

# our voice

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
ywca

volume 2.4 summer 2009 southeastern massachusetts

## persimmon power on capitol hill



Above: Yvonne Drayton, Nicole Almeida, Jan Baptist, Gail Fortes, and Marie-Frances Rivera.

By: Nicole Almeida and Marie-Frances Rivera

The YWCA National Assembly and Annual Meeting occurred this April 2009 in Washington D.C. Executive Director, Gail Fortes; Board President, Jan Baptist; Board Members, Nicole Almeida and Marie-Frances Rivera, along with National Coordinating Board Member, Yvonne Drayton were all in attendance.

It was a very inspiring four days for all of us. Right off the plane, we attended Capitol Hill Day; a day set aside to advocate for the YWCA and the issues we are all passionate about.

As a region, we met with aides from Congressman Frank's, Senator Kerry's and Senator Kennedy's offices. During these meetings we spoke about the Paycheck Fairness Act, Hate Crimes Legislation and the Violence Against Women Act.

We also had our own separate meeting with Senator Kerry's office to discuss another federal appropriation in the amount of \$525,000 for the capital campaign. Senator Kerry's, Congressman Frank's and Senator Kennedy's staff were all very supportive of the initiatives the YWCA is pursuing and all were very

familiar with our local association and the great work done in Southeastern Massachusetts.

In addition to Capitol Hill Day, we each participated in several different workshops throughout the weekend related to racial justice, economic empowerment, advocacy and sustainability. Several speakers, like Bonnie St. John, Para-Olympic downhill skiing bronze medal winner were on-hand to provide motivational and inspirational talks on being a FEARLESS woman in today's society.

The highlight of the weekend for us, was the 150th YWCA Anniversary Celebratory Dinner that ended with a special video of First Lady Michelle Obama congratulating the YWCA on 150 years of service dedicated to the elimination of racism and empowerment of women. It was a thrilling night as the YWCA USA celebrated its distinguished 150 year legacy as the nation's oldest and largest women's organization. Four distinguished American women leaders were honored and spoke at the dinner: Lily Ledbetter of the Lily Ledbetter Paycheck



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Above: First Lady Michelle Obama addresses the YWCA Annual Meeting by video.

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## from the executive director from the president



Summer has finally arrived! This is always a wonderful time at the YWCA. During this time we offer a full day program for children ages 5-13 at ywkids. The program operates Mondays - Fridays from 7:30am - 5:30pm and is open from the day children finish school in June until the day before school starts in September. Parents can rest assured that their children are in a safe, secure setting with a wonderful, caring staff that provide unique opportunities for them to develop and grow throughout the summer. Children participate in daily activities related to racial justice, economic advancement, science, math and technology, the arts, educational field trips to the Boston Science Museum and New Bedford Oceanarium, the downtown historic district and of course fun-filled days at local beaches. It is wonderful to see their smiling faces and listen to their exciting stories of their adventure-filled days.

Our Girls Giving and Growing Program is also in full swing with daily creative and innovative programming for girls ages 11-14. The program provides an

opportunity for girls to develop leadership skills and build their self-esteem. The girls participate in community boating, community service projects, fundraising, advocacy, economic advancement, racial justice, babysitting, etiquette, nutrition, and field trips to various locations in downtown New Bedford and throughout the community.

For me, the summer is a time to reflect on our fiscal year that just past and our new fiscal year that has just begun. Despite the struggles that the YWCA has faced this year, along with many other individuals and organizations, we are still working diligently on our advocacy efforts, especially in the areas of pay equity, hate crimes and violence against women; hallmark and other programming efforts and opportunities, community collaborations and capacity-building plans. A strong focus this year for the YWCA is our \$4.8 million capital campaign for the purpose of refurbishing the YWCA Standish House and the construction of a 12,000 square foot addition that will include barrier-free accessibility and new program spaces for ywkids, a new teen center, a new women's resource center, multi-purpose and community spaces and housing for single women age 18 and over. Community support is crucial to the success of our campaign and I hope that all of you will continue to assist the YWCA in this effort. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

*Gail M. Fortes*  
Executive Director



It was a full, hectic and rewarding spring for our YWCA, and there is always so much to talk about. We have our ongoing Capital Campaign, a robust schedule of summer programming, ongoing Board work and there was that memorable May trip to Washington D.C.

First, I'll reflect on how being a YWCA woman, member and Board president has its benefits. A few Sundays ago, a friend and I were cooking up a little late morning breakfast and we were listening to a Patti Austin CD. I took the opportunity to brag about my good fortune to be in Patti's company, and hear her beautiful liquid voice at the culminating event of the year-long sesquicentennial commemoration gala honoring selected YWCA, "Fearless Leaders" in D.C. Patti Austin, one of the honorees, is a Grammy Award winning jazz and R&B singer, who was sexually abused as a child, and is now the international spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Violence. She entertained us with her passionate music, and we were enthralled with the company of so many powerful and talented women during the celebration.

This year's conference began with a day of lobbying on

Capitol Hill, as 150 delegates, dressed in persimmon and black engaged members of congress on a number of bills, including, The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R.1913). This carefully crafted bill protects First Amendment rights and combats violent, bias-motivated crime. The LLEHCPA/Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act punishes only violent actions, not beliefs or thoughts. This legislation has been making its way through Congress since 2001 with uneven success, but this president and congress have strongly supported it.

The three day meeting continued with workshops on a variety of YWCA issues. I chose the strand associated with sustaining nonprofit organizations in an economic downturn. I learned about shaping law and policy and the process of authorization and appropriations. Another session focused on accessing American Recovery and Reinvestment for Economic Sustainability Funds, erroneously referred to as "stimulus money." I also learned ways to enhance fund raising efforts at the local level. One concrete thing that we brought back is the concept of bequests through estate plans.

Finally, the meeting offered opportunities for YWCA women to YWCA women camaraderie. Though this wasn't formally on the agenda, we did it anyway. Attendance at this annual meeting goes a long way in cementing commitment to the YWCA movement, at the world, national, regional and local levels. Join us.

*Jan Baptist*  
Board President

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

Thank you to everyone who took the opportunity to become a member of the YWCA, during our special Sesquicentennial Birthday Celebration membership drive.

In celebration of 150 years, the YWCA would like to recognize some of the women that have been committed supporting members of the YWCA over the years.

**Eusie Zane, YWCA Member**  
Since November 6, 1989

**Carol Pimental, YWCA Member**  
Since June 24, 1987

**Janice Fauteux, YWCA Member**  
Since December 16, 1986

**Meryl Novek, YWCA Member**  
Since November 16, 1984

**Gladys Gaj, YWCA Member**  
Since September 13, 1984

**Madeline Copeland, YWCA Member**  
Since January 28, 1983

**Cecile Krause, YWCA Member**  
Since December 12, 1980

**Jean Campbell, YWCA Member**  
Since August 19, 1968

**Brenda Dixon, YWCA Member**  
Since April 13, 1967

**Louise Sawyer, YWCA Member**  
Since January 23, 1957

**join online:** <http://www.ywcasema.org>

## **our mission**

**YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts is  
dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering  
women and promoting  
peace, justice, freedom, and  
dignity for all.**

**eliminating racism  
empowering women**  
**ywca**

## **annual meeting** (cont. from pg. 1)



**Above: Lily Ledbetter, Eve Ensler, Patti Austin and Dr. Dorothy Height**

Fairness Act, Patti Austin the Grammy award-winning jazz singer, composer, and staunch activist against domestic violence, Eve Ensler, the internationally acclaimed playwright and author of "The Vagina Monologues" and Dr. Dorothy Height, who was the only woman standing on the podium during Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

with the Annual Meeting where we voted in new National Board Members and the revised Mission Statement. At this meeting the YWCA General Assembly voted by 91%, to revise the YWCA mission statement, which now reads... "YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all."

The weekend culminated

It was truly a memorable four days, which will be written in HERstory for the future generations of YWCA women to look back upon and learn how to become FEARLESS leaders themselves!



## pics of thanks



5/21/09: Catherine Bourassa, Director of Programs and Services and Jeanette Beltrán, Director of Community Initiatives, Susan G. Komen for the Cure presents the YWCA with \$40,000 for ENCORE<sup>plus</sup>



6/26/09: Senator Mark Montigny and Representative Antonio Cabral join Gail Fortes, Jan Baptist and Dave Guertin (not pictured) to discuss plans for the YWCA "Under One Roof" Capital Campaign project.



6/24/09: Children from the ywkids school age program were invited to watch the New Bedford Bay Sox by Coach Brian Rose, "Brian's Buddies," a community outreach program built around the summer collegiate team. Pictured Left: The New Bedford Bay Sox and Coach Brian Rose with the ywkids.

**strong alone.  
fearless together.**

## our voice

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In an effort to conserve resources, please email [info@ywcasema.org](mailto:info@ywcasema.org) with your Name and Email address and we will move your contact info to our electronic mailing list to send you an electronic copy of **our voice**.

thank you for reading **our voice!!**

## save the dates

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
ywca



business after hours sponsored  
by the new bedford area chamber  
of commerce and ywca

Join us on Thursday, September 17, 2009  
from 5pm - 7pm at the YWCA.

This is a great way to network, socialize,  
meet your fellow Chamber members,  
exchange business cards and promote your  
business. RSVP by calling the Chamber:  
508-999-5231 or register at  
[www.newbedfordchamber.com](http://www.newbedfordchamber.com)

Free for members  
\$15 for non-members (cash at door)  
Complimentary hors d'oeuvres &  
refreshments.

*4th Annual*  
*Sizzlin' Salsa Dance Party*  
*(formerly Hispanic Heritage Night)*

Friday, September 25, 2009  
8:00 pm to 1:00 am  
The Sky Room  
Howland Place,  
New Bedford

Proceeds Benefit the YWCA  
Southeastern Massachusetts  
Leadership Development  
Programs for Young Women.

21+ Adult \$25/person  
Spanish Buffet & Cash Bar  
Salsa Lessons @ 9pm

*A fun evening of dancing  
with something for Everyone!*

Purchase Your Tickets Today!!  
[www.ywcasema.org](http://www.ywcasema.org) or call the YWCA @ 508-999-3255.

## 14th annual week without violence

**Sunday, October 18: "A Day of Remembrance"**  
Church bells will ring for one minute at 12 noon.

**Monday, October 19 "Protecting Our Children"**  
"When I Get Mad I Draw" art contest displayed all week at  
the YWCA, 20 South Sixth Street, NB 9am – 4pm.

**Tuesday, October 20 "Making Our Schools Safer"**  
"Safe Zones" at ywkids, 89 Merrimac St. NB, 3pm-5pm.

**Wednesday, October 21 "Confronting Violence  
Against Women"**  
"Clothesline Project" displayed at UMASS Dartmouth,  
285 Old Westport Rd, N. Dart., 9am-4pm.

**Thurs., October 22 "Facing Violence Against Men"**  
"Self Defense" (more info coming soon).

**Fri., October 23 "Eliminating Racism & Hate Crime"**  
A breakfast conversation on racism and hate crimes at the  
YWCA, 20 South Sixth Street, NB 8am – 10am.

**Sat., October 24 "Replacing Violence With Sports,  
Recreation, and Fun!"**  
Block Party! Join us for a fun day of play at the YWCA, 20  
South Sixth Street, NB 12pm – 3pm.

### Save The Date

*Under One Roof*  
*Reception*

Rotch-Jones-Duff House

September 26, 2009 - 7 to 10 pm

\$100 per Person  
\$1,000 per Table Sponsor  
\$5,000 per Event Sponsor

For reservations or event information  
please contact Linda  
508-999-3255 or [llarsen@ywcasema.org](mailto:llarsen@ywcasema.org)

## leadership southcoast class of 2009



### *Class of 2009*

- Ms. Nicole Almeida
- Ms. Shelly Correia
- Ms. Caroline R. Cuccia
- Ms. Jennifer S. Downing
- Ms. Tracy Gerety-Ibbotson
- Mr. John F. Long, MPA
- Ms. Jill M. MacLean
- Ms. Helena Silva Marques
- Ms. Maria H. Mojica
- Ms. Athena M. G. Mota
- Mr. Ephraim O. Osazuwa
- Ms. Melissa M. Pacheco
- Ms. Maria O. Pinarreta
- Ms. Charlene Rocha
- Ms. Kristine Rodrigues
- Mr. Michael Ryan
- Ms. Lois E. Spirlet

Leadership SouthCoast's mission is to provide our region with an ongoing source of diverse leaders, who are prepared and committed to serve as catalysts and sustainers of positive change for the quality of life on the South Coast of Massachusetts.

selects a diverse group of acknowledged and aspiring leaders to participate in a 10-month community leadership program. Participants are challenged by a variety of issues presented by leaders and experts in their fields. The purpose of the program is to transform a highly motivated group of individuals into a

network of leaders with knowledge and commitment that benefits the community.

This year the Leadership SouthCoast Class of 2009 included YWCA Board Member, Nicole Almeida; YWCA Director of Advocacy and Communications, Athena M. G. Mota; and YWCA Steering Committee Member, Maria O. Pinarreta.

Leadership SouthCoast network of leaders with

## persimmon pics



YWCA staff, board, volunteers, family, friends and children were out showing off their "persimmon pride" at the Cape Verdean Recognition Week Parade on July 5th.

## ywkids wish list

The ywkids school age summer program is in full session and in need of support to further summer programming and activities for our kids.

Monetary donations are welcomed and greatly appreciated, as well as in-kind donations of items such as:

Athletic Equipment (Basketballs, Jump Ropes, etc.)  
Electronic Equipment (DVD Players, Radios, Computers, Computer Games, etc.)  
Beach Equipment  
Board Games  
Outdoor Games (Volleyball Net, Water Games, etc.)  
Indoor Game Equipment (Pool Table, Foosball, etc.)  
Art Supplies  
Books  
Digital Camera  
Area Rugs

## residential wish list

The YWCA's, A Woman's Place and Another Woman's Place would greatly appreciate the donations of items such as:

Microwave  
Twin Sheets, Blankets, Bedspreads, Quilts  
Pillows  
Towels  
Curtains  
Kitchen Equipment

## interns wanted

Wellness for Women and Girls is looking for an intern to assist with clerical support, community outreach, and health presentations.

For more information, please contact: Ana Silva at the YWCA, 508-999-3255.

## why the ywca?

**name:** Joe Guarino

**role(s) in the ywca:** ywkids school age program, Orange Room Group Leader

**role(s)/hobbies outside of the ywca:** Student, UMASS Dartmouth

**worked at the ywca for:** 1 year

**why did you become interested in the ywca?:**

I love to work with kids, and I saw it as an opportunity to make a difference...and I really needed the job.

**what do you find particularly inspiring about the ywca?**

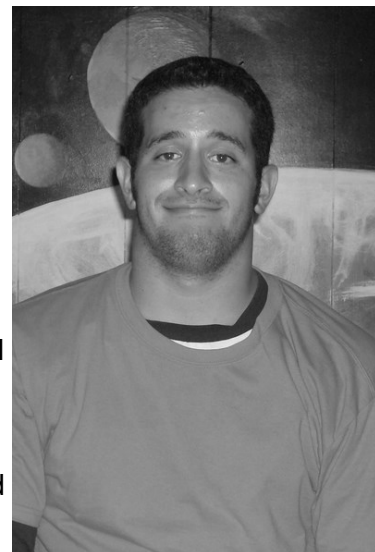
How the kids, despite some of their rough backgrounds can rise above it and become truly amazing people.

**one of your proudest moments with the ywca...**

Taking the kids to the Roger Williams Park Zoo. We were short staffed that day and in a very busy and big place, which made me nervous with how the kids would handle it, but in the end they were terrific. They listened to us perfectly and they all had a really great time.

**3 words to describe the ywca...**

Really Great Fun!



## ywca board of directors

**President**  
Jan Baptist

**Vice President**  
Yolanda Dennis

**Treasurer**  
Marcia Ramos

**Assistant Treasurer**  
Marie-Frances Rivera

**Clerk**  
Dr. Darrel Hoagland

**Carolina Africano, Esq.**  
**Nicole Almeida**  
**Tammy Beckman**  
**Lena Pires**  
**Jacquelyn Ramos**  
**Rita Ribeiro**

**Ex-Officio**  
Gail M. Fortes

## ywca staff

**Gail M. Fortes**

**Executive Director**

**Catherine Bourassa**

**Director of Programs and Services**

**Athena M. G. Mota**

**Director of Advocacy and Communications**

### administrative services:

Lisa Calvano  
Linda Larsen  
Annamarie Lopes  
Janice Fauteux  
Linda Rose  
Jack Davis  
Dave Pires  
Domingo Quinones

Director of Finance  
Office Manager  
Administrative Assistant  
Finance Clerk  
Receptionist  
Facilities Manager  
Custodian  
Custodian

### youth services:

Kathleen Stykowski  
Aline Jasgur  
Ildavina "Vicky" Silva  
Shawneen Fyock  
Sharonique Araujo  
Michael Grant  
Joe Guarino  
Beatriz Guerrero  
Jill Howard  
Natasha Iraheta  
Iris Ruiz  
Thomas Williams  
Shirley Houtman

Teen Services Coordinator  
Teen Services Assistant Instructor  
ywkids Site Coordinator  
Coordinator of Support Services  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Group Leader  
ywkids Asst. Group Leader  
ywkids Clerical Support

### wellness for women and girls:

Ana Silva  
Valentina Martinez

Outreach Specialist  
Outreach Specialist

### adult services:

Joan Yotides

Widowed Persons Director

### women's collaborative project:

Candy Royster

Resident Assistant

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southeastern massachusetts

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New Bedford, MA 02740

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of Greater New Bedford

**our voice**

For info on any of our  
programs and services,  
please call the YWCA:  
508-999-3255 or visit:  
[www.ywcasema.org](http://www.ywcasema.org)