

Biography:

JoAnne Funch founded *Circle of Strength*[™] to meet the growing need she discovered among friends and colleagues who frequently discussed their search for meaningful connections and support from other women. With the goal of inspiring and helping women (primarily between the ages of 40 and 60) to grow and have more fun, *Circle of Strength*[™] sells inspirational gift items for women, produces fun events, and shares knowledge and inspiration via the monthly newsletter and website. In an effort to further strengthen women by strengthening their communities, *Circle of Strength*[™] donates time, money and resources to organizations benefiting women.

JoAnne is also committed to helping those who are suffering through life transitions by sharing her personal story of surviving loss. In 2005, she lost the two people closest to her—her mother and, a month later, her husband. Still working through her grief, in 2007 she decided to move from Southern California back to her hometown of Minneapolis, Minnesota. There she continues to make a difference in the lives of women through her business and her volunteer community activities. She is a board member for Women Connections Networking Group, and a volunteer at Ready for Success in Minneapolis. Everywhere she goes, she is a constant advocate for women's personal and professional success, and is available for speaking engagements on various topics relating to loss and other life transitions. JoAnne's story was recently featured nationally in *Hallmark Magazine* and locally in *The Star News* and *The Drummer* newspapers.

JoAnne has an extensive background in marketing and sales. She continues to own and operate ***GIR-Graphics & Innovative Resources***, a successful promotional products company established with her husband in 1996. While in California, she was an active business member in the Moreno Valley Chamber of Commerce where she served on the legislative action committee and volunteered countless hours on numerous special event committees throughout the years. Both she and her husband were two of the four nominated for Citizen of the Year in 2005 & 2006. JoAnne also served as an advisor and past Director of the Moreno Valley chapter of the **For You Women's Network**, was a member of NAWBO, and was involved with the California Women's Leadership Association (CWLA). In 2005, she completed the elite **Marian Bergeson Excellence in Public Service Series**, a 7-month course designed to teach, encourage, mentor, and prepare women leaders to seek new levels of involvement in government and politics.