After a brief hiatus, TCW’s 100 Women feature was revived three years ago. Between 100 WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE in July 2011, 100 WOMEN TO WATCH in 2012 and 100 WOMEN OF INSPIRATION in 2013, these lists of intelligent, powerful, hardworking women generated a big buzz around town. We featured diverse groups from a variety of professions, including arts, education, finance, government, healthcare, philanthropy and more. This year, we’ve assembled a list of 100 WOMEN OF INSPIRATION – ladies from the Chicago area who’ve done incredible work in their personal and/or professional lives. You’ll recognize familiar faces from previous 100 Women lists and new women we haven’t yet featured. Due to space constraints, we’ve only printed portions of their bios, but their inspiring contributions go far beyond what’s listed here. And although we’ve omitted some women who are, indeed, inspirational, we limited our selection to 100.
Julieanna Richardson
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE HISTORYMAKERS
A diverse background in business and humanities, corporate law and television production, Julieanna Richardson founded a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational institution headquartered in Chicago with regional offices in Atlanta and the D.C. area. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Richardson founded the largest national collection effort of African-American video oral histories on record, with a digital archive and users in over 50 countries.

Nancy R. Rotering
MAYOR, CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK
A former attorney with McDermott, Will & Emery, Nancy R. Rotering has served as mayor of Highland Park since 2011. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: An active member of the community, Mayor Rotering has served on a broad range of civic and philanthropic commissions, boards and committees. And she finds the time to do this all while raising four boys with her husband, Rob.

Lisa Russell
CO-FOUNDER, MS. TECH
Lisa Russell’s career started in finance. She then transitioned from director of sales at a broker dealer to become the first sales-related hire for a local technology startup. She now serves as director of marketing for PointFindr, an online sales presentation tool. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Russell traveled all seven continents before the age of 30 and joined Ms. Tech as co-founder to help women connect to start and scale their tech start-ups.

Laura Sage
CO-FOUNDER, THE LYNN SAGE FOUNDATION
Amanda Santoro
FOUNDER, LITTLE GRAFFITI FOUNDATION
Amanda Santoro founded a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to advancing maternal research and supporting patients and parents of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Santoro launched her non-profit after she and her husband lost their daughter, Cheyenne, born three-and-a-half months premature with the memory of her mother, Lynn, who passed away from breast cancer almost 30 years ago, Ms. Sage devotes much of her time to the Advisory Board of the Lurie Cancer Center of Northwestern University.

Carla Sacks
PHILANTHROPIST
Carla Sacks and her sister, Patti Bartelslein, launched the CERATE app: the first free mobile app designed for art buyers. With just a few taps, users can visualize how art will look on their walls and make easier purchasing decisions. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Sacks is an active philanthropist involved with several civic and cultural organizations/institutions like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where she’s been on the Board of Trustees since 2000.

Scheherazade Tillet
CO-FOUNDER, THE LURIE COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER
SHE’S INSPIRING: In addition to her efforts to promote awareness of heart disease among women, Dr. Volman wears red every day to remind people that there are currently more women dying from heart disease than men.

Julie Smolyansky
CEO LIFEWORX
Julie Smolyansky became the youngest female CEO of a publicly held firm when she took over her father’s lifetime business in 2002, at age 27. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Having launched the national #MotherCulture campaign at Lifeway to promote the maternal nurturing of healthy children through food, attention and love, she is also a member of the United Nations Foundation’s Global Entrepreneurs Council and a maternal health advocate with Every Mother Counts.

Anne Sweeney
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CO-FOUNDER, HESHEKIVA
In 2007, Anne Sweeney co-founded a leading girls and women’s rights non-governmental organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: With headquarters in Chicago and a seasoned regional specialist and auctioneer, Anne works tirelessly to protect and empower refugee girls and young women who have been separated from their families and displaced by conflict in Somalia, Ethiopia, DR Congo and Southern Sudan.

Eve Tyree
FOUNDER, JAMES TYREE FOUNDATION
Eve Tyree is a long-time Chicagoan and the former CFO of MeadWest. She received her BS in Accounting from DePaul University. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: After losing her husband, Jim Tyree, 10 years ago, Ms. Tyree continues to keep his memory and legacy alive as the Chair of the Board of the James Tyree Foundation, which supports various non-profit organizations and programs in the Chicago area.

Donnita Travis
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BY THE HAND CLUB
Thirteen years ago, Donnita Travis saw kids in Cabrini-Green fall in to despair, get in trouble and have no place to go after school. She then quit her job as president of a successful advertising agency to give those children a place to find real purpose. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Located in four of Chicago’s toughest neighborhoods, Ms. Travis’ organization serves nearly 1,000 children and plans to accommodate double by 2018.

Laura Van Zeyl
PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, DESIGN GROUP AT SCRANTON GILLETTE COMMUNICATIONS
Laura Van Zeyl oversees sales and content for magazine, advertising, digital communications, events, custom solutions and social media pages in the home furnishings and interior design industries. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: Ms. Van Zeyl is devoted to serving on the board of The H Foundation, a cancer charity that had raised over $5 million dollars for the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University.

Bernarda Wong
FOUNDER/President, CHINESE AMERICAN SERVICE LEAGUE
Bernarda Wong is a leader in the Asian community, having chaired the Advisory Council on Asian American Affairs under Mayor Harold Washington and Mayor Richard M. Daley. She has traveled the world and raised over $5 million dollars for the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: In 2010, she chose to serve on the board of the University of Chicago Public Library, and the Chinese American Service League has grown from a one-person operation in 1978 to a major organization under her leadership.

Nicole Yaros
CO-FOUNDER, MS. TECH
Nicole Yaros founded Ms. Tech in 2010 with a mission to empower women by helping other women network and do business more effectively and efficiently. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: With less than a percent of venture-backed startups founded by women, it has become her organization’s mission to build a conduit to help more women raise the capital they need so they can start and scale their businesses.

Nicole Yeary
CO-FOUNDER, MS. TECH
Nicole Yeary founded Ms. Tech in 2010 with a mission to empower women by helping other women network and do business more effectively and efficiently. WHY SHE’S INSPIRING: With less than a percent of venture-backed startups founded by women, it has become her organization’s mission to build a conduit to help more women raise the capital they need so they can start and scale their businesses.