

Voices: Women Making a Difference

Meet women who feed the homeless, provide free airfare to kids needing medical care and make the impossible possible.

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There are women who rush in where others -- angels, multimillion-dollar charities and government task forces, for example -- fear to tread. Armed with grit, grace, and shoestring budgets, these women make a difference in their communities.

Four years ago, Charming Shoppes Inc. chairwoman Dorrit Bern launched the Voices campaign to celebrate such women.

The program's full name -- Voices ... One voice can lead to a chorus for change -- reveals its purpose, recognizing women whose volunteer efforts make a remarkable impact. Why? To honor those women and to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Of the nearly 3,000 nominees generated during the 2006 Voices campaign, five inspiring finalists were recognized on *The Montel Williams Show* [Montel Williams Show](#) on November 24, 2006. Bern, on behalf of Charming Shoppes, presented each finalist with a \$20,000 grant for their respective charity.

"So many people feel they can't make a difference; so they do nothing," Bern says. "I want their stories to inspire others and to show that one person can make a difference. Each of us has the power to help one person or many, but we have to take action to do so."

Charming Shoppes' partnership with *The Montel Williams Show* has given the campaign visibility before millions of viewers. The number of nominees has grown from 841 in its first year to more than 3,000 this past year.

The finalists championed a wide array of causes. For examples, **Sue Cobley**, who was once homeless herself, founded a program that feeds 60,000 homeless Boise, Idaho, residents. Since 1985, **Ann McGee's Miracle Flights for Kids** flew 46,000 children to medical centers where they could get needed treatment.

Are you passionate about something? Take action and let yourself be inspired by the tremendous nominees and finalists in the 2006 Voices campaign.

There's a hole in the chorus just waiting for your voice!

2006 Voices Finalists

Sue Cobby, Founder, Chefs to the Rescue [Idaho Food Bank](#), Boise, Idaho. Cobby's Chefs to the Rescue program recovers prepared food and delivers it to Boise's homeless and hungry. A project started by Cobby and her five children when they were homeless themselves, Chefs to the Rescue now recovers and delivers 60,000 pounds of prepared food every month.

Anna Ouroumian, Refounder and CEO, Academy of Business Leadership [Academy of Business Leadership](#), Rosemead, California. With Ann Ouroumian at the helm, the Academy of Business Leadership (ABL) has tripled in size. The ABL seeks to transform at-risk middle and high school students into future leaders. Ouroumian draws on her experience as an orphan in Lebanon to help inspire students to make a positive change in their lives.

Ann McGee, Founder, Miracle Flights for Kids [Miracle Flights](#), Green Valley, Nevada. Believing no child should go without medical treatment because of financial hardship, Ann McGee created Miracle Flights for Kids. McGee's free flights provide access to healthcare for American families. Since 1985, 46,000 flights have carried children to medical treatments as far as they need to go and as many times as necessary.

Tara Lawrence, Founder, Hats Off For Cancer [Hats Off for Cancer](#), Milford, New Jersey. Tara Lawrence was introduced to cancer's far-reaching effects after losing her grandfather to the disease. When Lawrence realized the importance of baseball caps to children who have lost their hair to cancer, she took immediate action. Hats Off For Cancer has since distributed more than 500,000 donated caps to children on five continents.

Haley Kilpatrick, Founder and Executive Director, Girl Talk [Desire to Inspire](#), Atlanta, Georgia. Haley Kilpatrick knew from experience that making it through middle school was tough. At age 15 she started Girl Talk, a mentoring program that pairs middle school girls with high school girls who've "been there" and can help the younger girls through. In five years Kilpatrick's program has grown to reach 10,000 girls in 19 states.