

To Quote the Rev Martin Luther King, Jr: 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'.

Whether it was handing out leaflets on the street corners of NYC, checking the grape and lettuce cartons during the boycotts, demonstrating for No More War Toys, organizing for the first Earth Day event, I was driven to work for social change. As the Women's Movement took off in the 70s, I saw the need to make sure that women had an equal voice in the change that was happening. As they say: 'the hand that rocks the cradle must also rock the boat'. *In those days, support was just a phone call away.*

*The social justice movements of the 70s continued to gain momentum.*

All effective social movements start at the grass roots level.

It's Trickle Up / not Trickle Down. Some bear the face of an individual

Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta organizing the United Farm Workers

Malala Yousafzai struggling for the education of girls in Pakistan

Greta Thunberg sounding the alarm about climate change

Annie Wauneka eradicating TB on the Navajo Nation

Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu dismantling Apartheid in South Africa

BUT we all know that it takes a village to make change.

Time, Tenacity and a Thick skin are all part of the equation. *None of us are in it to win popularity contests – that's for sure. With risk comes reward.*

One day while handing out leaflets obviously pregnant and with toddler in tow – a man approached me with an argumentative question - *Why don't you go home and take care of your children?* To which I replied *that is exactly what I am doing. Working for a better society for them and others.*

When I was Pres of Women in Management for a large Corp and discovered that living women in AZ were not being formally recognized for their accomplishments, only the deceased were - aka AZ Women's Hall of Fame. They finally added of few elderly women for recognition. So, I created the Year for All AZ Women (living). I intending to have only 5 events; the project snowballed into over 100 events. Women were coming out of the woodwork to help me. They were from all ages / all ethnic and racial groups. It was heartwarming.

In 2002 when I began to realize that most of the grant money and media coverage was focused on the large non-profits, I established the AZ Women's Partnership, an all-volunteer non-profit, the fund the small nonprofits. One local podcaster termed it a United Way for small charities. Our grant recipients address critical issues of domestic violence, child abuse, hunger, literacy, programs for at risk youth, refugee families, etc.

I have often been referred to as the Energizer Bunny – maybe I just have the NYC hustle in me.

I do believe that most people want to help others. We fully realize that we in this life TOGETHER. As MLK said 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'.

With google as our common friend – a search for a match is easy. Volunteermatch.org has a database of thousands of volunteer opportunities at your fingertips. They can be virtual or in person – matches are not made in heaven – but on the internet. It has been a treasure chest for the AZ Women's Partnership. During COVID we had more volunteers than I needed, so I created additional volunteer jobs and wrote profile articles for each of these new volunteers which are on our website. It's so important to give recognition for and express gratitude to supporters and donors. They deserve that and more.

Be they inequities in public school education, unfair labor practices, environmental pollution and degradation, disparities in health care, privatization of prisons - there is work to be done. I challenge you to make 2022 meaningful for you and for others.

#### POEM on SUCCESS

My mother was very fond of sunflowers – known in Italian as Girasole because they always turn to the sun. So in 2022 let us be like the sunflower - looking up and facing the sun, as we work for a brighter tomorrow.