

Foundation to award 121 nursing scholarships

By Linda Girardi

FOR THE BEACON NEWS

On Friday, the Rush-Copley Foundation announced plans for a \$750,000 Dunham Nursing Scholarship program honoring the legacy of the late John C. Dunham of Aurora.

The Dunham Nursing Scholarship will support 121 nursing scholarships for qualified applicants attending the nursing programs at Aurora University and Waubesa Community College over the next two years.

The scholarship program has been funded by the Dunham Fund, a private foundation founded by the Aurora entrepreneur and philanthropist. He created the fund in 1996. Dunham attended West Aurora High School and his father, Thomas M. Dunham, founded the Equipto company in 1907.

"This gift by the Dunham Fund advisers is not only an investment in nursing education but our community as a whole," said Barbara Graham, Rush-Copley Foundation executive director.

Graham said the scholarship program will expand nursing for promising students, give students an opportunity to practice in diverse community settings and help meet areas of need in Aurora.

"One of the ideas we focused on in the development of this project was to find a way to give back to the community in the spirit of what we thought might be important to John Dunham," Graham told a roomful of leaders in the health care and academic fields at the Rush-Copley Heart Institute. "As the charitable arm of Rush-Copley Medical Center, our mission is to inspire this type of philanthropic support to provide the highest quality of health care to the community we serve."

Rush-Copley will partner with AU and WCC, Alden of Waterford, Dreyer Medical Clinic, Provena Mercy Medical Center, Rush-Copley Medical Center, VNA of Fox Valley and the Kane County Health Department. Each of the partners expressed how the scholarship program would impact medicine and the health of people living here.

"Task-oriented nursing is not the focus right now," said Dr. Dennis Keane, chief medical adviser to the nursing scholarship program. "We need skilled nurses with critical thinking skills who can identify with patients to prevent complications and provide quality outcomes we are known for in Aurora."

Scholarship applications will be made available electronically beginning Oct. 1 through the participating organizations. Students must be enrolled or accepted for admission at the two education partners and expected to dedicate their time to a designated community service project in the Aurora area.

Applicants must be a resident of the Aurora area or employed by an Aurora area employer. Graham said there are already plans to extend the scholarship program beyond the two years.