“Does the Carnegie Abbey Club allow in “Wild Women?” You bet, because Women’s Resource Center’s Wild Women are all special ladies who have a long list of business and professional accomplishments.

Join us on Thursday, June 16 at 12 p.m. as we recognize our 2016 Honorees: Christine Cunneen, Amy Davock, Felise Feingold, Joan Johnson-Freese, Sally P. McDonald, Niko Merritt, Brenda Nagle, Lisa Raiola, Annie Sherman Luke, Carolann Silvia, Heather Strout and Diane Williamson.”

The Newport Equity Zone’s Niko Merritt joins our list of 2016 "Wild Women" Honorees. Niko actually has two jobs that she finds fulfilling: Resident Consultant with the Newport Equity Zone and Program Director for Baby Steps Newport.

Niko also has extensive volunteer experience that includes being involved in her community as a certified diabetes lifestyle coach for the Health Equity Zone, chair of the Newport Prevention Coalition, and member of the local NAACP. She has taught beauty techniques to cancer patients for the American Cancer Society’s Look Good Feel Better program, and helped bake cakes for families of critically ill children through Icing Smiles, Inc.

Niko considers the essential characteristic of a Wild Woman to be “courage. To me, ‘wild’ means adventure, doing something that hasn’t been done before, not following the crowd, and being a leader.” She says her defining WW moment was more of a gradual change over time. “I look back and realize there were some pretty big obstacles in front of me, but I am here now.”

As to her WW role model, Niko says it is “Any person who doesn’t let life, circumstances, or the word ‘no’ deter them from what they are trying to do.” One thing that most people don’t know about this energetic lady: “I LOVE naps. Every Wild Woman needs a break, right? I mean, a well-rested Wild Woman can’t be stopped!”