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NEWS

# Local women pool funds for charities

January 5, 2023

By Marin Howell



ADDISON COUNTY — A new philanthropic initiative kicking off in Addison County this month could \$40,000 or more to local nonprofits by the end of the year. Members of the charitable giving circle 100 Women Who Care Addison County will gather quarterly to contribute \$100 each and decide which local organizations will receive the group’s pooled donations.

At 100 members times \$100 apiece, that would net \$10,000 per quarter.

Porter Knight, a Bristol resident who helped bring the initiative to Addison County and sits on its steering committee, said the group is not limited to 100 members and could bring

PORTER KNIGHT

in more than \$10,000 for local nonprofits every three months.

"I hope to be funneling a lot more than \$40,000 a year to local organizations through this effort," she said. "There's been a lot of enthusiasm for it, which is great."

The county effort is part of a larger movement. The first 100 Women Who Care meeting took place in 2006, when a Michigan resident rallied 100 women together to quickly and efficiently raise money for local charities. The giving circle model has been recreated throughout the country ever since.

Women who join the local giving circle donate \$100 quarterly and are at the same time may nominate an area charitable cause to receive the pooled gifts. Nominated organizations must have been in operation for at least three years as of the date of nomination, and must serve Addison County and be a recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit.



MELISSA WEST

The group's steering committee handles the members' nominations. Two weeks before the group's quarterly meeting, the committee randomly selects three of the nominated organizations. Their representatives make short presentations at the group's meeting, sharing how they would use the funds if selected.

The group then votes on to which nonprofit they'd like to donate their funds. The organization that receives the most votes receives 70% of the funds. The two runners-up each receive 15%.

100 Women Who Care chapters have started up in other Vermont counties. Knight said she first learned of the giving circle model through the Chittenden County group, and she was invited to attend one of the

chapter's meetings this past summer.

"I said, 'I totally want to do this in Addison County,'" she recalled. "Every single person I talked to was like, 'Yes, I want to do that too.'"

Knight worked with fellow steering committee members Kirsten Pitts and Melissa West to put together the Addison County group, which went live last month. Knight said 63 local women have already joined the chapter, and the group is hoping to welcome more members ahead of its first quarterly meeting on Jan. 17.

The group is also putting together a fund that would create spots in the giving circle for local women that are unable to contribute \$100.

"We want to build a list of people who would like to be participating and invite donors to contribute more than the monthly amount for them to have a spot," Knight explained. "We already have one person who signed up as an anonymous donor and did not want to vote at meetings, so we have one slot now, and maybe we'll have more slots by Jan. 16."



KRISTEN PITTS

The Addison County group is also looking to take on a fourth steering committee member; interested individuals are encouraged to reach out to Knight or another steering committee member. Knight said there's some flexibility in terms of what that position entails, though the unfilled role involves managing the nomination process. With more nominations expected there will be plenty for a fourth steering committee member to do.

As the steering committee readies for its first meeting, Knight said she's excited about the potential impact the group could have on local organizations.

Soon, the steering committee will randomly select three nonprofits to hear from at its first meeting. Organizations that have been nominated thus far include Bristol's Have A

Heart Community Food Shelf, Turning Point Center of Addison County and WomenSafe.

"I think there's so much to love about this, I think a lot of people are excited about learning about new organizations in the region as well as sharing with other women the organizations that they're interested in," Knight said. "I think we'll have more than 100 women so I'm excited to channel that money back into organizations that do good work for our community."

Those interested in joining 100 Women Who Care, Addison County can learn more online at [www.100wacvt.org](http://www.100wacvt.org).

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