

# News for Members and Friends

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

OCTOBER, 2010

## Westchester Women's Agenda

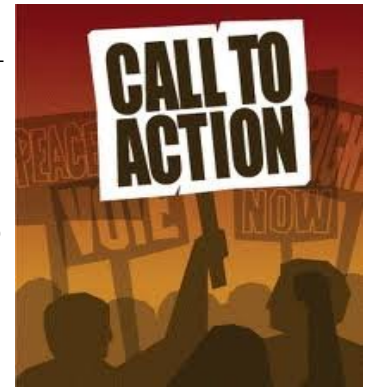
### Women's Café Coming in October: A Call to Action!

#### Upcoming Events:

- 2nd annual Manos Management Golf Classic to benefit Victims Assistance Services. Oct 5 at Salem Golf Club. Contact Stefan Malgarinos @610-5752 or [stefanm@manosmanagement.com](mailto:stefanm@manosmanagement.com)
- Take Back the Night, Westchester. Wed. Oct.6. 6:00 refreshments/ welcome @Memorial Methodist Church (250 Bryant Ave, White Plains). 6:30 rally and silent march to YWCA (515 North St), 7:30 speakout
- Sexual Assault It's Everybody's Business (screening of NO! The Rape Documentary), A film and talk on the topic of DV and other issues of victimization of women.. Tuesday, Oct. 19 @6:30 pm. Romita Auditorium, Mooney Center.-College of New Rochelle. Free and open to the public. Contact Dr. Judith Gordon, 914-654-5392 or [jgordon@cnr.edu](mailto:jgordon@cnr.edu)
- Undoing Racism Workshop. Oct. 17-19. @Fordham University. 400 Westchester Ave.. Harrison, NY. To register, visit [www.antiracistalliance.com](http://www.antiracistalliance.com).

The WWA will sponsor a Women's Café on the evening of October 28<sup>th</sup> at the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester. Based on the World Café model of "awakening and engaging collective intelligence through conversations about questions that matter" (see [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)), the evening will bring together leaders and membership of local organizations whose missions address the well-being of women. We are calling on organizations who may not always "sit at the same table" to come together and talk about what is important to them and to their

neighbors, family and constituencies. Part of our Communication and Community Engagement Committee's efforts to better understand and include the priority issues important to all communities of women who live and work in our richly diverse county, this Café is also an opportunity to educate each other on how the current fiscal and political climate is affecting women on the ground, to examine the real impact of coming county cuts to safety-net services, and to mobilize an effective grass-roots response. Our hope is that this Café will be the first step in organizing a broad-based, activist Women's



Forum in the Spring of 2011. The Café is free, dessert and coffee will be provided, and interpretation and childcare are available by prior arrangement. For further info., email: [westwomensagenda@gmail.com](mailto:westwomensagenda@gmail.com)

### Campaign to Restore Child Care Funding

On March 9, 2010, County Executive Rob Astorino announced \$16 million dollars of cuts from the County's 2010 budget, \$1.5 coming from child care. As a result, the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship was terminated, new Title XX child care subsidy cases were frozen as of April 1, 2010 and the parent co-pay rose from 15% to 20%, effective June 1, 2010.

Since the child care cuts were made, public rallies have been held in White Plains, Mt Vernon and Ossining calling for restitution of the funding for child care and the need to make children's services a priority for the county, especially during these difficult economic times.

A "Call for Kids" campaign is going out next week, anticipating the announcement of the new poverty figures for chil-

dren. We are asking people to call the County Executive to say that children's services must be a priority. Petition signatures are being collected and other public events are being planned.

For more information, contact Kathy Halas, Child Care Council of Westchester at [kathyh@ccwny.org](mailto:kathyh@ccwny.org) or Cora Greenberg, Westchester Children's Association at [cgreenberg@wca4kids.org](mailto:cgreenberg@wca4kids.org).

## WWA Requests Support for Local Policy Initiatives

### Ban Source of Income Legislation

A person's source of income (e.g. housing voucher assistance, social security, SSI, public assistance) is often a barrier to safe and affordable housing. WWA urges the County Executive to continue its support for legislation that would make it illegal for a landlord to reject a prospective tenant based on his/her source of income and for the County Board of Legislators to adopt such legislation.



### Provide Access to Reproductive Health Care

WWA supports the proposed Westchester County Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities Law. Its purpose is to protect those seeking and providing reproductive services at health care facilities from harassment, intimidation and violence while exercising their constitutional right to obtain reproductive health care services or provide such services.

### Balance Capital Support for Housing Development Between Urban and Suburban Areas

WWA is concerned that Westchester

may not provide funds to develop and preserve affordable housing in areas not targeted by the Housing Discrimination Settlement. Given the tremendous need for housing and the desire of many individuals and families to remain in urban areas, WWA urges the County Administration and Board of Legislature to balance the interests of providing housing opportunities in communities that are less racially diverse with developing housing in those communities that have traditionally provided affordable housing.

Establish the Westchester County Office for Women as a Charter Office.

## Westchester Housing Less Affordable for Women

Rental housing has become steadily less affordable in Westchester County, especially for women. According to the most recent Census data (for 2008), more than 42% of rental households in the County pay 35% or more of their household income in rent. Five years earlier (in 2003) only 36% of the County's rental households paid this high a percentage of their income in rent.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines "affordable" as housing that costs no



more than 30% of a household's monthly gross income.

Since the median income for women is substantially less than that for men (\$39,996 vs. \$53,136), rental households headed by women find housing even less affordable than do households headed by men.

For more information contact:

Rose Noonan, Housing Action Council, 914-332-4144, rnoonan@affordablehomes.org

## Spotlight on: Tostan



### Act Globally!

Visit [www.tostan.org](http://www.tostan.org) to learn about the social structure of female genital cutting (FGC) and how Tostan's approach to community-led development has led to the abandonment of FGC in thousands of villages in Africa.

Tostan's unique Community Em-

powerment Program (CEP) has successfully promoted human rights and health in villages throughout Africa.

Tostan means "breakthrough" in the West African language of Wolof. Since 1991, Tostan has brought its holistic 30-month education program to thousands of communities in ten African countries.

Find ways to get involved at [www.tostan.org](http://www.tostan.org)

# WWA Issue Priorities

Housing Development and Housing Support. Contact: Rose Noonan, Housing Action Council, 914-332-4144, [noonan@affordablehomes.org](mailto:noonan@affordablehomes.org).

Health Care. Contact: Lindsay Farrell, Open Door Family Medical Centers, 914-502-1450, [lfarrell@ood.org](mailto:lfarrell@ood.org).

Reproductive Rights. Contact: Reina Schiffrin, Planned Parenthood Hudson and Peconic, 914-467-7312, [reina.schiffrin@pphp.org](mailto:reina.schiffrin@pphp.org)

Violence Against Women (a) Sexual Assault. Contact: May Krukiel,

Victims Assistance Services/ WestCOP, 914-345-3113, [mkrukiel@westcop.org](mailto:mkrukiel@westcop.org). (b) Domestic Violence. Contact: Carlla Horton, Hope's Door, 914-747-0828, x11, [chorton@hopesDoorNY.org](mailto:chorton@hopesDoorNY.org)

Mental Health Care. Contact: Amy Gelles, 914-636-4400 x240.

Civil Legal Services. Contact: Barbara Finkelstein, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, 914-949-1305 x136, [bfinkelstein@ishv.org](mailto:bfinkelstein@ishv.org)

Economic Development. Contact: Anne Janiak, WEDC, 914-960-9725;

Kim Jacobs, Community Capital Resources [kjacobs@ccrhv.org](mailto:kjacobs@ccrhv.org)

Child Care. Contact: Kathy Halas, Child Care Council of Westchester, 914-761-3455 x102, [kathyh@ccwny.org](mailto:kathyh@ccwny.org)

Immigration.

Enact the Farm Work Fair Labor Practices Act to eliminate exclusions in labor law (A1867).



## Register to Vote!

### Why Your Vote Matters!

- It's only through voting that we truly have an opportunity to affect the political system and make changes. If you don't vote, you let politicians ignore issues that are important to you.
- Elections matter because politicians in office get to make important decisions that affect your family, your children, and your community. For example...At the Federal Level, politicians decide:

-Whether or not military-style firearms can be legally sold in your community.

-How much money the government will spend to help poor families pay rent.

At the State Level, politicians decide:

-How much money your local schools will get from state government

-Whether or not people who own guns will be required to store their guns where children can't reach them

At the County Level, politicians decide:

-The amount of money that low-income families have to pay for child-care.

-Whether or not poor children receive free dental care.

VISIT OR CALL  
 WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
 25 QUARROPAS STREET  
 WHITE PLAINS, NY 10601  
 (914) 995-5713  
[WWW.WESTCHESTERGOV.COM/BOE](http://WWW.WESTCHESTERGOV.COM/BOE)

## Perspective



You can Make a Difference!

A man goes out on a beach and sees that it is covered with starfish that have washed up in the tide. A little

boy is walking along, picking them up and throwing them back into the water.

"What are you doing, son?" the man asks. "You see how many starfish there are? You'll never make a difference."

The boy paused thoughtfully, and picked up another starfish and threw it into the ocean.

"It sure made a difference to that one," he said.

—A Hawaiian parable quoted in "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide.," by Nicholas D. Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn. (Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 2009). As told to the authors by Naka Nathaniel.

# Westchester Women's Agenda

P.O. Box 302  
White Plains, NY 10605  
Co-Chairs: Rosemarie Noonan and  
May Krukiel

To join, contact:  
[westwomensagenda@gmail.com](mailto:westwomensagenda@gmail.com)

A Strong Voice for Women in Westchester

Westchester Women's Agenda wishes to thank those legislators who have voted on behalf of our issues. We appreciate your continued support.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

—Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Community Activist and Leader:

Join the Westchester Women's Agenda, and add your strength to actions that support the empowerment of women. Join forces with women leaders of organizations that deliver critical services for women and children, advocate for and influence legislative and social policy, and act to improve the quality of life in Westchester County.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Dues: Individual\_\_\_\$50; Supporter\_\_\_\$100; Nonprofit Organization\_\_\_\$100; Corporation\_\_\_\$200; Student/Special Needs\_\_\_\$20.

Please complete, include your check made payable to WWA, and mail to WWA c/o Judith Schwartz, Treasurer, 300 Martine Avenue, Apt. 8C, White Plains, NY 10605.

## Snapshot of the Westchester Women's Agenda

The Westchester Women's Agenda is a feminist organization that advocates on behalf of women in Westchester County and works to ensure that the social and economic climate in the County offers women equal access to opportunity.

Our membership represents over 50 individuals and organizations serving tens of thousands of residents each year.

We seek equal rights and economic equality for women, champion reproductive freedom and access to healthcare, work to end violence against women, support civil rights for all, and

oppose racism and bigotry based on race or sexual orientation.

The WWA recognizes that affordable housing, healthcare, and child care are essential to low-income women who are often the most vulnerable members of our communities. Women who are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence require protections and services to assure their safety and ability to live freely. Women who are members of ethnic minorities should live in communities that are welcoming and provide equal access to opportunities available to others.

We have a distinguished history of protecting and advancing the interests of Westchester women. Our member organizations provide vital, quality services to thousands of County residents each year and do so in a cost-effective manner.

