



PHILANTHROPY MAGAZINE

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WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS RAMPING UP

Kae Dakin, president of Washington Grantmakers, an organization of 140 capital-area philanthropic groups, tells the Washington Post, “There is an enormous amount of untapped potential” among affluent women. Dakin says women are traditionally more comfortable with volunteering time than with giving money. Lin Macmaster, who has studied wealthy women’s attitudes, agrees: “Women don’t look at themselves as philanthropists.” Ami Aronson, head of Washington’s Bernstein Family Foundation, says “old-school women philanthropists are of a mind-set of being private, of trying to downplay their economic viability and success” or their inherited wealth. One survey found that affluent

women “needed more money than men did to feel financially secure about their futures.” But women’s philanthropy is increasing; women’s foundations that raise money “primarily for programs that benefit women and children” have risen in number from five to 95 in the past 20 years. Nor are women philanthropists limited only to “women’s issues” in their work. For example, the Boston Globe tells of **Elizabeth Weber**, who grew up in the Somerville housing projects of Boston, yearning to get out. “All I knew was I wanted to be a millionaire,” she says. At 44, she’d reached her goal, going “from selling brushes door-to-door to becoming international field president for Market America, earning more than seven figures a year.” What’s next? “You give it all back, or at least a lot of it.” At her twentieth wedding anniversary a year and a half ago, Weber announced the formation of **The Weber Foundation of Helping Hands**, which has given more than \$100,000 to people with “life-threatening illnesses or other catastrophic situations.” They give away “nearly every dime” received because “all of the administrative expenses, which are considerable, have been donated by friends and suppliers or paid for by Weber.”