In the middle of December, 1998, two young mothers sat in a Chinese restaurant, poring over brochures and leaflets sporting names like Francie’s, Vance’s and Uncle Bud’s with idyllic pictures of mountain landscapes draped with snow. Sue Sturm, with two young children at home, and Jackie Bellowe, mother of three, were looking for an adventure, an escape, an opportunity to set aside their of-the-moment responsibilities and return to the women they were before they had families of their own. Neither of them had ever done a backcountry trip before, but when they saw the Polar Star Inn, perched on the shoulder of New York Mountain, a sunset blazing in the distance, they resolved to each other that “We are going to do this.”

And in January of 2000, they did. Five young mothers arrived at the trailhead full of enthusiasm, greeted by a guide who winced at their light weight skis and comfort-over-function boots. Undaunted, they strapped on skins and headed out on the track, breathing in the winter air, sharing stories, laughs and tears around the fire, reconnecting with themselves and enjoying the quiet. And when they came back, Sue and Jackie resolved to do it again. And they did.

Winter after winter a growing sisterhood of women ventured out into the Colorado wilderness with the same motivations that have driven countless people out of their comfort zones and into the world. And each year they returned restored and refreshed. They made it to Francie’s, Vance’s and Uncle Bud’s. Stood on alpine fields of snow and felt the wind whip through their hair as clouds scurried off towards distant ranges. Helped one another when a blister blossomed or a skin failed or a rib broke. All with the spirit of “We are going to do this.”

So in the mid-2000s, when a new hut was being contemplated, Sue and her husband Don decided to take part. Meant as a 50th birthday present for Sue, it would open its doors eleven years later when she was 61. But the best things take the most time. And when it came time to name the hut, there was only one name appropriate.

Sisters.