

"FOCUSED, FUN AND FIERCELY LOCAL."
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Pam Gaber

Leave it to Pam Gaber to playfully put antlers on her dog and get a sudden inspiration for one of the most sought after non-profit services the Valley has ever seen. In 1999, Gaber was a volunteer at Crisis Nursery. Usually, she was met with untrusting, shy and withdrawn children, who were used to being let down or abused by adults. Then one day, on a whim, she dressed her dog, Gabriel, as a reindeer and brought him in for a visit. According to Gaber, the children were different that day; as if by magic, the troubled little souls became "kind, loving and sweet."

At that moment, Gabriel's Angels—a 501-C3 non-profit—was born. Gaber realized her Weimaraner had the power to reach and heal these abused, neglected and at-risk children in a way humans could not. Empowered by this revelation, she decided she would help improve their lives by teaching them unconditional love through a pet.

Today, Gabriel's Angels has grown beyond Gaber's wildest dreams. Each year, over 100 therapy teams from 60-plus Valley agencies touch the lives of more than 12,000 children in crisis through the application of pet therapy.

Gaber has been featured in *Money Magazine* for departing the corporate world and building a successful "business with a heart." She is quick to add that her Weimaraner, Gabriel, continues to be a huge inspiration and partner in her organization.



Peggy Bilsten

Many people don't know that every day, young girls are being kidnapped, beaten and forced into prostitution right under our noses. Not only does Peggy Bilsten realize the gravity of this situation—it has become her life's mission to stop it.

Outspoken, passionate, and caring, Bilsten has been advocating on behalf of human rights issues, both locally and internationally, since she was appointed to the Phoenix City Council in 1994. During her membership with the council, she served on many different boards and committees, and was appointed vice mayor twice.

In 1995, Bilsten established the Graffiti Hotline. She opened her district's first senior center, Shadow Mountain, and served on the Mayor's Commission for Disabilities. She also represented the citizens of Phoenix and the Phoenix City Council on rescue trips to the post tsunami regions in Indonesia, earthquake regions in China, and war torn areas in Central Africa including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

Bilsten is especially proud of her role in creating the Family Advocacy Center, which provides medical aid, counseling, prevention, education and other assistance to victims of domestic violence. It is now the largest facility of its kind in the state.

She is currently the vice president of Streetlight Phx, a local non-profit organization that focuses on eradicating child rape for profit. Bilsten's work with Streetlight Phx includes providing awareness about child sex trafficking, and helping to make changes in legislation regarding punishment for offenders. Some day soon, she hopes to establish a one-of-a-kind safe house facility for these young victims.



Sherry Lund

Philanthropist and Texas native Sherry Lund lives by the motto, "I root for the underdog." This philosophy is the driving force behind her many nonprofit activities. "I know personally that single, working moms, children and the community need our help," says Lund. "I'm prepared to work toward that!"

Her family, friends and community can attest that Lund's giving heart has no boundaries. Having spent 20 years as a single, working mother, Lund has devoted much of her life to easing the burdens and suffering of others. She continues this commitment through her impressive work with Mercy Gilbert Medical Center, the Wellcare Foundation, The Harp Foundation, and Starshine Academy.

Additionally, Lund is the president of the Victoria Lund Foundation, which provides medical attention for those who need but can't afford it. The foundation, named for her stepdaughter who passed away from liver failure, has been in the Murphy School District for five years, helping more than 2,600 children and their parents each year. Along with another organization, the Victoria Lund Foundation provides five full days of health care at Hamilton Elementary School along with dental clinics.

In her lifetime, Lund has had an eclectic mix of jobs; she is a former fashion model, radio voice-over broadcaster, television performer and commercial actress. She even owned several TCBY franchises. But her focus, devotion and gift to the world is her compelling and giving spirit. She is married to Bill Lund, and has two daughters, Rachel and Sabrina.



Tara Hitchcock

We wake up to her bright, smiling face every morning, and are entertained by her quick wit and sense of humor. But Tara Hitchcock's day doesn't end when the lights and cameras go off—in many cases, it's just beginning.

Hitchcock, who anchors and hosts the highly rated "Good Morning Arizona" news program on 3TV, volunteers much of her time to a number of different Valley charities. Nearest to her heart is Best Buddies—an organization dedicated to establishing opportunities, friendships, employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Hitchcock has lent her time and talents to countless fundraising events including Childhelp's "Drive the Dream Gala" and the Scottsdale Women's Council of Realtors "Desperate Realtors" event to benefit Gabriel's Angels. Hitchcock uses her influential voice and position to bring unsolicited exposure and heightened awareness to these and other charities, bridging the gap between potential donors and new volunteers.

Hitchcock has dedicated herself to bringing our community pertinent, up-to-the-minute news. Fourteen years ago, she proved that a 25-year-old could get "the job," and through candid speaking engagements, she continues to inspire women to follow their dreams.

Hitchcock is married to Kenn Francis and enjoys being the stepmother of three wonderful children. "I'm so excited," she says, referring to her nomination. "I've never won anything before in my life!"