



A History of 100 Women Who Care

As told by Jane Uhila and Patty Sete, sisters of the late Karen Dunigan, founder of 100+ Women Who Care

Growing up in a family with 12 kids, we each had to learn what our own strengths were, if for no other reason than to survive at the dinner table. One of Karen's was her refusal to take "no" for an answer. As she was facing the end of her life, she asked us to continue her legacy of 100+ Women Who Care and we knew immediately that we could not refuse her request. By taking on this leadership position, we are committed to making Karen proud of us through keeping alive her vision of bringing people together and building strong communities.

Those who knew Karen would call her a strong woman. One of her greatest strengths was her belief that everyone deserves a chance and has something to offer that is of value. Whether you come from a good home and were given opportunities or grew up with little hope for a better life, Karen knew that as an adult you have a choice to give your talents or give up. Karen also believed that all of us struggle at times and when those struggles occur, we owe it to each other to do what we can and provide a helping hand.

As such, Karen was always involved in her community. The list of organizations with which she served on boards, worked for or volunteered with is very long. She also liked to keep it personal and was known to befriend young women who needed someone to guide them into adulthood. She always took the time to listen to your story and rather than judge, she simply sought out a way to help if asked. Her involvement ranged from something as simple as cooking a meal to share with a friend to raising tens of thousands of dollars for her community as well as give at every level in between.

Karen always found it interesting that one of her greatest ideas was born from something as simple and basic as baby cribs and that this need, which most new mothers take for granted, is what began our movement. One day, Karen was having lunch the CEO of the Center for Family Health, their Dental Director and Development Coordinator to discuss other fundraising matters. In passing, the CEO mentioned a need her staff members brought to her attention that morning regarding new mothers and portable cribs. Karen's ears perked and she told her that would be something she would like to know more about and another lunch was scheduled to specifically discuss the need.

During the follow up lunch, details were shared on how new mothers were bringing their babies home and placing the sleeping infants in boxes, dresser drawers or on their own beds because they could not afford a proper crib. Some of these babies didn't survive the night. Karen was presented with a list of how many cribs were needed, the cost of mattresses, blankets and beds. In all, a total of \$10,000 was needed. As Karen began thinking about Center for Family Health's need, she knew there had to be a way to quickly and easily meet the financial request that was presented. With all of her involvement in the community, Karen figured she knew 100 women who would each give \$100. She began making phone calls and scheduled a meeting. At that first meeting, in one hour, a group of Karen's friends heard the story and each wrote checks to the Center for Family Health, resulting in a \$12,800 donation, more than requested, to supply new mothers with the simplest need: a crib.

Karen recognized that she was on to something special and that it too was in its own infancy and needed to be nurtured to grow. She founded the first 100+ Women Who Care and scheduled quarterly meetings. The rules were simple, any member could present a need in the community, the need had to be immediate and the money had to remain local. The idea was that a worthy cause benefits many in the community.



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Karen's legacy lives on through the expansion of 100+ Chapters throughout the world. There are now more than 350 chapters either fully operational or under development and they include women, men, people and kids chapters. Karen may have had a tough exterior, but she had a heart of gold and she truly cared. She saw people for their strengths and enhanced them. Everybody has their own strengths and when 100 or more people come together in a room those gifts become a powerful force for doing good work while lifting up your community. We are each strong in our own right, but together we are stronger. Karen knew this, applauded it and was so very proud of 100+ Women Who Care.