**2022 WODA – Community Category**

**DEB PIKE BARNES**

**USA**

**COMMUNITY**

Deb Barnes Pike, principal, Human Affection Project, ink (HAPi by Design) contributes to the global community through peaceful, intentional, and empowered communication by providing event management, public relations, and strategic planning for businesses and political campaign management. HAPi by Design is a culmination of over 20 years of entrepreneurial, event, and corporate experience. After discovering donations collected in Spokane for breast cancer awareness via the Susan G. Komen Foundation would not all remain in Spokane, Deb, president, and CEO, founded Every Women Can (EWC) in 2017. Deb is passionate about helping women and recognizes the tremendous need in Spokane for breast cancer awareness and for support well beyond health care. EWC is a grassroots organization made up of survivors, advocates, and warrior volunteers. It provides awareness, advocacy, wellness information and education for women on breast cancer and other cancers. Many women are single, working mothers or oftentimes their household’s sole income earner. These women often ignore their own health, cannot afford to take time away from their job, or do not have the means to get to the appointments. EWC conducts fundraising events - walks, fairs, silent auctions, etc. One hundred percent of the funds raised stay local and are reinvested in the region.

EWC serves women in over 20 counties in Washington state and recently expanded into Idaho. Of special note, is the indigenous in the region (5 tribes) that are now being reached. Deb’s initial vision was cancer early detection, recovery, and maintenance resources. Women are supported with transportation access, mentoring and guidance towards employment, entrepreneurial coaching, etc. Deb has leveraged her network with local businesses and entrepreneurs to assist women in finding employment. Deb’s support of women is about economically empowering women, and she has developed a sisterhood of women helping women.

**ROSALIND CARDINAL**

**AUSTRALIA**

**COMMUNITY**

In 2019, Rosalind Cardinal and Susan Fahey, founded the Women of Substance Emerge program to help ambitious, high-performing women advance in their careers. They both drew upon their own career journeys, backgrounds and experiences that complement each other, along with what they knew from coaching and mentoring women who wanted to change their careers, join a board or to have more influence in their current roles. Launched in early 2020, Emerge is packed with wisdom across 3 key areas - Value, Visibility and Connections — six weeks of self-directed learning with a group coaching call each week. The group is capped at a maximum of 12 with two slots reserved for scholarships provided by Emerge. Small group learning allows for a tailored approach. They also draw on their vast networks to engage some incredible guest faculty to conduct interactive sessions with each cohort. Emerge isn’t just another “women’s leadership” program, it is so much more because it focuses on each individual woman at the center of the journey and helps her understand her own values and dreams. They now have a fantastic (and growing) alumnus group consisting of women from across Australia and even internationally. They host “Meet the Women of Emerge” alumni sessions to continue this network of emerging women. In addition to her own blog, Rosalind is a regular contributing writer for Leaders in Heels, “Thrive” and “People Development” Magazine. She has received several awards, including Leadership Coach of the Year - Australia by Corporate LiveWire in their Global Innovation & Excellence awards. In 2016, she released her best-selling and award nominated book “The Resilient Employee: The essential guide to coping with change and thriving in today’s workplace”. Of note, Rosalind is a past president of the Tasmanian Women Chiefs of Enterprise International (WCEI).

**MENAKA IYENGAR COOKE**

**AUSTRALIA**

**COMMUNITY**

Menaka Iyengar Cooke is a highly qualified professional woman with great personal drive, a force that has kept her going through periods of adversity. Now in the ‘third age’ of her life, she works to give back and play a role as a social activist with the wisdom and compassion she has gained over many years.

As she explains, her early experiences in Australia after immigrating from India as a single mother and encountering systemic, overt, and covert racism and sexism led her to become a passionate feminist, and she joined various women’s and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) organizations to advocate for women’s rights and empowerment.

After immigrating, she found her academic qualifications (B.A. Hons) were not recognized. Professionally she could not move upward without additional qualifications. While employed full time she succeeded in completing two Masters’ degrees – one in Commerce and the other Psychotherapy and Counseling.

Menaka went on to succeed in several high-level Human Resources and Change Management roles with large Australian companies, retiring as HR Director of a multi-national.

She is a strong believer in Intersectional Feminism, coaching Indigenous and NESB women in leadership, reaching out to women of multi-cultural backgrounds to encourage them on their journey. Menaka’s support for social and women’s issues has seen her involved with a number of organizations, including: Representative to Economic Security 4 Women (ES4W) (2017 – 2021), Involvement with the Equality Rights Alliance and the Australian Gender Equality Council (2021-present), Board member of the Women’s Electoral Lobby (WEL), which is a community of change-makers campaigning for a more just and equal future for Australian women, and giving women a political voice (Sept 2019 - present), Director – Indian Crisis Support Agency (ICSA) - a small but highly professional team of volunteers dedicated to social equity and justice; regardless of background (Sept 2018 – present), Board member – Older Women’s Network (OWN) (Oct 2019 – present), State President, Women Chiefs of Enterprises International (WCEI) (Oct 2017 – Oct 2019), and Radio newsreader reading news (2RPH), which provides a radio reading service for people who cannot read independently, handle or understand printed material (July 2017 – present). Menaka also works with Indigenous organizations, including mentoring a CEO.

Her memoirs ‘Monsoon Woman’ under the pseudonym of Laxmi Lall were published by Balboa Press in 2019.

**SALAMBA DIENE**

**SENEGAL**

**COMMUNITY**

Salamba Diene is a 30-year-old entrepreneur with a degree in international business from the Sorbonne, and in economic development and international project management from Paris 12. She is the founder of Action for the Development of Africa (ADA) which today supports more than 3000 women to improve their living conditions.

Stemming from her work in conjunction with the US Embassy as a project coordinator for a self-help project involving the women of Bandafassi and Salemata, and her work as the Director of Operations of Bioessence Laboratories which manufactures natural cosmetics and organic food supplements, she founded in 2017 a company called Biosene SARL.

Biosene is an agri-food company specializing in the production, processing, and marketing of local products such as millet, fonio, maize, and Baobab. The agricultural sector employs 70% of the Senegalese population.

Salamba worked with women farmers through women’s promotion groups. Through this collaboration, more than 2000 Senegalese and Burkinabe women now earn a decent living and are financially autonomous. She created a large impact for the advancement of women’s economic empowerment in the rural agricultural sector of Senegal.

**SUSAN FAHEY**

**AUSTRALIA**

**COMMUNITY**

In 2019, Susan and Rosalind Cardinal, founded the Women of Substance Emerge program to help ambitious, high-performing women advance in their careers. They both drew upon their own career journeys, backgrounds and experiences that complement each other, along with what they knew from coaching and mentoring women who wanted to change their careers, join a board or to have more influence in their current roles. Launched in early 2020, Emerge is packed with wisdom across 3 key areas - Value, Visibility and Connections — six weeks of self-directed learning with a group coaching call each week. The group is capped at a maximum of 12 with two slots reserved for scholarships provided by Emerge. Small group learning allows for a tailored approach. They also draw on their vast networks to engage some incredible guest faculty to conduct interactive sessions with each cohort. Emerge isn’t just another “women’s leadership” program, it is so much more because it focuses on each individual woman at the center of the journey and helps her understand her own values and dreams. They now have a fantastic (and growing) alumnus group consisting of women from across Australia and even internationally. They host “Meet the Women of Emerge” alumni sessions to continue this network of emerging women.

Susan is a passionate advocate for women. She spent 26 years as a lawyer working on behalf and for women particularly in the areas of physical and mental abuse. Susan and an academic who subsequently was made Governor of Tasmania, Kate Warner, created a program for women who were suffering from physical and mental abuse. Together, they established a website which was eventually also launched in India. For many years Susan was the CEO of Women's Legal Services in Tasmania. During that time the organization grew exponentially, and it now has a very real voice in support of the empowerment and health and welfare of women. In addition, she raised awareness for LGBT people in the community and lobbied government to give equal rights to women and men who needed support and a platform to address issues that needed to be raised on their behalf.

**REGINA C HALL**

**USA**

**COMMUNITY**

Regina Hall, the President, and founder of Enlighten Heart Services, LLC (EHS); and Sisters Journeying Together (SJT), is a Counselor, International Speaker, and Trainer. Regina speaks life to those suffering from Trauma, particularly women and girls. She is the author of "Mommy, I Need You!" Regina shares with others the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of a next-door neighbor to inspire, uplift, and educate. SJT was birthed from her book, and its purpose is to mentor young ladies between the ages of 12-19 to find their voices through self-awareness and leadership. Regina has been a featured speaker at the Les Brown and Dr. Cheryl Wood Virtual Women Summit and has presented at the Christian Widows and Widowers Empowered-Nigeria, Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (WICCI), and One Woman's Fearless World Summit. She was also a finalist and featured speaker for “Stage Time” at the John Maxwell IMC Conference, August 2021. Regina served as a trainer with 200 other John Maxwell coaches on the Dominican Republican Transformation Trip, 2021, training leaders in various capacities throughout the country. Adding to her significance in the world of motivational speaking and coaching, Regina shares a sincere regard for higher learning and servant leadership. She holds a Bachelor of Science, in Business Administration, and a Master of Arts, in Pastoral Counseling. She is a certified John Maxwell speaker, trainer, coach, and Les Brown motivational rhetorician; a licensed professional counselor (LPC), and an ordained minister. She is a recent graduate of the National Entrepreneurs Association and Comerica Bank Entrepreneur Bootcamp and certification program.

**VIRGINIA KHUNGUNI**

**MALAWI**

**COMMUNITY**

Virginia Khunguni is a women’s rights activist from Malawi working to promote girls’ education health and well-being by ending social and cultural practices that limits their potential. She is the founder of the Girls Arise for Change an organization that empowers women and girls victimized by practices that undervalue women and girls in Malawi. Virginia has worked with Population Services International where she helped establish mobile clinics that provide sexual reproductive health services to young people in rural areas who otherwise do not have access to health services and has also worked with Malaria Elimination 8 where she was a communication specialist leading communication programs that helped to combat malaria in 8 SADC countries. She is an alumnus of the Mandels Washington fellowship program and was also given a special congressional recognition by the US Congress.

She became a journalist and headline news personality at one of Malawi’s radio news stations. In her role as a journalist, Virginia visited many communities and schools and in all of them she met girls and young women who asked her to help them deal with many kinds of abuses which they were facing. Herself being a victim of abuse understood that writing stories of these women was not enough, so she founded the Girls Arise organization which has been empowering girls and women with financial and innovation development skills. These are girls and women who are victims of abuses such as trafficking for sex, rape, sexual cleansing, and forced marriages among others. She has since 2017 empowered 2050 young women and girls and established 4 empowerment centers in Lilongwe and Phalombe and has established small businesses for over 1000 of them.

**AWAH FRANCISCA MBULI**

**CAMEROON**

**COMMUNITY**

In 2015, after being trafficked by a labor agency to Kuwait, Francisca Awah Mbuli returned home to Cameroon and founded the organization, SUVIVORS’ NETWORK (SN), CAMEROON with 200 members. Survivors Network is made up of female victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. The organization works to build a network of education, empowerment, and awareness across Cameroon and other countries in Africa, and advocates for the most vulnerable in our societies and communities; women and children, about the dangers of working in the Middle East, child labor, human trafficking, and modern-day slavery. Through her efforts in combating trafficking in persons in her community and beyond, she has been able to provide vocational skills development and business startups to vulnerable women and girls, survivors of human trafficking, gender-based violence and other forms of related abuse, all geared toward creating a sustainable livelihood to the affected population.

In seven years, Ms. Francisca has been able to provide empowerment opportunities to over 1000 women and girls in her community through skills development programs, and through economic empowerment programs with startup kits. She has also through her collaborative efforts with other stakeholders provided a temporal shelter, to victims and survivors of human trafficking, gender-based violence and all forms of contemporary modern-day slavery. Her interventions are widespread as human trafficking cuts across different acts of work. Ms. Francisca has been recognized by the US government with the Trafficking in Persons Hero award in 2018, and in 2017 as one of the 50 most influential persons in Cameroon. She was recently recognized by Free the Slaves as the best frontline community organization and is an Obama Africa Leader fellow (2018).

**ERIKA MIELKE**

**USA**

**COMMUNITY**

Erika L. Miekle JD, CFP, is a Principal at Arbor Investment Advisors in North Carolina, USA, providing wealth management strategies to families, business owners, and professionals. Erika is a community focused leader with multiple organizations. In 2019, Erika founded The Breakfast Club with the purpose of bringing professional women in the community together for fellowship and relationship building. Over 90 women may attend monthly breakfasts resulting in uplifting each other through organic discussions with positive outcomes. Mentoring opportunities, job referrals, and board positions are the byproducts of the Club. In 2019, Erika co-founded Thrive Community to build a community where adults with intellectual and development disabilities (I/DD) can live and work independently, safely, and with purpose. While Thrive Community serves women and men, there is a realization that women with I/DD tend to experience more adverse consequences from a lack of secure housing and employment. Women and girls with disabilities experience higher rates of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation than those without disabilities. They are 3 times more likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women. More than 75% of caregivers to adults with I/DD are female. Women tend to bear the responsibility of caring for an adult family member with I/DD. In 2020, Thrive Community became a 501(C)3 organization with Erika as president with a dedicated board and receiving initial funding ($8,500) for community research and a feasibility study. Women and girls with I/DD and female caregivers will be economically empowered through the works and resources of Thrive Community. Since 2018, Erika has served as Programs Chair, Professional Women of Winston-Salem (PWWS). Recognizing professional women’s lives shifted in the COVID era changes were needed. In 2019, Triad Women’s Club (TWC), evolved built on the foundation of PWWS, expanding reach, diversity, scholarships, and nonprofit status. Erika has been instrumental in this positive transition and has recently assumed the president’s role.

**SHARON MONETHI**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**COMMUNITY**

Sharon Monethi is the founder of Women of Age Foundation working with marginalized communities in South Africa. She promotes girls and young women as leaders within remote/marginalized informal settlements by promoting an equal voice in leadership and participation in challenges removing root causes of poverty and injustice. For over five years she has been implementing projects which mainstream gender equity in its programs for agriculture and rural development by working directly with women farmers and agribusinesses to strengthen their managerial technical skills and links to markets. The foundation conducts gender-sensitive analyses of trends in farm and off farm employment and promotes gender equity in government policies for expanding rural job opportunities promoting labor standards, occupational health and safety, savings groups, and participation in the farmers union. The project has trained over 3,500 women to identify market opportunities, design business strategies, and improve production methods. The benefits include improved household nutrition and increased income. She received Mayoral recognition awards in the year 2020-2021 for her leadership skills in eradicating poverty through literacy during the COVID 19 pandemic.

She worked as an Ambassador for the World Literacy foundation. Her project to reach children in marginalized villages in remote farming areas with no access to eLearning resulted in using solar powered tablets known as Sun books fully embedded with educational material. The project specifically reached over 3,757 young girls of whom 76 went on to start their own small businesses: resulting in reduced poverty in those villages.

**THERESA FARAI NYAVA**

**ZIMBABWE**

**COMMUNITY**

Theresa is the founder and director of Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe Trust, a registered non-profit organization that is empowering women and girls to fight menstrual/period poverty by training them to make menstrual products and equipping them with business skills to sell their products to earn incomes to build resilience and be in control of their livelihoods.

Theresa grew up in the rural areas of Zvimba in Zimbabwe in an extended family of 15 children, with seven of them being girls. She suffered period poverty from puberty, causing her to regularly miss school because of a lack of sanitary wear. She founded her organization to change the narrative. She is training women and girls in underprivileged circumstances to not only eliminate menstrual poverty but also training them how to make reusable sanitary pads, underwear, and liquid soap to sell as income generating businesses. Many women in rural areas have managed to raise their income levels from the sales of reusable pads they have made. Their rising income levels enables them to send their children to school, buy food for their families and buy animals for rearing as wealth creation initiatives. Theresa also created a program for the free distribution of menstrual products to vulnerable people such as female prisoners, homeless girls, rural women and girls.

Since 2018, Theresa has reached out to over 50,000 beneficiaries with her programs. In 2019 she won the Power Together Global Award conferred by the Women Leaders Global Forum in partnership with the Government of Iceland, for her efforts in fighting period poverty.

**ALICE LAMUNU OBIYA**

**USA**

**COMMUNITY**

Alice Lamunu Obiya is the Director and Founder of Voices of Children's Faith (VOCFINU) in Northern Uganda. A community-based organization founded to restore hope in the lives of children, marginalized and discriminated women in the rural community of Northern Uganda after the war that lasted for over 20 years. The organization has education programs for children and vocational skill training and medical services for women.

VOCFINU has since 2018 supported 300 women in Village Savings and Loan Associations through supporting the women’s groups with revolving loan funds, enrolled in vocational training female high school dropouts, and helped others return to high school to finish their studies.

Alice has supported the women and the community’s access to medical services like cervical cancer screening, postnatal services, nutrition, blood pressure control and has also ensured that the women are treated equally. 120 girls have graduated from a tailoring program and 80 more are currently enrolled. Of the women who participate in the Village Savings and Loan Association ,70% have started their own income generating activities through the revolving loan fund. 90% of the women and girls are trained in business management, financial literacy, leadership, and life skills to enable the women to be self-reliant and have leadership skills.

**MARIA JOSE’ YURRITA**

**GUATEMALA**

**COMMUNITY**

Maria Jose’ Yurrita is an advocate and change agent for Guatemalan women, particularly for women in Mayan villages in the Boca Coastal region.

In 2007, María José began work at Boca Costal Medical Mission. There, she discovered her passion, falling in love with serving the extreme poor. It was initially difficult to find work with NGOs because of sexism in Guatemala. She also didn’t have a higher education degree and her English was not very good. However, she persevered, financially supporting her children after her divorce, while at the same time starting studies at university. María José is currently on her last year in university and will graduate with a degree in social work.

Maria Jose’ enjoys mentoring the next generation of women and has even developed a leadership program which is offered to young women (and young men) ages 13 and older. She is constantly working to assist Mayan women to commercialize their art of weaving by connecting them with individuals, companies, and resources to sell their products. Most recently, she helped a startup import business based in North Carolina connect with Mayan women to create a home accent product line.

Currently Maria Jose’ serves as the Guatemalan Field Director for Partners in Development (PID), a non-profit organization that provides those living in extreme poverty the tools to change their future. As the Guatemalan Field Director, Maria Jose conducts once-a-month workshops for Mayan women in several villages near Mazatenango. The workshops cover many aspects of life but emphasize the importance of education and understanding finances. The complete workshop series lasts 18 months. Maria Jose’ has coached over 60 women in these workshops. She is also responsible for the PID small business loans, which provide microcredit to approximately 10 women every 6 months. With this seed money, women from the villages have been able to begin small handicraft and other types of businesses.

Maria Jose’ models economic empowerment for woman in her community and shares her knowledge and experiences with other women who seek economic independence.