



Young women connect at CARA's poetry event, "Giving Birth to New Roots."

Bringing an End to Violence: Women and Men Working Together for Safe Communities

Advocating for violence prevention and survivors of violence may be one of the toughest jobs out there, but Alisa Bierria takes on the work gladly. "I believe that oppression is mainly a result of trauma," she said. "I truly think that people would advocate for a more equitable world if they had the tools to address the trauma in their lives. Therefore, it's critical for communities to address trauma caused by sexual abuse and violence as well as the political impact of sexual oppression."

As cofounder and program coordinator of Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), Alisa moves toward the goal of an equitable world by advocating for and assisting the survivors left behind by mainstream antiviolence work. CARA works specifically with Black survivors, survivors with disabilities and young people, because these are some of the groups who are the least visible in antiviolence programs. Alisa stated, "Each of these communities has

higher than average rates of sexual assault, yet often have the least amount of services available."

CARA's work prioritizes women's experiences, but also works with women's entire communities—especially men—to end violence in the lives of women and girls. This is closely aligned with the Ms. Foundation's own views. The Ms. Foundation is not only one of the first national foundations to fund safety work, we were also the first to support antiviolence programs that directly involved men. We have funded violence prevention work that includes men in several ways, from educating men about their responsibility to stop violence to working with boys to redefine what it means to be masculine.

"Different communities have different needs and issues, so gender plays out in various ways in all of our work," Alisa said, "For example, when working with Black communities,



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Ms. Foundation for Women

SUMMER 2002

Welcoming a New Chair: Andrea S. Levere

In May 2002, the Ms. Foundation for Women welcomed Andrea S. Levere as the Chair of the Board of Directors. A Board member since 1998, Andrea brings an extensive background in community development, microenterprise, and organizational finance to her work at the Ms. Foundation for Women. "We're so pleased that Andrea is stepping into this new role," said Sara K. Gould, executive director. "The Ms. Foundation has benefited greatly from Andrea's expertise and perspectives as we have grown and expanded our work responding to women's and girls' most pressing needs."



Andrea S. Levere

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"Becoming the chair of the Board of Directors for the Ms. Foundation is one of the great honors of my life," said Andrea. "I look forward to working with the outstanding Board members and staff to garner the financial resources that the Foundation needs to truly realize the potential of its groundbreaking work."

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ms. Foundation supports the efforts of women and girls to govern their own lives and influence the world around them. Through its leadership, expertise and financial support, the Foundation champions an equitable society by effecting change in public consciousness, law, philanthropy and social policy.

Beliefs and Values Statement

Our work is guided by our vision of a just and safe world where power and possibility are not limited by gender, race, class or sexual orientation. We believe that equity and inclusion are the cornerstones of a true democracy in which the worth and dignity of every person is valued.

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Letter from the President and Executive Director



Henry Leutwyler

Dear Friends,

Since our inception, the Ms. Foundation for Women has sought to realize the vision of a just world for women and girls. Our work, and that of many other individuals and organizations, has laid the groundwork for women and girls to control their own lives and participate more fully in public life. Changes in women's and girls' roles, while not complete, have paved the way for parallel shifts in men and boys' roles.

To build a truly democratic society, the movement of women into all aspects of public life must be joined by men's far greater involvement in the private spheres of family and community. We recognize that the Ms. Foundation has a part to play in bringing about this change, and we are looking very closely at gender—the social, economic, and political relationships between women and men and girls and boys. After 30 years of building a strong base of expertise and credibility, now is the time to take the next steps in fulfilling our mission.

The Ms. Foundation has always included men and boys in our vision of an equitable world. Over the years, our beliefs have found their way into our grantmaking in the area of ending all forms of violence against women, and into the design of Take Our Daughters To Work® Day, which has always included school-based activities

for boys. In addition, many of the organizations we fund have a diverse leadership base of women and men working side by side to effect changes that, while women-focused, positively impact every member of a community.

We know that transforming the lives of women and girls cannot be complete without transforming the lives of men and boys. Issues such as work-family integration, sexual assault, and teasing and bullying cut across gender to deeply affect the lives of men and boys. Many men are hungry for these changes; for example, a recent national survey found that 82 percent of men ages 21 to 39 rated "having a work schedule which allows me to spend time with my family," as "very important" (Life's Work; Radcliffe Public Policy Center/Harris Interactive 2000).

Moving forward, we will bring this knowledge to our work in new ways. We are seeking out organizations, such as Communities Against Rape and Abuse (see cover story), grappling with new ways to support individuals, families, communities, and the broader society to shape more balanced relationships between women and men and address the complex relationships among gender, race and class. From the new Take Our Daughters And Sons To WorkSM Day, to our work with youth leading social change efforts, our work will begin to reflect a new analysis.

As always, we know that the Ms. Foundation can count on your support as we move forward with this exciting work. As many of you are aware, the Ms. Foundation is known for taking on the difficult issues, whether they are seen as possible or popular. Thank you for taking this journey with us to ensure that all women and men, and girls and boys, can live out their full potential.

Marie C. Wilson Sara K. Gould

Marie C. Wilson
President

Sara K. Gould
Executive Director



Bringing an End to Violence continued...
we must contend with the dominant culture's racist portrayals of Black men's sexuality as dangerous or inhuman. When discussing the current reality of sexual violence in Black communities, we must also address the painful legacy of the way that rape and rape myths have been used as a tool of racism."

To address this issue, CARA's Black People's Project places discussions of rape within the larger context of racism and the experience of being Black in America. Through organizing community forums in churches and other public spaces, CARA engages whole communities in discussions of police brutality, lynching, slavery and other issues that connect to Black people's experience of sexual violence. Instead of racism becoming a barrier to discussing rape, CARA integrates an analysis of racism into rape. This helps facilitate discussions where men can acknowledge the need for male accountability as it relates to women's oppression as well validate the fears that come up when discussing rape. CARA also works with individual Black men who promote CARA's mission by mentoring other men in the community.

CARA's other two programs, the Disability Pride Project (DPP) and the Young People's Liberation Project (YPLP), also have unique approaches to gender. DPP, which organizes people with disabilities against violence, deals with an unusually high number of male survivors. Alisa said, "Men with disabilities experience very high rates of sexual abuse and rape, and then struggle with self-blame and loathing. Because dominant culture has a very narrow definition of



Wendy Carrillo, youth activist and organizer of CARA's poetry event.

masculinity that does not include disability or rape survivors, many men with disabilities struggle with their own identity as men. Activists with disabilities at CARA expand conceptions of masculinity that are disability positive."

YPLP focuses much of its work on organizing young people to create safe spaces that challenge violence by discussing positive sexuality, gender, and relationships. Activists reach out to both young women and men through youth conferences, the local music scene, and other youth-oriented events. Emily Thuma, community organizer of YPLP, said, "We facilitate conversations among young people on how young women and men can have healthy relationships, and by extension, create healthy communities."

While CARA's work with men and boys is just one part of its mission, it is an integral piece of its strategy to organize local communities to change the political, economic and social factors that contribute to violence against women and girls.

For the future, Alisa envisions CARA's work as a first step toward a larger goal of creating a truly equitable society—one that will need both women and men striving together. She said, "Taking leadership to develop values and strategies for safety and accountability on a community's own terms not only addresses rape and abuse, but also builds opportunities for long-term cultural transformation."

*Welcoming a New Chair:
Andrea S. Levere continued...*

Andrea is the vice president of the Corporation for Enterprise Development in Washington, DC. She directs programs that invest in financial institutions and microenterprise organizations in low-income communities, fostering economic growth in those communities. In addition, she provides consulting and training to a number of nonprofit, public, and private institutions engaged in community development finance.

The Importance of Giving at the National Level

As a donor, one of the many decisions you make is how to allocate your resources among local, national, and international organizations. The Ms. Foundation knows that donors most often give at all of these levels, because they are aware of the lack of funding for women's organizations. However, if you have a particular goal to bring about change at the national level, the Ms. Foundation for Women will meet this goal and strengthen the efforts of local women's funds and organizations.

A Wider Vision. Holding a national perspective helps the Ms. Foundation select the most promising approaches to change across the country, in issues ranging from health care to leadership development. We also connect local organizations to national movements, amplifying their voices as an important part of a larger mission to create an equitable world. "Since its inception, the Ms. Foundation has understood that even our smallest local movements have national and global consequences," said Margaret Lynch, a longtime donor to the Ms. Foundation who also supports organizations in her home city of Los Angeles. "This vision helps real women who are making good choices have greater impact, brings me personally closer to every woman's local problems, and has made the Ms. Foundation a significant creator on every level."

Beyond Grantmaking. When an organization receives a grant from the Ms. Foundation, it receives much more than money. Grantees also receive training, advice and mentoring from both the Ms. Foundation and peer organizations. Through national and regional meetings, grantees meet and network with national Ms. Foundation staff and each

other, sharing lessons learned and ideas for growth. In addition, many grantees have told us that receiving a grant from the Ms. Foundation, a well-respected name in national philanthropy, helps them gain the support of other local and national foundations. Merle Chambers, a supporter of both the Ms. Foundation and several organizations in Denver, Colorado, recognizes the advantages that national organizations confer on

She stated, "I've been working with the Ms. Foundation's Democracy Funding Circle for some time now, and I get more knowledge from it than any other organization I support. I'm not just participating in something bigger than what I can find in Pittsburgh; what I've learned also helps guide my local giving. I feel that the education component is an important part of what the Ms. Foundation offers donors."

"I like that the Ms. Foundation funds grassroots organizations, rather than taking a 'trickle down' approach to change. That's the Ms. Foundation way—to empower women to change the world from the ground up."

—Margaret Lynch, Ms. Foundation donor

local groups. She said, "It is important to fund nationally in order to give substance and support to local work. Often, local organizations benefit from the resources, tools and products developed by national organizations."

Education. As a widely recognized expert on women's and girls' issues, the Ms. Foundation has made all kinds of education a top priority. We reach millions of people across the country through public education campaigns such as Take Our Daughters To Work® Day, and our research reports highlight the latest developments in programs for women and girls. We also place a great emphasis on donor education, bringing friends of the Foundation together through our collaborative funds and funding circles. Catherine Raphael, who gives to organizations in the Pittsburgh area, particularly appreciates this aspect of our work.

Influence. Because we know that local women are the best experts on solutions to their communities' problems, the Ms. Foundation's work brings their voices to the tables where public policy decisions are made. As a national organization, we open doors for women and girls that they cannot access on their own. Margaret Lynch said, "I like that the Ms. Foundation funds grassroots organizations, rather than taking a 'trickle down' approach to change. That's the Ms. Foundation way—to empower women to change the world from the ground up."

To learn more about our work, and to find out how you can support the Ms. Foundation, please call Susan Fryberger, development director, at (212) 742-2300.



ms. bits

From Our Kitchen Table to Yours

As a pioneer in the microenterprise development field for over a decade, the Ms. Foundation has listened to thousands of women who started their own businesses to support themselves and their families. Now, in partnership with Westview Press, we are bringing their voices to you in *Kitchen Table Entrepreneurs: How Eleven Women Escaped Poverty and Became Their Own Bosses*. Written by journalist Martha Shirk and Anna Wadia, director of program for the Ms. Foundation, *Kitchen Table Entrepreneurs* tells the true stories of 11 low-income women who used their entrepreneurial skills to chart a path out of poverty. Look for this inspirational book in stores everywhere on September 3, 2002.

Supporting Mothers who Survive Violence

On May 2, 2002, over 200 participants listened in on a Ms. Foundation audioconference to update anti-violence activists across the country on the landmark New York City case, *Nicholson v. Williams*. This case, closely watched by safety advocates, challenges the city's practice of blaming and punishing battered mothers for the abuse they suffer. Sharwline Nicholson, a survivor of partner abuse, lost custody of her children after being charged with "engaging in domestic violence" in their presence and "failure to protect" them. She filed a suit against the City, which has resulted in a federal judge ordering the City to stop

removing children from battered mothers. Because many women across the country face similar circumstances, the success of Nicholson's case paves the way for reform of punitive state and county policies that only inflict more harm on battered women and their families. Nicholson and her attorneys Carolyn A. Kubitschek and Jill Zuccardy joined Ms. Foundation staff to discuss the details of the case and how other activists can use the case's legal precedent to spark reform in their own communities.

Fighting for Child Care

On April 23, Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), and Marie C. Wilson co-moderated an audioconference on the reauthorization of the country's major child care program, the Child Care and Development Block Grant. A new investment of \$20 billion over the five years would allow two million additional children to receive child care help and provide funds for states to strengthen children's early learning experiences. Under current funding, only one in seven eligible children can receive child care benefits, and newly proposed welfare reform laws will make it even more difficult for working families to obtain the high quality child care they need. Guest speakers on the call included Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT), one of the bill's sponsors; Helen Blank, director of the CDF's Child Care Division, who discussed the current state of child care; and Sue Russell, president of Child Care Services in Durham, North Carolina, who addressed the special issues faced by the child care workforce.

A Night to Shine

On May 16, 2002, friends and guests of the Ms. Foundation gathered at the 14th Annual Gloria Awards: A National Salute to Women of Vision in New York City to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Take Our Daughters To Work® Day and honor women who've made the program

a nationwide success. Over 500 attendees helped us honor women who either organized, or participated in, exceptional local Take Our Daughters To Work® programs to make girls visible, valued, and heard. The event, hosted by Marie C. Wilson and Gloria Steinem, also featured celebrity presenters Angela Bassett, Cynthia Nixon, Jessye Norman, Martha Plimpton, and Jane Pratt.

Youth Taking Action

This summer, the Ms. Foundation's Collaborative Fund for Youth-Led Social Change (CFYS) gave \$1.4 million in grants to support youth engaged in their communities. The twelve organizations that received funding work in low-income communities across the nation and consider how young women and young men can lead together to positively affect their schools, workplaces, and politics. "These young leaders envision a just and safe world," said Sara K. Gould, executive director. "The CFYS grants and continuing education will allow young women and men to grow together and develop their leadership, communication, and community organizing skills to strengthen their lives and their communities."

For more information on the Ms. Bits, please visit our website at www.ms.foundation.org.



Opera star Jessye Norman makes time for girls from the New York City Housing Authority at the Gloria Awards.

China Jorjin

Marie C. Wilson Receives Prestigious Scrivner Award

On April 30, the Council on Foundations presented Marie C. Wilson, president, with the 2002 Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking. This award is among the highest honors in the field of philanthropy, recognizing individuals who possess the vision, principle, and personal commitment to make a difference through innovative and effective grantmaking.

During Wilson's 17-year tenure, the Ms. Foundation's pioneering programs and unconventional approach to grant-making have allowed the Foundation to achieve enormous impact on the lives of women and girls. Marie has guided

the Ms. Foundation through a period of intense growth, expanding our reach in communities across the country and directing much needed resources to pivotal issues for women and girls. The Scrivner Award brings unparalleled acknowledgment of the leadership, inventiveness and deep caring that Marie brings to the Ms. Foundation and the field of philanthropy.

"Marie Wilson and the Ms. Foundation for Women have shown us that a relatively small foundation can have a big impact and that funding for women benefits families, communities, and the nation," said Dorothy S. Ridings, president and CEO of the Council on Foundations. To read more about the award, and an interview with Marie, please visit www.ms.foundation.org.



Nancy Goldenberg

Marie C. Wilson accepts the Scrivner Award.



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