

## Seven women honored for making a difference

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**STAFF WRITER**

When Mayra Suero-Wade was a teenager, she expected to turn her love of fashion into a career.

But at New York University, she heard a dentist talk about the satisfaction of helping patients and realized she'd found her calling.

"I knew that was what I was supposed to do," Suero-Wade recalled Sunday. "I feel that God has a sense of humor, because I was afraid of the dentist growing up."

Suero-Wade was one of seven women honored Sunday by the Bergen/Passaic chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, a service organization devoted to economic, education, health and gender equity issues.

The lunch, held at the Fiesta in Wood-Ridge, was attended by about 300 people, mostly women. Many wore red in honor of the American Heart Association's campaign that encourages women to dress in red to keep cardiac health issues in mind.

Suero-Wade, a mother of three from Saddle River, was honored for her charitable work. She recently sold her private dental practice to focus on a mobile dental clinic, which serves foster children in Manhattan and the Bronx.

In addition, she and her pediatrician husband, Mark Wade, run a non-profit organization, Arise and Walk Ministries Foundation, which brings health care to Kenya, Haiti and other poor nations. The group is planning a trip to Nigeria in about a month.

"You go out to these countries and you realize people have nothing at all," Suero-Wade said. "I found private practice very lucrative, but at the end of the day, you want to make sure you've done your part to help people who are truly in need."

Kimberly Holmes, a lawyer and vice president of the chapter, said honoring high-achieving black women is important because "we want to show everyone, especially young people, that you can look at African-American women and see they're in a lot of different jobs."

"We can do anything," said chapter president Deborah Witcher Jackson, "and these women have proven that."

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### Others honored

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- Althea Avery, a senior probation officer in Bergen County.
- Barbara Fitzgerald, owner of the Esteem Academy in Englewood.
- Angela Martin, a guidance counselor at Hackensack High School.
- Pamela Miller, an attorney and executive at Medco.

- Baraka Sele, assistant vice president for programming at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

- Lillian K. Whitaker, principal of Nellie K. Parker Elementary School in Hackensack.

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