



# COMMUNITY IMPACT I

## The Giving Circle

By Kim Tarnopolski | Pictures by Jenni Webb/jenniferwebbphotography.com  
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*Philanthropy* ... the word comes from the Greek and it means “love for humanity.” How a person shows their love for humanity depends on many factors. Some people give money while others give the gift of their time and expertise. In today’s world, we are all busy and stretched in a million directions but inherently we want to help others. Women are especially hardwired for giving back, it’s in their DNA. Women are problem solvers; they are empathetic and altruistic. So the challenge becomes how to fit philanthropy into a woman’s busy schedule.

Fortunately, there is a new trend in philanthropy and it’s called a giving circle. The word “giving” is used because women think of themselves as givers. “Circle” means that the participants pool their money so they can make larger gifts to selected nonprofits. The majority of the first giving circles were created by women for women members. In 2006, Karen Dunigan created a giving circle in Jackson, MI called 100+ Women Who Care. Ten years later, over 350 giving circles modeled after Karen’s group have spread across the world.



One of those giving circles is located right here in the Valley of the Sun. 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun

launched their chapter in February of this year with two sister groups; their Ahwatukee group is right here in our neighborhood. Their inaugural year was a tremendous success! The Ahwatukee group has over 150 members who collectively donated over \$40,000 to local charities in 2015. Their sister group in Scottsdale donated over \$25,000 for a grand total of \$65,000+ in one year.

The group is a gathering of like-minded, passionate women who want to connect to one another and to their communities. The ladies are leveraging their resources so their small gifts (\$100 per quarter) add up to a significant donation to a local charity (\$10,000 per quarter). To them, it is not about just signing a check; it is about caring.

It is the women in this group who bring the charities and their plight to the attention of the members. These women care about the issues facing us today – poverty, hunger, homelessness,

cancer, disease, seniors, and children to name a few. The stories they tell the group are transformative. They evoke our imagination, connect us emotionally and move us to action.

In 2015, the group’s donations helped send 30+ diabetic children to a camp in Prescott where they could just be kids for a week; improved the tutoring program for foster children and provided needed technology to aid in homework; enabled an organization to open their own commercial kitchen where they can make healthy meals for homebound cancer patients; and enhanced the lives of Ahwatukee seniors and gave support to the volunteers who assist them.

The 100+ Women Who Care model has allowed us to cast a wide net into our community and do something for the common good. 2015 was just the beginning. Our goal is to create a legacy of giving that exceeds \$500,000 in five years.

If you are looking for a way to fit philanthropy into your 2016 schedule, be sure to attend the group’s first quarter meeting in February. More information can be found at [www.100wwcvalleyofthesun.org](http://www.100wwcvalleyofthesun.org).



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