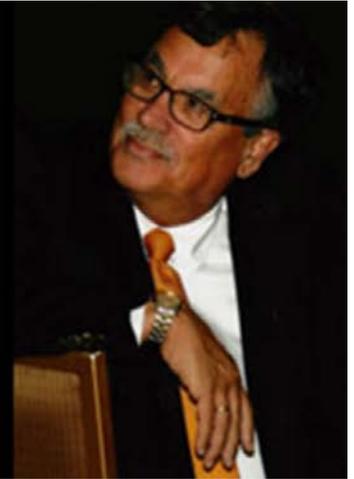


MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



THE WOMEN OF TIP

In the last few years it seems like women's calls for equality and justice has become louder and louder. Through the ME-TOO movement women have called for an end to sexual harassment and sexual assault. Also, various high-profile lawsuits have been directed towards companies which pay women less for doing the same work as men. Many self-help books are encouraging women to speak up and find their voice. ("Why Women's Voices Get Silenced and How to Set Them Free", for example). The media has played an important part in this effort by amplifying women's efforts to gain equality and prevent victimization.

I enthusiastically support all the efforts mentioned above. There has been and remains a real problem in our treatment of women in this society which needs to be addressed.

For the last 35 years, I have had the privilege and joy of working with amazing women as we have developed the TIP organization. Without in anyway denying the plight of women mentioned above, I feel I need to speak up and express how I have experienced the women who have made TIP possible. I have experienced women not as second-class citizens without a voice but as women on a mission who haven't let anything stand in their way. I call these women **THE WOMEN OF TIP**. They have found their voices and aren't afraid to speak up. They are women whose talent has been unleashed. They are Superstars.

Let's face it, TIP is a woman led and operated organization. More than 85% of TIP volunteers nationwide are women, and 86 % of TIP staff are female. This has been a source of frustration for TIP leaders who occasionally vow to recruit more men, usually without much success. Maybe because of the rarity of men in TIP, our women in TIP have great affection and speak very highly of them. I have taught many seminars at TIP affiliates where at some point the TIP leader gleefully and proudly states: *"look.... we have 3 men in the class!"*

I too am very proud of the men we have in TIP. They are every bit as committed and talented as the women. There just aren't many of them. And for that reason, I believe it's accurate to describe TIP as a "women led and operated" organization. Women may not be running the world (yet) but they are sure running TIP.

I appreciate many things about **THE WOMEN OF TIP**. Let me mention only 3. . .

1. **THE WOMEN OF TIP** “make the time” for TIP. I know women in TIP who are caring for an elderly parent who make the time for TIP. I know TIP volunteers who are “overwhelmed” pre-med students who make the time for TIP. I know TIP volunteers who are single parents and work full time who make the time for TIP. I know TIP volunteers who are foster parents who make the time for TIP. What this willingness to “make the time” says about **THE WOMEN OF TIP** is that not only are they amazing multitaskers, but they are very committed to serving their communities and helping others.
2. **THE WOMEN OF TIP** are tough and persistent. Few women come into the organization with a formal education related to leading a nonprofit or doing all the things women in TIP do. But lack of experience or education in certain areas has not slowed them down. **THE WOMEN OF TIP** have the guts to take on challenges responsibilities and problems they are unprepared for. They roll up their sleeves, step up to these challenges and as one female leader told me, *“I just figure it out”*. When I quizzed a woman in TIP recently about how she met a challenge for which she had no previous experience, she looked at me and simply explained: *“I’m a mom.”*
3. **THE WOMEN OF TIP** are always growing. They seem to be continually discovering new skills and talents they didn’t know they had (*“I just thought of myself as a homemaker”*). And they are not afraid to use these talents for the benefit of TIP. I know women in TIP who didn’t know they could speak in public who are now TIP master trainers. I know women in TIP who never saw themselves as leaders who are now leading large TIP affiliates. I know women in TIP whose relationships for years revolved around their kids and their spouse who are now TIP super networkers in the community.

Perhaps many of **THE WOMEN OF TIP** suffer the same victimization in their workplaces and in their communities as women in general. But in TIP women are soaring. They are changing the public safety system. They are helping thousands of traumatized survivors. And they are doing it mostly on a shoestring, often in the face of resistance and frequently in uncharted territory.

THE WOMEN OF TIP Rock!