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**WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES
ACCLAIMED JOURNALIST, AUTHOR AND FORMER FIRST LADY, MARIA SHRIVER, TO KEYNOTE
www.ccwc-fresno.org**

Fresno, CA – The Central California Women’s Conference announced at their 2018 Community Celebration and Grant Reception last night that the iconic Maria Shriver will keynote this year’s event. Tickets will go on sale Tuesday, June 5, for this day of inspiration, growth and knowledge planned for women across the Valley at the [31st Annual Central California Women’s Conference](#). CCWC is the largest women’s event in the region and will be from 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2018 at the [Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center](#).

Maria Shriver is a trailblazer for empowering women and is one of the world’s leading advocates for women and Alzheimer’s support and research. Shriver serves as an inspiration for others to become “Architects of Change” and make the world a better place. Her life is driven by her fervent belief that everyone has the ability to make a difference. Her latest book, the New York Times bestselling “I’ve Been Thinking...: Reflections, Prayers and Meditations for a Meaningful Life,” offers wisdom, guidance, encouragement, and inspiration for those seeking to create a meaningful life of their own.

Shriver, the mother of four, is an American journalist and activist. She is the former First Lady of California and the women’s conference she coordinated - which sold out in 10 minutes - set the bar for all other conferences. She is an Emmy and Peabody award winner. She is a past and current New York Times bestselling author. Shriver is a member of the Kennedy family; her mother, Eunice Kennedy, created Special Olympics, and her father, Sargent Shriver, created The Peace Corps. Her uncles were President John Kennedy and Senators Robert Kennedy and Ted Kennedy.

“We have tried to get Maria Shriver for the past ten years,” said CCWC Board President Nene Casares. “So you can imagine how thrilled we are. We know this year will be extra special as Maria shares her life-changing ideas with our attendees.”

The theme of this year's CCWC is *Be the Difference*. Attendees will celebrate their differences and be inspired to move forward in making a difference in all areas, including careers, relationships, and, most importantly, their own personal growth.

The morning Warm-Up Session kicks off the conference by honoring 20 under-served young women who will receive the Wells Fargo/CCWC College and Career Preparation Scholarships. The scholarships are awarded on the basis of need, promise and the students' commitment to create positive change. Also in attendance at the conference will be the five AT&T/CCWC/Central California Education Opportunity Center (CCEOC) Re-Entry Scholars.

The morning keynote speaker is Mallika Chopra. Chopra, a media entrepreneur, author, and the founder of Intent.com, speaks to audiences around the world and has shared her passion about Intent at [TedXBerkeley](#), [Business Innovation Factory](#), [Sages & Scientists](#), and many more events and conferences. Her most recent book is *Living With Intent: My Somewhat Messy Journey to Purpose, Peace and Joy*. She is also the founder of The Chopra Well, a premiere YouTube channel she launched with her brother, Gotham Chopra, and father, Deepak Chopra.

Attendees choose three [breakout sessions](#) to attend throughout the day from 21 options. Topics include career development, health and fitness, money and finance, relationships, courage, service and activism, and strength and change. “This year’s lineup is so diverse and rich in valuable information,” said Casares. “Our board and team couldn’t be more excited about the day we have planned for our attendees. This unforgettable conference will be a day of information, networking, fun, great food, and ‘retail therapy’ for the hard-working women of this Valley.”

Attendees also have the opportunity to visit the conference Marketplace and Community Corner where more than 175 businesses and non-profits share information about their products and services. Visitors will be treated to samples, gourmet tastings, information and shopping. “There’s really no other event like this in the Valley,” said long-time conference-goer June Boyce. “I love it – I come at 7:15 a.m. and leave at 5:30 p.m. and I really feel pampered all day long – and now that they got Maria Shriver. WOW!”

The day winds down with the Cool-Down Session where women enter to win prizes, kick off their shoes and relax. This year's Cool-Down speaker is Karen Mills. Mills has been a nationally touring comedian for 25 years and can be heard daily on Sirius/XM comedy channels. She has appeared on ABC, GAC and most recently on season 12 of America’s Got Talent. Even her experience with ovarian cancer couldn’t stop her from turning pain into punchlines. Diagnosed in 2013 after a routine checkup, Karen was determined to take on the disease with hope and humor. Now cancer free, her mission is to love, laugh and take on everything life hands you with a positive attitude.

This year's event is expected to be an exceptionally early sellout. Tickets go on sale on Tuesday, June 5, and are \$125 each. Admission includes continental breakfast, all seminars, the celebrity keynote speaker luncheon and the afternoon reception. Tickets are limited to the first 3,500 attendees. Early registration is encouraged. Visit www.CCWC-Fresno.org for tickets and additional information.

The conference is made possible through the [support](#) of national and Central Valley businesses. The presenting sponsor is Community Medical Centers. Founding sponsors are The Fresno Bee and ABC 30. Valley Children's Healthcare is the Keynote Speaker Sponsor. Major sponsors include Wells Fargo, Saint Agnes Medical Center, Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino, Fresno Acura, Fresno Lexus, Fresno State, AT&T, Cumulus Media, Univision Radio, Pepsi Beverages Company, FTB Print & Mail, Fresno Smile Makeovers, Kaiser Permanente Fresno, Macy's, The Brownie Baker, and many more.

[Sponsorships](#) and [exhibit booths](#) are still available. For sponsorship information contact Jan Edwards jan@ccwc-fresno.org; for exhibit booth information contact Mary Stabelfeld at mary@ccwc-fresno.org.

More information about the [conference](#) and [speakers](#) is available at www.CCWC-Fresno.org.

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The **CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE** was founded in 1988 by the late State Senator Ken L. Maddy of Fresno, Calif. The conference is a 501(c) (3) non-profit, non-political organization, and the event is designed to educate, motivate and inspire women to be the best they can be in their professional and personal lives. (Tax I.D. #77-0178140).