



# The NEW PHILANTHROPISTS

Women in Northern California's Silicon Valley are making spectacular fortunes. But their focus is to use their business savvy to aid favorite causes, recruit their friends and create incredibly effective foundations. By Diane Dorrons Saeks

High-tech charity's leading ladies, from left: Bitu Daryabari, Akiko Yamazaki, Melanie Ellison, Juliet Flint de Baubigny and Marissa Mayer.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DREW ALTIZER



It

was a night of celebration last fall. As the audience in San Francisco’s glittering War Memorial Opera House awaited the first performance of Stewart Wallace and Amy Tan’s new opera, *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, David Gockley, General Director of San Francisco Opera, walked on stage to announce

that Palo Alto residents Cynthia and John Gunn had donated \$40 million for the development of new operas.

The audience rose to its feet, cheering, whistling and applauding, acknowledging the largest private donation ever to an American opera company. That evening, the Gunns (John is chairman and CEO of Dodge and Cox investment company; Cynthia supports dozens of Peninsula groups) returned home to Palo Alto—and quickly immersed themselves in planning another gift: a new building for Stanford University, said to cost well north of \$32 million.

Silicon Valley tech and financial companies are generating staggering fortunes, and women are at the forefront of many companies—actively and passionately engaged in significant philanthropy, and often with their own money.

Residents of the high net-worth Peninsula, the ‘area code 650’ region South of San Francisco from San Mateo to San Jose, are among the world’s greatest and most creative donors, providing both financial traction and effectiveness for non-profits. What’s unprecedented: A-list women with results-focused business backgrounds are involved in creative giving in ways that will set the pace and style of philanthropy. Their skills, ingenuity and connections will have international effects for decades to come.

Google alum Olana Khan founded San Francisco-based Kiva Microfunds (kiva.org), a wildly successful three-year-old online community that connects people who make micro-loans to individual entrepreneurs in far-flung countries like Tajikistan, Cambodia, Bolivia and Paraguay. Repaid funds are then used to help other hard-working small-business people who post profiles on the site. Kiva has been an intermediary for more than \$46 million in loans (and is generating record online traffic).

“Powerful Silicon Valley women, many of them successful and wealthy in their own right, are fully engaged in creative philanthropy. They want to be effective and to generate the maximum dollars for their causes,” says Atherton-based Gwen Books, whose

four-year-old company offers personal concierge services, designs private travel itineraries and manages many Silicon Valley households.

The difference between today’s high-powered women philanthropists and the devoted donors and volunteers of 20 or 30 years ago is that in the past, old family money in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties was generated by banking, railroads, real estate and agriculture. Women had time to volunteer. Families wrote checks to the Stanford University Medical Center or to national groups.

Today, philanthropic non-profits are controlled by hands-on women who are passionate about education, medical research, literacy, micro-finance, environmental issues, the arts and a broad spectrum of community groups.

Sally Osberg, president and CEO of the highly funded Peninsula-based Skoll Foundation, works to attain the organization’s goal of supporting global entrepreneurs who are creating change in disadvantaged communities. Among its many projects (and \$196 million in grants), the foundation has

helped thousands of girls in East Africa complete high school. (Jeff Skoll, the founder, was the first hire at eBay.)

“The younger group wanted to leverage their money and power—to get the best results for their charitable giving,” says Susan M. Hyatt, who supports the Children’s Health Council and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. “They are very effective at pulling together the resources of the community.”

Altruistic Peninsula philanthropists who want to be part of the giving community live in such privileged enclaves as horsey Woodside, bucolic Portola Valley and super-rich Atherton (one of the wealthiest towns in the U.S.) in addition to Stanford-centric Palo Alto. And while many of them have access to corporate or private jets, enjoy unrivaled company perks, live in chic ultra-private residences and have access to

## PENINSULA PASSIONS

**Juliet Flint de Baubigny**  
Mercy Ships

**Gwen Books**  
Palo Alto Arts Center  
Foundation  
Global Heritage Fund

**Sukhinder Singh Cassidy**  
Job Train

**Bitu Daryabari**  
Unique Zan Foundation  
The H.A.N.D. Foundation

**Melanie Ellison**  
Peninsula Humane Society

**Cynthia Gunn**  
The San Francisco Opera  
Stanford University

**Noosheen Hashemi**  
PARSA Community  
Foundation

**Laurene Powell Jobs**  
College Track  
California College of the Arts

**Olana Khan**  
Kiva.org

**Marissa Mayer**  
San Francisco Symphony  
San Francisco Museum  
of Modern Art

**Rebecca Morgan**  
The Nature Conservancy

**Akiko Yamazaki**  
The San Francisco Ballet  
The Asian Art Museum

home gyms with personal trainers, along with nutritionists, drivers, nannies, party planners, a body guard or two, wardrobe stylists, yoga instructors, and even private chefs (often alums of Chez Panisse), flashy wealth on the Peninsula meets a certain level of societal disdain. In this area, philanthropy through non-profits, private foundations and company foundations like the Google Foundation, eBay Foundation or the Oracle Education Foundation, or through community groups, is the higher goal.

“Peninsula philanthropic women are creative, business-oriented and very results-oriented,” says Books. “Many successful entrepreneurs are mavericks. They lead busy lives, have high-powered husbands in the tech world, and they have young children. The women expect their charities to be run on a top-level business model, and they expect accountability.”

Noosheen Hashemi, who co-founded and runs the three-year-old, Menlo Park-based H.A.N.D. Foundation, says that for her, life in Silicon Valley is about work, family and giving—in that order.

“We have our own micro-culture. Folks are as intent on building their philanthropic resumes as they are their professional ones,” says Hashemi. “A big part of strategic philanthropy today is networking and signaling other donors to inspire more giving.”

Private philanthropy salons (like the private soirees gathered by Facebook’s Sheryl Sandberg and Pam Cook for Caridad Partners) and groups that pool their resources and make grants collectively, like Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen’s Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund (sv2.org), are leading the way.

Palo Alto-based Arrillaga-Andreessen, admired as the highly-influential goddess of giving among many Silicon Valley leaders, created and teaches Stanford Business School’s first course on Strategic Philanthropy and Stanford University’s first course on Philanthropy and Social Innovation. She is credited with helping found significant foundations and teaching a new business-like model for philanthropy that is now driving non-profits in the region.

Arrillaga-Andreessen also runs the Arrillaga Foundation, founded with funds from her billionaire real-estate entrepreneur father. Other second and third generations of women philanthropists include Susan Packard Orr, head of the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, and Lisa Sobrato Sonsini, President of the Sobrato Family Foundation. Sonsini’s passion is programs for at-risk youth.

“Success came early to many talented people in Silicon Valley, and now they want to give back—while

“WE HAVE A STRONG CORE OF PHILANTHROPIC WOMEN IN SILICON VALLEY WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT EFFECTIVE GIVING.”

—GWEN BOOKS

in their twenties, thirties and forties,” says Juliet Flint de Baubigny, who, at 38, is a charismatic partner in the prestigious Menlo Park-based venture capital company Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers. “They have corporate ambition, but they have outside interests. We don’t want to be defined only by work.”

De Baubigny became involved with Mercy Ships, a medical group that operates hospital ships throughout the world. She and her husband, Andre de Baubigny, wrote their largest checks for the charity—and then started evangelizing to their colleagues and friends, she says.

“We ask ourselves what we are really committed to in philanthropy, and it has to hit high,” notes de Baubigny, who is also on the board of Project Red, an extension of her day job which encourages creative capitalism. She is also trustee to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and a donor to the San Francisco Symphony.

Like other high-profile businesswomen (de Baubigny was recently named one of the 10 next-generation Silicon Valley women to watch by *Fortune* magazine), time is of the essence.

“Women philanthropists may meet to discuss a cause or a foundation in a private home between 5 and 7 p.m., and it is never a fashion show or a long lunch,” she explains. “The real work of charities and foundations comes from one-off meetings, always subtle, off-the-record, with no press or photographers. No one today is in it for social prestige in the old way. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 142

one deeply layered and interesting vignette after the next: first edition novels, black-and-white photographs of McRee interviewing Hillary Clinton or accepting a warm embrace from Nancy Reagan, miniature oil paintings, an original signed screenplay for *Some Like it Hot*, arrayed between purposefully placed silver keepsakes. Filling in the bigger spaces are stuffed rolled-armed couches upholstered in lively, colorful cotton, linen velvet or damask complemented by warm earth and moss colored velvets cov-

ering the wood framed antiques throughout.

"When I grew up in Fort Worth, no matter where you were at the tennis club or the library or church, it was very much an old-fashioned community where everyone watched out for everyone's kids," says McRee. "This area in Hancock Park takes you back there with the big sidewalks and friendly neighbors. I don't know if it's possible that I could let my kids out at nine years old and tell them to come back when the street lights turn on, but that is how I

was raised, and this, at least, gives me the illusion that I can do that someday."

Generations of children have climbed on the ancient elm tree and slid down the banisters of this old house. One can imagine the whispers of young love in the corners of the foyer, grand banquets in the dining room or the hushed meals of a family awaiting news of a loved one fighting in the war. Sunshine Hall has been restored to her former grandeur—a glamorous, stately residence both historic and alive. ●

## THE NEW PHILANTHROPISTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 125

give to the opera or to museums, and enjoy attending celebrations and parties, but we are also hands-on mentoring in an African village or working with local groups."

Debbie Hall, board chair for the micro-finance Village Enterprise Fund, likes the hands-on approach of going to Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania and working closely with village leaders to mentor and sponsor subsistence farmers to found micro-enterprises. "My family's philosophy is to select groups where we can help directly and very effectively," says Hall. "I volunteer at charter schools in East Palo Alto, and at Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula. I especially like Village Enterprise Fund because it offers training and effective business programs to get people out of poverty."

Silicon Valley support also extends

globally. The Palo Alto-based Christensen Fund gave its world-class collection of tribal art to 14 museums around the country and now focuses its grant-making efforts to maintain tribal identities and ecological diversity in countries such as Melanesia, Turkey, Ethiopia and northern Australia. The fund also works with ethnically diverse groups in Silicon Valley.

Diaspora philanthropy is the newest style of giving in Silicon Valley, an area with one of the world's most diverse and highly-educated populations, including many successful and influential first-generation Indian-, Persian- and Chinese-Americans. As they make their mark (and their fortunes), they want to raise awareness for their home countries and help women and girls there to receive an education. Lata Krishnan of Milpitas, who was born in India and is one of Silicon Valley's leading entrepreneurs, is president of the American India Foundation, which offers grants to education and public

health projects in India with emphases on elementary education and women's empowerment. Noosheen Hashemi, instrumental in the early success of Oracle, started the PARSA Community Foundation to benefit the Iranian-American community.

Bitra Daryabari, a former telecommunications exec who was sent to California as a teenager by her Persian family, founded the Unique Zan Foundation to provide international educational grants to nurses, teachers and similar professionals, as well as to fund girls' schools (currently in Afghanistan) and health clinics in developing countries.

"In times such as these, philanthropists are cautious and thoughtful, and they will tend to focus on one or two areas in which they are passionate," says Juliet Flint de Baubigny, who has two young children. "Generous givers in Silicon Valley focus on the big idea. They want to be a catalyst, and they want results. The money is there for philanthropy and it will continue to flow." ●

## SHOPPING GUIDE

### ON OUR COVER

Dolce & Gabbana white lamb's fur gown with grey tulle underlay, price upon request, select Dolce & Gabbana; dolcegabbana.it.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**p.16** 3.1 Phillip Lim exclusively for Barneys Co-Op long white chiffon dress, \$1,250, Barneys New York, Beverly Hills, 310-276-4400. Cara Danielle pearl earrings, \$219, garadanielle.com. Nicole Khristine gold and amethyst pendant, \$3,060, nicolekhristine.com. **p.20** Bill Blass beige scribble-print chiffon halter dress, \$3,500 by special

order, Saks Fifth Avenue, San Francisco, 212-221-6660. Tod's black studded leather gloves \$625, Tod's, Beverly Hills, 310-285-0591. **ON HIM** Bottega Veneta navy cotton jumpsuit, \$2,000, select Bottega Veneta, 877-362-1715. Calvin Klein Underwear white cotton ribbed tank top, \$30 (pack of three), select Bloomingdale's; cku.com.

### C WHAT'S HOT

**Present Perfect, p.33** Oscar de la Renta wool bouclé dress with embroidered necklace detail, \$3,290, select Saks Fifth Avenue; oscardearenta.com. 3.1 Phillip Lim Thompson sunglasses in brushed silver, \$250, 3.1 Phillip Lim, West Hollywood, 310-358-1988. Harry Winston emerald-cut diamond ring, price upon request, Harry Winston, Beverly Hills, 310-271-8554. Giuseppe Zanotti Design black leather cutout high heels, \$875, Giuseppe Zanotti Design, Costa Mesa, 714-979-3300.

Mercedes-Benz strawberry red metallic 1957 300SL Roadster, \$750,000, Mercedes-Benz Classic Center; mbclassic.com. Soolip gift wrapping, 8646 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 310-360-0545; soolip.com. And December 1-24, Fred Segal Melrose is featuring a Soolip Boutique with their specialty wrapping service, 8100 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, 323-651-4129.

### Something for Everyone, p.34 LA JOLLA

**BEACHCOMBER** 1. Mrs. John L. Strong color bookmarks, \$25/set of five, mrsstrong.com. 2. Laszlo Layton's *Emperor's Slit Shell*, PL. 10, 2003, \$1,500 unframed, Peter Fetterman Gallery, Santa Monica; peterfetterman.com. 3. Jacob & Company ladies antique style rose-cut diamond earrings, \$17,595, Tourneau, L.A., 310-553-8463. 4. First-edition copy of *The California Islands*, 1958, \$60, Nick Harvill Libraries, W. Hollywood, 310-271-6230. 5. LAFCO NY Beach House