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YOUNGER WOMEN'S TASK FORCE



A PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

1050 17TH ST. NW, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 202-293-4505 YWTF@NCWO-ONLINE.ORG

Welcome from the Younger Women's Task Force!

The Younger Women's Task Force is a coalition of progressive younger women, ages 19 to 39, from across the country. The YWTF is working to define and develop the next generation of the women's movement by reaching out to all younger women, including those who may not already feel a part of the women's movement, and giving them the tools to decide what issues matter most and how to work on their policy priorities.

Through the grassroots organizing of nine regional chapters across the country, YWTF is developing policy and legislative agendas on issues of concern to younger women, sponsoring congressional briefings and events on younger women's issues, providing information to individual members of Congress and their staffs, and incorporating younger women's issues into the existing framework of the NCWO. YWTF hopes to provide a stronger voice in the policymaking process for women ages 19 to 39.

The YWTF Newsletter will be a quarterly publication containing updates on Task Force activities and efforts across the country and highlighting issues of interest to Task Force members. Thank you for reading, and please visit our website for more information at YWTF@NCWO-online.org.

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Thank You to our Funders!

YWTF wishes to thank the following funders, without which the National MeetUp of YWTF members would not have been possible! Thank you!



The Eastman Fund

The General Motors Foundation

The Leo S. Guthman Foundation

Lifetime Television

Oxygen Media



The Oxygen Network

Events

YWTF's National MeetUp

To launch YWTF, young women from 42 states converged in Washington at George Washington University January 28-30, 2005 to discuss the social, legislative and cultural priorities of their generation.



YWTF Founding Members and Coordinating Committee

At a strategy meeting last June, it was agreed that YWTF should not be D.C.-centered in its membership or goals. Survey questions and applications to attend the MeetUp were sent to women around the country through e-mail lists, postings at colleges, community centers and health clinics, and word-of-mouth advertising. More than 500 applications were mailed back, and the YWTF selected 130 to attend the first national gathering of the organization.

Through initial outreach, YWTF found that issues of concern to younger women often differ from those addressed by the mainstream women's movement. Based on the answers to survey questions regarding the most pressing concerns of women ages 19 to 39, the central focus of the MeetUp became to draft a Younger Women's Issues Agenda. Participants spent the majority of the weekend in break-out groups discussing one of eight issues, including sexual and reproductive freedom, media representation and body image, and inclusion and diversity within the women's movement.



YWTF members discuss gendered violence



Mingling at the Welcome Reception

In addition to drafting an agenda, the weekend included a series of intergenerational dinners where senior women leaders hosted YWTF MeetUp participants at their homes. Hosts included: Martha Burk, Chair, NCWO; Leslie Calman, Senior Vice President, Legal Momentum; Cynthia Harrison, Associate Professor, George Washington University; Barbara Haugen, Senior Vice President, The Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers; Joan Kuriansky, Executive Director, Wider Opportunities for Women; Theresa Loar, Senior Advisor, U.S. Water Sector Program Management Office; Karen O'Connor, Director, Women & Politics Institute; Liz Velez, Academic Director, Community Scholars Program; and Laurie Young, Executive Director, Older Women's League.

Finally, young women broke into regional groups where they elected regional directors and discussed which issues from the Issue Agenda were most critical in their regions. One- and five-year action plans were constructed and in the coming months, regional chapters will organize around one or more of the issues on the agenda.

Did You Know?

The Task Force includes a women running for her state senate, a mother on welfare trying to start her own advocacy group, and an engineering student trying to break into the male-dominated science world at her graduate school.



Letter from NCWO Chair Martha Burk

Welcome to the Younger Women's Task Force, a project of the National Council of Women's Organizations, the nation's oldest and largest coalition of women's groups.

First, let me congratulate you on the incredible MeetUp that was held in January. It truly can be the start of the "next wave" of women's activism. We know that all women are not alike, but we also know that all women want basic fairness, and a world where they are welcomed as equals with men. There are many ways to work toward these goals, and I know you will discover new ones along with the tried-and-true.

We live in exciting times, times of the greatest opportunity for women that we have ever known. But we also live in perilous times, when conservative forces worldwide would roll back the gains women have made over the last century.

Thanks to women like you, that won't happen.

The NCWO has a slogan: "One woman can change the world, but it's easier if you work in groups." The YWTF is one group that will ensure a bright future for the women's movement.



NCWO Chair Martha Burk

Sincerely,
Martha Burk

Interested in becoming a member? Please email YWTF@NCWO-online.org and we will put you in touch with the regional director nearest you!

YWTF Issue Agenda

Utilizing a qualitative, open-ended application, we asked MeetUp applicants to identify the most important issues facing younger women today. These responses were fused into eight categories:

- Raising Consciousness about the History and Need for Feminism
- Breaking the Silence: Acknowledging and Redefining the Power Dynamics of Feminist Efforts
- Gendered Violence
- Sexual and Reproductive Freedom
- Economic Justice
- Women in the Media
- Access to Education and Opportunities
- Political Representation

Throughout the weekend, YWTF members met in issue groups where they developed issue statements for the agenda. During these break-out sessions, YWTF members defined the issue, how it affects younger women, and how young women can make a unique contribution in working on the issue.

At the end of the MeetUp, each group presented their statement to all attendees, who voted to approve them as part of an agenda-in-progress. Following the MeetUp, we held an online, ten-day comment period for feedback, edits, and proposals to amend each issue statement. These suggestions were anonymously voted on to produce the final issue agenda.

Regional News — Meet the Regional Director Nearest You!

DC Metro Region

Deva Kyle, emaildeva@yahoo.com

Deva, 26, is an attorney in Washington, D.C. helping retired and working people get their pensions. She was a founding member and editor-in-chief of Squirm Magazine, a feminist sex-positive Vassar College publication. She served on the board of directors for the national non-profit Alternatives to Marriage Project. In law school she was the editor-in-chief of the Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law.

Midwest/OH-KY-WV Region

Maureen White (Midwest), Mo@Projectq.org

Maureen, 24, currently works for the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center as their Youth Development Coordinator. In her current employment she coordinates a young women's group every week, as well as plans an annual Young Women's Empowerment Conference. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Carroll College, and in graduate school she is studying to be a school counselor.

Elena Corley (OH-KY-WV), eknight@mix.wvu.edu

Elena is a senior pursuing a double major in German and Women's Studies at West Virginia University. During her senior year of high school she lived with a German host family, attended a German high school and met members of the German Congress in Berlin. Currently she is President of the German Club, and she is a former officer and current member of WVU's Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Mountaineers (BiGLM).

New England Region

Princess Wood, princesswood@wildmail.com

Princess directs the Education and Outreach Programs at the Women's Rape Crisis Center in Vermont. A Filipina-American, she has organized communities around issues of oppression for the past four years. She is also a board member of the Peace & Justice Center in Burlington, Vermont. She received her B.S. in Social Work at the University of Vermont in the spring of 2004.

NYC Metro Region

Alexis McNaughton, am2215@barnard.edu

Alexis grew up in Enid, Oklahoma. As the first exchange student from her high school, she lived and studied in Belgium. She was Barnard College's first Women's Studies/Human Rights combined major. This past semester she interned for Hillary Clinton. This summer she will travel to India with EarthWatch Institute on an expedition titled "Maternal and Child Healthcare in India."

Erin Lee Mock, erinleemock@mindspring.com

Erin is a 22-year-old from New York City. In the past year, she has worked for John Edwards for President and Nontraditional Employment for Women, training, placing, and advocating for women in construction industry careers. A member of the Street Harassment Project since 2001, she continues to fight street harassment while attending the CUNY Graduate Center.

Pennsylvania Region

Jen Collier, jcollier@uvm.edu

Jen is a 22-year-old college graduate. She moved to Philadelphia last year shortly after graduating from the University of Vermont with a bachelor's degree in social work. During her senior year, her field placement was done at the local women's shelter. She now works as a service coordinator at a Center for Independent Living in Philadelphia.

Andi McClanahan, amccclanahan@po-box.esu.edu

Andi is an assistant professor of Communication Studies in Gender, Politics, and Cultural Studies at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. Andi's research focuses on alternative life choices of single women, including the choice to remain single and/or childless and the societal stigma attached to these decisions.

Southeast Region

Katie Wilson-Milne (Carolinas), klw8@duke.edu

Katie just graduated from Duke University where she studied Public Policy and African-American Studies. She was involved in several social justice issues on campus revolving around the war in Iraq, women's empowerment and racial equality. Katie plans to spend the next year living in South Africa before she attends law school.

Kate Michel (Georgia), kemiche@learnlink.emory.edu

Kate Michel is a junior at Emory University majoring in Political Science and minoring in Women's Studies. She is an Emory Community Building Fellow for the 2005-2006 year. Kate hopes to go on to law school and eventually pursue a career in DC as a lawyer for a non-profit Women's group.

Stephanie Mitchell-Madden (Northern Florida), wonderwomyn45@yahoo.com

Stephanie, 28, does outreach for a group of community health centers in Pinellas County, Florida, primarily working with uninsured patients. She previously worked as a Rape Prevention Educator for the local rape crisis center in northern California before moving to Florida to attend the University of South Florida for her Women's Studies masters degree. Stephanie lives in Tampa, Florida.

Sarah Covert (Gulf South), scovert@tulane.edu

Sarah, 22, is the recipient of the Parks Dean's Honor Scholarship at Newcomb College of Tulane University. She will graduate in May with a B.A. in Women's Studies and a B.S. in Psychology. She is in the process of writing her honors thesis entitled, "Hey, Baby: The Relation between Benevolent Sexism and Response to Terms of Endearment." She studied abroad at John Cabot University in Rome in Spring 2003.

Sophie Brion (Southern Florida), sophie@womensfundmiami.org

Sophie attended the University of Miami, where she double-majored in Philosophy and Political Science. Upon graduation she worked for the ACLU of Florida. A strong advocate for social change, she has also worked for Planned Parenthood of the Palm Beach and Treasure Coast Area, Inc. and she currently directs the Women's Advocacy Project for the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade.

Southwest Four Corners Region

Annette Gaynes, gaynes.99@alum.dartmouth.org

Annette Gaynes is a systems engineer in Tucson, Arizona. She spent her college years in Hanover, New Hampshire, earning a B.A. in Engineering with a focus in mechanical and electrical engineering from Dartmouth College. Since returning from the MeetUp, Annette has recruited over 40 new YWTF members and has begun organizing efforts to use engineering to help the handicapped.

Elizabeth Tipton, marianolake@yahoo.com

Elizabeth has a B.A. in Mathematics from Transylvania University and is working on her M.A. in Sociology from the University of Chicago. She currently resides on the Navajo Nation. During her first year in New Mexico, she was the Membership Director for Girl Scouts on the eastern portion of the Navajo Nation; she currently is an Education Specialist in the Transitional Studies department at UNM-Gallup.

Western Region

Lauren Luttrell, laurenluttrell@wanaral.org

Lauren currently works for NARAL Pro-Choice Washington. She is a 2005 fellow of the Institute for a Democratic Future political training program. She received a B.A. from Western Washington University where she studied American Cultural Studies & Dance and served as the coordinator of the Sexual Awareness Center.