

September 2026

My dear NAWBO Sisters, Corporate Sponsors, Community Partners, and Future Members, Have you ever stopped long enough to reflect on the kinds of rooms you find yourself invited into? I'm not talking about the typical conference room, boardroom, or Zoom room. Nope. I'm talking about the kinds of rooms intentionally created to bring people together.

This summer, I chose to forgo our usual Signature Meetings to do something totally different:

Just. Have. Fun. Together.

Think about it: When we take trips with our families over the summer, we often try new things, laugh, make memories, and deepen our connections with the people we love.

It's no different for us here at NAWBO. By creating opportunities to intentionally have fun together, we were able to let our hair down, make new memories, and build both new and stronger relationships among our members.

And this past month gave me a front-row seat to just how much those rooms really matter!

Let me give you three examples:

- 48 women registered for "She's Driven," our summer social.
- 17 registered for NAWBO Gives Back at Nourish Up, where we rolled up our sleeves and served our community together. Just about every woman asked if we could serve there again as a group—and do it quarterly.
- 42 women registered for UnCorked, the party I hosted in my home.

There was laughter coming from every corner. Women were sitting on couches, gathered around the kitchen, and standing wherever they could find a spot. Brand-new members were getting to know longtime members. Sure, they talked about business, but the conversations seemed to be more about kids, grandkids, spouses, life, travel, challenges, dreams, and everything in between.

When 8:00 PM rolled around, nobody seemed particularly interested in going home. The last woman left at 11:30 PM... and I. Loved. Every. Second. Of. It!

Afterward, I heard essentially the same thing over and over again from members and board members:

"We needed this so badly!"

More than the attendance numbers, that's what stayed with me. Our women weren't just showing up for programming. They were showing up for each other.

And it reminded me of something incredibly important:

We spend a tremendous amount of time as a board thinking about what we can do for our members. What programs should we create? What speakers should we bring in? What opportunities can we offer? What experiences can we provide?

And yes, those things absolutely, 100% matter.

But August reminded me that sometimes the most valuable thing we can do is simply put the right women in the room and give them the opportunity to know one another.

Because the greatest value of NAWBO isn't always sitting on our calendar. Sometimes it's in the woman sitting right next to you.

Sisters, relationships matter. And sure, there are plenty of wonderful places in Charlotte where you can network, exchange business cards, and collect LinkedIn connections. You can give someone your elevator pitch before you've even finished asking her name—and then that's it. You say goodbye and leave.

But I want something different for NAWBO Charlotte. I want us to build high-quality, meaningful relationships that last.

The kind where another woman notices if you haven't been around and checks on you.

The kind where someone says, "You two need to know each other," and makes the introduction.

The kind where someone knows enough about you and your business to confidently refer you.

The kind where we celebrate each other's wins—and show up for each other when things aren't going quite so well.

The kind where you can pick up the phone and say, "I have no idea what I'm doing here. Can I run something by you?" without feeling embarrassed to ask. (BTW, I personally do this often and highly encourage you to give it a try, too!)

THAT'S real community!

But it doesn't happen simply because you paid your membership dues and came to a few meetings. It happens because you actively, consistently, and intentionally participate in building it.

Eight years ago, at my very first NAWBO Christmas party (while wearing that ridiculously crazy ugly sweater I brought back for my Presidential induction in June), I met my mentor, Inez Romaguera.

At the time, Inez was President of NAWBO Fort Lauderdale—now NAWBO South Florida—and she helped me tremendously during those first few years of launching my business.

She was intentional about connecting with me, and I was intentional about staying connected to her.

And guess what?

If you attended UnCorked, you met Inez.

Eight years later, she flew all the way from Fort Lauderdale to Charlotte to attend UnCorked and spend the weekend with me. Simply because she wanted to support me. Ladies, THAT is the fruit of a relationship that began in NAWBO eight years ago. But it didn't happen by accident.

So, I'd like to leave you with a few questions:

- If you looked five years into the future, what kind of relationships would you hope to have within our chapter?
- Are they rich and meaningful? Do they add value to your life—not only professionally, but personally?
- And perhaps the most important question: What part will YOU play in building them?

We all have the opportunity to be the kind of friend, mentor, connector, and encourager we'd want to have ourselves.

And maybe that's another way we become impossible to ignore:

Not simply because of what we accomplish, but because our impact on the lives of the women around us becomes impossible to overlook.

Have an awesome September and keep on shining,



Carolina Marrelli
President | NAWBO Charlotte
2026–2027

