

THE POWER OF ONE

ONE



plus

one . . .

On paper, 1+1 sure doesn't add up to much.

Yet combine the efforts of two living beings and simple addition is no longer part of the equation. Suddenly, you have a powerful multiplication of energy, ability, resources, effort. Anything operating alone is weak but two of the same thing just doesn't have double strength, it's multiplied exponentially.

An enemy will always seek to isolate it's victim, physically, emotionally, financially, mentally. To divide and isolate is to conquer. To unite is to become strong - and it only takes ONE person to seek out another ONE.

I'd wager that most of us—in the cloistered space of our homes as parents, grandparents, creatives, entrepreneurs—assume we can't do much. It can be overwhelming to consider stepping out to start a "revolution" (an impact of change or help) within our sphere of influence of any sort. We believe it's for someone else with more "influence". So we go back to reading our books, decorating our homes—scrolling through social media, liking and admiring the impact that others are accomplishing but can't imagine that for ourselves.

But what if creating change and making an impact is as easy as 1 + 1?



FROM 1 TO 100.

In 2012, Jackie Gunn, then an owner of a well-know women’s boutique in Colorado Springs, Colorado wanted to do something for her local community but wasn’t sure where to start. A friend in Iowa told her about an organization called, 100 Women Who Care (now called 100 Who Care Alliance), and their story. Started by ONE woman, Karen Dunigan, who heard of a desperate need in her community of cribs for new mothers that were putting their babies in boxes or crates because they had no beds for them. The results were injuries and death to some infants. It was an urgent need which required \$10,000 immediately. Ms. Dunigan didn’t have the \$10,000 but wondered how quickly she could raise the money if she asked her friends to donate \$100. Now called *Fast Philanthropy*, Ms. Dunigan made some calls to friends, invited them over, shared the pressing need, and asked if they each would give \$100. That day, she raised over \$12,000 which was given immediately to the charity. Thus, the birth of 100 Who Care Alliance (also known as 100 Women Who Care /100 Men Who Care /100 Kids Who care... visit www.100whocarealliance.org).

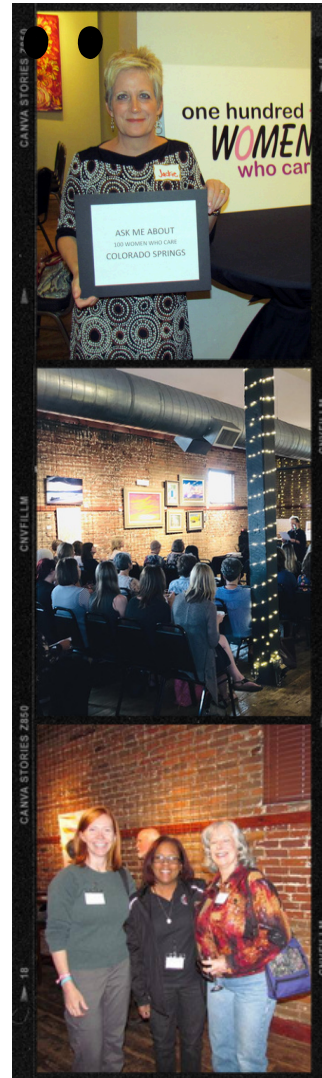
The idea is that once a quarter, 100 (or more) people gather, each bringing \$100, then give that money directly to meet a local need. No administrative expenses. No organizations or red-tape. Just people in a community coming together to help the community.

Jackie loved the idea so she called friends and boutique customers and formed a 100 Women Who Care group in Colorado Springs. Sharon Sperry was one of the first to attend this new group and now serves in a leadership capacity - though it’s not a formal organization and all financial gifts are given directly to the designated recipients.

Jackie and Sharon believe in keeping it simple because they want anyone to be able to participate. There’s no advertising, just word of mouth and anyone can come. “The structure of 100 Women Who Care is the most money for the least amount of time and energy,” says Jackie.

The group is still going after 11 years and most only see each other at the one-hour meeting every three months. Even so, Jackie says, “We call ourselves a tribe. It’s about human connection and we make it very personal. It’s also a chance to learn about our community. It feels great to directly impact our local community.”

It doesn’t cost to be a member but a member does commit to a one-year participation, agreeing to bring their \$100 every three months and paying it to the charity the group votes on-even if it’s not their choice. Once a person has participated in four meetings, they can nominate a charity or need. Nominations are placed in a bowl and three names are randomly drawn out of the bowl. The member who submitted the nomination has 5-minutes to share why they are submitting the need or charity. After three 5-minute presentations, the entire group votes on where to give the money.



“In 11 years, we’ve given back over \$450,000 to groups and charities in Colorado Springs,” says Sharon. And it started with ONE person, Jackie, who invited her connections to get together in-person, share a time of socializing, learn about the needs around them, then, combining their monies to meet a need.

Almost everyone can do \$100 every three months so it doesn’t exclude anyone. Jackie shares, “It’s an opportunity to do something with a friend. All these women come together with different ideas about the community. We get to hear about things that otherwise we’d never hear about. The group meets in person because we want that face-to-face personal encounter.”

On why they don’t advertise and rely on word-of-mouth, “It’s that personal connection. People want a sense of belonging, but they also want to be asked to participate.” As such, members are encouraged to go out into the community and invite people to come.

After 11 years, Jackie and Sharon have a good sense on how to keep their group strong and effective. For those that want to start something similar, Jackie and Sharon offer these tips:

1. Start somewhere. Start with friends.
2. Meet in your homes or a free space as you begin (then you can find a sponsor for a restaurant or other space).
3. Keep it simple: the hardest work is keeping it simple and avoiding the temptation to get into something bigger - because all the extra stuff takes away in the long run.
4. Your gatherings will fluctuate. Accept that people’s lives and circumstances change.
5. Set some guidelines for how, who, when. Even offer basic talking points for continuity.

It’s brilliant, really. And so simple. It can start with \$10 or whatever you want. The idea is the same: start with ONE person, invite another ONE, combine your money, efforts, connections, knowledge and make a splash for your hometown. ■

If you’d like to learn more about the Colorado Springs chapter of 100 Women Who Care, email Sharon Sperry at sharon@100wwccs.com. You can also visit their Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/100womenwhocarecoloradosprings



Jackie Gunn launched the Colorado Springs chapter of 100 Women Who Care in 2011



Sharon Sperry is a long-time member of 100WWCCS and volunteers her time with some of the administrative responsibilities.

