

## 100 Women Who Care take fundraising to the grassroots



**By Brock Weir**

Sixty minutes, four times a year, might not seem like enough time to make much of a difference in the local community, but a growing group of local women are finding it is more than enough time to have a big impact on the world around them.

In fact, they have the potential to raise up to \$10,000 a shot for a local charity in just one hour through 100 Women Who Care (Central York Region).

Founded by area businesswoman Laurie Brakeboer last September to serve Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury after learning about the concept established in Michigan, she says she knew it had the potential to do a lot of good in these three communities.

"I absolutely loved the idea that a group of women can come together for one hour every three months and do so much good in the community," she says. "All the way through life I have always been very busy, but I have always found time to give. Sometimes I don't have as much time as I would like to give, but I am always willing to give money. Except, I also want to know the money I am giving is going where it needs to be. That is the big draw of 100 Women Who Care."

Likening 100 Women Who Care to a "giving circle", Ms. Brakeboer explains the organization is founded on the principle of bringing, as the name suggests, a large group of women together for one hour once a quarter.

Members work at a grassroots level to research area non-profits and charities that might need a boost, putting their nominated organizations into a pool, and if their respective organization is one of the two drawn from the hat at each meeting, it is up to the nominating woman to make a pitch on why their charity should be the beneficiary of that quarter's meeting.

At the end of the hour, each woman "or team of women" writes a cheque for \$100 directly to the winning not-for-profit, potentially collecting up to \$10,000 in charitable donations.

100 Women Who Care (Central York Region) first met last October in Newmarket.

The result of the meeting was a \$4,600 donation to Newmarket's Inn From The Cold, a multifaceted organization dedicated to addressing the needs of area homeless.

They reconvene for their second meeting this Wednesday, January 27, at the Aurora Soccer Club, and hope to nearly double the

amount raised at their last giving circle.

“We're trying to help those who don't necessarily come under the big banners,” says Ms. Brakeboer. “Every single dollar goes to the organization and they are not allowed to use it for any administrative reason in the agreements they sign. When they are interviewed prior to coming to us, they have to designate what they would be using those funds for.

“The Aurora Soccer Club has been wonderful because 100 Women Who Care has absolutely no money, no banking, and we will never have any banking. Everything we do has to be done with donations and the support from the communities.”

Since that first meeting, the ranks of 100 Women Who Care have steadily swelled. At last count, they had 58 members, including individuals and teams, a number which impressed the international founders of the movement so early in the game.

“They said the fact our community has come out in those numbers just speaks volumes,” said Ms. Brakeboer. “I am just thrilled, but I never expected anything less. I am actively involved in my communities, so I know what amazing women live in Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. Now our biggest thing is spreading the word.

“It has become quite a phenomenon around the world. I don't even know how to explain the energy in the room. You just come together knowing you are doing so much good for your own community and it takes so little time from all of us. It is the excitement and thrill of being able to bring together a group of women to help our community. This is a way to make a difference very quickly and very efficiently.”

If you are interested in coming out to this Wednesday's meeting of 100 Women Who Care (Central York Region) either as a member or observer, visit [www.100womencyr.ca](http://www.100womencyr.ca) for more information. Observers are not entitled to vote for the meeting's beneficiary charity.