



Women Investing in Women

**2019 Giving Circle Leader
Guidebook**

Vision:

Changing the world by building communities of women helping women.

Mission:

Blossom is a non-profit organization which inspires women to raise funds through its giving circles to address the needs of women and girls in the South Sound and globally.



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SECTION 1: HISTORY

In 2006 Blossom Benefit started in Kim Murphey's living room with a small group of friends who came together to support others in need. Blossom grew from a few friends to a community of hundreds of women coming together each year to support women and girls. The women of Blossom donated over \$60,000 directly supporting nonprofits in our community and internationally. Blossom was paused in 2014 after 9 years of fundraising and celebrating women and girls.

In 2017 a small group of women convened to discuss the future of Blossom and how to revitalize the work. This group created a new vision of how to meet the needs of women and girls locally, nationally, and globally.

In 2018, Blossom launched a new charitable giving model called giving circles to reengage women in the work of Blossom and to create space for women to gather in community, learn about issues impacting women and girls locally and internationally, and most importantly, to give collectively to make a difference in the world by investing in women and girls.

This Inaugural Giving Circle of twelve women collectively raised \$12,000, 100% of which was divided equally between two organizations that met our identified 2018 focus on Health: Days for Girls and REST: Real Escape from the Sex Trade. Our donations helped provide menstrual supplies and reproductive education internationally, while also helping local anti-trafficking efforts to bring freedom, safety and hope to local women. The Inaugural Giving Circle also provided key guidance as a new Blossom organizational structure was formed.

Moving forward in 2019, Blossom will expand our impact by growing our circles and our collective giving to substantially increase our investment in women and girls.

SECTION 2: GIVING CIRCLES OVERVIEW

Giving circles are an increasingly popular model for philanthropic giving because they are flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the individuals participating in the circle. Generally speaking, giving circles are groups of individuals who pool their philanthropic contributions, thereby achieving a greater impact.

Giving circles can be informal (like a group of women who have a wine night once a month and pass a basket for contributions to a local non-profit) or more structured (groups that meet regularly at a designated location, require a minimum contribution and invite local non-profits to apply for grants). Whether informal or highly organized, giving circles allow donors to achieve a greater impact as a group, than if they individually made a financial contribution to a cause that matters to them. Plus, the hard work of researching organizations and figuring out where your donation can make the biggest impact can be easier and more fun when shared with others. Giving circles can also be models of the democratic process, providing donors equal voice in deciding how charitable contributions are disbursed. In the process, donors connect with one another and with their communities.

Good Reasons to Join or Start a Giving Circle (from <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-are-giving-circles-2502067>)

- Pooling money with others and focusing on a critical issue can have a far greater impact than individual gifts.
- The collective wisdom and know-how of a group create value and impact to charitable investments.
- Developing partnerships with a smaller number of charities can create a deeper level of involvement for donors and the nonprofits they support.
- It can be fun to be part of a group and fulfilling to contribute in such an innovative and insightful way.
- Provides the opportunity to join with like-minded individuals, such as those who wish to support causes related to women and girls!

With the Blossom Giving Circle model our goals are two-fold:

- 1) **Create supportive, inspiring circles where women can gather, engage in their local community and learn about issues impacting women and girls locally and internationally.**
- 2) **Pool our contributions to have a deep impact on the issues facing women and girls in our communities.**

SECTION 3: GIVING CIRCLE LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Giving circle leaders assemble a circle of women who meet at least quarterly to reach the financial giving goals of the circle and to learn more about how to support the needs of women and girls, locally and globally.

Circle leaders plan giving circle meetings:

- Quarterly to promote the giving theme for the year and to learn more about the organizations the Board selected for the annual gift. Circle meetings are intended to create an opportunity for women to gather, learn about the issues facing women and girls, and pool their collective financial resources to support those needs, locally and globally.
- Meetings can be short, usually an hour and a half, to allow time for catching up and small talk at the beginning and end. Just set aside some time each meeting to accomplish small circle-related goals (see Section 4 for quarterly calendar).

Circle leaders facilitate circle decisions:

- Determine meeting frequency, choose meeting dates for the year and locations, and determine other goals for the year such as choosing a book study or series of documentaries related to the annual giving focus. Circles are encouraged to use consensus voting to narrow choices.
- Determine the collective annual giving goal based on personal commitments that are meaningful for each individual. See Section 5 of this guidebook for more specifics about setting pledge goals.
- Identify potential grant recipient organizations related to the annual giving focus. Each woman is encouraged to research and identify an organization that personifies the annual giving focus to submit to their circle for consideration.

Circle leaders act on behalf of the giving circle to:

- Submit the collective goal to the Board and determine whether your circle prefers a quarterly detailed summary of giving or a more generalized circle summary. Reminder: individual donation totals are considered personal and confidential and will not be shared with other circle members.
- Submit one local and one international non-profit organization to the Board for consideration as a grant recipient.
- Collect donations from giving circle members.
- Demonstrate giving process by making a financial contribution by check or PayPal donation toward your circle's collective giving goal.
- Mail giving circle donations to Blossom using pre-addressed envelopes.
- Monitor progress toward your circle's annual giving goal. Circle leaders will receive a quarterly report detailing pledges received to date.
- Consider reading "The XX Factor Framework" to learn more about the outcomes that have the biggest impact on women and girls.
- Continue to engage, encourage and inspire each other!

Section 4: ANNUAL GIVING CYCLE

Blossom's Annual Giving Cycle follows the cycle of a flower:

- **Seed-sowing:** Identification of giving focus
- **Germination:** Brainstorm and propose potential grant recipients
- **Growth:** Education about our identified organizations
- **Bloom:** Big give and celebration!

It is our hope that your circle will meet, at a minimum, of four times per year. Circles are encouraged to meet more frequently such as monthly or every 6 weeks. The structure of these meetings is up to you and we encourage informal connections with an emphasis on building authentic dialogue about current issues facing women and girls. Quarterly meetings should include the following:

Seed-sowing: Theme/Identify Giving Focus (Quarter 1: January, February, March)

Board responsibilities: The board will choose an annual giving focus which will rotate annually based on current community/world need and input from our giving circles. In order to create the greatest impact for women and girls, our giving is guided by research from the Center for High Impact Philanthropy which identifies five key dimensions with a strong evidence base linking them to the strongest outcomes for women and girls. These five dimensions are identified in their framework "The XX Factor: A Comprehensive Framework for Improving the Lives of Women & Girls" and include:

- Health
- Education
- Economic Empowerment
- Personal Safety
- Legal Rights.

Giving Circle Responsibilities:

- This first meeting should include a get-to-know-you focus. We recommend you open with an ice-breaker, (see Appendix B: Icebreaker Idea Bank), identify meeting frequency, choose meeting dates for the year and determine other goals for the year such as choosing a book study or series of documentaries related to the annual giving focus.
- Determine your collective annual giving goal based on personal commitments that are meaningful for each individual. See Section 5 of this guidebook for more specifics about setting pledge goals.
- Submit your collective goal to the Board and determine whether your circle prefers a quarterly detailed summary of giving or circle summary. Reminder: individual donation totals are considered personal and confidential and will not be shared with other circle members.
- Contribute with a check or PayPal donation toward your circle's collective giving goal. Circle leaders mail donations to Blossom using pre-addressed envelopes.
- All circles are encouraged to read "The XX Factor Framework" to learn more about the outcomes that have the biggest impact on women and girls.

Germination: Identify Grant Recipient(s) Quarter 2 (April, May, June)

Giving Circle Responsibilities: (April, May)

- Identify potential grant recipient organizations related to the annual giving focus. Each woman is encouraged to research and identify an organization that personifies the annual giving focus to submit to their circle for consideration.
- Circles are encouraged to use consensus voting to narrow choices.
- Each Giving circle may submit one local and one international non-profit organization to the Board for consideration as a grant recipient.
- Contribute with a check or PayPal donation toward your circle's collective giving goal. Circle leaders mail donations to Blossom using pre-addressed envelopes.
- Circle leaders will receive a quarterly report detailing pledges received to date.

Board responsibilities: (June)

- Submit to membership the nominated organizations for consideration. Members will have the opportunity to vote on the nominated organizations received from all circles.
- The board will make the final determination of our grant recipient(s) for the year based on voting preferences from giving circle membership.
- Giving percentages will generally be divided equally with 50% of our disbursed funds benefiting local organizations and 50% of our funds benefiting international organizations.

Growth: Education about Grant Recipient(s) Quarter 3 (July, August, September)

Board responsibilities:

- Notify the grant recipient organizations and arrange an informational session with a representative from each chosen organization. This will be an opportunity for members to learn about each organization's work to benefit women and girls.

Giving Circle responsibilities:

- Come and learn how our selected recipient organizations are changing the world.
- Monitor progress toward your circle's annual giving goal.
- Contribute with a check or PayPal donation toward your circle's collective giving goal. Circle leaders mail donations to Blossom using pre-addressed envelopes.
- Circle leaders will receive a quarterly report detailing pledges received to date.
- Continue to engage, encourage and inspire each other!

Blossom: Big Give/Annual Celebration Quarter 4 (October, November, December)

- Continue to monitor progress toward your circle's annual giving goal.
- Circle leaders will receive a quarterly report detailing pledges received to date.
- Contribute with a check or PayPal donation toward your circle's collective giving goal. Circle leaders mail donations to Blossom using pre-addressed envelopes.
- All annual pledges to be submitted by November 30 to be included in collective totals.
- At the conclusion of each annual giving year, all giving circles will come together in celebration to acknowledge and recognize "The Big Give."

SECTION 5: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

During a giving circle's first quarterly meeting of each year, the leader will guide their circle in determining a financial goal for the year. There should be consensus within the group about a realistic and attainable goal with buy-in from each circle member. Once a goal is agreed upon, the leader will complete a Circle Pledge Form, signed by each circle member, and forward it to the Board. The Board will take into consideration each circle's goal in determining a collective annual goal for Blossom.

Giving/Goal-Setting Guidelines:

- There is no minimum donation amount required per circle or per individual; however each individual will be asked to donate and will be responsible for making their individual giving pledge.
- Circle members are asked to contribute financially at a level that is personally meaningful to them.
- Circle leaders should focus on the collective goal and will receive quarterly updates from the Board detailing circle donations received to date.
- Individual donation totals are considered personal and confidential and will not be shared with other circle members.

Donation Process:

- Blossom accepts online donations and checks. No cash will be accepted.
- Circle leaders will be provided with pre-addressed envelopes for members to submit donations directly to the Treasurer.
- Online fees will be reported so members can factor fees into their donation totals.
- One hundred percent of circle donations will be distributed to the selected charitable organization(s). All Blossom administrative costs will be deducted from the Board's circle donations.
- A tax receipt summarizing each person's donations for the year will be sent out by January 31st of the year following the donation.

APPENDIX A: GIVING CIRCLE PLEDGE FORM



Our Giving Circle Aspirational pledge for 2019:

\$ _____

- ❖ Giving circle members are asked to contribute at a level that is personally meaningful.
- ❖ Individual donation totals are considered personal and confidential and will not be shared with other circle members.

Signed by Circle members:

Name	Signature
_____	_____
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**Please provide our circle with a quarterly report of our collective giving.
Please provide our circle leader with a detailed quarterly report detailing individual pledges received to date.**

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDED READING

Books:

- ❖ Half the Sky - Nicholas Kristof
- ❖ A Path Appears - Nicholas Kristof
- ❖ Generosity Network - Jennifer McRea & others
- ❖ Inspired Philanthropy - Tracy Gary
- ❖ Women and Philanthropy - Sondra Shaw-Hardy/Martha A. Taylor
- ❖ What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence for the World's Best Investment – Gene B Sperling & Rebecca Winthrop
- ❖ Girl Rising- Tanya Lee Stone
- ❖ I am Malala- Malala Yousafzai

Articles:

- ❖ The XX Factor: A Comprehensive Framework for Improving the Lives of Women and Girls (The Center for High Impact Philanthropy). Available at: <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/the-xx-factor/>
- ❖ Poverty is Sexist: Why Girls and Women Must be at the Heart of the Fight to End Extreme Poverty (One.org) Available at: https://s3.amazonaws.com/one.org/pdfs/poverty_is_sexist_report.pdf
- ❖ Gender Matters: New Research Explores Philanthropic Giving to Women's Causes (Non-profit Quarterly) Available at: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2016/06/16/gender-matters-new-research-explores-philanthropic-giving-to-womens-causes/>
- ❖ Girl Effect <https://www.girleffect.org/who-we-are/our-story/>
- ❖ How to Be a Better Donor and Have More Fun With a Giving Circle (The Balance) Available at: <https://www.thebalance.com/what-are-giving-circles-2502067>
- ❖ Giving Circles: More Impact To Go Around (NY Times) Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/giving/giving-circles-more-impact-to-go-around.html>

APPENDIX C: ICEBREAKER IDEA BANK

Icebreakers are a core part of opening each of our Blossom circle meetings. These questions sometimes inspire laughter and goofiness, and sometimes inspire thoughtful reflection. Whatever your style, here are some fun suggestions:

<https://projectbliss.net/team-building-icebreakers-for-meetings/>

Benefits of Using Team Building Icebreakers for Meetings

- Icebreakers help teams bond and build rapport more quickly.
- They can help teams relax and prompt creativity.
- They can help team members start building trust.
- You can facilitate connections among team members that would likely take longer to happen, or might not happen at all otherwise.
- For meetings with remote teams, having an activity that allows the team to bond a bit can help facilitate rapport across teams that don't have opportunities to see each other face-to-face.

What's on your reading list? Ask participants to tell about some of the books they have recently read or are currently reading. By sharing the books you are reading you tell something about yourself. In addition, you may learn of some great books to add to your own list. Source: [Joitske Hulsebosch](#)

Two Lies and A Truth. Have participants share three pieces of information, two of which are lies and one is true. Participants must guess which statement is the true one. The person who has fooled the most team members wins. Source: [Joitske Hulsebosch](#)

Would you rather? Ask participants "would you rather..." questions for insight into their preferences and personalities. This game was provided by [Tempedia](#), where you can find a long list of questions for this game. Some examples:

Would you rather be able to stop time or fly?

Would you rather give up your computer forever or Tv forever?

Would you rather be a deep sea diver or an astronaut?

Would you rather be invisible or be able to read minds?

Would you rather give up your computer or your pet?

Would you rather go to an amusement park or a family reunion?

Would you rather live without music or live without T.V.?

Would you rather own a ski lodge or a surf camp?

What's Your Favorite Meal? Have participants tell what their favorite meal is. It could be something they order out or prepare themselves. You'll likely have an engaging discussion about several suggestions, and even recipe requests. Source: [Lucid Meetings Blog](#), Chris Higgins

Time Machine. Ask participants to share where they'd go if they could climb aboard a time machine. Which time period would they visit and why? Would they want to stay? Source: [Deb Peterson at About Education](#)

Your Worst Job. Have each person tell the group what the worst job they've ever had was. You'll get insight and likely sympathy for team members. In addition, this can spur fun and lively conversation. Source: Kevin Johnston at [Chron](#)

Who Is It? Ask each player to write a fact about themselves that others don't yet know on a notecard. The facilitator collects the cards and either passes them out to be read aloud individually by each team member or reads them aloud herself. As you get to each card, the team must guess which participant wrote the fact. To play the game remotely, have the team members email a fact about themselves, and the facilitator will read each while the team guesses. I first played this at a team offsite, and we had great fun with it!

Marooned. Have each participant share which three people they'd choose to have with them if deserted on an island, and perhaps why. These people could be living or dead. Source: [Ryan Rosado at Govloop](#)

Life Highlights. Have each participant think about the best moments in their lives. Then have each team member share one of these best moments and if they would relive it if they could. Source: [Icebreaker Ideas](#)

Meeting Icebreaker Questions. Also from [Icebreaker Ideas](#), a long list of questions that team members or meeting attendees can take turns answering. They can all answer the same question or mix it up. Some possible questions:

If you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?

If you could live anywhere, where would you live and why?

If you could be friends with a celebrity, who would you choose and why?

If you could choose to remain one age until you die, which age would you choose and why?

What is your favorite movie and why?

If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose to meet and why?

Is your favorite season spring, summer, fall, or winter? Why?

What is the favorite material object that you own? Why is it your favorite?

If you could buy anything and price was no object, what would you buy and why?

If you could go anywhere on vacation, where would you go and why?

<https://www.signupgenius.com/groups/funnyicebreakerquestions.cfm>

There are many opportunities in life where you need to converse with people you don't know very well, so here are 100 funny icebreaker questions to really get the conversation rolling!

Throwback

What are your favorite songs from your teenage years that you still rock out to when nobody else is listening?

Who was your childhood actor/actress crush?

What's your most embarrassing moment from your teen years?

What's the craziest dare you ever took?

What's the grossest food you ever had to eat to be polite?

What's the worst thing you ever did as a kid — and got away with?

What's the craziest fashion trend you ever rocked?

What did you get into the most trouble for with your parents as a kid?

What's your silliest memory with your best friend?

What part of elementary school do you wish you could incorporate into your adult life? (i.e. naptime)

What was the first concert you ever went to?

Do you have any crazy roommate stories?

What is the weirdest thing you've ever eaten for breakfast that is not a breakfast food?

What's the strangest family tradition in your family?

What was your favorite item of clothing as a kid?

What did you name your first car?

What Disney/cartoon character were you inexplicably afraid of as a kid?

What was your first record, tape or CD that you ever owned?

What were words you couldn't pronounce as a child, so you made up your own?

Have you ever gotten super lost? What happened?

What's the story of your first crush?

What was your first job? What did you like/dislike about it?

Who was the worst grade-school teacher you ever had?

What afterschool activity did you quit as a kid, and why?
What's the funniest thing that ever happened on your family vacation?
What's the funniest animal you've ever owned as a pet?
What's the worst haircut you ever had?
What's the best prank you've ever played on someone?
What's the most ridiculous thing your parents ever did to embarrass you?
As a kid, did you ever do something wrong but manage to pin it on your siblings?
What's the worst job you've ever had?
What totally rad expression did you overuse in high school?
What was your favorite Halloween costume you wore as a child?

Facts About Yourself

Who is your craziest/most interesting relative?
What band would you be embarrassed to admit you listen to?
What's the craziest thing on your bucket list?
What's a weird fact you happen to know?
What is your real favorite movie, and what movie do you pretend is your favorite to sound cultured?
What's your strangest talent?
What's your funniest talent? Or un-talent?
What's your best idea for a reality TV show?
Which Disney character's story does your life most resemble?
Everyone has those recurring bad dreams ... what is your nightmare?
What are two truths and a lie about you?
What's a funny (appropriate) pick-up line that works for you?
What's your favorite part of a county fair?
What show on Netflix did you binge watch embarrassingly fast?
Which celebrity do you shamelessly follow in the news?
What's something about you that people would be surprised to know?
What is your favorite smell and why?

What's the best knock-knock joke you know?

What completely safe animal are you inexplicably afraid of?

What food could you not live without?

What dance move are you secretly awesome at?

What commercial jingle gets stuck in your head all the time?

What sport did you try as a child and fail at?

What interesting skill do you want to learn?

What's the most random thing in your purse/wallet?

What invention do you think will be popular in 20 years?

What blog or website are you embarrassed to admit you love?

What do you never leave the house without (can't be your phone, keys or wallet)?

Who is your celebrity look-alike?

What's your real favorite book, and what book do you pretend is your favorite to sound smart?

What do you pretend to hate but actually love?

What's a nickname people actually call you?

If you could pick your nickname, what would people call you?

Have you ever lied about an interest/talent to impress someone? What happened next?

Hypothetical

If you were famous, what would you be famous for?

If you had a boat, what would you name it?

If you could pick a TV show to be your life, what show would it be?

If your best friend picked a tattoo for you to get, what would he/she pick?

If you could only eat at one restaurant forever, what restaurant would it be?

If you could only wear one type of shoes for the rest of your life, what type of shoes would it be?

If you could have any celebrity be your best friend, which celebrity would you pick?

If you created your own country, what would it be called?

If all your clothes had to be one color forever, what color would you pick?

If you had to be an animal, which animal would you be?

If you had lots of money, what unnecessary thing would you splurge on (i.e. a private plane, concert tickets)?

If you could switch places with anyone in your family for a day, who would it be?

If you wrote a book, what would it be called?

If you had to use a fake name, what fake name would you make up?

If you could live any historical figure's life, which one would you choose?

If you could eliminate one food so that no one would eat it ever again, what would you pick to destroy?

If you had to wear a hat every day for the rest of your life, what type of hat would it be?

If you could create one holiday, what would you create?

If you were a vegetable, what would you be?

If you were an Olympic athlete, what sport would you compete in?

If you were the president, what would you change about the decorations in the White House?

If you were a type of jeans, what type would you be?

If you could be one superhero, which superhero would you be?

If you could turn the ocean into a liquid other than water, which one would you pick?

If you had to be Siamese twins with one person, which person would you pick to be stuck with?

If you could pick three famous people to be a part of your entourage, who would you pick?

If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, which song would you pick?

Which celebrity would you pick to exchange lives with?

If you could pick one job to do forever (and be guaranteed all the money you need), what job would it be?

If you were trying out for a singing reality show, what song would you sing?

What game show would you be super awesome at?

If you had to endorse a brand, which brand would it be?

Last and possibly least ... The corniest icebreaker question ever: How much does a polar bear weigh? (Just enough to break the ice!)