

OC LEADER BOARD

Opinion, Analysis, Insight

How Women Drive Innovation In Local Philanthropy

Women's wealth and influence are on the rise, especially in Orange County's philanthropy circles.

Today, 40% of global wealth holders are women, according to a recent study from Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University.

That's good news for philanthropy and for improving local communities because, as the study and research from the same institute also reveal, women across all income levels and generations are more likely to give to charitable causes and demand alignment of their values with the businesses they frequent and invest in.

They also prefer to give collectively and in partnership with other women, to invest in systems-level change and to take informed risks.

We're seeing similar trends here in Orange County.

Smart, savvy business women from a diverse array of backgrounds and life experiences are stepping up to drive innovation and impact through their philanthropy. Three inspiring OC women are providing trailblazing lessons for anyone looking to up their philanthropy game.



By Shelley Hoss

nonprofit world just as strongly as in the for-profit world – and is taking action to do so.

In taking her leap to innovate for good, she reached out to our foundation and assembled the new Innovative Philanthropy group. These like-minded donors are navigating some less traditional, high-impact philanthropic investments with the potential to create meaningful and lasting change. For example, when the group challenged members to rethink water, they featured a social entrepreneur who invented a “hydropanel,” a device that makes drinking water from sunlight and air. The group is also interested in impact investing, and meets with for-profit companies who are interested in creating positive social impact.

Collaboration

Through the growing movement of Women's Giving Circles, women are collaborating to maximize their impact. In fact, Giving Circles have tripled in number since 2007 and a full 70% of giving circles are comprised of women. They're sharing ideas and working together to push philanthropy to the next level.

Women like **Reshma Block** are leading the charge. She is founder and principal of **Compass Consulting**, a technology consulting firm specializing in large scale software implementations and disaster planning.

In addition to her business acumen, Reshma has extensive philanthropic experience, including as vice chair of OCCF Board of Governors.

Reshma is spearheading the formation of a new giving circle to amplify the vision and insights of Asian Pacific Islander (API) women in philanthropy, which includes Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander members. The newly released Orange County Equity Report reported that nearly one-fifth of the Orange County population is Asian American or Pacific Islander (API).

The new API Women's Giving Circle will explore the needs and challenges of the API community in Orange County, determine key opportunities for philanthropic investment, and offer sustainable solutions. Some documented challenges among local API populations include poverty and unemployment, racial gaps in hourly wages, educational inequity and a lack of access to proper health services.

Women Improving Society

Coretta Scott King said, “I have great faith in the power of women who will dedicate themselves whole-heartedly to the task of remaking our society.”

As president of OCCF, I have the same faith in the power and potential of savvy, dedicated and visionary women – because I have the privilege of working with them to help transform our community through the powerful tool of philanthropy.

Here at OCCF, where it is our mission to inspire a passion for giving that has a sustainable impact, we are proud to serve as a convener of women philanthropists and a catalyst for their collective action that promises to benefit Orange County for generations to come.

Editor's Note: Shelley Hoss has led the Orange County Community Foundation since 2000, turning it into the largest non-profit organization in the county. Since 1989, the foundation has granted more than \$600 million in partnership with “dreamers and doers motivated by their passion for a wide range of causes and issues.”

Hands-On Engagement

About 68% of women consider themselves highly engaged in their charities, according to the Women's Philanthropy Institute research.

Vicki Booth, who served on Orange County Community Foundation's Board for nearly a decade, including as chair, is not only emblematic of that trend in her own giving but is passionate about encouraging a hands-on experience for other women.

To do so, Vicki, who is also president of the **Ueberroth Family Foundation**, formed a Women's Giving Circle with her mom and other women across her networks. Women's Giving Circles are a national trend often started by donors: highly flexible do-it-yourself vehicles for philanthropy that maximize impact through a shared giving experience.

Vicki's group of like-minded friends meets to determine an issue area around which to focus their collective contributions. They then build out programming to understand the needs and opportunities first hand. They schedule nonprofit site visits, learn about organizations' impact and engage in collaborative grant making decisions.

Last year, the group decided to focus their philanthropy on children's issues, ultimately making grants to organizations providing development screenings for at-risk babies, support to struggling families with seriously ill children and workforce training for young adults.

Innovative Ideas

Across all industries, progress stems from innovators who strive for new approaches to unsolved problems or challenges.

Philanthropy is no different—we're seeing visionary donors explore new avenues to achieve game-changing impact.

Katie Kalvoda, founder and managing director at **Newport Wealth Management**, is one of these forward-thinking givers.

Driven not only to support organizations, but to improve outcomes at a systems level, Katie believes human ingenuity should be applied to the



Booth



Kalvoda



Block