



**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

southeastern massachusetts
volume 1.3 spring 2008

our voice

“deep roots, wide branches”



YWCA Women marched on Capitol Hill advocating with state legislators for the Violence Against Women Act. Above: The YWCA New England Region Delegation, including Yvonne Drayton, Gail Fortes, Jean Kellaway, Athena Mota, Rita Ribeiro, and Marie-Frances Rivera from the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts.

movement of many “firsts,” including the first boarding house for students, teachers and factory workers in 1860, the first typewriting class for women in 1870, the first employment bureau and sewing machine classes in 1872, the first organization to introduce sex education in health programming in 1906, the first interracial conference in 1915, the first organization to send professional workers overseas for administrative services to the U.S. Armed Forces in 1918, and the first desegregated public dining facility in Atlanta in 1960. (Just to name a few.)

going through doors, but they don't know how those doors were opened. And some of them don't care. I say to young people wherever I am: You are the beneficiaries of what people did during the civil rights movement. You owe something to your ancestors and predecessors. You have the responsibility to take it from here to the next step.” The Y W C A Southeastern Massachusetts strives daily to take that struggle to the next step by offering programs and services to women that further economic empowerment, break down internal and external barriers to racial equality and challenge our communities to move toward equity in the workplace, housing, education and all aspects of life.

The YWCA USA kicked-off its Sesquicentennial Celebration at the YWCA National Conference and Annual General Assembly in Alexandria, Virginia this past April.

There have been many diverse and historic accomplishments over the past 150 years. The YWCA, whose mission focuses on the elimination of racism and empowerment of women has been a leading agent in social change since its inception in 1858. The YWCA has led a

There were leading ladies in this movement. Women such as Dr. Dorothy Height, civil rights activist, established the YWCA's Office of Racial Justice. "Never forget the struggle," said Dr. Dorothy Height, in the January-February 2006 issue of Homes of Color." Today, many people are



Right: Yvonne Drayton and Gail Fortes. Yvonne Drayton was re-elected Vice-Chair of the National Coordinating Board for the YWCA USA.



Left: Dr. Dorothy Height

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from the executive director...



I recently spent time on Capitol Hill during the YWCA USA Annual Meeting. It was so empowering to see hundreds of YWCA women marching on the "Hill" to have congressional visits with their state delegations. As a group, we were "Strong Alone, Fearless Together." We spoke to issues on Violence Against Women, the Victims of Crime Act and Pay Equity. I left DC feeling renewed, refreshed and ready to come back home to advocate for issues in our local community.

Advocacy is the cornerstone of the YWCA. Nationwide we advocate for equal rights for women and people of color, safe housing for women, eradicating domestic and sexual violence, providing quality and affordable after-school programs for children, eradicating racial and ethnic health disparities and ensuring women's financial stability.

On April 23rd, Equal Pay Day, a group of 21 YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts women and girls (as young as age 11) went to the State House in Boston to build support for state pay equity legislation. We also discussed the wage gap with women from across the state and spoke with our state senators and representatives about supporting pay equity legislation. Did you know that women have to work into April of the following year to earn

the same salaries that their male counterparts earned the previous year? That is a startling fact and one that is unexplainable. On average a woman makes only 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. Over a lifetime that's a loss of \$700,000, if you have a high school diploma, \$1.2 million with a college degree and \$2 million dollars with an advanced degree. How can this still happen? The wage gap has a direct impact on a woman's ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency, especially during retirement. The wage gap also affects a woman's ability to access education, housing, affordable child care and healthcare. The proposed state legislation will require the state's human resources division to establish a job analysis study of state employees to update the current job classification system to ensure that they are free from gender and racial bias. We need your support to spread the word about wage inequity. I hope you will join the YWCA in advocating for this very important issue.

The YWCA will always remain in the forefront in addressing issues of racial and gender inequities. The YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts will continue to provide opportunities to help women and their families reach their fullest potential. We will continue to grow and change to meet the contemporary needs of women in our community.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our generous donors, supportive Board Members, dedicated volunteers and wonderful staff who make it possible for the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts to achieve its goals. Thank you again for your continued support.

Gail Fortes
Executive Director

from the president...



I want to share some serious thoughts and concerns that I just can't shrug off these days. It's Spring 2008, an election year and the country is bombarded with current news stories surrounding the selection of a president, a questionable war, a faltering economy and diminishing resources. It's a scary and difficult time. As a country our concerted effort is required to address these ills but we are increasingly divided by the racial issues that exist in our society. Rooted in the history of slavery and injustice, racism continues to divide and perplex us, impacting the lives of all Americans. Many of us have taken note of Senator Barack Obama's speech on race and racism delivered in Philadelphia in March, and whether you acclaim or reject his remarks, the message is clear: as a nation and as individuals we must learn to talk about race. YWCA's nationwide, through our "One Imperative" are committed to "thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary." Your YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts takes a proactive stand against existing systems of oppression and works to

ensure fairness and equity in our community through our direct services and advocacy. Your YWCA is also committed to taking the lead in the work of "talking about race."

To talk about race we must first learn to listen carefully and respectfully to understand and believe each other. We must speak to achieve a greater understanding rather than convince someone of our own point of view. We must remain open minded rather than judgmental and be willing to see things in another way, from another point of view. We all have an obligation to know the history of the black experience in America so that we can respond in ways that show we are knowledgeable about the issues. With sincerity, commitment and courage we can begin to close that "chasm of misunderstanding" that fosters racial division. To quote Senator Obama, "if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together."

But finally, in talking about race and racism in America, we must acknowledge that racism will not end because people of color demand it. Racism will only end when a significant number of white people of conscience, the people who can wield their privilege and power with integrity, find the will and take the action to dismantle it. We must believe that this constant effort will transform our country so that all people will have an equal experience.

Jan Baptist
President

our voice

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ywca sesquicentennial celebration



you have the power to make a difference.
become a member.
donate today.

In celebration of **150** years...

The YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts is holding a membership drive to increase membership by **150** new members. There has never been a better time to become a member of the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts. Become a part of the legacy of women that have left a mark on the YWCA since 1858 and contributed to building decades of ideas that have forever changed the community in which we live.

become a member

<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Women/Men (18-59)	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student with I.D.	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Women/Men (60+)	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Teen/Youth (to age 17)	\$15.00

become a donor

<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$500.00 +

Donations over the amount of dues are tax deductible.

become part of the legacy 150

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Renee King | 29. Anonymous |
| 2. Claudette Blake | 30. Susan Botelho |
| 3. Ellie Early | 31. Lydia Murphy |
| 4. Emma Basso | 32. Nancy Hawes |
| 5. Anonymous | 33. Mary Houtman |
| 6. Marie-Frances Rivera | 34. Martha Woodbury |
| 7. Dr. Juli Parker | 35. Kathryn Luongo |
| 8. Kimberly Sylvia | 36. Sarah Tinay |
| 9. Cynthia Edwards | 37. Tracy Beckman |
| 10. Anonymous | 38. Toni Foreman |
| 11. Anonymous | 39. Gary Foreman |
| 12. Anonymous | 40. Darrel Foreman |
| 13. June Pina | 41. Rudolph Steward |
| 14. First Citizens Credit Union | 42. Joyce Schwartz |
| 15. Anonymous | 43. Alice Clark |
| 16. Anonymous | |
| 17. Anonymous | |
| 18. Anonymous | |
| 19. Anna Lisa Vust | |
| 20. Dorothy Lopes | |
| 21. Marianna Sylvester | |
| 22. Maria Pinarreta | |
| 23. Ashley Goncalves | |
| 24. Joan Medeiros | |
| 25. Deidre Fountain | |
| 26. Mary Kruge | |
| 27. Anonymous | |
| 28. Lourdes Colon | |



Our Mission

The YWCA is a women's membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. 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 people.

The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

persimmon pics



Christine Coelho & Melissa Costa



Carol Almeida-Fortes and Sgt. Rita Ribeiro



Above: Marcia Ramos, Leny Lazado, Maria Pinaretta, & Marguerite Perryman Below: 5th Annual Red Dress Fashion Show Models



Photos by: Andrew Gallagher
Andrew T. Gallagher Photography
www.myspace.com/atgphotography



Kelley Clark and SueAnne Delorey



Pamela Souza & Chief Ronald Teachman



Councillor Debora Coelho, Fern Gonsalves and Councillor Jane Gonsalves, City Council President



Miss Massachusetts, Valerie Amaral & Miss New Bedford, Marissa Louro

Photos by: Robert Hughes
Hughes Photography
www.bobhughesphoto.com

5th Annual

Red Dress Fashion Show and Silent Auction

2-27-08

persimmon pics



The **YWCA Southeastern MA** recently celebrated community women on **International Women's Day** with... **"Sweet Indulgence."** Over 100 women came out in the pouring rain to indulge in a well-deserved day of pampering.



Above: Bristol County Savings Bank Charitable Fund presented the YWCA Southeastern MA with a \$5,000 grant for "A Woman's Place."

Below: Equal Pay Day 2008—Women have to work into April of the following year to earn the same salaries as their male counterparts did the previous year. YWCA staff and board were joined by students from UMASS Dartmouth's Women's Studies Program and the Feminine Majority Leadership Alliance, the YWCA's Teen Talk and the Girls Rule Program. These women met with legislators to advocate for pay equity.



Left: At their Grand Opening, Longhorn Steakhouse raised \$1,473.82 for ENCORE^{plus} from their friends and families night. Patricia Garcelon, Managing Partner of Wareham's Longhorn Steakhouse (center) flanked by distinguished members of the Cape Cod Canal Chamber of Commerce, Staff Members, Guests, & Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA.

councillor jane l. gonsalves, city council president



Jane L. Gonsalves is serving her eighth-term as City Councillor in New Bedford. She has served as Ward Five Councillor longer than any of her predecessors. She was first elected to the seat in 1993, in her first run for public office. In 1999, she

became the first woman of Portuguese descent to be elected to the Office of City Council President in New Bedford. In 2008, she became the first woman to serve a second term as City Council President.

Councillor Gonsalves is a life-long resident of New Bedford. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Providence College in 1980 with a B.A. in Economics. In 2003, she received an Exemplary Citizenship Award from the Providence College Alumni Association. Councillor Gonsalves is employed as a Senior Claims Specialist for the Hanover Insurance Company.

In addition to her community involvement as

an elected official, Councillor Gonsalves serves many community organizations in various capacities. She was a longtime member of the Board of Directors for the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts, serving as YWCA Vice-President. She currently serves as the Chair of the YWCA's Red Dress Fashion Show and Silent Auction and serves on the YWCA's Steering Committee. She has previously served on the Board of the Friends of Buttonwood Park. She is a member of the New Bedford Preservation Society, W.H.A.L.E., and the Portuguese-American Police Association. She has been honored several times for her community efforts.

"I was approached by Yvonne to serve on the Board. I had been a swimming student at the YW as a child but had not been involved since. I agreed to serve and loved the experience so much that I stayed for almost 10 years. During that time I was the only female member of the New Bedford City Council and I really needed the sisterhood of support that I got from my fellow Board members. It was also gratifying to look around the table and see a room full of accomplished women; it gave me faith that someday City government might look the same....and now there are 5 women on the City Council and 2 women on the School Committee!"

dr. juli parker named unsung heroine



The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is proud to announce its 287 Community Unsung Heroines of 2008. These Unsung Heroines come from cities and towns across the Commonwealth and each were recognized for their outstanding contributions to

their organizations and communities in a ceremony on Wednesday, May 14 at the State House in Boston.

Dr. Juli Parker, Director of the Women's Resource Center at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Affiliate Faculty of Women's Studies is the 2008 Unsung Heroine for Swansea. Juli Parker has been a collaborating partner with the YWCA in engaging young women into advocacy and activism. She has encouraged student volunteerism at the YWCA through a service learning component in her Third Wave Feminism course. She has also collaborated in efforts towards pay equity by promoting wage events at the university.

"I nominated Juli Parker for

the Unsung Heroine award for her tireless, advocacy efforts in the areas of racial justice and gender equity," said Gail Fortes, YWCA Executive Director. "Her work at the UMASS Dartmouth Women's Resource Center is exceptional. She is truly an inspiration to women in our community." These 287 Unsung Heroines were carefully selected from nearly 600 nominations to be honored for selflessly making a difference in the lives of others.

"Our Unsung Heroines are women who don't make the news, but make the difference in their communities, businesses, or volunteer endeavors. They are the women who quietly, without fanfare or recognition and usually

behind the scenes, use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others," said Linda Brantley, MCSW Executive Director. "We are awed by the fabulous work women across the Commonwealth are doing and thankful to the many nominators who brought these incredible women to our attention."

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities. The MCSW provides a permanent, effective voice for the women of Massachusetts.

building our community boards

United Way of Greater New Bedford, the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts and Leadership SouthCoast are teaming up to address the need for increased participation and diversity on the Boards of Directors of local nonprofit organizations through a new online database tool.

United Way's on-line database, Board Connections, seeks to connect potential Board Members with volunteer board opportunities in Greater New Bedford.

"It's easy to use and completely free of cost, both for the nonprofit and potential Board Member," said Sarah Gonet, United

Way's Vice-President of Resource Development. "Too often it's the same faces around the table. We want to change that and get more people involved."

Survey responses from a number of local nonprofits reveal that many organizations find it challenging to recruit new Board Members. In addition, there is a real lack of diversity in age, ethnicity, gender and area of expertise among many of our local area non-profit boards.

"Many people have expressed interest in serving on Boards, but do not know how to access these opportunities," said

Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts. "Boards of Directors need to be diverse in as many ways as possible. Boards should reflect the population served by the non-profit and the community at-large. Board Connections is a great way to make that happen."

The Board Connections online tool allows nonprofits to post information about board openings that community members can then search through and respond to. Board Connections will also serve as a tool to help non-profit organizations reach out beyond their immediate circles to find potential new

Board Members and build new community relationships.

Potential volunteers and nonprofits seeking Board Members should log onto this site to register their Board opportunity, as well as to view Board Member postings: <http://www.unitedwayofgnb.org/volunteer.htm>

For more information and/or assistance with the website please contact Caroline Cuccia at 508-994-9625, ext. 15 or ccuccia@unitedwayofgnb.org.



"mrs. h"

why the ywca?

name: Shirley Houtman a.k.a "Mrs. H"

role(s) in the ywca: Clerical Support at Yw kids School Age Child Care: I answer phones, take care of attendance, filing and snack time. I take care of little bumps and bruises and hop on the bus when needed.

role(s) outside of the ywca: Wife of Wallace Houtman, Mother and Grandmother. I belong to The Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW), Susan A. Sullavou Temple No. 94. I also belong to the Oret LeBorah Liberty Council in New Bedford.

worked at the ywca for: 9 years

why did you become interested in the ywca?

When I was younger I used to go to the YWCA on Spring Street to use the pool or sit down to look at magazines.

what do you find particularly inspiring about the ywca?

You are treated like family. You have flexible working hours. You meet a lot of new and interesting people.

one of your proudest moments with the ywca...

When we honored Mrs. Yvonne Drayton at her retirement party.

3 words to describe the ywca...

I can't limit it to 3 words.



summer programs

Yw kids School Age Child Care has openings for subsidized care. The Summer Program is in operation from 7:30AM - 5:30PM.



Girls Giving & Growing Program for girls ages 10-14 runs from July 7 - Aug. 21, 9AM-4PM. Program limited to 20 girls.



Call Catherine Bourassa, Director of Programs and Services at 508-993-5858.



ywca board of directors

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our voice