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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Carmel, Carmel-by-the-Sea, and the Carmel Highlands  
July 2018

Banking on...

# Sandi Eason

Cover by Glenn Fidler Photography

 Best Version Media





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# Sandi Eason

By George Donaldson

Photography by Glenn Fidler Photography

Until recently, banking—especially commercial banking—was a business dominated by men, but like so many areas of our society that have evolved over the past few decades, that's no longer the case. One Monterey Peninsula resident who has led the wave is Sandi Eason, Regional Senior Vice President—Business Banking Group with Wells Fargo Bank. She is responsible for Wells Fargo teams in Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo along with Specialty Markets Group for all of California and Oregon.





But to Sandi, it's not about the numbers. "One thing I've always said: people don't bank with banks, they bank with people," Sandi says. "And that's what I love about it. When I see my clients in the grocery store, it's a hug, not just a hello. We become part of the family. That's what it comes down to, the people part of it."

Sandi Eason grew up in Pacific Grove, went through PG schools, is a PG High graduate—in fact, she was in the first group of inductees in the PG High Hall of Fame. After graduation, Sandi started a part-time job as a teller at the Wells Fargo branch on Alvarado Street in Monterey and worked her way up to branch manager. "I grew up in banking," she says. "In 1991 I moved over to the business/commercial side of the bank. That's the area I've been in ever since." Except for stints with three other banks, she's been with Wells Fargo her entire career—for a total of 34 years. And she most assuredly found her niche...and her passion. "The aspect I love so much is that we work with wholly-owned businesses. So, when I go out to meet with a client, I'm meeting with the business owners, the decision makers." Sandi finds her clients' personal stories just as important as their portfolios. "I love their life stories, and how they got involved in their businesses. It's about their passions, their dreams and their legacies. Many of these businesses are in their second or third generations. It's not just a job, it's their lives."



We would like to thank Anne Thull Fine Art Designs for bringing you this month's cover story.

The previous sentence is a good summation of Sandi's attitude towards her career. One of her favorite sayings is "You have a bank...but do you have a banker?" "Do you have a person at your bank you can call?" she asks. "There's so much more to it than just numbers. We do things that support growth of the business: lines of credit, commercial loans, construction loans. But at the end of the day, my passion is people, the human spirit."

That passion for people extends well beyond her day job. "I have a *career*," Sandi says, "and then I have a *job*. My career is in banking, my job is serving the community. Both are part of my DNA."

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and who I am." She lends her time and talents to many worthy organizations, including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), the Living Breath Foundation, IMPOWER and United Way Monterey County. For the past seven years she has served on the UC Santa Cruz Board of Councilors, Division of Social Sciences.

Sandi has three children, two daughters Nicollette and Briana and a son, Royce. While in high school, Royce was an active teenager who one day suddenly ended up in the emergency room where he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes (T1D). "I knew about JDRF, but I didn't know much about T1D," Sandi says. There are approximately one million Americans who have been diagnosed with T1D. Sandra Silvestri of Carmel founded the local JDRF chapter in 1996. "I reached out to Sandra and quickly got intimately involved in JDRF. I'm on the local chapter board." Sandi has chaired the organization's largest annual fundraising event, the JDRF One Walk, nine times (this year's One Walk will take place October 4. To learn how to participate, visit [JDRF.org](http://JDRF.org)). "I jumped in [to JDRF] wholeheartedly," Sandi says. JDRF people across the country know my name. When—not if, when—we find a cure for T1D, I want to look my six-foot-three son in the eye and know that I did everything I possibly could for him and everyone with that disease. It's a club we didn't want to join, but we're thankful we have it." Sandi says that she carries an empty insulin bottle with her at all times. "I look at that small bottle and know that's life support for my son and others. I never want to lose sight of that. Without that clear liquid, it's just a matter of days for those with T1D."

Another organization Sandi finds near and dear to her heart is the Living Breath Foundation, founded by her lifelong friends Chris and Lori Pappageorgas, whose children were diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) in 2000. Living Breath's mission is to "provide scholarships for higher education, financial aid for medical expenses and equipment and aid to families, in addition to creating public awareness about CF."

IMPOWER (Inspire, Motivate, Prepare and Organize Women to Engage and Reinvest) was founded under the umbrella of the Salinas Chamber of Commerce in 2007 by Margaret D'Arri-go-Martin of Taylor Farms of California and Cathy Schlumbrecht. "IMPOWER grants scholarships to low- and moderate-income Monterey County women in any area of study," Sandi says. "We hold four events each year: three luncheons and a gala. Every luncheon sells out."

Sandi serves on the board of United Way Monterey County and is just beginning her second three-year term on that organization's Executive Board. Of her seven-year contribution on UC Santa Cruz' Division of Social Sciences, she says: "My involvement is supporting and advocating for the school. It speaks to my 'social justice heart.'" She credits her employer Wells Fargo for that bank's unswerving support of its team members and their dedication to serving their communities. The company also puts its money where its mouth is: "Wells Fargo donated \$396,600 to Monterey County non-profits in 2017 alone," Sandi says.

Even while passionately dedicated to both her career and her job, Sandi made time to raise those three successful children—all PG High grads, by the way. Royce graduated college in Rhode Island and is Director of Purchasing at Hyatt Monterey. He married his college sweetheart Gina and recently brought Luca, Sandi's second grandchild into the world. Nicollette earned her master's degree in Manhattan and after moving back to the peninsula is an art consultant. She lives in Pacific Grove with her husband, James Trottier, a Carmel architect and their son Bruno. Briana is a jewelry



maker, lives in Los Angeles and is engaged to musician Robert W. Davis.

Plus...Sandi had been caring for her aging mother, who passed away in December, and step-mother of 51 years (whom she lovingly calls her "bonus Mom"). That has taken time from another of her passions, cycling. "I've been road biking about eight years," she says. "For a long time I pretty much lived to be on my bike with the wind in my face. It's a place where I can be in my own little corner of the world. But that had to be put on the shelf for the past two years as I helped with my two moms' care." Sandi lives in Pebble Beach with her long-time partner Kat Phelan.

It's rare to meet someone with the energy, spirit and passion of Sandi Eason. She is a true asset to both the company she works for and the community she serves.

Learn more about the organizations Sandi serves:

JDRF: [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)

Living Breath Foundation:

[www.livingbreathfoundation.org](http://www.livingbreathfoundation.org)

IMPOWER: [www.impowerwomen.org](http://www.impowerwomen.org)

United Way Monterey County:

[www.unitedwaymcca.org](http://www.unitedwaymcca.org)



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