GIFTING FOR GOOD

SHOP WITH PURPOSE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND ALL YEAR LONG

A HUMAN TOUCH: PUTTING A FACE, AND A STORY, TO THE REALITIES OF HOMELESSNESS

STORIES OF METRO DENVER PHILANTHROPY
WHY I GIVE: SUSAN KIELY

A PRACTICE OF GIVING OUT OF DUTY, WITH JOY, AND GROUNDED IN FAITH.
BY NICOLE BAKER

For Susan Kiely, philanthropy is the ability to help others succeed. Indeed, being of service to others is at the root of her decades of giving. Her gifts have touched lives around the world, including in India, Thailand, Ghana, Ethiopia, and here in her home of Denver.

Kiely and Leo, her husband of 47 years, moved to Denver 25 years ago when he took on the role of COO of Coors Brewing Co. He retired four years ago as the CEO of MillerCoors. The couple shares a strong Christian faith that drives their commitment to give back. A Bible passage, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required...” is the foundation for their philanthropic activities.

Susan’s faith and drive to help others led her to graduate with a Youth and Family Studies degree from the Denver Seminary in 1996. She put her education into practice by helping in homeless shelters, serving as a volunteer chaplain for seniors, and counseling couples. “For me, God is about love, and I believe every human being has a right to succeed and do good,” she says.

Abundance was not part of Susan’s early life. She attended 13 different schools up and down the East Coast as her single mother struggled to find stable employment. As the founder of the Women With A Cause Foundation (WWAC), she channels this experience into a passion for empowering women to use education and skills training to break out of poverty. WWAC has provided training in financial literacy, sewing, micro-lending, and entrepreneurship to women in India and other countries. Six years ago, Susan brought the programming to Denver to address immediate needs at home.

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Philanthropy is a family affair for the Kielys. “We want our children and grandchildren to continue the work and to understand the importance of giving back,” says Susan. They make decisions together and make sure that their grandchildren understand the impact a gift can have early on.

Susan treasures the strong relationships she has formed with graduates of WWAC, many of whom come back to serve as mentors to other young women. She has empowered hundreds of women to succeed in achieving their dreams. Seeing them succeed has, in return, given Susan Kiely an immeasurable gift.

“We have been blessed abundantly,” says Susan. “We feel it is our duty to give back, and the impact that comes from our gifts brings so much joy to our lives.”