs are held on Tuesday's at 9:25 a.m. in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center (LYCC). More information is available at 704-406-4277.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University was founded in 1905 and is home to over 4,300 students from 37 states and 21 foreign countries. Gardner-Webb seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, balances conviction and compassion, and inspires in students a love of learning, service, and leadership.