



## THE FACTS

**What?** In 1999, Kappa Delta Sorority created National Women's Friendship Day for all women. The holiday was so popular that it was expanded in 2009 to a month-long celebration. Now women celebrate International Women's Friendship Month (IWFM) the entire month of September.

**Who?** IWFM is celebrated across the world by individuals, women's groups, companies, retail businesses and others. All women are encouraged to participate.

**How?** Women celebrate in a variety of ways. Some women send cards or call their friends. Others have celebrated with spa days, weekend retreats, luncheons, etc. Some women incorporate a community service element to their celebrations. One women's group collected toiletries for military women serving in Iraq. Another group of friends ran in the New York City Komen Race for the Cure in memory of a friend. Every woman and every women's group can celebrate International Women's Friendship Month during September. From the simple to the more complex, there are countless ways to celebrate our women friends!

Several businesses and organizations have promoted the holiday. Supporters have included Avon's mark cosmetics, Maidenform, General Foods International, Karen Neuburger, Vera Bradley Designs, Suzy's Zoo, Pink Magazine, My Charmed Life, B.Sweets Chocolate, Seasons and Sentiments, love is respect National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, The National Domestic Violence Hotline and more. Local boutiques and salons across the country have held special events and sales. In the past, a shopping district in Philadelphia, Pa., held special events, including a fashion show at Talbots and book signings at Borders bookstore.

**Why?** With a membership of more than 230,000 women, Kappa Delta knows the value of women's friendship. Kappa Delta created International Women's Friendship Month to acknowledge the importance of friendship among women. We encourage women to take the time to show appreciation for the friendships they sometimes take for granted. We hope women will develop and nurture their friendships with other women throughout the month of September each year. And Kappa Delta is not alone in its belief in the power of women's friendship:

- We all know that friendship can make us happier, but now we know that ***friendship can make us healthier.*** Studies have found that social ties reduce our risk of disease by lowering blood pressure, heart rate and cholesterol, major risk factors for heart disease. A landmark UCLA study found that when a woman engages in "tending and befriending," her body, unlike a man's, releases more oxytocin, a chemical that counters stress and produces a calming effect. From the famed Nurses' Health Study from Harvard Medical School, researchers concluded that not having close friends or confidants was as detrimental to your health as smoking or carrying extra weight. "There's no doubt," says Dr. Klein, "that friends are helping us live longer."
- A nationwide survey released June 2006 found a ***sharp decline in friendships.*** The study's co-author, Lynn Smith-Lovin, a sociologist at Duke University in Durham, N.C., said, "From a social point of view, it means you've got more people isolated." Weakening bonds of friendship can have far-reaching effects. Among them: fewer people to turn to for help in crises like Hurricane Katrina, fewer watchdogs to deter neighborhood crime and fewer participants in community groups. By encouraging women to place value in their friendships with other women, International Women's Friendship Month is meant to turn the trend around.

- ***When life gets busy, women's friendships are one of the first things to go.*** Life is full of deadlines, meetings, appointments, play dates and dinner dates, but it's important to keep friendships a priority. According to Dr. Josselson, PhD., co-author of "Best Friends: The Pleasures and Perils of Girls' and Women's Friendship," "Women should be careful and NOT put their girlfriends on the back burner. Every time we get overly busy with work and family, the first thing we do is let go of friendships with other women, push them right to the back burner. That is really unfortunate because women are such a source of strength to each other. We nurture one another." It's important to keep our friendships a priority.
- ***Women friends have played important roles in the history of our country.*** The cause of women's suffrage and many other good causes have been born out of the friendship of women. In a speech, Harriot Stanton Blatch speaks about the friendship between her mother Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: "When the cause for which you have worked shall be victorious, then, as is the way of the world, will it be forgotten that it ever meant effort or struggle for pioneers; but the friendship of you two women will remain a precious memory in the world's history, unforgotten and unforgettable." From women's shelters to women's business associations, women friends have joined together to make a difference in our country.
- ***Women have a great impact on the economy.*** Women contribute \$3.5 trillion to the U.S. economy annually, according to Women's Consumer Network. "Women do 85 percent of the shopping in America. We buy 50 percent of all the cars. We spend 81 cents of every dollar spent in the grocery store," says Melissa Moss, president of the Women's Consumer Network. Women do most of the shopping, and quite often, they shop with friends. Further, most women's consumer choices are influenced by advice they receive from other women.
- ***Women make up a large segment of the labor force.*** In 1920, women represented less than 20 percent of the total U.S. labor force. Today 56 million women workers make up 45 percent of the nation's civilian work force. There's no doubt about the important role women play in the success of businesses and organizations nationwide. A *USA Today* article (Dec. 1, 2004), reported that "best friends are good for business" and that "employees with buddies at work are more 'engaged.'"
- ***Women's friendship is a "hot topic."*** Flip through almost any magazine and you will find an article that acknowledges the importance of women friends. We've all seen the headlines: "Real Women Tell What Keeps Them Close," "Friends Share Parenting Advice" and "17 Steps for Having Friends for Life." Broadcast news and television programs are no different. Surf the channels on any given day and you will find programs where two women friends join forces to make a difference in their community...close friends reunite after years of separation...two friends get makeovers for their class reunion. Women look for programs that offer support and encouragement, stories that reflect their lives and interests.

**More?** Visit [www.womensfriendshipmonth.com](http://www.womensfriendshipmonth.com) or call 800/536-1897.