Circle of Sisterhood 101

Alumnae Organization Starter Kit

One World. One Sisterhood. ®

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Why Support the Circle of Sisterhood?

We understand sorority alumnae organizations focus their philanthropic efforts in their local communities and most often by granting scholarships to sorority women in need. We'd like to invite interested alumnae organizations to expand their philanthropic portfolio of giving to include girls and women worldwide who are in need of the one thing we all have in common – an education. When 2/3 of illiterate adults in the world are women, there is much work to do and we are asking for your help.

The sorority community is one of the largest, identifiable bodies of college educated women in the world and our community holds a significant amount of influence. As one community of women, we can use our influence to help not only our campus and alumnae communities, but those around us to understand the global issues affecting women and the critical need to help girls achieve education around the world.

The Circle of Sisterhood (CofS) is a U.S. 501c3 charitable organization founded and powered by sorority women to remove barriers to education for girls and women around the world. When not even 7% of the world earns a college degree and 70% of out-of-school youth in the world are girls, there is much to be done. As educated women, we have a responsibility to help girls go to school. And when all girls are educated, the world will be a better place.

> **"When a country educates and unleashes women, those educated women often become force multipliers for good." - Nicolas Kristof**

The Circle of Sisterhood was founded in 2010 and in that short time has helped to remove barriers to education for girls and women in 32 countries. This movement is the epitome of the power of the sorority community when we all stand together – across affiliation – to make the world a better place. Will you join this movement? We are not asking you to raise a large sum of money because a little goes a long way in the developing world. **How about raising $250-500?** This could be a one-time commitment or a yearly commitment. Imagine the impact we could have in diminishing the global crisis in girls' education if every alumnae group in North America raised $250 to remove barriers to education?

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About the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation

Mission
The Circle of Sisterhood will leverage the collective influence of sorority women to raise financial resources for entities around the world that are removing educational barriers for girls and women facing poverty and oppression.

The Cause
For too many girls and women around the world, access to quality education is often limited. More than 100 million girls are out of school around the globe. Education is an answer to many of the global issues affecting women – poverty, oppression, misogyny, brutality. Ultimately, more and more educated girls will mean stronger and healthier villages, communities, and entire countries.

Why Sorority Women?
The Circle of Sisterhood (CofS) was founded and is powered by sorority women. Most sororities were founded in the 19th century because of very real obstacles to women achieving a college education. Sorority Founders bound together fiercely to fight for their right to higher education.

Today, more than 170 years later, and millions strong, we vow to continue the legacy of our Founders by standing together again to help girls and women go to school around the world. Since the Circle of Sisterhood's establishment in 2010, sorority women across the U.S. – whether on college campuses or alumnae in their own communities - have engaged in this global humanitarian effort to remove barriers to education for girls in the developing world. This movement by sorority women has already had an impact in 31 countries on 4 continents.

Sororities across North America help numerous domestic U.S. charities in significant ways and that will never change. The Circle of Sisterhood is a way for the entire sorority community to contribute in a global humanitarian way - together. Note: CofS also grants money to organizations in the U.S. The Circle of Sisterhood Foundation is a mechanism by which all sorority women can stand together across affiliation, age, color, and creed to make a difference in the lives of millions of girls and women. Collectively, we can do much more than we could as individuals or individual groups. We can give others an equal chance for rewarding lives and livelihoods through schooling, the learning of a trade, or even access to or preparation for college.

One person can make a small difference. But as a community of educated women, our collective efforts will be transforming for generations to come.

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Sorority Women are Making an Impact!
With Your Help, Our Impact Will Continue to Grow!

As of June 2026, the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation has:

- Granted over $2,700,000 to remove barriers to education in 32 countries on 4 continents
- Engaged 300+ sorority campus communities as official philanthropic partners
- Engaged 25+ alumnae organizations
- Funded the construction of 50 schools in villages/communities in Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Senegal
- Provided scholarships, tuition, uniforms, boarding school fees, malaria nets, libraries, teachers, tutors, electricity, computers, hygiene products, and the list goes on…to remove barriers to education.

The barriers to education that we are trying to remove include:

- Affordability (inability to afford tuition, uniforms, boarding, etc.)
- Child marriage
- Inadequate infrastructure (conducive structures, latrines, etc.)
- Lack of school supplies
- Puberty (inadequate menstrual hygiene education, facilities, supplies)
- Sex trafficking (reintegration, teaching of a trade)
- Untrained and underfunded teachers

Imagine what our impact will be years from now because of the commitment of both undergraduate and alumnae sorority women to provide opportunity through education for girls and women around the world!

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About Our Founding

Our Founder, Ginny Carroll, was inspired to establish the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation because she is a strong proponent of the sorority experience and understands the sorority movement came forth out of oppression.

She was also motivated by the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Around the World.* In the book, authors Kristof and WuDunn shared first-hand accounts from their travels across the globe of women being subjected to brutal violence and oppression solely because of their gender. And the frustration that too many girls in the world were not getting the opportunity to go to school which kept them locked in a life of poverty.

Through the stories in the book, Kristof and WuDunn help to shed light on the reality that a key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential. Throughout much of the world, the greatest unexploited economic resource is the female half of the population. Unleashing that process globally is not only the right thing to do, it's also the best strategy for fighting poverty.

> *"One study after another has shown that educating girls is one of the most effective ways to fight poverty. Schooling is often a precondition for girls and women to stand up against injustice, and for women to be integrated into the economy. Until women are numerate and literate, it is difficult for them to start businesses or contribute meaningfully to their economies."* ***HALF THE SKY****, pg. 168*

Ginny felt strongly, as a college educated sorority woman, that she had a responsibility to do something to help girls and women around the world get an education and she knew that she could not do it alone – that as just one person, her impact would be insignificant. But she was well-acquainted with a very large community of college educated women she knew would help – sorority women.

Without education, girls and women all over the world are unable to reach their full potential. Sorority women are fortunate to have the one thing that will help most women out of poverty – an education. And as educated women, we have a responsibility to those less fortunate.

Circle of Sisterhood firmly believes that the widespread oppression of girls and women economically, politically, and socially undermines stability and security worldwide. And we also believe that quality schooling is the great emancipator from poverty and despair and will provide a better life for a woman and that of her family. Every girl deserves to go to school.

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Tips to Get Started

By being able to answer Why, Who, What, Where, and When, you'll be able to plan to successfully begin incorporating support of the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation into your philanthropic portfolio of giving and educational programming.

Step 1: Why?
Understanding and articulating the importance of the work that CofS, and thereby the sorority community, is doing is an important first step. The preceding information should help you explain why. Here are a few additional tips for getting started:

Raise Awareness - Before you ask your members to donate time or money, educate them about why you're asking for their time and money.

- At a meeting, introduce the Circle of Sisterhood and show the video, "Support the Circle of Sisterhood". You can find the video on the Resources page of our website (www.circleofsisterhood.org). It's also on our YouTube Channel here: https://youtu.be/NQMasYJo13U
- When introducing your desire to support the efforts of CofS, explain that this movement is a way in which the entire sorority community – undergraduates and alumnae - is working together to answer the call to the global crisis in girls' education.
- Host a *Half the Sky* or *Girl Rising* documentary viewing party.
- To continue to create awareness, use other shorter videos about educating girls found on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=FLhjW9afFFQ6Xr81Nv0mu_zQ
- Establish a committee to provide ongoing awareness about the global issues affecting women at your meetings and to facilitate fund raising initiatives (see Appendix A for a suggested structure).
- FYI: There is no pressure to raise thousands of dollars. If every alumnae group across the U.S. raised just $500, it would be transformational. A little goes a long way in the developing world. Approximately $50-75 equates (every country is different) to sending a girl in the developing world to school for a year with everything she needs: tuition, a notebook and pencil, textbooks, a new school uniform, and school lunch every day for the entire academic year.

Step 2: Who?
Who in your organization needs to be involved in the process to adopt CofS? Do you need a committee? Are there other organizations in your area you could partner with?

Support from CofS - Don't go it alone! The Circle of Sisterhood assigns all alumnae chapters/associations or Alumnae Panhellenics with an Alumnae Relationship Manager (ARM). Once you officially adopt the Circle of Sisterhood as part of your philanthropic portfolio, let us know and we will assign you an ARM to serve as a direct resource. Send an email to: alumnaesupport@circleofsisterhood.org.

Step 3: What, Where, and When?
Once you've got the why and the who down, the rest will come more easily! Start thinking about ways to engage the women in your alumnae organization and community. Plan a fundraiser(s) that will fit well in your schedule. What will get your members excited to help you help girls go to school and for women to be literate? What are meaningful ways that they can contribute? Where is the best way to create visibility of this important work? Pull together an interest group and answer these questions together.

> **Work Smarter** - try to think about ways you can add Circle of Sisterhood efforts into what you're already doing. Consider adding CofS education and support to a planned event. For example, if/when you provide scholarships to women in your community, also promote that, as educated women, you are also working to provide opportunity through education for girls and women worldwide through an organization founded and powered by sorority women. Show a short video and ask for donations at the event.

Ready to Jump Start?

To jump start your alumnae organization's relationship with the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation, we recommend the following actions be taken: ☑

1. Adopt the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation as one of your philanthropic focuses. ☐
2. Let us know that you have officially adopted the Circle of Sisterhood as a philanthropic partner and we will assign you an Alumnae Relationship Manager (ARM) to serve as a resource as you integrate this important work into your calendar. Contact us at alumnaesupport@circleofsisterhood.org when you are ready! ☐
3. Assign a liaison/ambassador to the Circle of Sisterhood and provide us with her contact information so our Alumnae Relationship Manager can communicate with her. ☐
4. Form a Circle of Sisterhood committee (See Appendix A for examples of how to incorporate committees/work groups) to engage more members into this work. ☐
5. Educate and fundraise. Visit our website for numerous resources including our fundraising guide and fundraising ideas, awareness activities, and resources for your events (table tents, flyers, etc.). www.circleofsisterhood.org ☐
6. Share your successes with us so we can share and post about your good work! ☐

Getting Buy In

We know if you're reading this then you're probably already excited about the possibility of establishing a relationship with the Circle of Sisterhood. Try using your passion and this elevator speech to help get buy in.

Why get involved with the Circle of Sisterhood?

The American sorority movement was born in the mid-1800s as an avenue of support for women who were fighting for the right to earn a higher degree amidst tremendous odds. The societal view at the time was that women should not be attending college because they would be "upsetting the natural order of society." United, our Founders fought tirelessly over many decades for the right to be college educated, paving the way for women like you and me.

Now, over 170 years later, sorority women have joined forces to commit to follow in our founders' footsteps by helping to removing barriers to education for girls and women around the world through the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation (a U.S. 501c3 charitable organization).

For too many women worldwide, getting an education remains a privilege and not a right. Seventy percent (70%) of out-of-school youth in the world are girls and two-thirds of illiterate adults worldwide are women. As one of the most educated communities of women in the world, sorority women are answering the call to help end the global crisis in girls' education.

Too many girls and women around the world will never have the opportunities we have had—and continue to have—unless we help them. As one of the largest, identifiable bodies of college educated women in the world (when not even 7% of the global population has earned a college degree), we have a responsibility to help our sisters around the world.

- Educated women overcome poverty
- Educated women positively impact their economy
- Educated women earn 25% more income
- Educated women reinvest 90% of their income back into their families
- Educated women have smaller, healthier families
- Educated women have children who are 40% more likely to live past the age of 5
- Educated women are three times less likely to contract HIV
- Educated women live in less volatile, extremist cultures
- Educated women are more likely to stand up against injustice

The Circle of Sisterhood Foundation's mission is to leverage the collective influence of sorority women to raise financial resources for entities around the world that are removing educational barriers for girls and women facing poverty and oppression.

I am asking that each of you—as a sorority woman—give or raise $_____this year, and then ask every affiliated woman you know to do the same. If every sorority woman gets involved in this movement as a donor, we will transform girls' education – literally.

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Online Resources

The Circle of Sisterhood website is full of resources designed to help you raise awareness and begin fundraising. See below for links and information about each resource.

Raise Money - this page on our website is full of ideas for fundraising and shares resources for events.

Fundraising Guide - this guide will help you learn the best practices of fundraising for the Circle of Sisterhood. It's full of ideas for fundraisers. It was written with College Panhellenics in mind, but the ideas are most often universal. We recommend checking out 101 Ways to Raise $100 starting on page 21.

Raise Awareness – this page is loaded with ideas and information about raising awareness about the global issues.

News Around the Circle - here's where we'll keep you up to date with our progress! We feature donors, campus partners, alumnae groups as well as the impact of how donor dollars are removing barriers to education. It's a great way to stay in touch with the foundation.

Circle of Sisterhood YouTube Channel - here you'll find some of our favorite videos. These include videos from our trip to Senegal to build the first CofS school, stories of impact from grantees, and some of our favorite videos to create awareness about our cause.

Of course, we're also on Facebook and Instagram!

How to Contact Us

General Contact Information

Circle of Sisterhood Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 551
Belmont, NC 28012
(317) 775-9488

Email: info@circleofsisterhood.org
Website: www.circleofsisterhood.org

Team Specific Contact Information

Grants Team: grants@circleofsisterhood.org
Campus Team: campussupport@circleofsisterhood.org
Alumnae Team: alumnaesupport@circleofsisterhood.org
Donation questions: gifts@circleofsisterhood.org

Social Media Links

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CircleofSisterhoodFoundation
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/circleofsisterhood/
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/circleofsisterhood1/featured
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/circle-of-sisterhood-foundation-inc-

Appendix A: Sample Circle of Sisterhood Committee Structure

We want your relationship with CofS to be easy. We don't expect you to establish a committee, but it would be a great way to get more members of your alumnae organization involved in your philanthropic work around a cause many women care a lot about – education. We have yet to meet a sorority woman who does not want to help girls go to school so you may have a lot of interest!

The work of the committee could focus on (1) educating your membership about the global issues affecting women and why this is a cause you've chosen to support, (2) facilitating fundraising initiatives, and (3) outreach to people/organizations in the local community.

Leadership:
A member (or two) of your alumnae organization could be designated the Circle of Sisterhood Committee Chair. This may already be a designated philanthropy role in your organization or may be a new role. The committee chair can be the conduit to the CofS Alumnae Relationship Manager (ARM) and CofS will address all communication to her.

Structure:
It is important to pick a structure for your Circle of Sisterhood committee that best meets the needs of your alumnae organization. The committee's structure will vary based on your desired committee size. Here is a suggestion for structure:

Include three work groups within your committee:

1. Awareness Workgroup (2-4 ppl) – responsible for creating awareness about the cause
2. Fundraising Workgroup (2-3 ppl) – responsible for any fundraising initiative(s)
3. Outreach Workgroup (2-3 ppl) – responsible for outreach to people or organizations who may want to partner with your alumnae organization because they also believe in the importance of education locally and globally.

Appendix B: Fundraising Examples from APHs

PHILANTHROPY AT HOLIDAY AUCTION

The Indianapolis Alumnae Panhellenic organized successful holiday auctions with proceeds benefiting Circle of Sisterhood and a local community charity. Members of the APH bring items to donate such as arts & crafts, gift cards & goodie baskets, sports tickets, and jewelry. Some items were up for bid in a silent auction while others are featured in a live auction. To keep costs at a minimum, members also bring an appetizer for guests to share while they shop the event. The holiday auction is a casual and fun event for socializing with friends while fundraising for great causes.

FUNDRAISING THROUGH VIRTUAL WALK

The Northern Virginia Alumnae Panhellenic Virtual Walk is an opportunity to come together, wherever members and their friends may be, and support educational opportunities for girls and women. Participants in the virtual walk register, pledge to run or walk a designated distance, and collect sponsor donations for their participation. Proceeds benefit Circle of Sisterhood. Results are posted on social media which promotes encouragement, awareness, and inspiration for more dollars raised. The George Mason College Panhellenic is also included in the event.

BOOK CLUB AWARENESS

The second Wednesday of each month is book club for the Chi Omega alumnae chapter in New York City. The group designated one month to *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Around the World* by Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn. Book club members became more aware of just how many girls and women lack the opportunity to go to school, keeping them locked in a life of poverty. As sorority women, they became inspired to use their education to help those less fortunate. NOTE: a documentary viewing party could also be an option for an alumnae gathering. Two documentaries would be appropriate: Girl Rising (90 min) and Half the Sky Part 1 (120 min).

GIFT JAR

The Central New Jersey Alumnae Panhellenic passes around a CofS change jar at every meeting to collect pennies up to $20 bills to help remove barriers to education. While the jar is being passed, a member shares a new stat about the global crisis in girls' education as well as information about the impact CofS has been able to have around the world. Data and information can be found on CofS social media channels, the blog or on the website here: https://www.circleofsisterhood.org/take-action/raise-awareness/

NOTE: We are happy to let you know if a College Panhellenic in your area is involved with the Circle of Sisterhood. We always encourage our campus partners to reach out to alumnae in the area but a nudge from the local alumnae would also be helpful.