



THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE GIVING

By Yolanda F. Johnson

As we look to the year ahead and think of the hope we have for the future, it's also important to look back on the reactive nature of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic, racial justice movements, civil unrest, economic uncertainty—you name it, it seems to have occurred in 2020. And, whatever came our way, we had to remain resilient, flexible, and we had to pivot! In fact, I call 2020 "The Great Pivot," where we needed to continuously tap into our skill sets and talents in order to reinvent ourselves into whatever was needed to get the job done, survive and thrive.

When it comes to the "good work" of giving back, it's important to recognize how so many people, namely women, were able to reinvent their philanthropic endeavors through giving circles. Collective giving has seen a great resurgence over the past year. First, due to the congenial nature of it, and second, because it allows one person to stand together with many others in order to make an even greater impact.

A giving circle is a group of people who pool their dollars together to ultimately give to designated organizations or causes. Often, members of a giving circle are all committed to the same cause or are often part of the same ethnic background. Because of this, the circle eventually also begins to offer professional and personal development programming, networking and more, as everyone comes together for a common good.

Some giving circles require a minimum "buy-in" amount, and have periodic voting cycles when the group decides where the money will go. So, while your \$200 would have certainly done some good for an organization, just imagine what 50 \$200 gifts could accomplish via a giving circle?

While you can usually find a giving circle anywhere you're located across the United States, here are a few options of some of the most successful giving circles, should you be interested in joining one.

Impact 100

Impact100 is a collective force for good; uniting and empowering women to give together, creating transformational impact, locally and globally. Impact100 was founded by Wendy Steele in 2001 in response to feeling as though women's roles in philanthropy needed a new way to be expanded and encouraged. Wendy launched the organization with the goal of empowering women to see themselves as activists through utilizing large grants to make an impact within their communities.

Impact100council.org

Black Benefactors

Founded by Tracey Webb, Black Benefactors is a giving circle based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to enhance the well-being of Black children, youth and families by encouraging philanthropy, community service and advocacy in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

BlackBenefactors.org

Asian Women Giving Circle

Asian Women Giving Circle is an all-volunteer group of Asian American women in New York City who are passionate about amplifying the transformative power of arts and culture to advance an equitable and just society. They pool their resources to fund projects led by Asian American women artists and community groups. They take risks by investing in emerging and cutting-edge change makers. They stay rooted in the community, learning and innovating together. They believe funding can be a form of activism.

AsianWomenGivingCircle.org

Philanos

Can't find a giving circle but want to learn more about them or find resources for starting your own? Look no further than Philanos, the leading women's giving circle network in the United States. Philanos supports the creation, development, and expansion of collective giving circles by giving a national voice to the high-impact collective giving movement.

Philanos at a glance:

- More than 17,500 women strong
- More than 75 member organizations worldwide
- Granted more than \$140 million to nonprofit organizations

Philanos.org

However you choose to reinvent your personal way of giving back this year, be inspired and hopeful that there are many ways to shine a light on the good work that is needed in the world today. We'll explore a few of these in upcoming issues, but hopefully, if a giving circle looks like the right fit for you, you can find the resources you need to move forward.