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Book Recognizes San Diego’s Philanthropic Women Who are Changing the World

Published by UC San Diego, free download is available



"She Who Inspires" cover art.

It is clear from the title artwork of “She Who Inspires” that the face of philanthropy is changing. Debuted Oct. 25 by the University of California San Diego Office of Gift Planning, the new book recognizes the rise of female philanthropists throughout the San Diego region who are challenging the conventions of what it means to transform the world. For the women spotlighted in the new publication, philanthropy is about more than giving money—it is about giving time, leadership and vision.

“She Who Inspires” is a three-year book project profiling over 115 philanthropic women in San Diego who contribute to making our community better, from helping underserved children access education to supporting endangered species conservation. Regardless of their status or net worth, these game-

changing individuals have generously offered their gifts of time, talent or treasure to help make life better for other people. The book is now available for free to download online at giftplanning.ucsd.edu/shewhoinspires to encourage others to continue the good work of the featured philanthropists.

Following is just a sampling of the many inspirational women featured in “She Who Inspires.”

MAKING TIME

Carol Littlejohn Chang’s family was deeply involved in philanthropic activities through their church, and as a child she worked with underserved populations in East Los Angeles. This early immersion in volunteer work prompted her to commit to helping women in San Diego. As a charter member and past chair of the San Diego Women’s Foundation, and chair of the UC San Diego Foundation Board, Chang is able to channel her time toward supporting a number of causes that align with her values and passions.



Attendees at "She Who Inspires" book launch party. Photo by Heather Vandemark.

Chang’s story is familiar to many of the women featured in “She Who Inspires.” Their early experiences volunteering in their communities contributed to a lifelong passion for philanthropy. These women do not just give their money; they are board chairs, nonprofit founders and on-the-ground volunteers who enjoy seeing first-hand the effects of their work.

“UC San Diego was smart to appoint extraordinary women, like Carol, to roles in leadership, research and other positions of influence,” said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “Their contributions not only make our university a better place, they also create an environment that embraces inclusivity and leads to world-changing discovery.”

SHARING TALENTS

Supporting women and young people is the factor that unifies Amina Sheik Mohamed’s philanthropy. In 2015, she founded the Youth Advisory Council at UC San Diego’s Center for Community Health to support young people of color, many of whom are immigrants or refugees. She is passionate about ensuring that individuals and communities that have experienced historical and systemic inequalities have opportunities for success.

Mohamed, and other women like her, are part of a growing movement towards the increase of women involved in philanthropy. Experts estimate that women will control two-thirds of the nation’s wealth by 2030. Further, reports show that wealthy women are more likely to give money and time to charity than their male peers. However, these trends do little to illuminate the women themselves.

“We know a lot about the Warren Buffets and the Bill Gates and the Michael Bloomborgs, but we know next to nothing about women like Mary Ann, Carol and Amina,” said Elise Wald, director of development in UC San Diego’s Office of Gift Planning. “We wanted to celebrate these women and the things that make them and their philanthropy unique.”

GIVING TREASURE

When she was a child, Mary Ann Beyster’s family supported a number of programs committed to helping families, young people and research, including Achievement Rewards for College Scientists and UC San Diego. Today, Beyster is involved with a number of nonprofits in San Diego and across the country that focus on public health, science and technology, the environment and education.

Like many women, Beyster contributes to a number of institutions and initiatives, and she considers each donation carefully. Her philanthropy, and that of the other women in “She Who Inspires,” underscores a number of trends—that women tend to give to many causes rather than to one particular cause, that they are often passionate ambassadors for the nonprofits they support and that women give to education more than any other sector—but it also shows a more nuanced and personal approach to giving.

“Philanthropy is bigger than any one person,” said Dani Dawson, executive director of development in UC San Diego’s Office of Gift Planning. “This book was intended to show how, when people—especially women—contribute just a little bit of their time, talent or treasure, it makes an immense difference in people’s lives and our community.” Each woman recognized in “She Who Inspires” believes that philanthropy is not about numbers or notoriety. It is about leading, inspiring and giving what they can to make the world a better place.

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