

she

yw magazine
Shines™

FALL 2014 • FREE

celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women

Women of Achievement
across industry, culture and public service

Sierra Barter
Haiganush R. Bedrosian
Cathy Clasper-Torch
Jeanne Gattegno
Marie Ghazal
Sally E. Lapides
Leah Williams Metts
Donna Montaquila
Janet Pichardo
Lisa A. Ranglin
Toby Simon
Linda N. Ward
Laurie White

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smile

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

Organization of the Year:
National Association of Women in Construction
No. 1 of Rhode Island, Chapter 52

Special Insert:
YWCA Teen Parent Programs

published by YWCA Rhode Island • volume 10, number 1 • www.sheshines.org

volume 10, number 1

celebrating the aspirations and
accomplishments of women

published by YWCA Rhode Island



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No. 1 of Rhode Island, Chapter 52

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Hi Mollie!

photo by Deborah L. Perry

eliminating racism
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YWCA Rhode Island is dedicated to
eliminating racism, empowering
women and promoting peace, justice,
freedom and dignity for all.

YWCA highlights achievement

Each year for the last 9 years, we've gathered over lunch
to honor a select group of Rhode Island women who have
made extraordinary contributions to their families, work-
places, and communities. Our tenth year is no exception.

Nominated by their peers, the 2014 Women of
Achievement award winners include a judge, a multi-
instrumentalist, health promoters, educators, community
supporters, business advocates and owners, social service
leaders and an organization that promotes and supports
women in construction.

Congratulations to Laurie White, Cathy Clasper-Torch,
Linda N. Ward, Sally E. Lapides, Marie Ghazal, Leah
Williams Metts, Sierra Barter, Donna Montaquila,
Haiganush R. Bedrosian, Lisa A. Ranglin, Janet Pichardo,
Jeanne Gattegno, Toby Simon and the National Association
for Women in Construction, Rhode Island Chapter. Thank
you for your leadership, your example and your passion.

In this issue of *YW She Shines* magazine you will read
responses to a question we posed to the award recipients -
"Why is mentorship important and how is it enacted in the
world?" Their answers are thoughtful, and as award winner
Linda Ward reminds us "Everyone has gifts and capacities
to share – at home, in the workplace, in the community,
wherever he/she may choose to be involved." ❖❖❖

Very truly yours,

Deborah

Deborah L. Perry
YWCA Rhode Island
President/Chief Executive Officer

trust it

how to:

contribute. *YW She Shines* welcomes letters to the editor, articles, poetry, stories,
graphics, photos and calendar events. Contact us if you have an inspiring story to tell
or have a suggestion of someone to be featured. Only original contributions will be
considered and may be edited due to space limitations. Include contact information:
name, e-mail, address and phone number. Images provided electronically must be
high-resolution.

submit cover art. The cover is reserved as a gallery of art in keeping with the
YW She Shines theme. For consideration, send in a photo by e-mail attachment or mail.
This is a wonderful opportunity for local artists to show their work. A biography is
published in conjunction with the "Artist Canvas" section of *YW She Shines*.

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priate for the publication.

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and friends of YWCA Rhode Island. To be added to the mailing list, send in the sub-
scription form - available online at sheshines.org. The magazine is also available at
YWCA Rhode Island and at various special events.

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class of 2014

Aisha Ortiz of Woonsocket, photo right, is a
graduate of the YWCA Rhode Island sponsored,
Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy. She
is presently enrolled in the CNA training program at
Saint Antoine. She is the mother of a two year old.
Photograph above and on cover, with her friend
Jazmin Merced. ❖❖❖

Photo courtesy of Scott Kingsley Duo Pictures

honoring women of achievement

YWCA Rhode Island recognizes women in industry, culture and public service

event underwriters and attendees - thank you!



Thirteen women and an organization were recognized for their accomplishments promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity at the 10th Annual Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon, held September 30 at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln. Deb Ruggiero served as the event emcee.

Congratulations to the 2014 honorees. YWCA Rhode Island appreciates the underwriters and attendees celebrating the following Women of Achievement and Organization of the Year: Laurie White, Cathy Clasper-Torch, Linda N. Ward, Sally E. Lapides, Marie Ghazal, Leah Williams Metts, Sierra Barter, Donna Montaquila, Haiganush R. Bedrosian, Lisa A. Ranglin, Janet Pichardo, Jeanne Gattegno, Toby Simon, and the National Association for Women in Construction, Rhode Island Chapter.

Women of Achievement Awards are recognized nationally. They bring attention to the accomplishments of women in industry, culture and public service in local communities. For additional information, visit www.womenofachievementRI.org.

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Deb Ruggiero, emcee
Swarovski, gifts

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"YWCA is pleased to host this celebration for the tenth year in a row to recognize the accomplishments of women across industry, culture and public service," says Deborah L. Perry, president/chief executive officer of YWCA Rhode Island. "We see the honorees as true role models for girls and young women growing up in Rhode Island."

Editor's Note: The honorees are highlighted on pages 9 through 22.

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Congratulations to the **National Association of Women in Construction RI Chapter** on being named **Organization of the Year**.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation of NAWIC's commitment to opening doors, minds and opportunities to women in the construction industry.

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Congratulations to all of today's honorees!



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YWCA Rhode Island's
10th Annual Awards
Luncheon

Congratulations to the
13 Outstanding
Women of
Achievement!



*The University of Rhode Island
congratulates*

*Marie Ghazal and Laurie White,
recipients of the*

2014 YWCA Women of Achievement Awards.

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TO THIS YEAR'S
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***Congratulations to the 2014 Honorees,
including Linda N. Ward.***

Thank you for your vision, inspiration
and for sharing "The Journey" with
all of us at Opportunities Unlimited!

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Laurie White is president of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce -- Rhode Island's largest private sector business advocacy and economic development organization. The Chamber is the advocate for growing and protecting the business community in Rhode Island. A significant portion of the Chamber's work over the last several years has been devoted to developing the state's Knowledge Economy by driving entrepreneurship, medical, academic and industry collaboration, technology transfer; talent retention, competitive tax policy, niche industry identification and business recruitment. She is a frequent speaker on these subjects. White is an honors graduate of the University of Rhode Island where she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism. She also actively participates in community and professional organizations as diverse as the University of Rhode Island Foundation and the Rhode Island Quality Institute.

photo by Agapao Productions

Laurie White

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

I would like to begin by thanking the YWCA for this special distinction and extending congratulations to my fellow honorees for their contributions to our community. This theme of “mentorship” is so vitally important to women, in particular, and I am eager to read and learn about others’ experiences.

In thinking about a message to convey, I thought it might be useful to point to the various types of mentoring opportunities. There are lots of derivations on the same theme, but at its essence is the willingness of a mentor to simply listen and to ignite a passion for the power of possibility. On the career front, a nonjudgmental confidante often can help extinguish a mentee’s persistent self-doubt and light the path to “thinking bigger.”

An excellent resource for comparing the myriad types of mentor/mentee relationships is the advocacy and professional development organization EDUCAUSE. On their website,

educause.edu/careers, they neatly summarize the vast continuum of mentoring arrangements as well as the risks and the benefits to both parties.

To illustrate one style, a mentor that acts as a career “sponsor” nominates a junior colleague for desirable lateral moves and promotions, thus building a mentee’s reputation within the organization and affording the opportunity for exposure and visibility with key figures. The mentee develops the all-important informal knowledge of the organization which broadens perspective and enhances the ability to navigate internally. Sponsors also outline specific strategies for accomplishing work objectives and even shield the mentee from untimely or potentially damaging contact with senior managers by taking credit/blame in controversial situations or intervening when things go wrong.

On a less intensive level, “mentoring circles” are known to be gaining popularity. This

dynamic allows for a peer mentoring support network for friends and/or colleagues. The relationships are reciprocal in nature. Members of the circle support each others’ professional and personal growth. Other styles of mentorship include minute mentors, invisible mentors and reverse mentors, with varying time commitments and organizational supports built in.

I have had the great fortune of being mentored and acting as a mentor. And there have been many relationships. As careers advance, different skills and personalities need to be accessed. I am extremely grateful to all of those individuals who have taken the time to push me beyond my perceived limits and to help me recover after a failure. As a mentor, myself, it is satisfying to be able to reciprocate and to tap into new and bigger thinking from emerging leaders.

And, if I am lucky, the cycle will repeat itself! ✨



Cathy Clasper-Torch, a multi-instrumentalist (violin, piano, cello and erhu) has been playing, teaching, and performing in Rhode Island and New England for over 20 years with various groups, instrumental and vocal. Her passion is collaborating with others, and believes music is a powerful soul-force that brings people together in spirit and community. Whether she's accompanying city youth in a musical production, or teaching fiddle classes to adults, or group singing, Clasper-Torch's greatest joy is empowering others to feel the music move within, and be able to express it. She performs regularly with The Gnomes Band and Atwater-Donnelly Trio. She sings with the Grace Note Singers and the RI Feminist Chorus. To hear her music and see a calendar of upcoming shows, visit www.cathyclasper-torch.com.

photo by Agapao Productions

Cathy Clasper-Torch

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

As I reflect on the importance of mentorship, and how it's enacted for me as a musician, teacher, performer and religious educator, it feels like it happens when one is least conscious of it happening. Like musician John Lennon says, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." Mentorship is what happens when you're doing what you love.

It is such a privilege to work with children and adults through music, teaching, and creating together. Mentorship is a two-way street, as I learn so very much from those I get to work with: be it my adult fiddle students who come to group lessons each week; or youth in the after-school drama-music program at Paul Cuffee; or the spirited young people at church. I love the words of the religious educator, John Westerhoff, who said that 'faith is

not taught, but caught.' If one is doing what they love to do, then it is that very spirit or essence that is passed along to others.

As a woman, and mother of two amazing adult daughters, I often reflect on who my role models and mentors are, and have been. As many parents experience, our children are often our best mentors. I remember over-hearing my daughters refer to me as "an artist", when chatting with classmates, and realized in that moment that I wanted to live fully into the image they had of me. They had recognized where my 'light shined', maybe even more fully than I realized it myself. Living into one's gifts and passions, and finding ways to express them and pass them along, is not only a privilege, but a joyous journey of a lifetime! ✨



Linda N. Ward is co-founder and executive director of Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. -- an agency whose mission is to support people with differing abilities to lead rich and fulfilling lives and to ensure that all people regardless of abilities are treated with dignity and respect. Ward is a founding member of the RI Disability Vote Project. She was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and serves as chair of the legislation committee. She is a board member and past president of the Community Provider Network of RI. She is a supporter of the RI Coalition for the Homeless and a member of Women Ending Hunger at the RI Community Food Bank. Ward received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Rhode Island College. She is a graduate of Leadership Rhode Island and a 2009 Fellow of The Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation.

photo by Agapao Productions

Linda N. Ward

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

“You can be anything you want to be!”

In 1968, these words of wisdom were spoken to me by my 8th grade teacher at St. Anthony's School in Providence, Sister Margaret Gormerly CND. Words that have guided my life and provided what I now recognize as my first mentoring experience. As I left the safe, nurturing and sometimes restrictive environment of a small catholic school to go face the big, scary and demanding high school – Classical – her words provided me with strength, fortitude and most importantly confidence in my abilities and aspirations.

Mentoring to me is about supporting and encouraging, building confidence and strength, responding to challenges. It is about assisting someone to build their knowledge and recognize their true capacity. I believe everyone you encounter has the potential to be a mentor whether by active engagement or by observation. I still have a vivid recollection of leaving a meeting and seeing a line of people outside a food pantry waiting for it to open and thinking how

can this be that people do not have enough food. That observation guided me to further my work around issues of hunger.

Be open to everyone, even those with whom you feel you share nothing in common. Some of my most significant professional growth is a direct result of a mentoring relationship with someone who I had, at best, a tentative relationship but who encouraged me to develop skills needed to start my own business.

When I have been confronted by challenges I look to those who have shared similar experiences. Eighteen years ago when Marilyn Drummond and I decided to start a new agency working with adults with differing abilities, I called on people who I respected, who presented as open and willing to share and asked for advice. This agency, Opportunities Unlimited used that as a foundation for its development. To this day, I routinely call on these relationships for knowledge, encouragement and inspiration.

Everyone has gifts and capacities to share – at home, in the workplace, in the community, wherever

he/she may choose to be involved. This central belief has guided my work and my relationships. These are the values that my work and volunteer experiences embrace – supporting people to exercise their right to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness.

I am driven by my passion for fairness and equality and my mentors are often those who may be different, are homeless, struggle with hunger and worry about how to provide for their families. I look to them for guidance and direction and offer my support and encouragement as they engage in advocacy.

Don't ever underestimate the power of your words and interactions with people. The very way you respond to people can provide encouragement, inspiration and a feeling of self worth that dramatically impacts a person's life. When a person I provide services to says to me – “You really think I can do that?” I know my actions, interactions and supports have made a positive difference in the person's life. Something we should all try to do. ✨



Sally Lapidés is president and CEO of Residential Properties Ltd. -- a premier residential real estate firm that she co-founded in 1981. A graduate of Boston University with a Bachelor of Art Degree in Art History, Lapidés has made enriching our quality of life a priority and works diligently on behalf of the organizations that bring culture and charity to the lives of Rhode Islanders. She has served as the vice chair of the Board of Governors at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum and has been a trustee on the boards of Roger Williams University, Smith Hill Center, Trinity Repertory Company, and Providence Country Day School. She was the former chair of the Board at The Gordon School, the Newport International Film Festival, Global Alliance to Immunize Against Aids, and The Rhode Island Foundation's Equity Action Campaign Committee.

photo by Agapao Productions

Sally E. Lapidés

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

From the time I was a little girl, I was taught that we had an obligation to give back to the world so that we leave it in a better place than we found it. When your values include helping others achieve their dreams as you are working on achieving your own, it is a great foundation for finding a path to the importance of mentoring.

Every young person needs a relationship with someone who can be a role model, an unbiased sounding board and a motivator.

I began my mentoring as a counselor in training at the Barrington YMCA where I helped little girls build confidence in swimming, sports, and group activities.

I tutored inner-city girls in high school and after college, I moved back to Rhode Island and volunteered at the Smith Hill Center.

What I discovered about myself was that I got more out of the relationships with the children and adults that I met than they probably

got from me.

I opened up my company, Residential Properties Ltd in 1981. We began as a six women office in Providence and although I was the youngest member of my colleagues, I found that I became a mentor to these brokers early in their careers.

Over the past 33 years, I have mentored several hundred real estate associates, managers and administrative staff and have found out that their gratitude was all I needed to recharge my own energy. I also found that I went from the "youngest person at the table to the wise counsel over the years!" The advice I give is valued and appreciated by those who ask for help. No one revels in the success of others more than I do. The lack of jealousy and confidence in what I do, make it easy and natural to enjoy Mentoring.

For the last four years, I have been a Mentor at Year Up Providence. This is where I

have found a profound benefit to the young women I have been assigned to in the program.

We communicate often and see each other regularly. We discuss challenges in the workplace, the balancing of family obligations and a career path. We become friends in the process and I am a resource for each one of them as they follow their path for attaining their dreams.

I keep a Winston Churchill quote on my desk and live by it every day. "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give".

The world would be a far better place if more people understood the impact of Mentorship. When my Dad died, a man came up to me after the funeral and said, "Your Dad was my Big Brother when I was growing up. If it wasn't for him, I would never had gone to college and be a CPA today."

What a lovely way to be remembered and a true story about the power of Mentoring! ❖❖❖



Marie Ghazal, MS, RN is a proven leader in health care, highly respected for over 33 years of dedication to reducing health disparities for Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents. Through her accomplishments as a registered nurse, health center director, administrator and now as Rhode Island Free Clinic's CEO, she exemplifies a strong leader contributing to transformative dialogue on collaborations, community partnerships and a robust, cost-effective health care delivery system. Ghazal holds a Master's Degree in Community Health from Boston University and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from University of Rhode Island. In 2011, Ghazal received the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Advocate Award for Rhode Island.

photo by Agapao Productions

Marie Ghazal

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

I am here today because of strong mentors. Growing up in Central Falls, the daughter of working class, immigrant parents, they instilled in me their powerful example of what it means to help others, be honest, show compassion, and work hard. These core values have guided me throughout my career.

I grew up in a poor community. Most people had no health care. I knew very young that I wanted to improve health care access for everyone, not just those who could afford it. On my desk is a framed newspaper photo from 1979 taken at Jenks Park in Central Falls. In it, I'm a college sophomore, bending over a group of children, teaching them how to use a stethoscope. This commemorates my first community health experience.

Since then, and throughout my career, mentors have guided me. They inspired me to learn, ask tough questions, listen, and expand my horizons. I am honored to know many people who share my belief that health care is a basic human right.

Today, I have the privilege of leading an organization that is life-changing. The Rhode Island Free Clinic gives vital health care to uninsured, low-income adults. Nearly 60,000 people in our state still do not have health care. We provide care thanks to over 800 volunteers and community partners who give their time, talent, and treasure. At the Clinic, patients gain healthcare, volunteers grow in service to others, and student trainees learn how to give good care from inspiring volunteer medical professionals. The Clinic also hosts our state's largest AmeriCorps VISTA Team. This domestic Peace Corps deploys young people at the Clinic for a year of volunteer service, to help do the hard work of giving health care to adults who would otherwise have none.

I'm grateful. Every day I hear stories of how the Clinic changes lives – of patients, of volunteers, of students, and of VISTAs. The Clinic saves lives and also inspires others to seek a life well-lived, in service to others.

This is so powerful. At the Clinic, I serve as a mentor to empower this amazing team of volunteers, students, and VISTAs, and to work to create opportunities for everyone to make a difference. Everything we do sets an example and is focused on our mission of service. The Clinic is possible only because everyone is passionate about their work and the Clinic's mission and our donors are invested in our success.

I tell young people . . . Anyone can make money, but how will YOU make a DIFFERENCE? Whom do you seek as mentors to help YOU grow? What example do YOU set for those who will come after you? Who will be inspired by YOUR work?

Whether you are mentored or serve as a mentor, find your passion and stay true to it. Focus your energies and talents in directions that help. Be honest, be kind, be compassionate, and work hard to be a part of the solution.

“The measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable.”



Leah Williams Metts graduated from Hope High School and served as class president. She holds a Degree from Empire Beauty School. She attended Rhode Island College and Community College of Rhode Island. Metts co-chairs the alumni board at Davey Lopes Recreation Center, a place she credits for keeping her safe and off the streets as a child. She was integral in the formation of the NAACP Youth Council on which she serves as chairwoman and sits on the Executive Board of the NAACP. She is a member of the Southside Elementary Charter School Board and Providence Police Advisory Board. She serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She also serves as political consultant on several current statewide campaigns. Metts is the director of community engagement and outreach for OIC of Rhode Island providing job training and placement. She is also the community outreach coordinator for Swim Empowerment.

photo by Agapao Productions

Leah Williams Metts

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

I am truly honored to be recognized among the 2014 YWCA Women of Achievement in Rhode Island. To be honest, I have attempted to write this essay on numerous occasions. Each time I begin the process, my mind turns to the remarkable women recognized presently, and in the years past. Chief Justice of the RI Family Court Judge Haiganush R. Bedrosian, Amos House President, Eileen Hayes, the Annenberg Institute's Angela Romans, Betty Adler . . . Gina Raimondo . . . I find the company a bit humbling.

So, why is mentorship important? I've always believed that our most important and precious resource is our children. Certainly, my personal story has been shaped by my four beautiful kids. As a child, I grew up in Providence. I am a product of successful private, and city recreational programs. My Mother was raising three kids on her own, and was forced to work long hours to provide for us. The staff members at facilities such as The Davey Lopes Recreation Center, John Hope Settlement House, and The Boys and Girls Club had a nurturing and formative influence on my life, and, largely, I credit them for steering my path away from drugs, and crime.

Naturally, I expected the same offerings for my four children.

What I found was quite different. Violent crime was steadily increasing in my community, drug overdoses was on the rise, public recreation was being cut from the city's budget, and private recreation was underfunded.

With regards to raising a child, my belief has always been that "it takes a village." I found many other kindred spirits along the way, and together we are attempting to make some of the changes that need to be made in Rhode Island. Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Many of the committed private citizens and elected officials I have encountered leave me hopeful that we will achieve all of our goals. What could be a better use of government resources than to provide programs aimed at empowering our children?

Mentorship can come in many forms. It takes many influences to raise a child up to be an empowered and effective adult. The more doors we open for them, the greater the chance that they will find the right path. I am hopeful by the positive steps that, together, we have made towards these goals, and I am inspired by the future that I can see for my children. ✨



Sierra Barter received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Advertising and Marketing Communication from Johnson & Wales University. She worked for WaterFire Providence and a small web firm before joining her alma mater as their student services social media coordinator. Barter is the co-founder and president of PVD Lady Project -- connecting, inspiring and showcasing local women through events, membership and community engagement. Barter also runs her own social media consulting business, @SierraBarter and volunteers with PAWS New England. She serves on the board of Girls on the Run RI and the Summit Neighborhood Association. Barter is pursuing her Master of Business Administration Degree at Johnson & Wales University.

photo by Agapao Productions

Sierra Barter

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

Mentorship is a two way street. Regardless of your age, industry or career level mentors and mentees can always learn from one another. When Lady Project first launched in early 2012, we grew from 56 women at our first event to over 300 members in Rhode Island in less than three years. Our members were inviting not only friends and colleagues in their age group, but their previous (older) supervisors, their moms, family friends and mentors. This diversity naturally helped create mentor and mentee relationships within the Project. Both the mentor and mentee were learning from each other in an impactful, authentic and effective way. One of the reasons that I believe Lady Project is so successful is because we are so diverse. Women who come to our events are excited to meet so many other driven women because they know how important mentorship is—on both sides of the table.

Mentorship helps us grow. As women, we

lean on each other for support, encouragement and advice. We ask each other the important questions when starting a business and who the best dentist is in town. Mentors help us figure out the big picture, while sticking to the details.

Mentorship doesn't have to be so formal. Mentorship doesn't have to be this super-official, I ask you to be my mentor and then you accept and then we're going steady. It can be something as casual as a coffee date a few times a year, someone you can Gchat with during the work day and get feedback, or someone that you are inspired by every day from afar. Mentorship doesn't have to always be within your industry - you should be inspired by men and women in all areas, and more importantly, outside your comfort zone. Your mentors, even if you only talk to them a few times a year, are important at every level—whether you see them daily or chat twice a year.

You make your own Mentorship rules. You and your mentor decide what is best for you.

Maybe it's a Skype session or dinner a few times a year, your mentorship decides what's the best fit.

Mentorship is essential for a successful career and creating a healthy, vibrant and full person. You need those mentors (and to inspire your mentees!) to lift you up, challenge you, and listen when it matters the most.

We hope to launch our formal mentorship program in the next year—pairing our members with mentors, college students and industry leaders. Mentorship is essential in growing our mission and helping our members succeed.

Lady Project connects our members to naturally form mentorships, meet other driven, entrepreneurial women outside their industry, and inspire others to do the same. We showcase these mentorships and relationships through our blog, social media and at events. We encourage these relationships to flourish and grow authentically . . . and with a glass of champagne. ✨



Donna Montaquila is the director of The HeatSmart Campaign, an initiative of Northwest Woolen Mills. Over the past nine years the program has developed into a successful national program providing energy efficient tools that allow households to reduce their heating cost and save energy while keeping warm within their homes. Prior to developing HeatSmart, Montaquila was advertising director for two newspapers and has been employed with two Fortune 500 companies. She has served on numerous committees and presently is a member of Women Ending Hunger at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Marketing from Johnson & Wales University. Montaquila is a member of the Association of Energy Service Professionals.

photo by Agapao Productions

Donna Montaquila

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

According to Wikipedia, “Mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. Personal development includes activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations”.

Thank you Wikipedia for clearly defining a process that I, and others participate in daily, in all aspects of life without really realizing what we are doing.

If you are like me, hearing the word mentorship immediately my thoughts go to a work environment, supporting a person through guidance to achieve their next level of success. It could also be an environment at home with a child, trying to influence a most pressing decision they need to make through stories of my

past experiences so the path becomes obvious and the decision easier. Or trying to unscramble a friend’s confused mind when so many situations present themselves at one time in their life.

In each case, the journeys with the coworker, child, or friend began by listening to the circumstances facing them. A suggestion usually leads to a discussion. That discussion sets the path that hopefully leads to their personal achievement. Occasionally the path needs to be reworked. Sometimes the path is unsuccessful and a new course of action is required. Regardless of the outcome, a conversation based on care and concern took place and an understanding of their needs happened. And that exchange of thoughts and knowledge is what really matters and is why mentorship is important.

Our country is large and the world is massive. There is much going on. Some events are good and others not good. Today’s technology

enables us to receive information quickly, even in real time. Too often the explanation of the event we are viewing is described in sound bites. The sound bites leave much for our imagination to interpret. And usually an opinion is formed based on that, opposed to forming an opinion on fact.

Nationally and globally mentoring can be a challenge because we are not directly involved in the situations. A more indirect approach is needed but the same elements of mentoring can apply. Learn about the topic; listen to what is taking place on both sides. Then relate to your past experience. The experience could have been solving a family disagreement or presenting information to a friend to allow them to make a wiser decision. One direct way to mentor is to send your thoughts to your Governor or U.S. Congressman to influence and guide their decisions. Just think, at that time we will be influencing the mentors, how great is that! ✨



Haiganush R. Bedrosian is the first woman appointed as the Chief Judge of the Rhode Island Family Court on December 10, 2010, having served as an Associate Justice of the Court for thirty years. She taught elementary school for six years after graduation from Brown University. Upon graduation from Suffolk Law School, she served as Law Clerk for one year at the Rhode Island Supreme Court. In private practice, specializing in Family Law cases, she was often appointed by Family Court Judges to represent youth charged with delinquency offenses or to act as guardian ad litem to children in the custody of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families. While in private practice, she was employed part-time in the Attorney General's Prosecution Unit. In 1980, Governor J. Joseph Garrahy took the bold step to appoint her as the first woman in the Family Court.

photo by Agapao Productions

Haiganush R. Bedrosian

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

The Dictionary describes a mentor as a wise and trusted teacher or counselor. In the law, as well as many other professions, mentoring provides an opportunity for a law student or a newly admitted lawyer to learn how to practice law. By partnering with a mentor, a new attorney may achieve higher aspirations, enjoy greater confidence and develop relationships with other attorneys. Also, the principles behind mentorship are important to many occupations. In the legal field, it provides young professionals with knowledge of the law, as well as important professional support that will be extremely beneficial for career development.

Mentorship may be very helpful to newly admitted attorneys who may benefit from the guidance and advice of experienced litigators and many other practitioners as they begin their legal careers. Through mentorship, both experienced attorneys, as well as recently admitted attorneys, may enter the legal profession with a clear vision of how they wish to succeed in their chosen fields in the law.

Mentorship programs do aid in bringing new and

experienced lawyers together to help the new attorney develop leadership skills; it is this kind of supportive mentoring that give back while helping others achieve personal success. Also, mentorship relationships may teach inexperienced lawyers to build the core skills and confidence that they need for growth and success in the workplace. For many women, mentorship provided strong female role models which promoted the sharing of a variety of success stories which in turn inspired others and made a difference.

As Chief Judge of Family Court, students who are interested in the law are encouraged to apply for an internship with the Court. Each summer, we have one or two college or law school students who work on a project with us. These students observe courtroom practices, interact with judges and assist the Family Court with research or other important projects; that experience provides a glimpse into the practice of law outside of a classroom setting. Mentorship is encouraged for those students wishing to gain as much knowledge as possible as they embark on in their chosen careers. Mentors provide

support, encouragement and guidance which are necessary tools to make future generations gain strong skills to become future leaders.

In my case, Corinne P. Grande was my mentor. When I first met her in the late 1960's, she was a new member of the Cranston City Council. During the summer months and school vacations, I interned at her private law office and accompanied her to Court hearings. The courtroom became a symbol of the importance of the law to litigants whose cases required a Court hearing. Indeed, while in private practice, Attorney Grande taught me how to best represent clients in the courtroom setting. The lessons learned while observing the first woman judge in District Court were carried over to those days when I was the first woman appointed to Family Court in 1980.

In 1969, after her appointment, to the District Court, I'd attend Court hearings when school was not in session; there I observed how she handled a very busy courtroom.

Today, I'd like to publicly thank Judge Grande for her guidance and friendship. ✨



Lisa Ranglin is a vice president at Bank of America. She has over 10 years of experience in project management, business process improvement and organizational change management. In 2001 Ranglin set out on a journey to close the technological disparity, which existed in the African American community when she founded Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA) Rhode Island Chapter. BDPA delivers IT excellence to members, strategic partners, high school seniors and local communities. Ranglin is the founder and president of the Rhode Island Black Business Association -- a non-profit organization, dedicated to enhancing the growth and economic empowerment of minority owned businesses by providing them a forum to competitively participate in the local and global economy primarily through business development, advocacy, mentoring, and professional development. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Programming Technology from New England Technical College. In addition, she is a certified Project Management Professional, holds Six Sigma Green Belt Certification, awarded by Bank of America and a graduate of Leadership Rhode Island.

photo by Agapao Productions

Lisa A. Ranglin

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

Mentors have always been in my life. I attribute much of my personal and professional growth to an amazing group of mentors who have guided and supported me as I sought to develop into the amazing woman I am today. No one person has all the skills, knowledge or support that they need to grow. Mentors selfishly provide the shoulders that we consistently stand on as we reach towards our personal goals.

Throughout my career, I have grown to appreciate the power of mentorship and I have built my personal list of individuals to whom I go to from time to time to bounce ideas off or seek advice. The people who have mentored me have been supportive, kind and knowledgeable.

I think mentorship is a key ingredient in maximizing one's potential. A good mentorship relationship breaks one out of their comfort zone and forces the individual to challenge oneself in learning more. We all have something to offer. Frankly, each of us can learn from each other so whether it

is a formal or informal agreement, mentorship serves a distinct role in helping individuals grow and thrive.

Mentor and mentee relationships provide powerful connections. These connections support continuity in learning as well as an opportunity to build business acumen to broaden one's knowledge base, which is essential in today's competitive job market.

There is no doubt I could not be where I am today had it had not been for the generosity of time and support that mentors have afforded me. They have carried me, supported, and encouraged me. They are my mentors. So many people have influenced and have helped to shape my career. They are my teachers, senior leaders at Bank of America, family members and community leaders. The leadership team in Rhode Island Black Business Association has not just supported and mentored me but has allowed me to further develop my leadership skills. These wonderful thought leaders who

inspire me and motivate me to carry on my work are my mentors.

I have had the pleasure to serve as both mentor and mentee and both roles have been extremely rewarding. As a mentor, I enjoy working with young people entering the workforce, transitioning between jobs and or looking to advance their career. I have also served as sponsor in helping individuals to land jobs by leveraging my personal network. Being known and respected by my community is important to me, I was taught at a very young age the importance of giving back to one's community and others. I operate on the premise that we succeed or fail together and for me failing is not an option.

In closing, I believe mentor and mentee are two great sources of a wealth of information and each person provides fresh insights that the other person might not have. I value mentorship as it allows mentees to tap into their unknown potential. Mentorship is a "win win" for all involved. ····



Janet Pichardo is the director of family and community engagement for the Providence School Department. Since 2003, she has worked with district staff, community organizations and parents with developing and implementing district initiatives to improve student achievement in the state's largest school district. She is involved in various steering, advisory and working groups with a focus of doing what is best for kids while including parent voice along the way. Her previous work experience in the state and banking industry allowed her to assist individuals with the "know how" of accessing home ownership and entrepreneurship opportunities. Her active participation in the community has shaped a strong willingness to make a difference in the lives of others. Pichardo has a Master's Degree in Global Business-Organizational Leadership from Johnson & Wales University and in 2007 was an award recipient of the "40 Women We Admire" from Big Sisters of Rhode Island.

photo by Agapao Productions

Janet Pichardo

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

The first word that comes to mind when I hear the word mentorship is "Coach". A mentor guides you on your path, offering clarity and a sense of encouragement with regards to your interests, hopes and dreams.

I remember my first mentor - Julie White, a college advisor at CCRI. She was an inspiration for me, who believed and listened to what I had to say and made sure I felt cared for. She also wanted to make a difference, noticed I may not have had exposure to the world and asked me to take a career interest test to determine my direction beyond CCRI. The test results included career options I had never considered; but there was one common theme - the opportunity to help others because of my compassionate nature. Julie White is a friend to this day; I truly appreciate her and her willingness to give of her time, show me love, affection and be the role model of a professional woman making a

difference in the lives of so many youth.

Mentorship is a natural act for me, especially in my work experiences and as a parent. In my current job, as in my previous work, I am blessed to provide the guidance necessary to help others be successful, as well as an active listener in which they can confide. Families are struggling and feeling lonely, helpless, marginalized, disrespected and disregarded. Many times these feelings can create depression and agitation which can affect the social and emotional state of a child. I am mindful of this and always put myself in that person's place, asking myself, "Imagine if that were you; what would you do?" Many simply do not know where to go or what to ask; as a mentor I help them find programs and services that can assist them.

As a mother of three children - ranging from elementary to high school - mentorship becomes part of parenting. Although my hus-

band and I are both college graduates, we too struggle with figuring out the best way to raise our children to become successful and productive citizens in society. We are very involved in the community and make it a point to share our experiences with our children, bad or good. This provides a realistic point of view of the world, and how it's not easy and working hard is how you get to where you want to be. A challenge that is common amongst parents is learning how to help children be responsible for their actions and acknowledging their mistakes, while also picking themselves up after something doesn't go as planned.

Mentors are a bright light, a gentle smile, a confidante, a shoulder to cry on and a trustworthy friend who unconditionally cares and is openly willing to prepare another human being for their life's journey. Every youth deserves a mentor. ✨



Jeanne Gattegno's career in social services spans over 45 years, first working for Progress for Providence and then as executive director of the Joslin Center before taking the helm at Westbay Community Action, a role from which she recently retired. She was also one of the founders of Rhode Island Food Bank and Rhode Island Donation Exchange. She joined Westbay as president and CEO in 1982, overseeing a ten-million-dollar budget, eight directors, seven departments, 80 employees and hundreds of volunteers. She also worked with a supportive board of directors. The staff serves 10,500 client households annually and is the largest agency in Kent County. Gattegno is active with Warwick 13 and Rotary Club of Warwick, where she served as president 2008-2009 and in 2010 traveled to Dominican Republic to build a health clinic with the Rotary.

photo by Agapao Productions

Jeanne Gattegno

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

Mentorship is the greatest gift to give and to receive. It is teaching others and learning from them as well as learning from others and teaching. Every interaction with another can be a "mentoring moment" and can serve as the light in the dark, the touch of reality or the helping hand that someone needs.

I am the luckiest person in the world. I have been blessed with so many kind, generous and caring mentors in my life. Family, friends, co-workers, and colleagues taught and guided me to be the person I am today and the person I will be in the next phase of my life. Yet, most of them never realized the impact they had on my personal and professional growth.

When I began my work in the 1960's, I was just 17 and just out of high school. My mother and 10 brothers and sisters and I lived in poverty. At one point we lived in an abandoned apartment house, but then moved to

the security of a public-housing project. It was a time in our country when the movement began to expose and challenge the conditions of poverty and create economic opportunities for those who had none. I started my life's work with the Community Action Program not really knowing what the War on Poverty was all about, but I seized the opportunity. In the end, I realize that I was born to do this work.

At 17, I was so ill prepared for the world. I was afraid, insecure and even ashamed of my poverty; feelings, I believe, we have all felt during our lives. We all have birthdays and we age from infant to child to adult. Growing from a girl to a woman, a poor kid, to an active participant in the antipoverty movement, however, was not about age. I learned so much from the "welfare mothers" I worked with early on about strength, persistence and taking care of each other.

Neighborhood people taught me about working together and having faith that things could change. My co-workers taught me how to work as a team member and to listen, lead and solve problems. My colleagues helped me to think strategically. My family and friends showed me how to love and be supportive. And my lifelong mentor and friend showed me that I had value and endless possibilities if only I would be open to them.

He instilled in me the value in helping and guiding others. He set the example for me right from the start. It has been the mentoring of others that has given me great satisfaction as I come to the end of my Community Action career.

I believe that Mentorship is a right and a responsibility. It is as much a verb as a noun.

Mentorship can be intentional or unintentional, and it is a vital way of life. ☺☺☺



Toby Simon recently retired from her role as the director of the Gertrude Hochberg Women's Center at Bryant University. Serving as the first director, Simon's responsibilities included providing leadership for programs addressing women's concerns, collaborating with faculty and staff, and working on retention of women students. Specific responsibilities included advocacy on sexual assault and sexual harassment, women's health, campus climate and women in business. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Syracuse University and a Master's Degree in Education at Tufts University. Simon has taught Human Sexuality courses at several colleges and universities and is the author of numerous articles and books on sexual assault, sexuality, and the connection between alcohol and sexual behavior. For the past twenty years she has been working in Haiti, most recently at the YWCA Haiti, as a board member and trainer.

photo by Agapao Productions

Toby Simon

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

We can all probably benefit from having mentors in our lives. After all, who doesn't enjoy a trusted relationship or meaningful commitment with another person?

I recently retired after a thirty-five year career in higher education. I can count on only one hand, the mentors in my life but as I think back to the experience I had with these people, I realize now, even more, how vital they were in my professional and personal development.

Sol Gordon was my first mentor. He was a faculty member at Syracuse University in the department of Sociology. He was also a sex expert in the 60s when no one else was. He wrote books that got banned due to the subject matter but it didn't stop him. He took risks--good ones-- because he wasn't afraid of risk taking. He had the best sense of humor that I've ever seen. He was generous, funny and really smart. One example of his wit was when he taught us that there are 4 classifications in the psych literature that best describe people: rich, kind, boring and mean. He loved to be irreverent but never was nasty! He also taught us (and recent studies 50 yrs later confirm this) that in the grand scheme of intimate relationships-- his top 10 list-- sex was not the number one most important thing. It made the top 10 but it was actually number 7. Sharing of household tasks was higher on the top ten list than sex. The anecdote Sol used to demonstrate this was the story about his wife Judith, who asked him to

help with the laundry. He said he was too busy with his career of being a professor, a sociologist, and a writer. And that he didn't have time for helping with the household tasks. Sol told us that Judith said "How would you like a divorce?" "It took me 2 minutes to rearrange my schedule" Sol told us.

Sol was a pioneer and a youth advocate before the term even existed. Studying with Sol was an experience like none other. With great delight and passion, he followed my career. And he was a mentor to hundreds of other sexuality educators. I still use his humor and story telling in the human sexuality class I teach. I think about him often, he lived to 85 and left a tremendous legacy.

Had it not been for Sol Gordon, I would not have believed in the importance of mentorship. He taught me that not all risk taking is a bad thing. He encouraged me to push on the issues I felt were deeply important in the sexuality education of adolescents. From him I learned about humor--especially when talking about sex-- as a teaching tool. He followed my career for a while and was very proud of all of his mentees. I had other mentors along the way and thoroughly enjoyed the interactions. I'm not sure I thought of myself as a mentor but since retirement in early July, I have heard from so many former students who used that word when they described our relationship. Perhaps that's the best part of

being a mentor: you don't necessarily realize you are being one at the moment. It's not always a formal arrangement.

My last position was at Bryant University. I spent 11 years as the director of the Gertrude Hochberg Women's Center. It was a wonderful place to work and starting a new center was a dream job. But I also have come to value and cherish the mentees I had at Bryant. I was the "elder" in the Student Affairs division at Bryant and there were many young professionals who I not only worked with, but who ended up considering me an important mentor in their lives. I am still in constant contact with them and our trusted relationship as well as my commitment to their careers will not waiver.

It's probably quite obvious but worth mentioning: I think mentorship is extremely important for young women and girls. Sadly in 2014 we are still living in a country that doesn't pay women the same as men, where sexual harassment continues to be a problem in the work place, and the concept of "leaning in" is still not a reality for many young women. As a result, young women need to find mentors in other women who have already made the journey and perhaps have even figured out how to lean in.

I can't really comment on how to enact mentoring in the world, but I can talk about the work I do in Haiti. I am a board member of the YWCA Haiti. The board consists of

truly amazing Haitian women who have careers in law, business and medicine but who are devoted to making Haiti a better place and have chosen to do so by starting a YWCA. These women are relatively empowered since they are all college and grad school educated and hold important jobs in the community. They understand the importance of working with young girls in Haiti, to activate them and help them see that they can have a say in their futures. The board has older high school and college girls work with the younger girls all summer in a mentoring project. There are paid positions at this YWCA called "mentors" who work full time with girls and women. Throughout the year, the mentors at the YWCA work with 9-13 year old girls teaching them about gender based violence, self esteem, financial literacy, human rights and the environment. The YWCA Haiti's slogan is "Se ave'm chanjman ap komanse" which means "change starts with me." There is also a leadership academy that the YWCA hosts all year for women aged 18-30 who come every Saturday for 10 weeks and learn from other women. Close to 50% of the households in Haiti are run by women so when they suffer from the effects of poverty, their children do as well. There is lots of work to be done in Haiti to improve the status of women. It's not an easy place for women yet the mentoring programs at the YWCA Haiti are a small step and provide a glimmer of hope of what can be done. ✨

NAWIC

Why is mentorship important and how do you enact it in the world?

Many people may think of mentorship as a relationship between an adult and a child, but we cannot forget that young adults and adults need mentorship too. Mentoring comes in many different forms: teaching, listening, giving positive feedback, guidance and leadership. NAWIC's foundation is mentorship. NAWIC was formed in 1953 by women engaged in construction in Fort Worth, Texas. The Rhode Island chapter was formed in 1963 and has two focuses: first to help children of all ages and races to see the possibilities of a career in construction, and second, to be mentors for each other.

The mentorship program for the children consists of Block Kids. This is where we reach out to children of elementary school age. Our members and supporters talk to the children about what we do at our jobs and how being involved in construction is a wonderful opportunity to leave a positive mark on the world. The children get 100 blocks and a variety of other materials like string, a rock and foil to build a construction-related object.

We offer a Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) competition for High School students in which the students are given the challenge to create a structure according to the customers' specifications. The students have most of the school year to work on the project. This project gives them the opportunity to learn what it would be like to have a customer with certain requirements and to then create a structure that will fulfill those needs.

YWCA Rosie's Girls is a summer camp for girls in the inner city. NAWIC members and their employees introduce the girls to the construction industry with hands-on wood working projects. Each project is chosen carefully to fit the experience level of the girls. The girls learn more than just how to assemble a project. They learn how to use their safety equipment properly, follow directions, take measurements, and work as a team. Perhaps most importantly, they learn to have patience with themselves and others.

Mentoring each other, in our group, is natural. Our membership is diverse with owners, managers, engineers, office support, and trades women. Our meetings try to reach all of our members to help them build their businesses and themselves. Our meetings combine networking and education – whether a tour of a member company's project with a networking dinner afterward, or a speaker explaining the ins and outs on insurance coverage. Other meetings have covered the advantageous programs that the SBA and other state organizations offer. We also team up with other organizations to learn and network such as Construction Specifications Institute of RI, RI Builders Association Woman's Council, and Women In Transportation. By supporting other groups in our area, we can spread the word of our mission of mentoring. NAWIC offers us opportunities to interact, network, speak to an audience, promote our businesses, and give back to the community.

NAWIC Builds! ❖❖❖

National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) No. 1 of Rhode Island, Chapter 52 has worked toward fulfilling its core purpose to enhance the success of women in the construction industry in Rhode Island since 1961. This organization provides its members with opportunities for professional development, education, networking, leadership training, public service and more. It hosts a CAD Design/Drafting Competition for high school students as well as The Block Kids Building Competition for children in grades 1-6. It is also involved with Construction Career Days, hoping to inspire young minds to consider construction-related career paths. NAWIC is an international association.



From left to right, representing the organization NAWIC: Sophia Karvunis, Dianne Gibree, Virginia Bragger Hucks, Maria E. Votta, Carol O'Donnell, Pamela A. House, Lindsey Desjarlais, and Judi Baxter.

photo by Agapao Productions

teen parent **programs**

eliminating racism
empowering women **ywca**

Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy Class of 2014

photos courtesy of Scott Kingsley Duo Pictures



Trailblazing an Educational Path for Teen Parents

Dear Friend:

A little over one year ago, a new charter school opened with locations in Providence, Central Falls and cyberspace.

It's the Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy Charter School, and it combines the best of the "old school" format of classroom instruction with the advantages offered by 21st century online education.

The organization behind it: YWCA Rhode Island.

This might sound like a new role for the YWCA, but in truth, it's a natural outgrowth of what YWCA Rhode Island has been doing for years.

Twenty-nine years ago, Sheila "Skip" Nowell, the executive director of what was known as YWCA of Northern Rhode Island, saw a need and filled it with a program she called Parenting In Progress (PIP). It was geared to teenage girls who were likely to drop out of school because they were pregnant or already mothers.

Participants took classes leading to a GED diploma, but they also were taught life skills, like how to take care of their babies and themselves, how to handle finances, and how to think about their futures. Moreover, one of the biggest stumbling blocks to continuing education was removed: PIP provided child care when the mothers were in class. Graduation exercises were big events that celebrated these students' significant accomplishments.

While this program has been ongoing, YWCA has expanded and diversified its programs surrounding teen pregnancy. Most recently:

- 2009: developed a HIV/AIDS risk assessment for teen mothers.
- 2010: sponsored a year-long series of community conversations on raising sexually healthy children.
- 2012: hosted the influential "Children of Children" exhibit, a collection of photographs and audio stories reflecting the hopes, regrets, frustrations and rewards experienced by people affected by a teen pregnancy.
- 2013: working on ways YWCA and its partners can use social media to share information and good ideas on reducing rates of teen pregnancy and supporting young families.

The Nowell Leadership Academy, however, is the most ambitious and long-range undertaking. The idea developed after YWCA Rhode Island took the lead three years ago in researching and developing a statewide plan to reduce teen pregnancy and to support young families. Many agencies were involved, including the State Department of Health, but headquarters were at YWCA Rhode Island. Initially called the Rhode Island Teen Pregnancy Coalition, the group now is simply The Rhode Island Alliance.

Along with statistics such as one out of every 10 births in Rhode Island was to a teenager, and that the state ranked eighth in the nation for highest percentage of repeat teen births, this group also found that in 2009 more than 56 percent of these teen mothers did not have a high school diploma or GED.

On an individual basis, that means a lifelong limit on employment, income and opportunities. Those Rhode Island statistics bear this out: 70 percent of the births to girls age 15 to 19 were in the six communities with the highest child poverty rates.

At the very least, teen childbearing adds to the drain on social services. One study put the cost to Rhode Island taxpayers at the federal, state and local level at some \$35 million – in 2004 dollars. That doesn't begin to quantify issues like self-esteem and the bigger issue of contributing to society at large.

Rather than being overwhelmed with the data, however, YWCA Rhode Island honed in something it already had tackled: Changing that high school graduation rate. Months of planning went into the concept of a school that would offer its students the flexibility of online classes, which they could access from home via school-provided computers, as well as classroom instruction, 15 hours of each per week.

Academic progress would be measured as it is in all public schools, through exams like the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Like its forbear, the PIP program, this new school would offer support with things like health and nutrition workshops, family planning services, preventative health care for infants and young children – and that crucial on-site

day care during classroom sessions.

All those ideas have become real in the Nowell Leadership Academy. The State Department of Education has signaled its approval. A board of directors was organized under co-chairs Dr. Patricia Flanagan, chief of clinical affairs at Hasbro Children's Hospital and an expert on teenage parenting and adolescent medicine, and myself, Deborah L. Perry, CEO of YWCA Rhode Island. Jodi Timpani, formerly a vice principal at Central Falls High School, was named head of school. Two campuses were secured and 160 students enrolled in the school. This past month 23 students graduated and received a high school diploma. The five-year strategic plan for the school envisions doubling the number of physical locations and increasing the student population to 320.

YWCA Rhode Island has given birth to its own baby and now, like any parent, can watch it grow.

Very truly yours,

Deborah

Deborah L. Perry
YWCA Rhode Island
President/Chief Executive Officer

We invite you to help support YWCA Teen Parent Programs.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Enclosed is a donation in the amount of:

___ \$750 will provide four months of childcare

___ \$150 will provide one month of transportation to and from YWCA programming for parent and child

___ \$50 will purchase one case of diapers

___ Other

Thank you for your kindness!

Mail to:
YWCA Rhode Island
514 Blackstone Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895



YWCA Parenting In Progress Graduation 2014

photo by Deborah L. Perry



It has taken 30 years of commitment, community building, advocacy, and financial resources from YWCA members and donors such as Rhode Island Foundation to level the educational playing field for some of Rhode Island's most at risk youth.

And we are not done yet.

1984 - ongoing

Parenting In Progress (PIP)

– Created under the leadership of Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell, YWCA Northern Rhode Island executive director 1973-1993, PIP is a program for teen mothers and contains a comprehensive set of services including GED education/external high school diploma tracts, case management, childcare, transportation, and access to social services.

2009

HIV/AIDS/STD Risk Assessment/Survey

– Conducted by YWCA with pregnant and parenting teens.

2010

Woonsocket Community Dialogues

– YWCA Raising Sexually Healthy Children year-long community conversation series held in Woonsocket.

2011

Rhode Island Alliance

– YWCA Rhode Island serves as the lead support agency for The Rhode Island Alliance (RIA). A collaborative effort of over 60 individuals and organizations, RIA views teen pregnancy and childbearing as a complex issue requiring a comprehensive approach.

2012

Statewide Comprehensive Plan

– RIA completes and launches a statewide comprehensive plan to reduce the rates of teen pregnancy and support young families.

Children of Children Exhibit

– YWCA Rhode Island sponsors Michael Nye's Children of Children Exhibit which is hosted by Rhode Island First Lady Stephanie Chafee and DOH Director Dr. Michael Fine. Over 600 people view the month long exhibit, a powerful installation of 52 portraits and audio-stories of lives touched by early parenting.

2012 - 2013

Barbara Sokoloff Associates (BSA)

– BSA is hired to determine charter school feasibility and becomes principal author of application to create a public school which will reach underserved youth, including those who are pregnant and parenting.

April 2013

Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy

– School becomes first blended virtual model charter school high school in Rhode Island and is granted a 5 year charter to serve 320 high school students by the year 2018.
– YWCA members are majority minority board members of the new charter school thus ensuring long-term fidelity to original intent of school creation and mission.

September 2013

Jodi Timpani

– Hired as Head of School and provides day to day leadership.

2014

RIA Statewide Communications Plan

– RIA plan completed detailing ways partners can use social media to share information and good ideas to reduce the rates of teen pregnancy and support young families.

August 2014

Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy

– First commencement ceremony held.



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