



BY NHU TE

## I CAN DO THAT, TOO

I've always been what you would call a tomboy. I liked the things and enjoyed the activities that were typically "for boys." I grew up with my older brother who I admired.

I was usually the target of his raging energy. He always defended himself saying, "Well, I always wanted a little brother, so I treated you like you were one." I'm happy he saw me as so.

He was my role model. Everything he did, I did. All the things he liked, I liked. All the clothing styles that he took on, I took on. A free spirit rocking cargo pants and really worn flannel shirts, I looked forward to spending time with him and our neighborhood friends—playing b-ball, catching insects, roughhousing with one another and playing video games. They saw me as one of their own, and life was great.

I don't think that I saw a difference between my brother and I until I hit my pre-teen years, and I was no longer allowed to do the things I loved... because those things were not suitable for a young lady. Fast forward 10 years.

In 2012, I discovered the world of olympic weightlifting, where women were just as strong as the boys, and, shockingly enough, they were being celebrated for it. Women were lifting weights twice their body weight and weren't shamed for doing activities that weren't "ladylike."

I became fascinated with the sport, and even took it on myself. And here's what I discovered:

- **Women can** do all the things that men can (even better).
- **Women have** no limits to their strength and resilience (I can't tell you how many times I got knocked down and got back up).
- **Women should not** be scrutinized or placed in a category because of their gender.
- **Women do** what they want (and they excel at it).

In this issue, we celebrate the women in philanthropy. We are a sector that is majority women and, yet, we only account for 45% of CEOs,

according to "The Nonprofit Leadership Workbook for Women." We're fighting an ongoing battle; and we won't win until all gender stereotypes are thrown out the window, and people are judged by their knowledge, their skills, their experience and what they bring to the table. **NPPRO**

Stay strong. Stay fierce. Until next time.

Nhu Te  
Editor-in-Chief  
NonProfit PRO  
nhute@napco.com

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# THE RISE OF WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY

POWERFUL NONPROFIT LEADERS BREAKING  
STEREOTYPES AND ESTABLISHING THE NEW NORM

BY NHU TE





**L**ook around you today: It's becoming increasingly more common to see women hold leadership roles at nonprofit organizations, proving that women play a central role and are becoming more dominant in today's nonprofit landscape. But it hasn't always been this way. Breaking the barriers and challenging a male-dominated world has always been an uphill battle, but research supports that the fight for equality is now going in the right direction (albeit slowly).

In the nonprofit sector, 75% of women make up the labor force, according to "The White House Project: Benchmarking Women in Leadership" report. Like we mentioned earlier, women are playing a central role in the charitable giving space. According to "Women and Million Dollar Giving: Current Landscape and Trends to Watch" report, women represent 51% of total wealth in the U.S.—that's a grand total of \$14 trillion, with an expected rise to \$22 trillion by 2020. Further, 45% of U.S. millionaires are women and 40% of U.S. households have women as primary breadwinners.

With all this said, there's no denying that there is a rise in the role of women in our sector. And in this cover story, we highlight seven powerful and inspiring women who give us their insights on the role of women in philanthropy.

#### **WOMEN ENTERING INTO THE DECISION-MAKING ROLE**

We're in a historical moment in time where women are not looking to their husband or male counterparts in order to make a decision. They are now looking toward a future where they are the decision-maker, whether it comes to charitable giving or anything else.

"Women have always been stronger than men in fundraising for charities, but now they—and we really—want more options, more opportunities for creativity and partnership," Jodi Patkin, VP of brand strategy and communications at March of Dimes, said in an exclusive interview with Non-Profit PRO.

"I am really excited that more women are getting creative ►



and infusing new power into their fundraising and creating ways of giving with an organization, and not being limited to one or two ways to get involved,” she said.

To help support this, March of Dimes created a DIY platform and community-building initiatives like #UnspokenStories in conjunction with its March for Babies. Patkin explained that donors wanted to share their stories to help others, as well as their dollars and their time.

For women who do have a spouse or partner, 81% of couples said that they discuss charitable-giving decisions as a couple, according to Fidelity Charitable’s “How Couples Give” report.

In high-net-worth households, 84% are the primary decision-maker or joint decision-maker about investments, according to the “Women and Million Dollar Giving: Current Landscape and Trends to Watch” report. The report also stated that women are twice as likely to view charitable giving as the most satisfying aspect of wealth, and women are more likely to value their wealth as a way to create positive change.

“In my work at Living Water International, I have really seen women embrace their own ideas, their own passions and their own money to be the driver for their philanthropy,” Julie Hill, director for philanthropy at Living Water International, said. I’m really inspired by women who are embracing of their power, their finances and their ability to make a difference.”

“The biggest trends are women giving on their own, not in the name of their husbands if they have one, and the explosive growth of giving circles. Giving circles are particularly well-suited to women, I think, because they are both social and philanthropic,” Allison Fine, author and founder and CEO of Network of Elected Women, said.

“Women [are] getting much more practical and hands-on with their giving, and I also see a lot of women recognizing that they can go full-on into gender equality giving,” Kiersten Marek, founder of Philanthropy Women, said.

She shares the example of Melinda Gates, who has always been a strong partner in the Gates’ philanthropy; but in recent years, her hands-on work in gender equality has increased to the point where she wrote a book proclaiming her feminism and talking in detail about how empowering women needs to be at the center of discussion on how to improve the world.

“She didn’t get these ideas by staying in the 1% bubble. She got them by going out into the world and seeing with her own eyes and hearing with her own ears about the world’s problems, and listening to, in my opinion, very wise leaders in the nonprofit sector,” Marek continued.

When it comes to women in the nonprofit workforce, women are now claiming leadership seats within organizations and with a voice that is their own, a shift from what we’ve seen in decades past.

“You’re seeing more leaders in this sector, more promi-

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ment leaders, more voices being spoken. In the past, there were leaders, but you felt like they were carbon copies of the boys club to fit in and that they had very certain styles of leadership that very much mirrored, maybe even harsher, in this sector than the men would be to prove that they were tough and could handle it,” Jamie Natelson, SVP of marketing at The Humane Society of the United States, said. “Now you see women coming into their own in this industry, leading the industry, being the leaders in the philanthropic community, making their own path and doing it their own way.

### UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN GIVE

When it comes to giving to charity, women are more empathetic toward the causes they care deeply about. In many cases, they have a tendency to give more than men. And in some cases they can be spontaneous with their giving. The Fidelity Charitable “Women and Giving: The Impact of Generation and Gender on Philanthropy” report found that women have a heart-first approach to giving:

- 64% said: “I am more motivated by my heart when it comes to giving (versus my head).”
- 51% said: “I am often motivated to give in the moment (versus being more strategic).”
- 61% said: “I grew up giving (versus becoming a giver as an adult).”

- 68% said: “I consider myself highly engaged in giving.”

“Women have always been more likely to give. They’ve always been more concerned about what’s going in the world and other similar situations. I think we’re doing everything we can to engage them,” Natelson said. “The best thing we can do to get women to get more into philanthropy is to deal with income and equality, so women will have more revenue to give.”

At March of Dimes, the organization is listening—asking what is meaningful, what issues matter and how women want to be engaged.

“Women’s value to an organization is so much more than dollars raised. Women are powerhouses in engaging our networks in causes we champion and believe in. And that engagement has to be authentic and meaningful,” Patkin said.

There’s a general notion out there that women respond to messaging tactics that are clearly targeted toward women, and that’s simply not the case.

It’s important for nonprofits to understand that each woman has a different background, they each have different passions and interests, they respond to different messaging and they will support organizations that they emotionally connect with.

“Women are inspired by helping an organization solve problems. I think there’s a general perception that women need to be communicated with differently or that women are going to give for different reasons,” Elizabeth Zeigler, presi- ▶

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dent and CEO of Graham-Pelton Consulting, said.

She continued, “We have to be more delicate with them, or we have to paint a rosier picture for them, when, in fact, that’s not true.”

In fact, more self-made women are being very visible and relational about their philanthropy, which means they don’t want to just give to an organization, they want to be involved within that organization, Kishshana Palmer, CEO of Kishshana & Co., noted.

“It’s been interesting to see light being shined on women and giving as if it’s a new thing when it is not new. What feels ‘newer’ is the opportunity to place us front and center, and not as a good supporting actress in the story,” Palmer said.

## WOMEN CHANGING THE FUTURE OF PHILANTHROPY

Women can change our landscape by making larger gifts in their lifetime, and there’s an opportunity for that.

“Frankly, the onus is on the nonprofits to extend those invitations, meaning they need to identify the opportunities to present to women and invite them to make those kinds of gifts,” Zeigler said. “We predict that we will see increasing numbers of gifts at the \$1-million-dollar level, \$10-million-dollar level and \$25-million-dollar level, and we predict that being made by single women.”

“I hope that women will stop being afraid of talking about money and recognize it as the necessary and critical vehicle to power and change that it is,” Fine said.

Like we’ve previously mentioned, women make up a majority of the nonprofit sector; but women sitting in leadership roles is something that we want to see more of in the future for our sector.

“The future means there are going to be more women giving, which means we need more women in leadership and more women involved in this field. We need to be strategically connecting with and engaging women across the board,” Hill said.

While we have made significant strides, we still have a lot of work to do. There is still a lack of diversity in our sector, and we must do better. McKinsey & Company said, “More diverse companies, we believe, are better able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction and decision-making, and all that leads to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns.” This is also relatable to the nonprofit sector. And what’s encouraging is that we are finally starting to have more conversations about it.

“For me personally, what stands out is that there is a lot more conversation about the place, or lack of place, for women of color in philanthropy; although women of color from every ethnic background throughout the diaspora, and throughout every cultural place in the world that we can think of, has been giving,” Palmer said.

“I am envisioning a world where feminist giving is the standard of practice in philanthropy. This would mean that all grantmaking institutions would take an approach with three prongs: inclusion, equality and systems change,” Marek said. “Women leaders in philanthropy will be in demand, as they will have brought a deeper understanding to the sector about how the wealth gap is detrimental to society and how philanthropists must lead the way toward deep systems change to right the balance.” *NPPRO*

## Q Can you share a great example of a woman who is changing the philanthropic landscape?



“Priscilla Chan, co-founder, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.”  
— *Jamie Natelson*



“Dalila Wilson-Scott, SVP of community impact for Comcast Corporation and president at Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation.”  
— *Kishshana Palmer*



“Paula Liang, chair of the board, Catalist, encourages people to create giving circles that meet their own personal interests and social needs.”  
— *Allison Fine*



“Melinda Gates, co-founder, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has always been a trailblazer. And she continues to be.”  
— *Jodi Patkin*



“Melinda Gates, co-founder, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.”  
— *Julie Hill*



“Ruth Ann Harnisch, founder, The Harnisch Foundation.”  
— *Kiersten Marek*



“Frances Hesselbein, former CEO, Girl Scouts of the USA, is the epitome of leadership and service.”  
— *Elizabeth Zeigler*