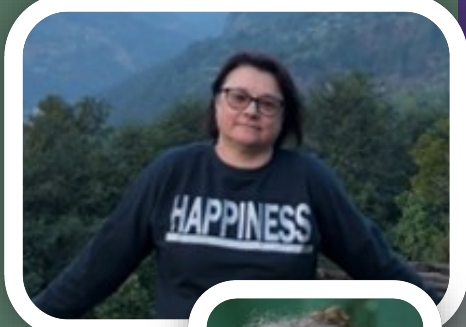
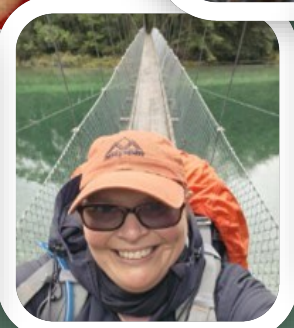


Happy International Women's Day



 International
Women's Day

#AccelerateAction
#IWD2025



March 8, 2025

*What's the greatest lesson a woman should learn?
That since day one, she's already had everything she needs within herself.
It's the world that convinced her she did not.*

Rupi Kaur, Poet, Illustrator, Photographer & Author

Dear Associates,

On March 8th the world will honor International Women's Day (IWD). It has been a day of recognition, celebration, and activism for more than 100 years. Founded in 1911, IWD calls on individuals, organizations, and communities around the world to act swiftly and decisively to address gender inequality, both in personal and professional spheres. It is a call to increase momentum and break down obstacles that prevent women from reaching their full potential.

While much progress has been made since its founding, inequality continues and so should the work. This year's theme for International Women's Day is *Accelerate Action*. According to the World Economic Forum, it will take until 2158 or another 133 years to achieve full gender parity. You can learn more about International Women's Day [here](#).

Today we honor daring women leaders across the globe who change the world with Grand Circle Corporation, Grand Circle Foundation, and the Alnoba Lewis Family Foundation.

Please take some time to learn more about these leaders.

Love and peace,

The Lewis Family



TATIANA ALEXEEVA

Operations Manager - Scandinavia and Finland
Location: St. Petersburg, Russia

What is the best piece of advice you have received?
There is nothing impossible!

I graduated from St. Petersburg State University where I majored in Mathematical, Structural and Applied Linguistics and received a degree of the Candidate of Science in Linguistics in 1988.

For several years I worked at the Baltic University teaching Linguistics and English. As a student, I also worked as a part-time local guide and a trip leader.

In May 2004, I was invited to work for Grand Circle. Since then, I oversee different programs in the northwestern part of Europe.

I love to learn and to travel and always try to use special deals to travel with OAT/GCT at least once a year.

MANAL SAILANE

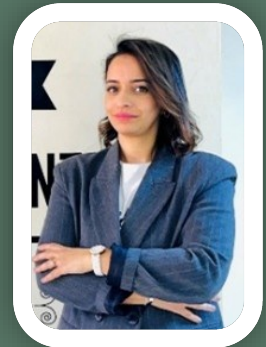
Regional General Manager - Morocco & Tunisia

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

Someone once told me that I would never make it if I followed the path I chose. I'd like to thank them because their words became my biggest motivation.

My journey has been all about hard work, persistence, and stepping out of my comfort zone. With 16 years of experience in tourism, I have led teams, driven operational excellence, and built plans that make an impact. I believe that success comes when we dare to take risks, keep learning, and push ourselves to do better.

I am passionate about **leadership**. For me, leadership is about **guiding, inspiring, and helping people grow**. It's about creating an environment where teams feel empowered to take action and improve every day. I believe that true leadership isn't about titles, it's about taking responsibility, making an impact, and bringing out the best in others.



RACHEL ARMSTRONG

Program Services Manager - New Zealand

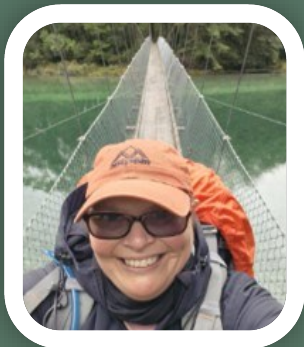
What is the best piece of advice you have received?

It was actually something I learned myself when I was 18 and diagnosed with Leukemia, and that is live each day to the fullest, and never regret any decision you make.

Traveling is my life, both work and play. I am dedicated to providing our OAT travelers with their "trip of a lifetime" experience in New Zealand. I rejoice in the role of empowering our New Zealand trip leaders to be the best they can be.

With over 30 years of experience in the travel and tourism industry, I have held a number of roles across the world focused on my commitment to deliver outstanding customer service. My leadership is rooted in the belief that every journey, whether for business or leisure, is an opportunity to connect people with the world around them and create lasting memories.

Outside of work, I appreciate the natural beauty of New Zealand. As an avid hiker and cyclist, I like to immerse myself in the incredible landscapes we have in New Zealand. I love my role as a solo mum to my dog, Sylvie, cherishing both the companionship and the balance it brings to my life.





AMELIA SCHOEMAN

Senior Vice President – Africa
Location: Cape Town, South Africa

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

Embrace every opportunity for learning and growth. Success isn't just about reaching your goals, but about the journey and the lessons learned along the way.

I have been with OAT for the past 8 years and in the tourism industry for a good 30 years. I started as the Regional Leader and then added the Buying role, which is a very good combination in our region. Strong relationships with fellow associates, trip leaders, and vendors are the most important part of my everyday OAT life.

The love for my continent, the diverse people, amazing animal kingdom, and breathtaking scenery is what fuels my passion to inspire and motivate all involved to exceed excellence. Tourism is life changing, not only for our travelers, but even more important for the communities we visit.

ANDREJA CERNEVSEK

Europe Buyer
Location: Slovenija

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

No one is responsible for your happiness but you.

I was born and raised in Slovenia. After finishing primary and secondary school, I completed my studies in economics and mechanical engineering. At the beginning of my studies, my daughter Lara was born. She is my greatest love and pride, the driving force to continue everything I start. My journey of learning about the real world and life began with her.

Life's challenges have brought me to where I am now, and I am proud to be part of the Grand Circle family. The job gives me new challenges and confronts me with breaking boundaries that basically don't exist.



TANJA URLOVIC

Director, People & Culture
Location: Dubrovnik, Croatia

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

Never assume, always ask.

It's easy to fall into the habit of trying to guess what others think, feel, or how they might react, and I was no exception. Over time, I've come to realize that what seems obvious to me may not be the same for others, and asking questions leads to better understanding and connection.

I have been with the company for 15 years, starting in Ship Human Resources before transitioning to People & Culture in 2021. This shift offers me a fresh perspective and a deeper appreciation for the inner workings of the organization.

Throughout my career I have always strived to create a positive workplace environment where people feel valued and supported. What I love most about working at Grand Circle is the excitement and energy that comes with every day. There's never a dull moment. Each day brings new challenges, pushing us to grow, adapt, and step out of our comfort zones.

Honoring Recipients of Alnoba's Moment of Truth Award for Gender Equity

2021 Recipient

CHRISTA BIG CANOE

Legal Advocacy Director, Aboriginal Legal Services
Partner since 2021 | Funding to date: \$315,000

Right now, four out of every five Indigenous American women are affected by violence, and are murdered at rates more than 10 times the national average. Christa is the Legal Advocacy Director for Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS), a nonprofit organization that works with the families of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW) to navigate the legal system and find justice for their loved ones.

She served as Lead Commission Counsel for Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2017. This year the ALFF will fund Christa's work to hold the Canadian government accountable for genocide.



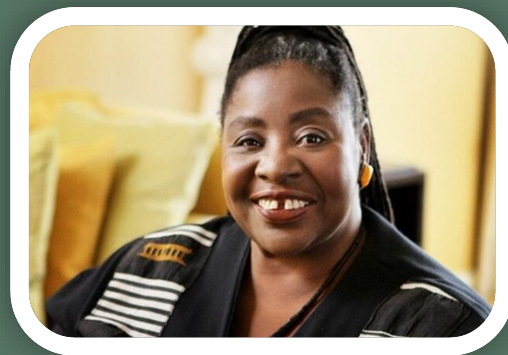
2022 Recipient

LORETTA J. ROSS

Activist, Public Intellectual and Professor
Funded \$10,000

Loretta's activism began at 16 when she was tear-gassed at a demonstration as a first-year student at Howard University in 1970. She was one of the first African American women to direct a rape crisis center in the 1970's, where she used her own story of sexual assault to facilitate a conversation with incarcerated rapists, teaching them Black feminist theory.

As part of a 50-year history in social justice activism, she was the national coordinator of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective from 2005–2012 and co-created the theory of Reproductive Justice in 1994.



2023 Recipient

RUCHIRA GUPTA

Founder, APNE AAP Women Worldwide
Funded \$10,000

For more than three decades, Ruchira Gupta has campaigned for a world where no girl or woman is bought or sold. Along with 22 courageous women in prostitution, she founded **APNE AAP Women Worldwide**, which is a grassroots Indian organization that empowers marginalized girls and women to resist and end sex trafficking. To date, she has helped more than 20,000 women and girls escape prostitution.



2024 Recipient

MARYAM MONTAGUE

CEO, Project Soar
Funded \$10,000

Maryam Montague is trying to stop child marriage of teen girls in Morocco and Syria, as well as advance menstrual rights using a new menstrual solution she and her colleagues developed called the Soar Hurya.

In 2013, she created Project Soar in Morocco and later added sites in Syria and Uganda. Project Soar envisions a world where every marginalized teen girl knows her value, voice, body, rights and path – and seeks to empower teen girls to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.





LEILA SALAZAR LOPEZ

Executive Director, Amazon Watch

Partner since 2020 | Funded to date: \$96,483

Leila is a mother; proud Chicana-Latina woman; and passionate defender of Mother Earth, the Amazon, Indigenous rights and climate justice. She leads Amazon Watch in its work to protect and defend the bio-cultural and climate integrity of the Amazon rainforest by advancing Indigenous peoples' rights, territories, and solutions. For 20+ years, Leila has worked

to defend the world's rainforests, human rights, and climate through grassroots organizing and international advocacy campaigns at Amazon Watch, Rainforest Action Network and Global Exchange. In April 2019, she was acknowledged in Make it Better Media's "17 Bay Area Environmentalists Making a Difference."

DR. LIANNEA SMITH

Founder, Amazon Medical Clinic

Partner since 2000 | Funded to date: \$15,855

In 1990, Dr. Linnea Smith left her Wisconsin medical practice to begin providing services to the indigenous people of the Peruvian Amazon region. Initially, she worked out of a small thatched-roof room without electricity, running water, laboratory services, staff or funding. In 1993, after hearing a radio interview with Dr. Smith, volunteers from Duluth, Minnesota; Thunder Bay, Ontario; and Iquitos, Peru, built a riverside clinic complete with solar panels to provide electricity and a well for water. Over the years, others supported her work and in 1996 The Amazon Medical Clinic became a 501c3.

Prior to Dr. Smith's arrival, people living along the Amazon River had no local access to health care. In recent years, the clinic has been treating roughly 2,000 patients annually, all arriving on foot or by boat. Services include family planning, well childcare, dental services, prenatal care, vaccinations, and treatment of poisonous snakebite, malaria, intestinal parasites, trauma, and a multitude of infectious diseases.



2024 Recipient:

International Indigenous Leadership Award

NAIYAN KIPLAGAT

Co-Founder, Paran Women Group

Funded \$10,000

Naiyan Kiplagat is a grassroots leader with more than 20 years experience, who works on climate change adaptation and mitigation through her efforts around reforestation, energy efficient cook-stoves and training other Indigenous women to

become climate defenders.

She co-founded Paran Women Group, which is now a network of 3,000 women from 64 Indigenous women's organizations from the Ogiek and Maasai Indigenous Peoples in Kenya.

Paran is in Ololunga, Narok south sub county in Narok County, a village that is inhabited by a population of approximately 60,000 residents.

2021 Recipient:

Moral Courage In Leadership Award

PATRICIA GUALINGA

President, Foundation Tiam

Funded to date: \$50,000



Patricia Gualinga has worked for decades as a vital, internationally recognized voice against oil extraction and destruction of the Amazon Rainforest. Patricia is an Indigenous rights defender of the Pueblo Kichwa de Sarayaku (Kichwa People of Sarayaku), an Indigenous community in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Without their consent, communities in her area only learned that their land had been opened for oil exploration when strange helicopters arrived, followed by “men with guns.” In 2012, Patricia was one of the representatives in a case presented to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in which the government was found guilty of rights violations and of authorizing oil exploration and militarization of Sarayaku lands without consulting the community. It was an all-too-rare victory for Indigenous tribes.

MINH TU

Founder, Minh Tu Orphanage

Partner since 2002 | Funded to date: \$412,752

It all began in 1987, when two Buddhist nuns literally found a baby on their doorstep. One of the sisters was Minh Tu. It was just twelve years after the collapse of Saigon that ended the Vietnam War, and Minh Tu saw a country still reeling from decades of conflict, struggling to preserve its heritage and rebuild for a brighter future. She founded the orphanage to offer those who would create that future (such as the abandoned infant on her doorstep) the building blocks of food, shelter, education, and—most importantly—love and hope.



In all, Minh Tu Orphanage provides a home to 165 children, 13 of whom are disabled. Ages range from pre-school to college and university students. "The kids are raised in an environment filled with love and harmony," Minh Tu affirms. "My greatest joy is the love we can give to them. They are dying for love!"

Grand Circle Foundation partnered with the institution in 2002 and is proud to have made life more comfortable for the children. Over the years, total donations of \$412,752 have helped to renovate the dining hall and to purchase computers, new washing machines, new bicycles, and milk powder.



International Women's Day



March 8