



# A Woman's Journey: Best practices in educating, empowering, engaging women in healthcare & philanthropy

# Today's speakers



**Melanie Sabelhaus**

Philanthropic Trailblazer  
Co-Founder: Women United  
Co-founder: Tiffany Circle



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Nantucket Cottage Hospital  
President & COO



Women are catalysts in healthcare philanthropy.

They are leading families, starting businesses, and making health decisions.

This session shows how both large and small hospitals can successfully tap into women's leadership and philanthropy



## **The Power of Women in Philanthropy**

- 62% of wealth, 80% healthcare decisions, high business creation

## **Women's Distinctive Giving Patterns**

- Collaborative, impact-driven, relational

## **Why Hospitals Should Engage Women**

- Caregivers, leaders, investors, untapped donors



# Case Study: Women + Wellness

- Annual signature event,
- Community engagement + philanthropy

# Women+Wellness: A Community Health Case Study

- Event Overview: Annual signature event of Nantucket Cottage Hospital
- Attendance: Open to residents & seasonal visitors, free of charge
- Format: Keynote + local health speaker + networking reception
- Features Speakers: Tying back to community engagement and needs

## Purpose

- Created to educate, empower, inspire, and engage women as decision-makers in health and philanthropy
- Builds on the fact that women make 80% of healthcare decisions in families

# Boston Pops on Nantucket



**Boston Pops on Nantucket is the hospital's signature fundraising event that draws more than 8k. It is the island's biggest night of the season where music meets mission.**

**Women+Wellness provides a smaller venue for interested supporters who want to make a community impact.**



# Women+Wellness: A Community Health Case Study

## Community Engagement

- Features Speakers: Tying back to community engagement and needs
- Sponsors invited to exclusive reception with speakers & leadership
- Steering Committee composed of local leaders and potential or current donors
- Event aligned with Community Health Needs Assessment priorities

# Women+Wellness: A Community Health Case Study

## Outcomes & Impact

- Knowledge: Attendees gained insights on skincare, diabetes prevention, and women's health risks
- Access: Free attendance broadened reach across socioeconomic groups
- Philanthropy: Sponsorships underwrote event costs, keeping the program sustainable
- Momentum: Built stronger ties between women, wellness, and hospital initiatives

## Lessons Learned

- Accessibility fuels inclusivity: free events drive wider participation
- Combining expertise + philanthropy + community leadership creates credibility and impact
- Women-focused philanthropy is a powerful growth strategy for healthcare institutions

# Women+Wellness: A Community Health Case Study

## Future Directions

- Expand reach with hybrid/virtual sessions for seasonal residents
- Integrate interactive workshops (nutrition, fitness, mindfulness)
- Build “Giving Circle” to support long-term initiatives
- Collect outcome data to measure changes in knowledge, behavior, and philanthropy

## Case Study Takeaway

Women+Wellness shows that when women are empowered with knowledge and engaged in philanthropy, communities thrive.

# Women & Wellness: Trust-Building Timeline

## 9–12 months out | Listen & Align

**Goal:** Earn the right to ask by showing you're listening.

## 6–9 months out | Co-Design & Proof

**Goal:** Demonstrate competence and shared ownership.

## 3–6 months out | Invite & Educate

**Goal:** Make the invitation feel like participation, not solicitation.

## 30–90 days out | Show Readiness

**Goal:** Reduce uncertainty; show you're organized and values-aligned.

## Event Week | Deliver With Care

**Goal:** Keep promises flawlessly; center patients and caregivers.

## 48 hours post | Close the Loop Fast

**Goal:** Convert emotion into durable trust.

## 2–4 weeks post | First Impact Receipt

**Goal:** Prove movement already started.

## 2–3 months post | Outcomes & Reflection

**Goal:** Institutionalize learning; show stewardship.

## 6–9 months post | Compounding Trust

**Goal:** Maintain cadence, not just peaks.

## Next Cycle Kickoff | Invite Co-Creation

**Goal:** Turn supporters into co-designers.



## **Case Study Example: A Woman's Journey**

### **Meet Sarah – A Community Resident**

52 years old, year-round teacher

Juggles work, caregiving for her elderly mother, and supporting her two grown children

*Often places her own health last*

## Awareness

Sarah attends W+W after seeing a flyer drawn in by the free access and welcoming, community-focused format.

## Education

Dietician presents on women and diabetes.  
Sarah recognizes her own risk factors: fatigue, weight gain, irregular blood sugar

## Connection

Sarah meets other women and attends the reception.  
She signs up for the free diabetes screening at the hospital.

## Action

Screening confirms pre-diabetes.  
She begins a nutrition and wellness program and starts walking daily with several women she met at W+W

## Empowerment

Six months later, her blood sugar normalizes.  
She feels in control and joins the Giving Circle to support future events and becomes an Ambassador for the hospital.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with white outlines and hatching, set against a background that transitions from dark blue at the top to purple at the bottom. The mountains are depicted with various peaks and ridges, some with vertical hatching to suggest texture or shadow. The overall style is graphic and modern.

**Takeaway:**

Educating, empowering, engaging women in healthcare & philanthropy

Sarah's story shows how Women+Wellness transforms awareness into action, turning education into improved health outcomes and community-driven philanthropy.



# Philanthropic Investing Framework

**Identify → Inform → Engage → Solicit**

Step 1 – Identify: Beyond traditional donor lists

Step 2 – Inform: Trusted clinical education events

Step 3 – Engage: Social connection, peer invitations

Step 4 – Solicit: Collaborative giving models



# Community vs. Academic Hospital

- Small community hospitals and large academic centers both succeed with this model. The difference is scale, not process. Both see revenue growth and donor expansion.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with white outlines and hatching on a dark blue and purple gradient background. The mountains are layered, with some in the foreground and others receding into the distance. The sky is filled with horizontal white lines representing clouds.

Q&A



Melanie Sabelhaus

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Thank you for joining us.  
Women's engagement in  
philanthropy is essential for  
the future of healthcare.  
Together, we can build a  
sustainable and  
meaningful journey.

[Women+Wellness Recap: 2025 |  
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