



"We learn from each other," says Willoughby (center), at home with WWF members Eleanor Nolan, Susan Hubbard and Gail Ransom.

Charity Belle

Colleen Willoughby helps women give money away

Between sips of Seattle-strength java at Colleen Willoughby's turn-of-the-century house, nine women are wrestling with a knotty—if enviable—problem: how to give money away. "Do people just give to the groups they know?" asks Sue Bennett, 39, an organizational consultant. Jean Gardner, 60, wife of former Washington governor Booth Gardner, wants to

know: "Do you give to an organization that doesn't ask you?"

Philanthropy should be a piece of angel food cake. But as anyone sifting through a mailbox full of year-end pleas can attest, deciding how much to give and to whom can be daunting. In Washington State many women who want their dollars to make a difference turn to Willoughby, 64, president of the Washington

Women's Foundation, an organization she cofounded three years ago to encourage the fine art of generosity. Learning the ropes at meetings like the coffee-klatch in Willoughby's home, members pledge \$2,000 a year; \$1,000 goes to charities of their choice and another \$1,000 gets pooled, to be doled out in chunks of up to \$100,000 to causes selected by the membership. "Women are really enthusiastic about being able to invest in the community in big ways," says Willoughby. The elegant grandmother of four had long observed that while women were generous with their time, they tended to be less confident than men about flexing their financial muscle. "Women just