

WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY

by Beverly Denver

It is during the holidays, perhaps, that we become most keenly aware of the philanthropic nature of women. We know many of our sisters are out there — volunteering to do all sorts of good deeds for others and digging deep into their pockets to give generously to worthy causes and to those less fortunate.

But, of course, the philanthropy of women is not a seasonal phenomenon. Many among us devote enormous amounts of their time, energy and resources to enhance the lives of others — day in, day out and all yearlong.

Mandy Kao, featured on the cover of this issue, is a prime example. Kao is an entrepreneur with an inspiring story. This vice-president and co-owner of Titan Management, a real estate investment and development company, believes strongly in the value of mixing business with heartfelt generosity. The combination has proven to be the right recipe for her enormous success.

Kao and Titan Management are providing some awfully special services for the tenants leasing apartments in their properties. But, even more laudable is the program they have established to help their tenants buy their own homes and move out! Do yourself a favor; turn to pages 11-12 to learn more about Mandy Kao, her business and the mission of newly formed Mandy Kao Foundation. It will put a smile on your face and make you feel warm all over!

On page 18, you'll learn about those who received awards at the National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon. The annual event is sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals to honor and recognize those who contribute their time, talents, financial support and other resources to Houston's philanthropic organizations.

Among them is Lisa Kennedy of Baylor College of Medicine who was named Outstanding Fundraising Professional. To her and all the others honored that day, we send our sincerest thanks!

Meredith Iler, a busy young professional, wife and mother, is a powerful ally for the military. Turn to page 21 and read how Iler spends her "free time" raising funds to provide new and adapted homes for severely wounded troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2007, Iler founded the non-profit organization, Helping A Hero, to formalize this effort. With

generous donations from builders and contractors, politicians, friends and families, Helping A Hero has already awarded 26 homes in Houston and across the country! An amazing achievement, don't you think? This story is another good reminder: wonderful things can happen when one caring person is truly dedicated to helping others.

The stories about these women have inspired me. They have motivated me to take another look at what I have to offer others. And, at this most giving of seasons, I hope these stories will do exactly the same for you.