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500 Startups Keeps Its Commitment To Invest In Women In Tech

Posted Feb 12, 2015 by [Sarah Buhr \(@sarahbuhr\)](#)

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“The best thing women in tech can do is to invest in other women,” [500 Startups](#) managing partner Christine Tsai told me. That’s exactly what the early-stage investment firm has been trying to do over the last five years, and it seems to be succeeding.

Its commitment starts with the makeup of the organization itself, but extends into the portfolio companies that 500 backs. Half the managing partners and staff at 500 Startups are women, and at least one-third of the investing team are women. More than a quarter of the companies in the 500 portfolio are led by female CEOs, according to the firm.

It's also been working to create programs that invest in female-led companies and include more women in the conversation. The firm introduced its [500 Women AngelList syndicate](#) last fall and pledged to invest \$1 million in 10 female-led companies in the portfolio.

Tsai says she is well aware of the sexism and discrimination that often plagues Silicon Valley. She's witnessed the occasional remark about a female VC's breasts and heard the stories of pregnant female founders being questioned about how serious they are about their careers by potential investors.

But rather than talk about the problem, Tsai says we need to put our money where our mouth is.

"There is a problem but we need to focus on the positive by getting more women in VC and investment roles and invest in the women," she says.

Other accelerators such as [Y Combinator](#) have pledged to include more women and diversity in its ranks. According to [a blog post](#) released last summer, nearly 20 percent of all YC-funded startups have a woman on the founding team. Four of the full-time partners are also women.

"We think YC can help drive real change, and we hope lots of other organizations will join," [wrote](#) YC president Sam Altman.

500 Startups founding partner Dave McClure says he's already been working on recognizing women in tech for the last five years and will continue to do so.

"We are committed to working with women. We are investing in women because we want to make money and we feel they have been overlooked. Others have been touting it, but we haven't really been publicizing it," he told me. "Is this self-promotional? Sure as hell is. But the numbers speak for themselves."

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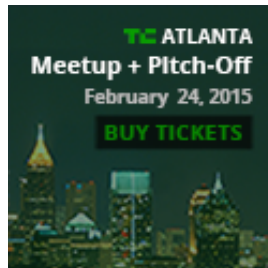
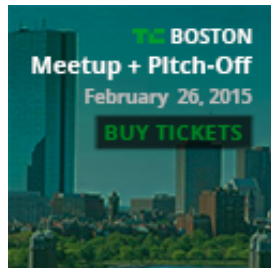
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Jess Erickson · Top Commenter · Director of Marketing at 500 Startups · 1,084 followers

Thank you [Sarah Buhr](#) for this great piece! The #500Family includes many positive female role models in this industry and we want to applaud them for their hardwork and commitment to supporting women in tech. Go #500WOMEN! <http://500.co/moar-500-women-raar>

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Jo-Anne Reynolds · Founder/CEO at SpikeBee

Sarah thank you so much for this great news! As I sit here waiting to fly home from the StartUp Grind this is the best news I have read all day! Thank you, thank you thank you 500 StartUps! @SpikeBeeJo

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Christine Tsai · Top Commenter · Google

Thanks Sarah Buhr for writing this thoughtful piece and for your support!

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Nichole Montoya · Denver, Colorado

Excellent article. [Cheddar Up](#) is proud to be one of [500 Startups](#) women-founded companies. It means a great deal to have such a well-respected group supporting women so authentically and consistently. Hats off.

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Jay Bols · London High School

Totally agree! Women are mentally and physically handicapped, so a special assistance from men (who do all the real work anyway) is required. Women are kind of like children. They clearly can't make it on their own, so I guess that's fair. Anything to keep those vaginas happy! Kind of like marriage. #MalePrivilege #SoSexist #DeathToWhiteMales

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Harendrasingh B Rajput · Sikkim Manipal University

All The best #500WOMEN..., Let us know, if you have any requirement of Mobile app parters and Digital marketing support.

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Anju Debnath Voisine · Top Commenter · Co-founder / CEO at HobbyJoint.com

Great program for the women entrepreneurs!

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Scott Mitchell · Top Commenter

why not focus on quality than a sexual bias?

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Sarah Buhr · Top Commenter · Reporter at TechCrunch · 767 followers

Women have been asking that same question for thousands of years.

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Ashiraf Nani · Retailer at Airtel Uganda

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