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celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women

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CELEBRATING WOMEN HOLDING OFFICE AND EMERGING LEADERS

she Shines calendar.....

april

Events are listed in the calendar as space allows. Submissions may be e-mailed to info@sheshines.org, faxed to 401-769-7454, or mailed to *She Shines*, c/o YWCA Northern Rhode Island, 514 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895.

● **April 26, A Taste of Wine & Art:** A benefit for programs of Opportunities Unlimited. Light Food Fare, Wine, Silent Auction, and Raffle from 5:30-8pm. For tickets, contact Marilyn Drummond at 401-942-9044. See event ad on page 9.

● **April 28, Dancing with the Stars of Mentoring:** FUN-raiser at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet to benefit RI Mentoring Partnership. For details and tickets, call 401-732-7700.

● **April 29, Branding Your Image:** In this workshop you will learn how to develop a brand that: delivers the message clearly, confirms your credibility, connects your target prospects emotionally, motivates the buyer, and creates customer loyalty. From 10am to noon at Center for Women & Enterprise in Providence. To register, call 401-277-0800.

● **April 30, Cut-A-Thon:** At Elegant Reflections Hair, Nail, and Skincare Salon in Cranston. Proceeds benefit the Autism Project. For details, call 401-464-6040.

● **April 29, Stand Against Racism:** See

may

the event ad below.

● **May 1, Bay View Academy Mass and Brunch:** Honoring Honorable Maureen McKenna Goldberg; Anne Lero; and Mary Faith Harding, RSM. To register, contact Lia Del Sesto at 401-434-0113 x104. See event ad on page 7.

● **May 4, Parents vs. Teen Pregnancy, STIs, Depression, and Dating Violence:** Free presentation by Dr. Michelle Cretella provides strategies and resources for parents to promote optimal teen health. At The Westerly Hospital from 6-7:30pm. To register, call 401-348-2300.

● **May 5 and 6, Women of Excellence Luncheon and Dance Competition:** Benefit events for the Women's Center of Rhode Island. For tickets, contact Barbara Lee at 401-861-2761 x134. See event ad on page 8.

● **May 7, Mother's Day Plant Sale:** A variety of interesting organic plants including: unusual and old fashioned perennial and annual flowers, heirloom vegetables, and culinary herbs. Free tours of the site and family activities. At Casey Farm in Saundertown from 8am-4pm. Contact 401-295-1030.

● **May 7, Corn Planting Moon:** At Tomaquag Museum in Exeter from 1-4pm. Cornplanting ceremony, museum tours, native games and crafts, storytelling, and food/craft vendors. For details, call 401-491-9063.

● **May 12, Metcalf Awards Breakfast**

Ceremony: Begins at 8am. Event showcases journalists and media for excellence in bringing issues of diversity to the public. It benefits Rhode Island for Community & Justice programs. For tickets, contact Dr. Toby Ayers at 401-467-1717.

● **May 13, Women of Colonial Newport, History Walking Tour:** At Museum of Newport History: Brick Market Museum & Shop. From 11am to 12:15pm. Follow a guide in colonial costume as she retraces the lives of the shopkeepers, tavern owners, teachers and more. Will investigate the many entrepreneurial women who once lived and worked in this diverse seaport. For details, call 401-841-8770.

● **May 14, Abracadabra Ball:** Event for Big Sisters of Rhode Island from 6:30pm to midnight at Hyatt Regency Newport. Cocktails, dinner, Magical Circle honorees, silent and live auctions, and dancing to The Felix Brown Band. For tickets, call 401-921-2434. See event ad on page 9.

● **May 18, Women Resource Network Luncheon:** Event will benefit The American Heart Association "Go Red for Women". From 11:30am-1pm at Providence Marriot, 1 Orms Street. Keynote Speaker is Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts. Guest Speaker is Dr. Barbara Roberts. For tickets, e-mail

june

info@wrnri.com.

● **May 28, Multicultural Festival:** At Veterans Memorial Auditorium Arts & Cultural Center in Providence from 1:30-8:15pm and on May 29 at 5pm. A showcase of Rhode Island's artistic talents. Reflects and honors the diverse heritage of our community. Laotian Dancers, Black Storyteller, Chinese Dragon Dancers, Bolivian Dancers, and more. For details, call 401-427-0267.

● **June 9, Advancing Women Entrepreneurs & Women in Business:** At the Crowne Plaza, this Leading Women's Conference will provide valuable strategies to fuel growth and catapult business forward. Keynote speakers, panel discussions, and workshops. Hear from experts, share best practices, network, and access resources. From 8am-3pm. To register, visit www.aweconference.net

● **June 11, Bayside Summer Festival and Craft Fair:** From 10am-2pm at Baptist Church in Warren. Entertainment, pizza, fun for the family, with an appearance by Miss Teen Rhode Island. For details, call 401-212-6116.

● **June 16, Rhode Island's Annual Cancer Summit:** From 7:30am-3pm at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. Designed for healthcare professionals, community members, cancer survivors and caregivers. Free. For details, call 401-222-7899.

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Sunday, July 17, 2011

1pm Shotgun at Foster Country Club

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Support YWCA Northern Rhode Island as a player,
sponsor, or raffle prize donor. The funds support
breast health awareness and outreach programs.



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how to

contribute. *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 *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 *She Shines*.

advertise. Visit sheshines.org to view the advertising media kit. *She Shines* reserves the right to refuse to sell space for any advertisement the staff deems inappropriate for the publication.

receive the magazine. *She Shines* is a free publication mailed to members and friends of YWCA Northern Rhode Island. To be added to the mailing list, send in the subscription form - available online at sheshines.org. The magazine is also available at YWCA Northern Rhode Island and at various special events.

contents

- 2 **calendar**
- 3 **artist canvas:** J. Bela Teixeira
- 4 **from the publisher:** women holding office
- 5 **from the guest editor:** Candice De Los Reyes
- 6 **herstory:** Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill
- 19 **on the rhode:** The Rhode Island Foundation
- 30 **herstory:** YWCA Northern Rhode Island
- 31 **talking points:** eliminating racism, empowering women
- 34 **talking points:** women and politics, RI fact sheet
- 35 **shining with:** Meaghan Lamarre

Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Awards:

- 11 Elizabeth Roberts, Lt. Governor (for leadership)
- 12 Rhoda Perry, State Senator (for peace)
- 13 Arlene Violet, former Attorney General (for justice)
- 14 Lila Sapinsley, former State Senator (for freedom)
- 15 Anastasia Williams, State Representative (for dignity)

Rising Stars:

- 16 Grace Diaz, State Representative
- 17 Deborah Ruggiero, State Representative
- 18 Vimala Phongsavanh, School Committee

Emerging Leaders in the Nonprofit Sector:

- 20 Elaine Farber Budish
- 21 Liz Colón
- 22 Michelle DePlante
- 23 Megan Fischer
- 24 Christina Garcia
- 25 Mary Helldorfer-Cooney
- 26 Karen Marshall
- 27 Rachel Panitch
- 28 Molly Soum
- 29 Amy Stein

insert:
YWCA Northern Rhode Island
spring III programs

artist canvas



untitled for women who are *Curious & Articulate*
oil on canvas

J. Bela Teixeira

cover artist

Curious & Articulate explores the personal and public spaces, in the stillness of faces. Skilled in paint, photography, and graphic design, the artist brings free will and intention together with natural, humanist, principles, the creative process is transformed into a blueprint for success. The creative process for a painting, as with public policy, humanities projects, and educational programs begins in similar fashion with ideas, seeing and envisioning the possibilities . . . reflects the preparation, practice, cooperation, challenge and passion that translate into experience . . . and becomes the beloved community.

The work that Teixeira does is driven by the belief that she is a spiritual being having a human experience. Empowered, curious, and articulate, the artist envisions, perseveres, and builds toward a more just, healthier, inclusive and supportive community.

Teixeira is presently employed by the Urban League of Rhode Island; and for more than a decade, she served as the executive director of Rhode Island Black Heritage Society immersed in public history, art and culture. The artist earned a BFA from Rhode Island College; where she is pursuing her MSW at the School of Social Work. You may reach the artist at bela.tcp@gmail.com.

Photo courtesy of Teixeira.



celebrating women holding office

from the publisher

a vehicle for women

YWCA Northern Rhode Island creates awareness of social and political issues affecting women



YWCA Northern Rhode Island is committed to supporting women who hold office, women planning to run for office or becoming involved in campaigns, and encouraging women to become more involved in the electoral process.

As part of this effort, YWCA held its third WHO (Women Holding Office) Celebration on Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at Bryant University from 6-8pm. The event was hosted by Kati Machtley, Director, The Women's Summit® at Bryant University.

Five women were honored as the first recipients of the Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Award – Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, Senator Rhoda Perry, former Attorney General Arlene Violet, former Senator Lila Sapinsley, and Representative Anastasia Williams.

Three women were recognized as rising political stars – Representative Grace Diaz, Representative Deborah Ruggiero, and Woonsocket School Committee Member Vimala Phongsavanh. And all elected women in attendance were recognized for their service to our community.

Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill – youngest of 13 children of a former Woonsocket city councilman – became Rhode Island's first female legislator. Other state and national titles would follow including Deputy Senate Floor Leader and Democratic National Committeewoman.

The event emcee was Reza Corinne Clifton. The event committee included Joyce Dolbec, Meghan Grady, Charlene Kneath, Sandy Riojas, and Toby Simon. Thank

you to Amy Stein for helping to coordinate the event and to all those involved in the Women Holding Office Celebration including our event sponsors acknowledged on pages 7-10. Finally, thank you to Lisa Piscatelli, YWCA communications director extraordinaire.

A special thank you to Candice De Los Reyes. To coincide with the Women Holding Office Celebration, she participated as guest editor in this spring edition. Mentees in The Rhode Island Foundation's Emerging Leaders Program contributed articles reflecting their definition of leadership and how they enact their power in the world.

Since 1923, YWCA Northern Rhode Island has been a vehicle for women to come together to spearhead local, national, and international efforts for peace, justice, freedom, and dignity. Women Holding Office and *She Shines* magazine are examples demonstrating YWCA's commitment to supporting women's rights, opposing racism, and creating a greater public awareness of the social and political issues affecting women.

Very truly yours,

Deborah

Deborah L. Perry
executive director, YWCA Northern Rhode Island
publisher, *She Shines* magazine

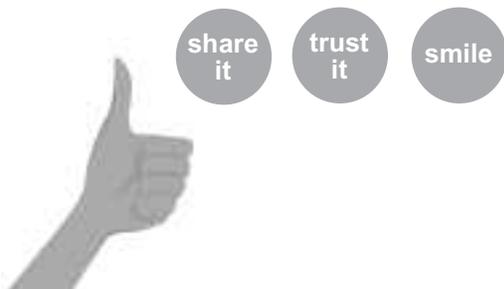
thumbs up

from the editor

Annually, *She Shines* includes a guest editor in order to increase the diversity of voices inside the publication. For Spring, our focus is on female leadership. Thus we called upon The Rhode Island Foundation's Candice De Los Reyes. She started their Nonprofit Emerging Leaders Program. She also connected with cover artist, J. Bela Teixeira. The articles and art that De Los Reyes highlights, compliment the articles written by the Women Holding Office honorees. Readers, your comments on leadership and *She Shines* are welcome. E-mail, info@sheshines.org.

Share it. Trust it. Smile.

Lisa Piscatelli, editor



Freelance editor, media producer, music DJ, and YWCA Women Holding Office emcee, Reza Corinne Clifton, appointed artistic director of Roots Café and Providence Inner City Arts.



Rhode Island LISC executive director and YWCA Woman of Achievement Barbara Fields appointed as HUD Regional Administrator.

express yourself

For details on how to contribute, submit cover art, advertise, or receive *She Shines* magazine, see page 3.





looking toward the future

Candice De Los Reyes creates opportunities for young leaders to emerge

As a child, I was fortunate to benefit from the nonprofit organizations in my community. Although I didn't realize then that the community centers that were a second home to me were nonprofits, I was determined to be involved in community-focused work as an adult. I attribute much of my success to having the support of various nonprofits as a young person. Working in the nonprofit sector is my way of staying connected to the movement for a more equitable society. The Rhode Island nonprofit sector provides an important safety net for our community. Like the rest of the sector nationwide, however, our state's nonprofits need strong leaders to drive these organizations into the future. There is a great deal of literature about the sector that presents a universal truth: in the next decade we will witness a mass exodus of Baby Boomer executive directors, and there is a critical need for the next generation of leaders to fill that gap. And yet, a key characteristic of the next generation (Gen X and Y) is that they strongly value

shared leadership and collaboration over the traditional executive director model. In fact, only one out of four emerging leaders in the nonprofit sector aspires to be an executive director. Where does that leave our sector? Our community? How does Rhode Island fit into this puzzle?

With the goal of developing the next generation of leaders for the state's nonprofit sector, I started the Nonprofit Emerging Leaders Program in collaboration with Jill Pfitzenmayer at The Rhode Island Foundation. The Foundation works in many ways to strengthen the nonprofit sector and I am grateful that the organization has invested significantly in the Emerging Leaders Program to carry that work into the future. A critical component of the program involves mentoring. 2010 was our inaugural year, where 13 emerging leaders working in Rhode Island's nonprofit organizations received mentoring from seasoned executive directors for 12 months. I had the great opportunity to work with the ten young women profiled in this issue, who

demonstrated their capacity for leadership now and in the future. Each in her own way has already made a significant impact in our community. ❖❖❖

Candice De Los Reyes is the program associate for the Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation. She joined the Foundation in September 2008, and spearheaded the effort to start the Nonprofit Emerging Leaders Program in 2009. Previously coordinator of the teen center at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center and case manager for pregnant and parenting teenage girls at a local community action program, she has a passion for empowering youth and has informally mentored many teenagers over the years. De Los Reyes graduated from URI with a B.A. in Sociology and will graduate with a Master's of Public Administration in May. She lives in Providence, is a fanatic chocolate eater, and loves competitive games like Scrabble and Cranium. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*

Emerging Leaders' articles begin on page 19.



Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill

Rhode Island's first female legislator

Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill – youngest of 13 children of a former Woonsocket city councilman – became Rhode Island's first female legislator. Other state and national titles would follow including Deputy Senate Floor Leader and Democratic National Committeewoman.

At the 3rd annual Women Holding Office Celebration on April 5, 2011, five women were honored as the first recipients of the Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Award – Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, Senator Rhoda Perry, former Attorney General Arlene Violet, former Senator Lila Sapinsley, and Representative Anastasia Williams. ❖❖❖

Women Holding Office articles begin on page 11.

*Image likeness from a photo of Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill:
Katherine Gregg, "Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill, A starring role at the
State House", The Providence Journal-Bulletin, March 1994.
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3rd annual Women Holding Office

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McKenna Goldberg*



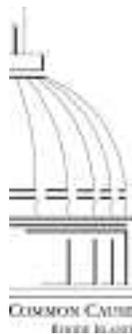
Anne Lero



*Mary Faith
Harding, RSM*

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Congratulations to the recipients of the Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Award

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Senator Rhoda Perry

Representative Anastasia Williams

Arlene Violet

Lila Sapinsley

Congratulations also to Rising Political Stars

Representative Grace Diaz

Representative Deborah Ruggiero and

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You are well deserving of these honors for your many
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Photo by the Friends of United LI Inc.

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**Women of Excellence Awards Luncheon
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Friday, May 6, 2011

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Providence Marriott, 1 Orms St.

Tickets: \$75 per person

Table of Ten: \$700



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Rhodes on the Pawtuxet

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Cocktails ~ Dinner
Big Sisters New "Magical Circle" Honorees
Silent & Live Auctions
Dancing to The Felix Brown Band

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RI NOW Supports Women Holding Office!



RI NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in all aspects of public and private life without experiencing barriers based on gender.

To learn more about RI NOW please visit our website at www.ri-now.org.

RI NOW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that exists to support the rights of women and girls in our state. RI NOW also has a political action committee (RI NOW PAC) that works to elect progressive women and other candidates to state and local offices. For more information, and to donate, please visit www.ri-now.org.

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Financial Advisor
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Joanne Daly works closely with her clients to develop long-term, comprehensive wealth planning strategies to help them pursue their financial goals. Her practice focuses on retirement planning, estate planning and educational funding strategies. She serves the investment needs of individuals, especially women, who are managing challenging transitions—including divorce, widowhood, change of employment and starting a new business. Joanne has more than 20 years of combined CPA and wealth planning experience. Joanne is a graduate of Bryant University, where she received her M.S. in taxation. Joanne is a past recipient of the YWCA "Woman of Achievement" Award for helping women achieve financial empowerment and is a frequent guest speaker for women's groups and hosts educational seminars. Joanne is also on the financial planning committee of the RI Society of CPAs and the Past President of the American Society of Women Accountants-RI chapter. She is also an active volunteer in other organizations, including the Rotary Club of Providence, South Kingstown Education Foundation, South County Hospital Professional Advisors Group, RI Community Food Bank and the GFWC. Contact Joanne to learn more or to attend a seminar.

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Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Award
for leadership



Elizabeth Roberts

Lieutenant Governor

Leadership is breaking down barriers and taking on roles in business, politics, biotech, healthcare, and many other fields in order to rebuild Rhode Island's economy. Leadership is leading by example and contributing to our community by paving the way for future young women who aspire to make a difference. As women, we often have to work twice as hard to compete, even harder to succeed. It is important that we work together and support each other as we help shape our communities through our hard work.

As a passionate advocate of quality, affordable healthcare for all families, I joined the Rhode Island State Senate in 1997, serving until 2007. As a co-chair of the Permanent Joint Committee on Healthcare Oversight, I led the fight to reform the state's largest healthcare insurer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield. My leadership and efforts helped refocus the non-profit's mission to provide affordable healthcare and increase accountability to the public that Blue Cross serves. I additionally served as the

Chairwoman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, which helped create the Office of Health Insurance Commissioner to oversee insurance companies and healthcare costs. In 2007, I made Rhode Island history by becoming the state's first female Lieutenant Governor. I am currently the chair of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council, the Small Business Advocacy Council, and the Emergency Management Advisory Council. Most importantly, I am more than ever determined to fight for healthcare reform. Starting in 2007, I launched Mission Healthy RI that laid the groundwork for healthcare reform in Rhode Island. After the passage of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, I created the Healthy RI Task Force in order to determine how best to implement national healthcare reform in Rhode Island. In January 2011, Governor Lincoln Chafee made healthcare reform a priority by signing into executive order the Rhode Island Healthcare Reform Commission. I am now serving as Chair. ❖❖❖



Rhoda Perry

State Senator

How do you define leadership? Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill herself is an outstanding example of leadership. A suffragist and vigorous campaigner, teacher, and silent film actress, this pioneer became the first woman elected to the General Assembly in Rhode Island after ratification of the 19th amendment. Conscious of her role as the Legislature's first woman, she pledged herself to support women's causes and to fight for legislation that women's organizations promoted. I am honored to be presented an award that bears her namesake.

I am certain that Ms. O'Neill recognized the foundation of leadership rests in one's ability to listen and focus on what others say, and to find the synergy between their perspectives and one's own causes. This ability is essential in enabling me as a legislator to lead more effectively and accomplish many of my objectives. Leadership is defined by this capacity to focus on each viewpoint and incorporate many perspectives synergistically to achieve progress.

How do you enact your power in the world? For me as a legislator, "power" is defined as the enactment of my policy

goals, which include initiatives to improve health care affordability and accessibility, and ensuring the provision of a sufficient safety net for our most vulnerable populations.

As the most liberal legislator in the Senate for many a year, I have succeeded in seeing many pieces of legislation through to enactment into law. While the bills I work on aren't the type that tend to pass on a unanimous 38-0 vote, I have nevertheless achieved more success than many of my colleagues in gaining passage of legislation. This is accomplished by considering the points of view of others, choosing opportune times to advance bills, and taking care not to alienate too many people. It comes from working together with my colleagues and all parties, persistence, and, often, patience.

There is an old saying, "The cock croweth but the hen delivereth the goods." I believe that my own attention to the many perspectives of others has enabled me to "delivereth the goods" through the passage of legislation dear to my own heart, mainly policy bills that protect the poor, women and children, and improve access to quality health care. ❖❖❖



Arlene Violet

former Attorney General

All of us have choices. Our decisions either make us a change agent or a changed agent; we either mold life or we allow life to mold us into its image and likeness. A pacesetter understands the words of Henry Kissinger that a leader directs where public policy ought to go. The task isn't to be a seismograph to determine public sentiment and vote that way but to get people from where they are to where they have to be.

To be a leader means to live your passion. The famous playwright, Paddy Chayefsky, has a scene in a play, where God appears to a very portly, Gideon and asks him to lead the chosen people. Gideon demurs, telling God that he ought to pick Aaron to lead since he is a great athlete so the men, at least, would follow him, not a dumpy guy like Gideon. God remains adamant. "How about Ishmael?" Gideon suggests, "He's handsome so a lot of the women would follow him. No lady finds me attractive", he protests. God replies, "No Gideon, I have chosen you because you are a man of a passion and only a man of passion ever sees anything through to the end".

I believe that to the core of my being. Only a man of passion, a woman of passion, ever sees anything through to the end. And, it doesn't even matter what you look like. You get there. ❖❖❖



Lila Sapinsley

former State Senator

Leaders rise when there is a problem to overcome and 50 years ago when I woke up and realized that women were being shortchanged there were very few women leaders. We knew of the injustices: Men ran everything. Women, “the weaker sex”, were expected to marry, stay at home and raise children. This was acceptable for some women, but for others it was unattainable or intolerable.

Leadership meant calling attention to these injustices and following up with action. The early leaders of the Women’s movement, and I consider myself one, sought complete financial and legal control of our lives and access to the same educational, political and economic opportunities as men. We demonstrated that women could be doctors, lawyers, professors, construction workers and politicians and darn good ones too. We demanded, we debated, we lobbied. We tried not to be confrontational, although sometimes it was necessary.

In my case, I was able to change not only laws, but attitudes as well. But my greatest accomplishments were in encouraging other women to follow me into political life. My proudest moments are when a successful, fulfilled woman says to me, “Your example gave me the courage to pursue a new life.”



Vimala Phongsavanh

Woonsocket School Committee Member

Leaders can inspire others to do more than they believe they could ever do; it's seeing a problem and having the vision and passion to change the status quo.

In my 2009 campaign for School Committee, I saw that the Southeast Asian community primarily living in the Fairmount section of Woonsocket was made up of the most apathetic voters in the City. I wanted to change that. I went door-to-door in Fairmount and registered over 100 new voters. On Election Day, a newly-registered voter came up to me and said "I've been living in this country for 30 years and I never voted before, but today I voted for you." At the end of that same day, I won the final position by 61 votes. The only polling place I outright won was in the Fairmount community.

A leader in his day, John Quincy Adams said: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Although the past two years have been anything but easy, leadership is having the ability to make others feel that everything is going to be alright. I hope my actions and my work continue to represent those with no voice to empower themselves to make their voices heard in the political spectrum and to become leaders.

I got into politics with the simple dream of changing the world one person at a time. In a time where so many people need inspiration, I hope that my actions inspire communities of people to get involved and make a difference. ✨

emerging leaders network

facilitated by The Rhode Island Foundation



Photos clockwise from top: Miranda O'Hayer from RI Campus Compact and Candice De Los Reyes from The Rhode Island Foundation. Jessica David and Shonté McDowel, both from The Rhode Island Foundation. Betty Clinton from Trinity Restoration, Inc.; Christy Islas from RI Modern Music Project; and Gretchen Heath from Save the Bay. Photos by Agapao Productions.

Networking event of the Nonprofit Emerging Leaders Program, held on February 17, 2011 at The Salon at 57 Eddy Street, Providence. Events like this are held throughout the year to give emerging leaders working in the nonprofit sector a chance to informally meet and expand their professional networks and follow them into the future.

using the elements of leadership

Elaine Farber Budish is making the world a better place



While there are many ways to be a leader, there are four elements of great leadership that really stand out to me. First, leaders must be able to envision a better world and act to make that vision a reality. It is this firm belief in their vision – and their actions in support of their vision – that differentiates leaders from dreamers. Second, I believe in leading by example. As Gandhi said, we need to be the change we wish to see in the world. By showing that something can be done, leaders inspire others to make changes in their communities and in the world. Third, I believe that great leaders not only respect and value the roles we all play in our communities, but also constantly learn from the thoughts, reactions and ideas of others. Lastly, I believe that positive change happens when people work together towards a common goal and that leadership is most effective when it's shared.

I try to be the change I want to see in the world, both in my personal and my professional interactions. I work in education policy and I feel very lucky to have the opportunity to go to work every day knowing that what I do makes the world a better place and improves the lives of others, particularly for those who have the fewest opportunities. My favorite professional leadership roles involve facilitating conversations between diverse stakeholders to reach consensus on solving a problem and leading project teams to develop creative and effective solutions to difficult policy and systems questions. When I'm not working, I volunteer as a member of the Providence/Cranston Youth Council (part of the local Workforce Investment Board), a member of the Rhode Island After-School Plus Alliance Public Policy Committee, through my neighborhood association in Providence, at my local community garden, and as a mentor for a City Year corps member. ❖❖❖

Elaine Farber Budish is an avid policy junky for all things related to children, families, education, and improving social and economic equity of opportunity for all people. She came to Rhode Island for college and decided to stay after graduation (except for a brief stint back in New Jersey – her home state – for graduate school, where she earned her master's degree in public policy). Between college and graduate school, she worked at an organization that runs group homes for teenage boys, coordinating a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant program. After returning to Rhode Island with her master's degree, Budish was a research analyst at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, managing their education and juvenile justice portfolios and co-coordinating the annual Factbook publication. She is currently a senior project manager at UPD Consulting (an education management consulting firm), supporting the Rhode Island Department of Education in their implementation of the federal Race to the Top grant. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*



challenging injustices

Liz Colón is spearheading the fight against lead poisoning

The past year has been very interesting for me. Coming into the Emerging Leaders Program, I wasn't quite sure what I wanted or needed, but finally I have realized where I want to go.

It was through my involvement as a parent that I stumbled into a career where I have thrived for the last 14 years. My journey began with a nurse at Hasbro Children's Hospital who put me in touch with an organization out of Boston focused on quality care standards for children and families affected by environmental lead hazards, here in Rhode Island. I began to volunteer. From there, I became involved with an initiative to design a comprehensive one-stop service for families with lead poisoned children. I was able to provide valuable information from an affected family's point of view and to help shape the proposed Center in a way that would be most responsive to the needs of families. In 1997, I began to create opportunities for myself where there were none

before, by starting and maintaining a parent-led advocacy group to change public policy to prevent lead poisoning and protect children.

I have accomplished a great deal. I have led initiatives to change injustice. I have lobbied and helped to lead a team of community leaders in passing what is considered landmark legislation in Rhode Island. I have been locally and nationally recognized for the work I have done and continue to do, including several notices of achievement from congressmen and senators, an Advocacy Award in 2006 from the Rhode Island Department of Health, and an award from the EPA for my work organizing parents. In addition, I have also found myself in quite a few "once in a lifetime" opportunities. My family and I were featured in the preface of President Clinton's Task Force Strategy for Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning in 2000, and Newsweek Magazine in 2003. In 2008, I had the pleasure of working as an advisor on the Lead Away

segment for Sesame Street Workshop. It was great to be able to work on an issue for which I have so much passion and with a program that I enjoyed as a child, as well as with my children.

Overall, I believe that Alan Keith said it best – "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen." ✨

Liz Colón is the director of training & outreach at the Childhood Lead Action Project. She is a life-long resident of Providence, where she and her husband raise their five children, including a foster child with autism. Family has always been her driving force. She made her way into advocacy after her second child was hospitalized for lead poisoning in their family home. Her experience, which would have been any parent's nightmare, quickly turned into her calling. After 14 years in this field, she is considered one of the state's experts on this issue and works tirelessly to protect children from the harmful impact of lead poisoning. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*

beyond borders

Michelle DePlante uses her passion for leadership to break barriers



In my eyes, the best leaders are informed and committed individuals who through their daily actions represent community values and inspire others. The best leaders will recognize the already existing capacities of their community and mobilize individuals to pool their knowledge, experiences and resources. Effective leaders will motivate others to think outside of the box and share best practices to ensure that past setbacks do not become future roadblocks for a better tomorrow. Leadership means serving others, and empowering them through partnerships that are established on the grounds of equality and mutual respect for all.

The day I began in the nonprofit sector I realized I became accountable to someone other than myself, to something larger than myself. On that day, I became accountable to my community and all the possibilities for the future. Starting that day, my job was to show up, ready and willing to take on anything and everything that may arise along the way. While still at the beginning, the journey so far has been amazing. My job is more than my job, it is my passion – it feeds my soul. I look forward to continuing along the journey, taking on responsibility and possibility, all the while knowing that I am part of something greater.

During my time at International Institute of Rhode Island, I led and organized the first annual Beyond Borders conference that brought together over 25 agencies and 100 participants. I have also formalized the internship program in order to educate and mentor younger future leaders. I am grateful for the chance to educate at all – to provide information to others that will empower them, or to bring awareness so that individuals may understand another person's reality.

At the end of the day, I am grateful for the chance to do anything at all, and am always seeking opportunities for personal and professional development. Every situation, every experience, and every day, is a chance for me to demonstrate the knowledge I have acquired and to discover how much more I have to learn and grow. There is still plenty to be accomplished, and against all odds, I am hopeful that the best is yet to come. ❄️

Michelle DePlante is the legal education and community outreach coordinator at the International Institute of Rhode Island. On a daily basis, she works to develop a comprehensive network of resources within the foreign-born community and educates the community on various immigration related topics in order to foster a more sophisticated understanding of immigration laws, policies, and issues that the foreign-born face in the United States. As the daughter of a Cuban immigrant, DePlante feels passionately about the empowerment of immigrants and firmly believes that our common life struggles transcend our barriers of difference. She graduated from Providence College in 2008 with a degree in Global Studies and minors in Spanish and Business Studies. DePlante returns to Providence College as a community faculty member in the Global Studies and Feinstein Center for Public and Community Service departments. She is a board member for Latino Dollars for Scholars and a founding member of the Coalition of Advocates for Student Opportunities. DePlante also serves as the community relations liaison for Rhode Island Teaching Fellows.

Photo by Agapao Productions.



exhibiting leadership

Megan Fischer is advocating self-directed play for children

I have been fortunate to work for and with a number of dynamic and successful leaders in my career – leaders by virtue of position, and those not necessarily in a leadership role but who have made a mark by their attitude and approach. I have actively learned from the examples of these strong individuals, and this collected wisdom is the foundation of my own leadership philosophy:

- Share leadership. Step back, let others step up, and empower them to make decisions and solve problems.
- Keep an open mind. Welcome new ideas and perspectives.
- Listen well. Even to the hard things. Ensure that others have space to speak up and be heard.
- Question everything. Avoid assumptions and don't be swayed by how it's always been done.
- Embrace uncertainty. See and seize unexpected opportunities. Don't be afraid if the process gets messy.
- Balance breadth and depth. Keep the big picture in mind and don't get lost in the details.
- Work collaboratively. Get the right people around

the table. Invite and make room for unlikely players.

- Cultivate community. Foster an atmosphere of creativity and ongoing learning – and a shared sense of purpose.
- Guard your mission. Hold tight to your core values but know when and where you can let go.
- Think and dream big. Above all, have a shared vision.

These ideas about leadership have informed my work – in many different capacities – at Providence Children's Museum for the past seven years.

Recently, I have led the Museum in communicating a consistent mission-driven message about the critical importance of unstructured, self-directed play for children's healthy development. I have expanded the Museum's reach and raised awareness about play through innovative social media, outreach and advocacy efforts, including our PlayWatch discussion listserv (www.playwatch.org) and community film screenings and conversations.

With my guidance, the Museum has built relationships with leading play advocates, been positioned as an important resource for children's play and learn-

ing, and earned the Leaders in Innovation Award from the New England Museum Association. I have also positioned myself as an emerging leader in the field. With the adoption of a new strategic plan this winter, the Museum has made play advocacy a major programmatic objective for the next several years and it is my charge to implement a cohesive public awareness campaign, collaborating with other organizations and key individuals.

And of course I'll continue learning from those around me every step of the way. ✨

Megan Fischer is the director of communications and marketing at Providence Children's Museum, where she is responsible for the creation and dissemination of Museum messaging and external communications – managing the website, blog, social media and email marketing; writing and editing the Museum's print materials; and promoting community outreach and advocacy efforts. She joined the Museum staff in 2004 and has a dual B.A. in sociology and culture and social issues from the University of Georgia and a master's in museum studies from Brown University. She also serves on the board of directors for Everett Arts.

Photo by Agapao Productions.

emerging leader

in her words



safety “net”

Christina Garcia provides leadership to keep teens informed while online

I believe effective leadership is the process of integrating the beliefs and needs of others to promote positive social change. Leadership is a process because a leader is continuously growing and learning from others. Trust is a fundamental component to this process – people must trust their leaders to take their narratives and respond, advocate, and enforce changes on their behalf. Respectful relationships are the building blocks to establishing trust. It is important to really listen to others, be empathetic, kind, and nonjudgmental. A good leader treats people as their most valuable resource. Leadership is ultimately listening to learn how to meet the needs of others and then empowering them to take action and be a part of the solution.

Through my community outreach, I meet peo-

ple from all walks of life and their stories teach me lessons that no textbook can. When I listen to teens, parents, and caregivers, I concentrate on their needs and think of ways I can empower them to come up with their own solutions. I developed a parent curriculum, Passport 2 Social Media, to teach parents and caregivers the skills to protect their teens from digital abuse. Passport 2 Social Media equips hundreds of Rhode Island parents and caregivers with the tools to ensure the teens in their lives have healthy relationships online and off-line. I also helped develop, www.hkupwithrespect.com, a safe online forum that highlights the voices of young people. It is a place they can be honest, learn from their peers, and take initiative to promote healthy relationships. ❖❖❖

Christina Garcia started her work in the nonprofit sector when a good friend insisted she apply to Sojourner House for a restraining order advocate position. In the interview her enthusiasm to make a positive impact in her community and eagerness to learn prevailed and she got the job with no prior experience in direct services. As a restraining order advocate for two years, Garcia learned empowering victims to become survivors was her true passion. When Sojourner House was awarded a grant to prevent Teen Dating Violence, she knew this was her opportunity to help prevent the cases she saw at the courthouse. Currently, as the prevention specialist for Start Strong Rhode Island, she leads Passport 2 Social Media, a parent education program and oversees the implementation of the Fourth R, a school-based health curriculum. Garcia lives in the Pawtucket area with Mugsy, the most handsome pug you will ever see.

Photo by Agapao Productions.

a positive role model

Mary Helldorfer-Cooney leads by example, passing on her knowledge and skills



To me, leadership is the ability to work with various people towards a common goal. My husband and I recently took “Sara”*, a young woman with special needs, into our home. While we provide her with food and shelter, I like to think that we are also providing her with the life skills she will need to one day live independently, which is her personal goal. On a typical day, I may help Sara with daily tasks such as picking out an appropriate “date-night” outfit, or showing her how to sort and wash laundry. Other days I may work with her on her soft skills, such as when to say “no”, or in some cases, on how to be more flexible in relationships with teachers and friends. While life skills are not innate, they are necessary.

Living with Sara has taught me to notice the layers of learning that are needed for a productive, harmonious life. Skills that I have learned from my mother, teachers, colleagues and friends that I take for granted in my daily life are a struggle for someone who was not cared for appropriately by her own family. In my life, there have been many “leaders” who have helped me get to where I am today. All of my accomplishments can be tied to some sort of training (informal or formal) that I have received from others. The leaders that I admire most are people who would not call themselves by that name, but who lead by example and who model positive behaviors and actions.

I hope that my work with Sara will lead her to a place that she wants to be, independent and in a home of her own. ❄️

* Name has been changed.

Mary Helldorfer-Cooney is the education director at Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center in Providence. She holds a master’s degree in Spanish and TESOL Education from New York University. Before coming to Rhode Island, Helldorfer-Cooney worked as the assistant director of the Good Shepherd Volunteers in New York, NY. She also served with the Colorado Vincentian Volunteers as an ESL teacher and neighborhood organizer. She spent a year working at the United Nations on issues of education, poverty eradication, and the status of women. Helldorfer-Cooney is an avid reader, enjoys yoga, cooking and the beach. She lives in North Kingstown with her husband, infant daughter, and Sara. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*

rising to the challenge

Karen Marshall assumes leadership with integrity, sincerity and candor



For the first few decades of my life, I adamantly brushed away each leadership opportunity offered to me. When I was voted upon or asked by friends, teachers, coaches and employers to step up and lead my peers, they often became perplexed when I replied, “No, thank you.” To me, the idea seemed preposterous. Having been the baby of my family and the only girl, I was certain I was not the type of person others would want leading them. What did I know, I thought, about getting people to listen to me? More importantly, I did not want to fail my peers and keep them from their goals. Each time I was asked, I tried to plead my case. I was usually not very convincing and eventually I would, grudgingly and anxiously, assume the leadership position.

A few years into my professional career, I started researching leadership and my attitude began to change. I recognized that I had always sought out great leaders and mentors, people who were looked up to for their integrity, sincerity, candor, penchant for consensus building, imagination and vision. They were the people I wanted to learn from and aimed to be like. The moment I was told others chose me because they saw I had these traits, I was both surprised and humbled. As I began to understand more about leadership and gained experience in the professional world, I learned to use these characteristics to advance my organizations. I now work with colleagues to agree upon concrete goals, create action plans, communicate and coordinate responsibilities and celebrate the smaller successes as we make our way to achieving the main objective.

My concept of leadership drives me and reminds me that great leadership is not about the abilities of one person but rather empowering individuals to reach their fullest potential. Coincidentally, my greatest sense of achievement comes in the moment when I catch myself using the capabilities that I thought I didn’t have. ❖❖❖

Karen C. Marshall is coordinator of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program at the State of Rhode Island Office of Housing and Community Development with responsibility for the planning, coordination, disbursement and reporting of Rhode Island’s \$24 million Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program. Developed in reaction to the national housing crisis, the program aims to promote the responsible and sustainable redevelopment of foreclosed or vacant properties in focused areas around Rhode Island. Prior to her current position, Marshall worked as the development coordinator for Preserve Rhode Island, the statewide nonprofit for historic preservation. In her youth, Marshall put in eleven years of hard time in the restaurant business. She remains most proud of those years and chooses to not have them expunged from her permanent record.

Photo by Agapao Productions.



leading in harmony

Rachel Panitch inspires others through her music

Good leadership requires noticing things. We know that leaders have to acknowledge problems and things that need to be fixed, but good leaders must notice what's working well, too. I have worked at my best with leaders who were willing to recognize my work not only publicly, but more importantly, in a quiet, personal way.

I judge my own leadership by how much those around me are taking on leadership challenges, themselves. How am I enabling my colleagues and my students to feel comfortable taking chances they had never before attempted? How am I helping to shape and spark good things around me without being in total control of them? How can I help by stepping back and noticing who else is ready to step forward?

In the past when I've told one of my students that they are going to be the leader, there's been an assumption that being the leader means telling the other students what to do. That being a leader means being the one in control.

But when I ask one of my students to lead a fiddle tune, they

know that all they need to do is start playing and the others will join in. They must know the music well, for sure, but there's no way they will be in total control of the sound. They'll need to listen intently to the others playing the tune in order to keep the group together.

Good leadership means noticing and enabling the good leadership of others. I hope that my students' musical leadership will translate many times over to other aspects of their lives as young leaders. ❖❖❖

Rachel Panitch lives in Pawtucket and serves as fiddler-in-residence and director at the Rhode Island Fiddle Project based in the Woodlawn neighborhood of Pawtucket. She is also a resident musician/administrator at Community MusicWorks in Providence, where she completed an Urban Musical Fellowship in 2009. Panitch is a contra dance fiddler with bands The Whatnots and Pizzazz, and has played fiddle as Lucinda Bourbon with bluegrass band The Bourbon Boys. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*

empowering others

Molly Soum connects people with resources and opportunities



Leadership is practiced by those who lead by example and teach others how to become involved in meeting the needs of their communities. Additionally, good leaders serve as role models for others and command respect through their actions and good deeds. A leader is someone who goes the extra mile to sacrifice time, energy and most of the time, monetary support to the group to which he or she belongs. I have done this and feel quite fortunate to be in a position to reach out and support the community. Good leaders have the courage of their convictions and are fearless in standing up for what is right.

As a leader, I have done things that I wouldn't normally do to ensure opportunities for my people who came to this country under very trying circumstances. As a former refugee, I understand that many people come to the United States unfamiliar with systems of government, so I work hard to advocate for others even when the language barrier is a challenge. I educate and encourage others to step up and defend their rights even when they are afraid. Many fear retribution because we would be killed if we spoke up to our government back home.

I enact my power by encouraging others to be leaders. An important part of leadership is understanding the need to develop the next generation of leaders. Good leaders listen just as well as they speak and have the patience to understand what people are truly saying. I also try to educate those involved in policy development and government departments like the INS, SSA, DHS, and the business and education sectors about the genocide that killed two million people as a result of the American and Vietnam War during 1975-1979. Sharing the truth, as painful as it is, serves as a reminder of the struggle that my people have endured as a result of being forced from their country into a new, and often times, hostile US community.

Finally, good leaders must provide hope and encouragement to people that have doubts about their humanity and low esteem as the result of the mistreatment they may have received. Connecting people who come from places of oppression and violence with resources and opportunities that are available to them in America is something that is central to my leadership.

I am very grateful for the support from my mother Chum Prom, Universe, Buddha-God, family, mentors, counselors, friends, and teachers that have helped me develop my skills and capability to be the person that I am today. Their positive messages and guidance really helped me to become a leader. ✨

Molly Soum was born in Cambodia. From ages 5-9, she witnessed genocide for four long years. From there, she lived in five different refugee camps in Thailand. Soum came to America as a refugee and has been involved in the community as an advocate for the Southeast Asian community and beyond since 1996. She has received numerous community awards. She currently works as a transition specialist at the Genesis Center and was previously employed at Rhode Island Department of Human Services as community liaison from 1998-2008. Soum was the co-founder of PRysm (Providence Youth Student Movement) and the former president of The Cambodian Society of RI. In 2004, she received a bachelor's degree in Social Work and a master's in science from Springfield College School of Human Services. Soum is the founder and president of the Cambodia Youth Development Academy. *Photo by Agapao Productions.*



leading by example

Amy Stein is making a difference in the world

My concept of leadership is derived from many different activities in my personal and professional life. I am a teacher, a leader in community nonprofits, and an active member of my synagogue and Jewish community. I am inspired by the words of noted American businessman Harold S. Geneen, who said, “Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.”

I believe in the importance of leading by example, and I seek to empower others to succeed. Whether I am supervising teachers, working with families, or participating in community programs, I seek to listen carefully, work hard, and pay close attention to personal needs. I always treat others with respect and never ask others to do what I wouldn’t do myself. A good leader is accessible, flexible, and creative.

For me, effective leadership is derived from knowledge. Personally, I am always seeking out opportunities to learn and

grow, and I try to provide others with the resources and information that they need to succeed. Great leaders ask good questions of themselves and enable those that they lead to find answers to their questions.

In addition to my professional and volunteer work, I am proud to be a wife and mother. As I watch my children grow, I am inspired and excited by their self-confidence, sensitivity, and wonderful imaginations. These are the greatest qualities of all that a leader can have: to have an impact beyond your own actions and to enable others to make a difference in the world. ❖❖❖

Amy B. Stein is a resident of Warwick. She teaches kindergarten in the religious school at Temple Sinai of Cranston, volunteers as part of the Cedar Hill School PTO, and is working on projects for RIPIN and YWCA Northern Rhode Island. She has held positions at several Jewish agencies in Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Photo by Agapao Productions.



YWCA Northern Rhode Island at 514 Blackstone Street in Woonsocket, circa 1970's.
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eliminating racism, empowering women

YWCA creates awareness of the social and political issues affecting women

YWCA is the oldest and largest women's movement in the nation. Members have a voice, strong and united, supporting women's rights, opposing racism, creating greater public awareness of social and political issues affecting women: equity, economic security, child care, issues affecting youth, women's health and peace.

There are many approaches employed by YWCAs nationwide to carry out our bold, dual-pronged mission of eliminating racism and empowering women, but two very specific priorities are present in all local Associations: our YWCA Hallmarks of Racial Justice and Women's Economic Advancement. These are the common threads that unite YWCAs across the country. They reflect our strategic purpose. They serve as a YWCA distinction.

YWCA Hallmark Initiatives are designed to have a direct and measurable impact throughout the YWCA and are often complimented by the YWCA's daily programs and services.

Racial Justice. Through community advocacy, collaborations and strategic planning, YWCA Northern Rhode Island brings into view the ways

in which jobs, working conditions, education, housing, social inclusion and even political power influence individual and community health. Emphasis is placed on how societal resources are distributed unequally by class and by race, and how that affects one's health.

Women's Economic Advancement. Through YWCA economic advancement programs, women are able to transform their lives by participating in a variety of educational programs and services that focus on new beginnings, employment training and career opportunities.

YWCA Northern Rhode Island, a nonprofit organization, was established in 1923 and has been providing programs and services to the northern Rhode Island and surrounding Massachusetts communities for over 87 years.

Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Our goal is to eliminate racism and to empower women. ❖❖❖

YWCA MISSION

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

speaking out against racism and sexism

your actions make a difference

As you become more aware of social issues, you'll be faced with a choice. The issue at hand could be as small as a slight in a public setting. A derogatory term used to describe a woman co-worker. A joke with racial overtones told at a party. A degrading comment made between friends. Or it could be wage disparity or being passed over for employment.

The choice: Will you be a bystander or an ally? Will you step up? Will you speak out?

The issues of racism and sexism are complicated. They can seem overwhelming and too big for a single voice or action to make any real difference. But one small voice or one little action becomes two. Two becomes ten. Ten becomes a hundred. A hundred becomes a revolution for real change.

Take the first step today and get started with the ideas you'll find on pages 32 and 33. And remember, you can make a difference in your life and in others. ✨

ideas to eliminate racism

your actions make a difference

- Learn about your family's ethnic background.
- Find out if your family name was ever changed.
- Notice what ethnic groups are missing from your work-place, your neighborhood, church, and social groups.
- Become aware of what assumptions you may have about other ethnic groups. Make a list of them and commit yourself to counteract or unlearn them.
- Speak up when you hear someone make a racist remark.
- Get to know co-workers of different ethnic groups.
- Form a lunch group at work that meets on a regular schedule to talk about racism.
- Read magazines that are directed at ethnic groups other than your own.
- Read books written about race and ethnicity in our country to broaden your understanding.
- Learn about the histories of other ethnic groups in the United States.
- Think about why people find it so difficult to talk about racism in an ethnically mixed group.
- Discuss this with others of your own ethnicity and those that are ethnically different.
- Notice how people avoid talking about differences. Think about what this avoidance creates. What does it mean to be different in your community? Talk to others about this.
- Find others who are taking active steps to combat racism and become their ally.



ideas to empower women

your actions make a difference

Value yourself, and relationships where you are an equal. In any relationship, there is going to be give-and-take as situations and circumstances change, but you should also feel that, overall, your value in the partnership is equal to that of your partner's.

Learn how to own your voice and assert your opinions. Pay attention to how women have been socialized to defer to men in conversations. Avoid interrupting, talking over, discrediting or dismissing a woman's opinion. Studies show that women are more frequently interrupted than men. Over the course of many conversations, they get the message that what they have to say is not necessarily as compelling or valued as what men have to say.

Identify words and language that communicate gender bias. Make an effort to consciously change the language so it draws attention to areas where bias is apparent. Two places to look for gender bias include position titles that infer gender and school/employer policies that infer gender.

Speak up about sexist jokes or sexist images. Promote sexual harassment policies in your workplace.

Focus on the person instead appearance. To foster a healthier self-image, compliment yourself or other woman for achievements, thoughts, and actions.

Call attention to media deception. Expose and understand unrealistic media images for what they are: retouched, computer-manipulated photos of models – a group that makes up only a tiny subset of the population.

Learn how to ask and negotiate for wages and raises. Know the worth of your job. Education is your best defense. Research everything you can think of to find the competitive salary for your job in your region – employment surveys, libraries, professional organizations, peers. For a raise, you need evidence to show your boss that you deserve it. One way to document your contribution to your company is to keep a job diary. Every week, or even every day, write down what you did and how it helped meet the company's objectives. Keep lists or spreadsheets, because managers like to count things. Remember that attributes such as positive attitude, willingness to put in overtime, and quality of work, are essential. Include a few good stories about your work in the diary to illustrate what you added.

Think about, plan and prepare for career advancement. Mentors are a great asset. If your company doesn't offer clear career ladders, research or find a seminar to help you understand your industry and opportunities.

Encourage risk taking. People develop self-reliance when they're given the space to solve problems and make mistakes in the process.

Know and be able to manage your finances. Start saving for retirement immediately in a career – it will grow to much more than the same amount if you wait 10 years to start saving. And keep saving – Social Security doesn't provide the equivalent of a "living wage" for retirement years. Women statistically live about six years longer than men, and run a higher risk of living in poverty as they get older.



women and politics
talking points

fact sheet
Rhode Island

Center for American Women and Politics
Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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U.S. Congress (Total Seats: 2 U.S. Senators, 2 U.S. Representatives)
Claudine Schneider (R) U.S. Rep. 1981-1991

Statewide Elective Executives (Total Positions: 5)

Gina Raimondo (D)	State Treasurer	2011-present
Elizabeth Roberts (D)	Lieutenant Governor	2007-present
Nancy J. Mayer (R)	State Treasurer	1993-1999
Barbara Leonard (R)	Secretary of State	1993-1995
Kathleen S. Connell (D)	Secretary of State	1987-1992
Arlene Violet (R)	Attorney General	1985-1987
Susan L. Farmer (R)	Secretary of State	1983-1986

State Legislature

Year	State Rank	Senate		Total Women / Total Senate		House		Total Women / Total House		Total Women / Total Legis.		% Total Women
		D	R			D	R					
2011	19	9	1	10/ 38	17	2	19/ 75	29/ 113	25.7			
2010	30	8	0	8/ 38	17	0	17/ 75	25/ 113	22.1			
2009	29	8	0	8/ 38	17	0	17/ 75	25/ 113	22.1			
2008	33	6	1	7/ 38	13	2	15/ 75	22/ 113	19.5			
2007	31	6	1	7/ 38	13	2	15/ 75	22/ 113	19.5			
2006	40	7	1	8/ 38	9	2	11/ 75	19/ 113	16.8			
2005	37	7	1	8/ 38	9	2	11/ 75	19/ 113	16.8			
2004	31	7	2	9/ 38	11	3	14/ 75	23/ 113	20.4			
2003	32	7	2	9/ 38	10	3	13/ 75	22/ 113	19.5			
2002	25	8	2	10/ 50	20	4	24/ 100	34/ 150	22.7			
2001	23	8	2	10/ 50	20	4	24/ 100	34/ 150	22.7			
2000	19	9	2	11/ 50	22	4	26/ 100	37/ 150	24.7			
1999	17	9	2	11/ 50	22	5	27/ 100	38/ 150	25.3			
1998	13	8	3	11/ 50	22	6	28/ 100	39/ 150	26.0			
1997	13	8	3	11/ 50	22	6	28/ 100	39/ 150	26.0			
1996	17	8	2	10/ 50	20	6	26/ 100	36/ 150	24.0			
1995	17	8	2	10/ 50	20	6	26/ 100	36/ 150	24.0			
1994	15	9	2	11/ 50	18	8	26/ 100	37/ 150	24.7			
1993	14	9	2	11/ 50	18	8	26/ 100	37/ 150	24.7			
1992	27	7	2	9/ 50	11	5	16/ 100	25/ 150	16.7			
1991	28	6	2	8/ 50	11	5	16/ 100	24/ 150	16.0			
1990	28	5	4	9/ 50	11	3	14/ 100	23/ 150	15.3			
1989	28	5	4	9/ 50	11	3	14/ 100	23/ 150	15.3			
1988	22	5	5	10/ 50	10	4	14/ 100	24/ 150	16.0			
1987	22	5	5	10/ 50	10	4	14/ 100	24/ 150	16.0			
1986	23	3	5	8/ 50	11	4	15/ 100	23/ 150	15.3			
1985	23	3	5	8/ 50	11	4	15/ 100	23/ 150	15.3			
1984	17	1	8	9/ 50	10	3	13/ 100	22/ 150	14.7			
1983	26	4	1	5/ 50	10	4	14/ 100	19/ 150	12.7			
1981	28	4	1	5/ 50	8	2	10/ 100	15/ 150	10.0			
1979	25	-	-	4/ 50	-	-	9/ 100	13/ 150	8.7			
1977	26	-	-	4/ 50	-	-	7/ 100	11/ 150	7.3			
1975	29	-	-	2/ 50	-	-	7/ 100	9/ 150	6.0			

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
northern rhode island

we're making a difference

Women & Infants Hospital in collaboration with the **YWCA of Northern Rhode Island**
Invite you to join us for a May Breakfast

Made possible by a generous grant from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Women's Health.

our 7th Annual Women's Health Event
celebrating **National Women's Health Week**

Monday, May 9, 2011
9:30 am - noon
Women & Infants Medical Office Building
2168 Diamond Hill Road
Woonsocket, RI

Valuable health information... Refreshments...Raffles...and Fun!

Women & Infants own David Edmonson, MD and Nnenna Okpara, MD will be on hand to discuss the most current trends in women's health, including health and the importance of colon screening.

To register, please call 401-767-2122 or visit womenandinfants.org

women & infants
ywca



shining

with Meaghan Lamarre

a card-carrying feminist

Meaghan Lamarre is the online communications consultant for YWCA Northern Rhode Island. She is the web developer and strategic services director for internet strategy and communications firm, Mandate Media, Inc., www.mandatemediacom.com.

She also chairs the board of directors of the Alternatives to Marriage Project, an organization dedicated to ending discrimination on the basis of marital status, www.unmarried.org.

Interview by Lisa Piscatelli.

Photo courtesy of Lamarre



How do you define leadership? “To me, leadership is more of a personality characteristic than a specific action or activity. A leader is someone who inspires others to change their lives, or others' lives, for the better.”

How old are you? “30.”

Tell us about yourself and your worldview. “I was a tomboy who built a go-cart with my dad, liked to shoot a bow and arrow, and played detective and explorer with my friends . . . I took violin lessons, played with computers, and got good grades . . . I've learned how lucky I was to have had such opportunities as a young girl . . . I've also realized the tremendous value of empathy and compassion . . . I believe that women around the world face additional obstacles, simply because they're women. In our country, I think a lot of these obstacles are self-imposed, based on what we're taught as girls about how we're supposed to think and act and be in the world. Until all those obstacles are overcome, I'm a card-carrying feminist.”

Why Miss Meaghan not Ms. Meaghan. Is that third wave feminism? “Ha, it really didn't have anything to do with my feminism, but I do get asked about it a lot. The truth is pretty apolitical: my grandfather used to call me Miss Meaghan and it made me feel special, so I started using it as my handle mostly for the fond memories evoked. But I suppose there's some third wave feminism in there in the sense that I don't feel like I have to define myself as a “Ms.” But I do always check the “Ms.” box on official forms.”

1st wave, 2nd wave, 3rd wave feminism . . . what does that mean? “To dramatically simplify things, the first wave earned us the vote, while the second wave focused on working toward legal and economic equality. There's a lot of argument about where the third wave is and what its focus is, but I think there's a powerful third wave out there, working on a lot of different issues.”

You have a great deal of knowledge about comput-

ers. What sparked your interest? “I got a pretty early start with technology; I typed my spelling homework on the typewriter in the first grade and we had a computer in the house by the time I was seven. My mom had an interest in computers and wanted to make sure I was exposed to them; she got me involved in computer classes the third grade. I really enjoyed those classes so I started participating in a summer computer camp where I was exposed to programming, computer graphics, digital audio/music and artificial intelligence. I loved it . . . I kept up with computer technology as a hobby through high school and college; I actually created my own online tests as part of my thesis in social psychology. After college, I was able to combine my hobbies of computers and activism into a career path.”

Do you think social media gives women a stronger voice in our society? “What I love most about social media is the community that one can tap into. I learn so much from the people I follow on social media - people I would never, or rarely, interact with in real life. And I feel a tremendous sense of support when I find others in my online community who are celebrating the same victories or outraged at the same atrocities as I am. There are definitely women using social media -- don't listen to any of the crazy talk about there not being any women bloggers. They're out there, they're doing their thing on Twitter, on blogs, and they're not that hard to find. Here's a good place to start: a list of feminists to follow on Twitter: <http://www.twibes.com/feminism/twitter-list>. That said, these online communities are self-determined and often insular; so while there are some awesomely supportive communities online for women to make their voices heard, the old boys' networks exist online as well as in the real world. But there are more avenues, and fewer barriers, for dialogue online, so I do think technology can help women's voices to be heard.”

You've been working with the YWCA on many projects over the past few years. Why the YWCA?

“I knew when I moved across the country that the east coast would be different from what I was used to but I was surprised to find that I had taken for granted my relatively feminist upbringing . . . The galvanizing moment was when I saw a story about an astoundingly high percentage of teenage girls indicating that it was okay in some circumstances for their boyfriends to hit them. When I read that, I was determined to get involved and began looking at local organizations where I could volunteer. I immediately resonated with the YWCA's mission of ending racism and empowering women and was especially interested in the YWCA's hands-on work with girls and young women . . . I knew I'd found the right organization.”

You are a virtual consultant for YWCA. How does that work? “Given the work that I do, which is a largely solitary job of creating graphics and building websites, it's not much different than what would happen in the same place, except that the feedback is given via e-mail, rather than in person . . . It's a great way to conserve limited financial resources and allow you to work with people who have the skills you need, wherever they happen to be located. I think it works especially well in nonprofits and other mission-driven organizations, where there's a shared commitment to the work being done.”

From Providence you moved to DC. What was that like? “It's fun to live in a place where everybody is as consumed with politics as you are -- often more so. It's not at all unusual to hear the details of the latest budget bill being passionately discussed on the bus. It was really exciting when I first moved here, since I was a wide-eyed, eager, young political activist looking to change the world. It's a little less exciting once you discover that changing the world isn't as easy as you thought. The real disadvantage of DC, in my opinion, is that everybody is from somewhere else. That's great in a way, but it also means that there are very few shared customs, traditions, idioms. I miss those things, and the unique culture of Providence.”

“I think third wavers are defined by a spirit of ‘don't ever tell me I can't because I'm a girl.’”

Once upon a time in America . . .

The Woman Suffrage Amendment passed.

The Civil Rights Act passed.

The Voting Rights Act passed.

The end? Not hardly!

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

northern rhode island