

# CarrollwoodPatch

Covering Carrollwood and Northdale

BUSINESS

## Women in Networking Group Offers Support

Organization helps women of all professions

By **Deb Kelley** January 24, 2011

They meet in an upstairs conference room at [Carrollwood Cultural Center](http://www.carrollwoodcenter.org) (<http://www.carrollwoodcenter.org>) on the second Thursday of each month. Forty to 50 women mingle before a catered lunch is uncovered and the official meeting promptly begins at 11:30 a.m.

Announcements are made and each woman has a "sixty second commercial" to introduce herself, talk about her business and who an ideal client might be. The meeting continues with a guest speaker and special community announcements. It ends 90 minutes later with the distribution of door prizes and business cards.

Founded in April 2002 by Susan Senger, [WIN \(Women in Networking\)](http://www.wintampabay.com) (<http://www.wintampabay.com>) has grown through word-of-mouth from six women meeting over breakfast at a restaurant in Oldsmar to almost 600 members in 11 locations throughout Hillsborough and Pinellas County.

"I founded WIN because I could not find a networking group that met my needs," Senger said. "WIN focuses on women supporting each other not only professionally, but personally, too."

WIN welcomes women from all types of businesses. There is no cap on the number of women per occupation.

The group includes bankers, realtors, hair stylists and acupuncturists to authors, graphic designers, therapists, and psychics. WIN provides a network for like-minded, professional business women to exchange ideas, tips, and generate business leads.

Though women-only networking is not uncommon today, WIN does offer something most other networks do not: no membership fee.

Registration is online at [www.wintampabay.com](http://www.wintampabay.com), (<http://www.wintampabay.com/>) and the only requirement is for members to attend one meeting per month. After three meetings, members can sign up to become guest speakers.

A WIN member pays for her meal and donates a dollar per meeting to WIN's Sunshine Fund, which is used to help members in need or commemorate a member achievement. As WIN is non-profit, all proceeds remaining at the end of each year are donated to selected charities.

Last year, the group donated to the Kimberly Home Pregnancy Resource Center, the Boys & Girls Club and St. Pete College's Women on the Way.

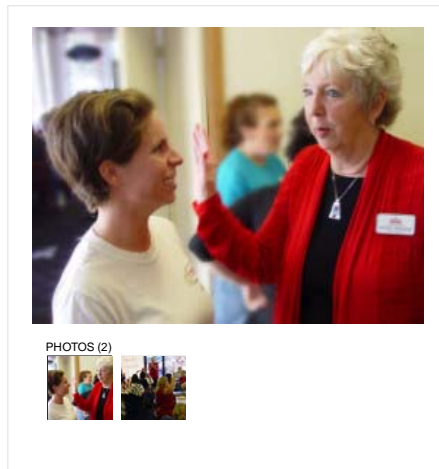
Since its inception, WIN has donated \$40,000 to local charities.

WIN focuses on helping the community. In March, members will be collecting clothing for Dress for Success. Later in the year, participating in Habitat for Humanity.

New member Kristin Rink of Fitness-Tek says "With WIN, everyone is so inviting and really powerful and intentional business women. I think it was a great find for me to meet this group of women."

Senger explained that the future plans of WIN are simple.

"Continuing to grow and watching women become successful," she said. "That's the goal."



Interested in a follow-up to this article?



SEE NEXT IN BUSINESS

**Job of the Day: Bilingual Spanish Customer Service Representative**

