



CITYWIDE-OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
 COORDINATED
 CHILDREN'S SERVICES INITIATIVE
 FAMILY CO-CHAIRS



Karmita M-Randall, MPA
 Family Consultant

Monthly Email Newsletter March 2024

Monique Lindsay,
 Family/ Parent
 Advocate

Welcome to the March 2024 Newsletter from the City-wide Oversight Committee Family Co-Chairs. This month, we honor Women's History Month and recognize the women who embody the spirit of "Everyday Heroes" in our families, communities, and organizations. These women play a crucial role in supporting youth and families. As Family Co-chairs, our focus is on offering advocacy, resources, and information. We express our gratitude to all of you for supporting this newsletter tailored to your needs. Thank you sincerely, Karmita & Monique.

WOMEN'S MONTH HISTORY



Hello March

- M ay the early spring
- A waken your soul and
- R emind you to
- C elebrate the season with the
- H ope and Joy it brings

ccsicofamilycochairs@vibrant.org

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES.

WE EXTEND AN OPEN INVITATION FOR INPUT FROM PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, LEADERS CAREGIVERS, CARETAKERS, ADVOCATES, TEACHERS, ORGANIZATION STAFF ETC

SEND US INFORMATION, RESOURCES, ARTICLES, FAMILY VOICES, STORIES, EVENTS, POETRY AND MUCH MORE.....

Series of Storms by LaRrain Subway Poetry Moments



We are a series of storms.

Woman is our name.

We are the sun storm that keep people smiling.

We are the rainstorm that cleanse the sadness away.

We are the snowstorm that settle quietly in the night.

We are the Ice storm that will force you to steer right.

We are the thunderstorm that will strike down the pain.

We are the sandstorm that blisters your face.

We are the tornado storm that stirs. everything up.

We a series of storm. We can bring peace and tranquility. We can also bring chaos and confusion....

Only mother nature determines our fate.

We are a series of storms.



Our Everyday Women's History Heros

Paulette Young, MSW



Paulette Young is the Coordinator of Peer-led Services here in Westchester County. In this role, she plays a crucial part in providing specialized services to individuals, helping them achieve their goals. These services range from clinical services to community-based assistance, family and peer support using credible messengers. Paulette's dedication contributes significantly to the well-being of the communities in Westchester County.

I AM a woman!

She has been in the field of social work for almost 14 years. She began her career as a peer advocate and made a commitment to elevate herself so that she can help youth in the most meaningful way. What inspired her to pursue working in the social service field, is her passion for helping young people navigate the system while achieving their goals and empowering them throughout the process.

She believes that education is key to obtaining your career goals. One of her greatest accomplishments is receiving a full scholarship to attend Silberman school of social work. She graduated May 2023 with a Masters of Social Work with honors. Since then, she has been able to implement programming highlighting the importance of credible messengers and how pairing them with youth in foster care allows the youth to age out of foster care with the knowledge of how to navigate the system but also feel empowered.

Paulette shares her lived experiences and inspires others to use their voices to express the challenges that they face as youth, young adults and families as a whole. She believes in the foundation of family. She understands the need for support and advocacy. She is knowledgeable about resources available for youth and families. She is relatable and at the same time vested in positive outcomes for youth and families.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

What does Women's History month mean to you?

Woman's History month is a time to reflect and honor women that have made an impact in someone's life and in this world. Women's History month helps us understand key moments in women's history. It is a time to reflect on the great work that has already been done, that has paved the way for so many of us to be able to experience amazing opportunities today.

Who are the pivoted women who influence you to achieve my goals in life.?

I have been fortunate to have been mentored by some amazing women throughout my life. My daughters play a big part in influencing me to strive to achieve a better me every day. My goal is to make them proud and teach them important life skills along the way.

Q: What suggestions do you have for youth and families in today's society?

A few suggestions that I have for youth and families in society today is, always communicate and listen to understand. Always find time to connect with the ones that you care about and love. Self-care is so important and allows you to refill yourself so that you are not pouring from an empty cup. Live your life to the fullest and make great memories along the way.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

Joyce McMillian



Joyce McMillan is a thought leader, advocate, activist, community organizer, educator, and the Founder and Executive Director of JMAC for Families (Just Making a Change). She is inspiring individuals to advocate for their rights. She is instrumental in creating change for youth and families impacted by the child welfares system.

I AM a woman!

Her mission is to remove systemic barriers in communities of color by bringing awareness to the racial disparities in systems where people of color are disproportionately affected. Joyce believes the conversation about systemic oppression must happen on all levels consistently before meaningful change can occur. Joyce's ultimate goal is to abolish systems of harm – especially the family policing/regulation/destruction system (also known as the child welfare system) – while creating concrete community resources.

Joyce has previously led child welfare family engagement and advocacy efforts at Sinergia Inc, an organization that works with and to support people with disabilities and their families. Prior to Sinergia, she was the Program Director at the Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP), where she created a community space to educate the community about restorative practices to empower, affirm, transform, and heal communities of color that have been traumatized by systemic injustices.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

Joyce McMillian

What does Women's History month mean to you?

Women's History month means honoring the entire woman for everything we are, everything we are not as well as all we desire to be individually and collectively.

Who are the pivoted women who influence you to achieve your goals in life?

My mother and my grandmother were courageous women who taught me life principles, boundaries, to believe in myself and stand up for issue that are important to me.

What suggestions do you have for youth and families in today's society?

I want young people and families to know if you don't stand for something you will fall for nothing, meaning we all have to have a cause important enough to us to stand up for, advocate, for sacrifice for, so that we can help to create positive outcomes for youth and families,

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

Lorraine Gittens-Bridges



I AM a woman!

Lorraine Gittens-Bridges is a New York City public school graduate who believes that it takes a village to successfully raise and educate a child. She graduated from August Martin High School and then went on to obtain her degree from the prestigious Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations with a focus on Human Resources. She credits members of her community for encouraging her to apply to the Ivy League school. The mentorship and support she received is what fuels her passion to give back to her community. Ms. Gittens-Bridges served as a N.Y.C. public school parent association president on the local, district (29) and citywide level. In 2009,

Ms. Gittens-Bridges was elected to serve as the chartering president of the Queens Community, Parent, Teacher Student Association. (The only unit of National/NYS PTA in NYC). Her dedication to children and her community has been recognized by education advocates across the country. In 2015 Lorraine was awarded the National P.T.A. Life Achievement Award, for exemplary service in support of children. In 2023 she was awarded National PTA Advocate of the Year. Ms. Gittens-Bridges currently serves as the Chairperson for Community Youth Care Services Inc., Vice Chairperson for the Youth, Education and Libraries Committee for Queens Community Board 13, Manager for the Queens Alliance Drumline, Founder, Students Real Friends Network, Co-Founder, HBCU Parent Association, Secretary for Friends of Rosedale Library, Scholarship Committee for United Black Golf Association. Lorraine is a very busy woman participating in many organizations and activities. Ms. Gittens-Bridges is a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Delta Beta Zeta Chapter.

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“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

Lorraine Gittens-Bridges

What does Women's History month mean to you?

Having Women's History Month is so important because we are working non-stop to take care of our families and lift up our communities all year long. Having a month gives us time to stop and take care of each other and celebrate along with moving forward with the plans and activities for the rest of the year.

Who are the pivoted women who influence you to achieve my goals in life.?

My sister, Elyse and my mother-in-law. They both helped me in different ways. My sister is my sounding board. We both care about helping others and we are always brainstorming for ideas and discussing how to make ideas come to life. My mother passed away right before my sixth birthday. Although she can be very bossy, she is my biggest supporter when it comes to raising my child. I never took her support for granted. I was grateful that my child had his grandmother. My sister and I lost our grandparents early in our lives too.

What suggestions do you have for youth and families in today's society?

Please begin to understand local, state and national politics. We are the employers. If we don't pay attention and tell our employees what to do with our taxpayer \$ whose fault is that? We allow elected officials to allocate our taxpayer \$ wherever they want because we are not paying attention. We must teach our families and their children how to follow our money and make sure needed services are provided for all families in need. Check with your City Council Representative and see if they have participatory budgeting in the neighborhood. High School students can participate and vote where some of the money should go! Please advocate for financial literacy for students in grades K-12.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros



JACQUELYNE (DR. JACKIE) CODY

Jacquelyne (Dr. Jackie) Cody is a noteworthy leader in the education community. She is known for her work currently as the Chief Executive Director of CodyCares for Kids, Inc.

I AM a woman!

Dr. Cody is credited for designing an eclectic counseling program that entails a wholistic (mental-educational-social-emotional) approach called Life Advisement which is based on the theology and theoretical framework that once a person realizes their gifts and talents, "Knows Thyself," they are then successfully living the richest life known to humanity.

Dr. Jackie Cody is also experienced in educating potential educators, supervising educators, and working with school communities as a team to effect great positive change in the lives of individuals, especially students, and society at large. Dr. Cody has provided effective and applicable crisis counseling and has served as an Educator and Parent Leader on every level throughout NYC Public Schools.

Dr. Cody is a member of the National Action Network and Chair of the Education committee, Chair of the African American Clergy and Elected Officials' Education Committee, Life Member of the National Alliance of Black Educators and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is affiliated with various other professional alliances and organizations. Dr. Cody has received countless awards and has been appointed to prominent positions locally and nationally. Dr. Cody holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Hofstra University, Hempstead.

"An empowered woman, can empower others."

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

JACQUELYNE (DR. JACKIE) CODY

What does Women' History month mean to you?

Just like Black History Month, I am a woman all year around, and it reminds me of how far we've come, the sacrifices that women before me have made, and how much farther we have to go. My wish is that the kindness and support that is displayed among women during the month of March be exhibited every day.

Who are the pivoted women who influence you to achieve your goals in life?

They have all transitioned onto Glory: My mother, Ida D. Willins-Cody, my grandmother, Irene H. Willins, and my aunts: Euline H. Turner, Shirley Reynolds, Ianthy (Annie) Newton, and Ollie McClean. All of these women were trailblazers in their own right, and definitely unsung heroes to our communities. For example, my grandmother mentored the late Hon Shirley Chisholm, and they were founding members of the Bed-Stuy Democratic Club. There is so much strength they carried, and that was all the example I needed to know that I could be anything I wanted to be. Imagine this little girl witnessing a black woman making a claim to run for the President of the United States?! This occurred at the church I grew up in, Concord Baptist Church. These are the type of women I was consistently exposed to. What greatness!

What suggestions do you have for youth and families in today society?

Live like the world you wish to see (hoping that at the heart of each human is to see a loving society); treat people with the kindness you want to receive; and be good to yourself.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros



FLORA ICHIOU HUANG

Flora has been an educator and social service professional dedicated to reforming the education, social service, and child welfare systems to improve life for families.

I AM a woman!

For over 10 years, she served as the Coordinator for the Lower East Side Community Partnership Program (CPP), which was funded by the Administration for Children's Services of New York City to promote community engagement within the child welfare system. Before that, she taught in New York City public high schools.

As the coordinator for the Lower East Side CPP, she worked with various stakeholders to connect families with resources while addressing issues of racial disparity and disproportionality within the child welfare system. When the ACS contract for the Lower East Side CPP was not renewed, she and some of her former colleagues continued the work by starting a new non-profit organization, the Lower East Side Community Partnership Project, Inc, to continue some of the work.

Flora also started her consulting firm, Stronger \Families and Communities, which includes providing support to families of children in foster care. She also provides quality test prep instruction for schools and nonprofit programs throughout the city as an instructor for the company, Bell Curves.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

Our Everyday Women's History Heros

What does Women' History month mean to you?

Women's History Month is a time to reflect on the achievements and accomplishments of women who have advanced society. It also reminds us to recognize all the women who contribute in ways that are not recognized as much but equally important: mothers, grandmothers, daughters who care for their parents, and other caregivers.

Who are the pivoted women who influence you to achieve your goals in life?

All women, whether it is an executive who broke the glass ceiling, or a home health aide is equally important. Women disproportionately make up the education and service sector, where we are underpaid and not recognized enough for our work.

What suggestions do you have for youth and families in today society?

My advice to all youth and families today is to take time to enjoy the moment now that you have together and appreciate what others do for you and what you do for others. Learn to take care of yourself, so you can better care for others. For parents, I encourage you to be more in tune with your children's needs. Do not be afraid to change your approach to working with your children even if it is much different than how you were raised. Most important, do not be afraid to reach out for help. None of us can do this alone. Most importantly, take the time to recognize the women in your life who have improved your life.

“An empowered woman, can empower others.”

DID YOU KNOW?

NYC TEENSPACE

NYC Teenspace is a free mental health support program available to any teenager age 13 to 17 living in New York City. Whether you struggle with mental health challenges or just want somebody to talk to about your everyday ups and downs, you can sign up for Teenspace to be connected to a licensed therapist for ongoing support. You will also get access to online mental health exercises to complete at your own pace. Teenspace is offered by the NYC Health Department and powered by Talkspace.

Sign Up Instructions for Teens

Follow these steps to register:

1. Visit Talkspace and enter your address and birthday.
2. Enter your parent or guardian's information and email address so they can provide consent.
3. Complete a simple online assessment to share your mental health needs and preferences.

You will then get matched with a licensed therapist for ongoing virtual support, access to online mental health exercises or both.

Types of Care Provided

Once signed up, a teen will be matched with a therapist within days. All Talkspace therapists participating in this program are licensed in New York and have experience working with teens. They can address a vast range of mental health conditions and concerns, including anxiety, depression, stress, relationships, grief and trauma.

Teens do not need to be experiencing mental health symptoms to participate. You can sign on with a Talkspace therapist to discuss thoughts and feelings about your day-to-day life.

Therapy will take place primarily through messaging on the secure Talkspace platform. You can message your therapist as much as you like and the therapist will reply five days per week. As part of the Teenspace program you can also schedule one 30-minute live virtual session, by via video or audio, each month.

Teens will also have access to interactive exercises and short lessons designed specifically to support teen mental health.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/teenspace.page#Overview> (2024)

OUR NEEDS GET INVOLVED

Pay off NYC child support debt twice as fast. PAY IT OFF
March 1 - 15, 2024

More than 4,000 noncustodial parents have participated in the Pay It Off (PIO) program. The average debt reduction amount owed to NYC DSS per case is \$4,322.

How much debt can we erase for you? Take action now to find out.

Step 1: Sign an Agreement
Submit the completed, signed agreement and a copy of your photo ID between March 1 - 15 by email, mail, or in person. A separate agreement is required **per case** to receive a credit.
EMAIL: caseworkers@nyc.dss.nyc.gov subject: "Pay It Off". Include your full name & Case ID(s) (e.g., AB1234567) in the subject line.

Mail: Pay It Off, NYC DSS, 151 West Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10013
In person: DSS Customer Service Walk-In Center, 151 West Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10013, Business Hours: Mon - Fri, 8 AM - 6 PM (except holidays and weekends)

Step 2: Make a payment(s)
• Make a payment(s) of \$500 or more, intended for Pay It Off between March 1 - 15. Payments must be received no later than March 15, 2024 to receive the credit.
• Payments should accompany the agreement. When submitting the agreement separately, indicate when and how the payment will be submitted.
• For multiple cases, submit a separate payment per case.
• Make payments payable to the "NYC Child Support Processing Center".
• Include your child support Case ID and indicate "Pay It Off" on your payment.

Step 3: Get your qualified payment dollar-for-dollar match
DSS will send you a summary of action taken 2 to 3 weeks after the agreement and payment(s) are received.

Step 4: Lower your debt over time
Sign up for the Automatic Credit Program (ACP) to receive a one-time debt reduction of up to \$3,500 to amount owed to NYC DSS when applying for ACP between March 1, and March 15, 2024.
Pay your monthly court-ordered obligation in full for a year and get up to \$3,000 off your NYC DSS debt at the end of 12 months. Stay in the program for up to three years and get a total of up to \$15,000 taken off your NYC DSS debt. See details at nyc.dss.nyc.gov/parents.

Additional information:
• If you are off the agreement your money judgment owed to NYC DSS, your interest will be removed.
• Late or non-payment of your child support could be reported and claim denied at any time you wish.

Don't miss this chance to reduce your debt!
Questions? Email: dss.caseworkers@nyc.dss.nyc.gov, subject: "Pay It Off", and include your full name & Case ID (e.g., AB1234567) or birth date.

Bronx Housing Forum

5:30 - 8 pm
Thursday, March 21
1501 Jerome Ave.
Bronx, NY 10452
RSVP: bit.ly/BxHF24

CLAIM YOUR HALF-PRICE FAIR FARES NYC METROCARD TODAY!
The Department of Social Services (DSS) Outreach Team is Here

JOIN US AT OUR UPCOMING
HRA FAIR FARES ENROLLMENT EVENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
OFFICE OF NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER CHANTEL JACKSON

FAIR FARES NYC

THE FAIR FARES NYC METROCARD GIVES YOU A 50% DISCOUNT ON SUBWAY AND ELIGIBLE BUS RIDES. PAY-PER-RIDE, WEEKLY UNLIMITED, AND MONTHLY ARE AVAILABLE. YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE FAIR FARES NYC PROGRAM.

Date: Tuesday, April 16th, 2024
Time: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: 780 Concourse Village West, Bronx, New York, 10451

SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TO ENROLL BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW

NYC DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Beyond Labels: Conversations on Disability

WHERE: Greenberg Lounge, VANDERBILT HALL
WHEN: March 29, 2024

Come join The Disability Allied Law Students Association for a Speaker Symposium with Esteemed Guest Speakers:
Ali Stroker & Tiffany Yu
RSVP Link Below
Snacks will be provided

SHARING INFO & RESOURCES

HIGHBRIDGE ANNUAL FAMILY WELLNESS & RESOURCE FAIR

WELLNESS

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024
10AM-3PM
P.S. 011 Highbridge
1257 Ogden Ave,
Bronx, NY 10452

Join us as we bring our community together to learn how to support each other, share resources, network and help build a stronger community

- Community and Health Resources
- Family Workshops
- Teaching Artist and Children's Activities
- Youth Performances
- Healthy Eating Information
- Mental Health Resources
- Free Health Screenings
- Fitness Demonstrations
- Prizes & Giveaways
- Food and Refreshments

Bridge Builders, GLOBE, IT YOURS, HIGHBRIDGE, Astor, SPEAK, and other community partners.

Housing Information Classes **NYC** Department of Housing Preservation & Development

We have your housing answers!

Tenants - Know your rights!

- Push back against harassment
- Eliminate pesky pests
- Landlord avoiding repairs
- Apply for affordable housing

Homeowners - We got you too!

- Learn about violations and summonses
- Navigate all the City agencies you need
- Resources for repairs, contractors, and financing
- Avoiding deed theft and other scams

Register Here!

Full List of Classes

Visit nyc.gov/hpc for more information.
FREE Zoom classes with City agencies and Community Based Organizations

OUR COMMUNITY PANTRY **NOURISH**
A COMMUNITY SUPPORTIVE FOOD PROGRAM

WEAR YOUR MASK AND KEEP SOCIAL DISTANCE

FREE MONTHLY FOOD PACKAGES FOR SENIORS PANTRY DISTRIBUTION

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

- Are you over 60?
(Must bring state or city ID)
- Are you a New York State resident?
- Do you make less than \$1,473 a month, or \$17,677 a year?
(Please provide social security award letter, bank statement, or self-declaration income)

call 917-982-2562 for more information
This institution is an equal opportunity provider

CCSI BOROUGH BASED COUNCIL MEETINGS

BRONX BROOKLYN QUEENS MANHATTAN ,& STATEN ISLAND

SEE CALENDAR BELOW

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 STATEN ISLAND SAC @ 10AM	5	6	7 SAC IN QUEENS @ 10AM	8 BRONX SAC @ 10AM	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY	18	19	20	21 MANHATTAN SAC @ 10AM	22 BRONX SAC @ 10AM	23
24 EASTER	25 QUEENS SAC @ 10AM	26	27	28	29	30

Coordinated Children's Services Initiative.

City-Wide Oversight Family Co-Chairs
Karmita (347) 595-9426
Monique 646) 401-2773
CCSICOCFAMILYCOCHAIRS@vibrant.org

THE COORDINATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES INITIATIVE (CCSI) OF NEW YORK CITY IS A UNIQUE CROSS-SYSTEMS FORUM THAT BRINGS TOGETHER PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, YOUTH, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS THROUGHOUT THE FIVE BOROUGHS OF NYC ON A MONTHLY BASIS TO CREATE MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, SHARE RESOURCES, AND ADVOCATE FOR INCREASED AWARENESS AND QUALITY ACCESS TO CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH CHALLENGES. USING THE SYSTEM OF CARE MODEL*, CCSI MEMBERS TACKLE SOME OF THE TOUGHEST BARRIERS STANDING IN THE WAY OF YOUTH RECEIVING COMPREHENSIVE AND STREAMLINED SERVICES TO SUPPORT THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AND WORK TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE. (CCSI 2024)