

Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield

Mary Bynum



Mary Bynum is a behind the scenes leader with a big impact. She leads diverse initiatives to improve education in our community. Her generous and caring spirit overflows to each volunteer and board position. Casting vision in many local endeavors, she has been instrumental in the development of the Women's and Girls' fund, a leadership initiative of Kern Community Foundation.

Mary had served as chairman of the Vision committee for the Women's and Girls' fund which awards grants to local organizations. Mary's generous example encourages other women to be philanthropic. She has personally brought a number of women to the Fund growing the endowment to over \$500,000.

In touch with the needs of her community, Mary has spent her life determined to be the hand that reaches out to make a difference in the lives of others. She describes her life full of exciting adventures when asked to share about her community efforts. Mary began her career at Department of Human Services, serving families on welfare. As an eligibility worker, she became very aware of extreme cases of disadvantaged people and people living in dire circumstances.

Attending and studying at Riverlakes Community Church for over 35 years, Mary has nurtured a compassionate heart and a calling to care for those persons in less fortunate circumstances. Mary gives her time and resources to a church project to bring generational change to Oildale, specifically the ministry at 325 Roberts Lane. Helping children with their homework, participating in the Christmas store and other outreach activities, Mary is developing deep relationships at one of the county's most challenged addresses.

Mary credits Junior League with really training her to be an effective board member and volunteer which prompted Mary to serve. Twenty five years as a part of Junior League, Mary has served in many areas to impact the community including Youth Connection a collaborative effort with Kern County Probation.

Mary was Executive Director of Youth Connection for four years and continues on the Board of Directors and co-chairs the Annual Dinner at the Derby fundraiser to keep this initiative viable. The community-based project focuses on preventing delinquency and crime by addressing resolvable problems.

Education is clearly another area where Mary has invested her energy and time. Serving for ten years on the Board of Directors of the Jim Burke Educational Foundation, Mary also reads with children through the Bakersfield Reading Program at Bakersfield City School District. She is currently a trustee for the Kern County Library Foundation. Mary and her husband Greg also volunteer, support through fundraising events and provide leadership at California State University at Bakersfield. Mary represents the best of Bakersfield. Those who have worked alongside Mary describe her as compassionate, creative, sincerely genuine and above all passionate about making our community a better place for all to live. Mary and her husband Greg have a partnership in all endeavors, building business, community and philanthropy as well as their most prized accomplishment their three children, Don David and Marley all married and living in Bakersfield. It is a joy for Mary see each couple become involved and serving in the community. Mary openly shares "God has purposefully sculpted me and that I am a work in progress."

