

PHILANTHROPY ALMANAC

Women's groups hitting their strides in giving arena

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When the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute launched its Women's Cancers Program Executive Council in 2004, its first annual breakfast raised about \$250,000.

This year, the charity group doubled its take to \$500,000.

The annual breakfast fund-raiser, mostly attended by women, highlights the increased impact local women executives and philanthropists are having in charitable giving. Indeed, women are giving more — and more women are giving.

The trend comes at a time when women's wealth is increasing in America, and more women are doing more to empower their peers to participate in the charitable realm.

"These are women who bring their checkbooks, and all cut what they consider leadership gifts," said Corinne Grousbeck, who attended the spring breakfast event. "That was very inspirational. No one had to go home and check with their spouse."

Grousbeck, the founding chairwoman of the Perkins School for the Blind trust, is part of the latest movement for increased empowerment of women in philanthropy.

"Giving circles," women who bond for a cause and encourage one another



BY MARC BERNSAU / BUSINESS JOURNAL

Corinne Grousbeck, the founding chairwoman for the Perkins School for the Blind trust, says women are becoming a force in philanthropic circles. "These are women who bring their checkbooks and cut what they consider leadership gifts," she said.

to give, also are on the rise, enabling groups of donors to support issues that affect them directly or give back to underserved women's organizations.

Last month, Cambridge resident and former U.S. Ambassador to Austria Swanee Hunt and her sister, Helen LaKelly Hunt, launched Women Moving Millions, an initiative to encourage women donors to give \$1 million-plus

gifts to support organizations serving women and children.

The group and its partners hope to raise \$150 million by April 2009, having already collected over \$70 million. The Hunt sisters accounted for around \$10 million of those donations.

"Women are becoming more focused on change rather than charity," said Swanee Hunt in an e-mail interview.

"Empathy led them to charity, practicality is now leading them to change."

Last fall, the American Red Cross launched the Tiffany Circle, a giving circle consisting of a "society of women leaders," high-income women, whose annual membership contribution is \$10,000.

The money is forwarded to local Red Cross chapters.

"We really recognized the power of women," said Deborah C. Jackson, the local chapter's CEO. "So many people we serve are women."

Said Robyn Redfield, chairwoman of the Mass. Bay Tiffany Circle chapter and a wealth adviser with Morgan Stanley: "When you meet someone who's involved with doing good work, and you include them in your circle, you want that camaraderie. Women are not afraid of money. Women are in control — they run the finances."

Added Janet Burrows James, a general partner at RockPort Capital Partners LP and chairwoman of the board of trustees for Perkins School for the Blind: "Women have become much more active in philanthropy as they have in, frankly, politics, business, education, the arts. It's just I think women are coming into their own."

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