MICHIGAN NOW’s mission has never been clearer: when it comes to women's rights, we don't need to compromise -- we need to educate and organize! History has shown that the forces of hate and oppression are always grasping for power. We have faced these forces before, and good people have rallied to turn the tide. Michigan NOW is ready to go, and ready to fight for justice and equality NOW!

**Women’s History Month Event!**

**Michigan NOW Conference**

March 25th 2017

#WeRise17

[Image of conference poster with silhouettes of two people raising hands]

**TOGETHER WE RISE!**

Crossing Boundaries, Claiming Power, and Leading Change NOW!

The purpose of our conference is to connect social and reproductive justice activists in our state, and to provide resources and tools to advance the fight for justice in Michigan.

Our conference will focus on:

- Deepening our understanding of intersectionality and how it impacts individuals and communities
- Examining social relations and power dynamics
- Techniques for successfully reaching across social boundaries to achieve positive social change
- Effective advocacy and grassroots organizing
- Strengthening individual expression and personal power as a foundation for social change

Our conference is co-sponsored by the Ellen Bommarito LGBTQ Center at the University of Michigan-Flint and the Women’s Education Center at the University of Michigan-Flint. The conference will be at UM-Flint this year.
Our keynote speaker is Natasha Thomas-Jackson. Ms. Thomas-Jackson is an activist, writer, performance artist, consultant, and the co-founder/executive director of RAISE IT UP! Youth Arts & Awareness (RIU), an organization that promotes youth engagement, expression, and empowerment through performance, literary art, and social activism. The theme of her keynote address is, “How a Creative, Intergenerational, & Intersectional Feminism Will Save Us All.”

The Anti-Defamation League will give a presentation regarding the Alt Right and hate crimes in Michigan.

Acclaimed Michigan artist Madelyn Porter will perform a piece from one of our feminist pioneers.

Speak- outs to discuss personal experiences with social inequality.

We are planning a panel discussion regarding the experiences of girls and women in the Michigan corrections system. The purpose of the panel is to increase awareness of the conditions that women and girls face while incarcerated, to understand what factors contribute to women and girls being incarcerated, and to learn what is needed to help women and girls succeed once they are released. We are also working on a panel focusing on the experiences of immigrants in Michigan (legal and illegal).

Henna tattoos- including a design created for our conference.

Workshops focusing on skills for successful organizing and social activism led by activists currently working in Michigan.

We will conclude our conference with a chapter meeting where new officers will be elected to the state board (see info later in the newsletter regarding this). Conference resolutions should be submitted at the beginning of the conference.

Conference Sponsors and Table Vendors: Individuals or groups that would like to be a conference sponsor or have a table at our conference should complete the form near the end of the newsletter or contact Michigan NOW directly.

Keynote Speaker: Natasha Thomas-Jackson

Keynote address: How a Creative, Intergenerational, & Intersectional Feminism Will Save Us All

Natasha Thomas-Jackson is an activist, writer, performance artist, consultant, and the co-founder/executive director of RAISE IT UP! Youth Arts & Awareness (RIU), an organization that promotes youth engagement, expression, and empowerment through performance, literary art, and social activism. RIU has been featured on National Public Radio (NPR), PBS, NowThis, Huffington Post, Blavity, NYMag, Mashable, Yahoo, Buzzfeed and
more. Natasha's writing has been published by AlterNet, John Hopkins University, and the Black Congressional Caucus.

In 2005, she was a member of Flint’s first-ever National Poetry Slam Team and in 2008 received the National Hip Hop Political Convention’s Up & Coming Social Justice Artist-Activist Award. In 2012, the Detroit Pistons (and their philanthropic Come Together Foundation) recognized Natasha for her contribution in the areas of youth development and entertainment. As one of their first-ever Community Impact awardees, she received $25,000 from the Pistons for RAISE IT UP! programs.

Natasha was a 2014 Resident of the Windcall Institute and was a Black Women in Arts & Media panelist for the first annual State of Black Women in Michigan Conference hosted by Mothering Justice and the Black Women's Roundtable in Detroit in 2015. Through a partnership with these two organizations, she was part of a delegation that attended a White House briefing on the state of black women and girls in 2016.

Last year, Natasha performed at Harry Belafonte’s inaugural Many Rivers to Cross Music and Social Justice Festival in Atlanta, Georgia and for Kimberle Crenshaw’s #SayHerName Campaign at the African American Women and the Law Conference in Washington, DC. As an artist and speaker, she has had the honor of sharing the stage with artists and activists such as Angela Davis, Stevie Wonder, bell hooks, Janelle Monae, Ryan Coogler, Sonia Sanchez, Jessie Williams, John Legend and more.

Though Natasha wears many hats, all of her work is informed by an intersectional approach to social justice with a particular focus on racial and gender justice, youth voice, spirituality, artistic expression, and popular culture.

**Madelyn Porter**

“The whole world is a stage...” and Madelyn Porter plays a part in keeping it real in Detroit. Porter has worked in professional theatre for over thirty years as an actress, storyteller, comedian, and creator of several one-woman shows. Porter has also worked as Director, Instructor, and Stage Manager.

Porter is the recipient of the Wayne County Chapter of NOW – Special Achievement Award for portraying Sojourner Truth (national tour), Rouge Award for Best Supporting Actress (Burying The Bones – Detroit Repertory Theatre), the YWCA Woman Of Achievement In The Arts Award, the WMGC-105.1 Woman Who Makes Magic Award – as well as the Between The Lines - Wilder Award nomination for Best Actress (Comedy/Original Script), and most recently nominated for best duo award for the production of The Best of Enemies (University of Detroit Theatre Company).


Porter is founder of Mad’s World Theatre Production, and cofounder of MYSS Theatre Company and Street Life Theatre Production. “What we need is quality theatre by any means necessary.”
Henna Artist Anshu Varma

Anshu Varma was born in north India and grew up in Calcutta and New Delhi. As a child she was fascinated by the tradition of meh’ndi, a paste of henna used to decorate the hands and feet with ornate patterns, the result being like a temporary tattoo. Greatly inspired by her mother’s artistic meh’ndi creations, Anshu learned the art of meh’ndi, sometimes simply called henna, at home.

Henna plays an important role in maintaining cultural and traditional identity in India. The tradition in India is associated especially with wedding ceremonies where putting henna on the bride’s palms and feet represents “dressing” the bride. It is, however, appropriate to be decorated with henna at all festive events. Being dressed in henna sets the celebratory mood of the community.

Today, Anshu is a master of the art. Now living in Michigan, she continues to teach the art of henna at public libraries statewide. She is regular participant at the Great Lakes Folk Festival where, for a small fee, she “dresses” visitors with meh’ndi, then generously donates these fees to the Michigan State University Museum to support the Great Lakes Folk Festival. Join her to get a fun henna tattoo*.

*unlike a traditional tattoo in which ink is inserted into the skin, henna makes a rust colored stain that stays on top of the skin and fades gradually.

***Conference registration form inside back cover***

Go to michnow.org for updates

Tell others about our conference!

MEET OUR NEW LGBTQ TASK FORCE CHAIR

MI NOW is pleased to announce the appointment of Jen Salamone to the position of LGBTQ Task Force Chair. Ms. Salamone has an M.S.Ed in Counseling and a B.S. in Psychology. She is a Student Affairs Professional with a passion for teaching and art as activism. Currently Ms. Salamone lives in Flint and is the Program Manager for the Ellen Bommarito LGBTQ Center at the University of Michigan-Flint. She also has experience as a Project Coordinator for the Women’s Educational Center at the University of Michigan-Flint.

“My interests and work revolve around advancing gender justice. Sexism and heterosexism are intrinsically linked and it is important to combat them in tandem in order to dismantle either system.”

Thank you Jen for hosting our conference at UM-Flint this year!
Washtenaw NOW stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter activists at EMU

Following a number of incidents of racist graffiti on the campus of Eastern Michigan University this fall, Black Lives Matter students and their allies took action. They held protests, sit-ins, and positive chalking events outside of the locations of the graffiti. Concerns presented more than a year ago regarding too few professors of color and other important issues were presented once again.

The EMU President and Administration responded in some ways that were helpful, but also in ways that seemed to add insult to injury. Student protestors who remained in campus buildings past closing were threatened with sanctions. Our Washtenaw NOW Chapter sent a letter of solidarity with the students to the President of EMU. We received a long and thoughtful response from Leigh Graden Esq, Advisor to the President. However, it left us with lingering concerns for the welfare of the students going forward, given Graden’s reference to “standard processes” during these extraordinary times:

Disrupting operations, including staying in campus buildings, academic offices or classrooms, or other facilities after they close, such as what occurred at the Student Center on November 2, is an area covered under Code. The Office of Student Conduct, Community Standards and Wellness is reviewing the matter following its standard processes.

We sent this response:

“Of course we would not expect exceptions to be made on a case by case basis. On the other hand, given that closing times are arbitrary, another approach to a sit-in that threatens to last beyond closing would be to take the action taken by MSU’s President John Hannah during the anti-Viet Nam War teach-ins – he opened the academic buildings 24/7. We think the goal of the University is to hear and respond to the student’s valid complaints, not to enforce arbitrary closing times. Let’s demonstrate to them that they are heard and that the community and the University are on their side during these trying times.”

Stay tuned!

**Congratulations to Washtenaw NOW for arranging a pre-election house party where a well-respected TV news reporter, Nadav Eyal from Channel 10 in Israel, interviewed feminists about women’s issues and the Presidential election. Mr. Eyal filmed in several states and edited the results into a 1 hour show that aired in Israel the week before our election.**

**TIP OF THE DAY:** Do you have health insurance? Support Planned Parenthood by visiting your local clinic for your health-care needs. Insurance pays 100%, so it helps to offset the cost of those who get discounted services. Planned Parenthood accepts patients even when the cost of service is greater than the reimbursement.
In the fall issue of MI Voice, our chapter reported on our Title IX Compliance project. Since then, we have experienced positive results.

Partnering with the Birmingham branch of the American Association for University Women, Oakland/Macomb NOW developed a power-point presentation for school districts to use to examine their current Title IX program and for in-service. The joint AAUW and NOW Title IX committee presented the power-point to the Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies on December 14, 2016. Each of the nineteen districts in attendance received a thumb drive of the presentation. On January 14, 2017, the power-point was presented to the Macomb Association of Curriculum Administrators. The power-point was also submitted to local television channels for airing on the public access channels.

To view the power-point, access: https://www.dropbox.com/s/eqz8p3fdsxmqfxx/Title%20IX%20presentation%202016%20Final%20with%20voice%20over.m4v?dl=0.

For further information, contact Dr. Martha O’Kray, Title IX Chair, Oakland/Macomb NOW

GENESEE COUNTY NOW

The Genesee County Chapter of NOW has continued working for the election of feminists, in federal, state and local leadership positions. Our motto has become, “If you are not sitting at the table, you are on the menu.” Many of our members participated in the campaigns of presidential candidates and in local races.

Our members boost young people into knowing more about our government and into running for office. For instance, we have seen young NOW supporters elected to positions as precinct delegates, starting their climb into higher levels of responsibility in governing. NOW members have helped them in their campaigns. Change percolates up, it does not drip down!

Genesee County NOW maintains a relationship and support for the girls at the Genesee Valley Regional Center, our local juvenile detention facility. We have recently been briefed by Shelley Spivak, a MI NOW honoree who brings artistic expression to the young adults detained there. Our NOW members have been group mentors to some of the youngsters in the past and expect to continue supporting them and Shelley in her work.

In light of the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the U.S., women in Michigan have more reason for concern over abortion rights and reproductive justice. Our Genesee County NOW chapter participates at a high level in the educational, lobbying and team building efforts of the Interfaith Reproductive Justice Coalition (IRJC) in Michigan.

GC NOW and MI NOW supported and staffed the first Inter-Faith Reproductive Justice Conference in Michigan held by the IRJC last June. We are currently planning the second Inter-Faith Reproductive Justice Conference in the spring. Save the dates of May 20-21 and watch for the announced program, speakers and venue.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

“EASY FOR YOU TO SAY...”

Suzanne Antisdel, Detroit area member

To understand the ages-old war on women, we can look no further than our own English language, and how certain terms have no gender counterpart. Words like cuckold, whore, termagant, shrew, bitch.

Take for instance cuckold, the husband of an adulteress. The term, found often in Shakespeare but rarely used now, could not be applied to a woman. It has been used strictly to denote a man socially disgraced by the actions of his wife.
So what can we call a woman - all the millions of women - who are married to adulterers? And shrew? What word do we have for men who browbeat their wives? Whore? “Toy boy” is a pretty weak counterpart.

Regardless of such fine points, if we don’t have a name for something, it doesn’t exist. So the language has refused to recognize that men are up to the same mischief/sins/cruelty as women. Since we have no name for those men, linguistically they don’t exist; it’s only women who do these things. And that concept affects the thinking of all of us.

Language is a river not a stone; it changes as we use it. And how we speak reflects how we think and how others think. So maybe we, as feminists, ought to consider how we can change attitudes - our own as well as other’s - by speaking more carefully. And pull those words right out of our vocabulary.

Kids’ Caves

Kids’ Caves is a new volunteer-based initiative to give deserving kids a space they can call their own. It doesn’t matter how meager the home, a special bedroom can be a haven for emotional security and personal growth.

Our first effort was a make-over for a second-grade girl referred to us by the St. Luke New Life Center. Her mother works two jobs in order to provide a two-bedroom apartment in a 1950’s-style strip motel on the Flint’s west side. Neither she nor her daughter had a dresser or lights in their bedrooms. The youngster was dressing out of the suitcase that brought her clothes from a trailer-home from which they had recently moved.

Her bedroom was paneled, so we could not paint. But, with a little over a hundred dollars in seed money, we purchased a not-very-sturdy six-drawer dresser from the Volunteers of America thrift store, and two lamps from Salvation Army. Per her request, we decorated the room with a kitten bedspread and “Frozen” movie posters; and crafted coffee can school supply holders and a bucket waste basket with laminated cat calendar pictures. We purchased a small drop-leaf nightstand from Goodwill, sanding and painting the top to match the bed spread. An elementary education major at the UM-Flint donated her like-new childhood fuzzy sling chair. The reward came when the girl curled up in the chair and simply said, “I feel better.”

We are now seeking (1) a local 501c3 that can identify families with a child who could use this service, and that could accept (and possibly monitor) financial donations for paint and other supplies; (2) a heated area where we can inventory and store donated furniture and furnishings; (3) commercial partners who are willing to donate suitable overstock and/or no-longer-sellable product; and (4) volunteers who may be interested in re-decorating rooms with us.

If you or your organization might have an interest in supporting this worthy and truly personally rewarding cause, please contact me. Your contributions of time and effort, money, and/or furnishings will be both appreciated and put to good use. Contact: Colleen Pace (Davison), cpace53152@gmail.com, 989-413-6866.
Progressive Women’s Summit
Bobbie Walton, Genesee County area member

I attended the recent Progressive Women of Michigan’s Summit in Royal Oak. Approximately 800 women (and a few men) attended. The program was heavily loaded with strong women. Speakers included, Rashida Tlaib, Gretchen Whitmer, Lori Carpentier, U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, MI Reps, Christine Greig, Winnie Brinks and Kristy Pagan. They spoke to fill our need for direction and energy.

Women were encouraged, urged, and inspired to run for office themselves. Message: “Speak out and never turn your head when you see something wrong, or someone being treated cruelly. Women take charge!”

Watch for the many summits for women across the state in the coming months!

COMING EVENTS
International Women’s Day is March 8th. This year’s theme is, “Be Bold for Change.”

March 25th is the MI NOW conference.

Equal Pay Day rally at the state capitol is April 25th.

The Inter-Faith Reproductive Justice Conference is May 20-21st.

FEMINIST LEADERS NEEDED!

 fwrite We need individuals to travel to Lansing to testify at hearings regarding legislation that impacts women’s rights. Contact Michigan NOW if you are willing to testify, to tell your story, or are willing to sit in a hearing wearing your NOW button!

Leaders are also needed for local chapters and groups. Groups are less formal than chapters and the state chapter takes care of the record keeping. Qualifications for leaders vary. All are volunteer positions.

All MI NOW members who have been a member in good standing for at least 1 year are eligible to run for a seat on our state board. Elections will be held at the state conference. Positions are: President, Legislative Vice President, Action Vice President, Administrative Vice President, Membership Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All positions are volunteer positions. A summary of duties is listed below.

President: Presides at meetings, prepares agendas, oversees chapter business, is the main spokesperson for the chapter.
Administrative VP: Assists the President in administering the state chapter and task forces. This person is usually in charge of creating the state newsletter and organizing the state conference.
Legislative VP: Tracks legislation, reports to the board, and coordinates legislative activity.
Action VP: Coordinates local chapters and groups in statewide activities.
Membership VP: Member recruitment and chapter development.
Secretary: Takes meeting minutes if our Association Manager (Sue Elder) is not present.
Treasurer: Reviews financial reports prepared by our Association Manage (Sue Elder).

Please contact Michigan NOW if you are interested in helping to lead the feminist movement in our state.
MI NOW Email: MINOW@danamgt.com.
DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that NOW is focused on intersectional grassroots activism? NOW is a multi-issue, multi-strategy organization that takes a holistic approach to women's rights. Our priorities are winning economic equality and securing it with an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women; championing abortion rights, reproductive freedom and other women's health issues; opposing racism; fighting bigotry against the LGBTQIA community; and ending violence against women.

As the grassroots arm of the women's movement, the National Organization for Women is dedicated to its multi-issue and multi-strategy approach to women's rights, and is the largest organization of feminist grassroots activists in the United States. NOW has hundreds of chapters and hundreds of thousands of members and activists in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since our founding in 1966, NOW's purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

Did you know that Pauli Murray was one of our founding members? Pauli Murray was a Black Queer Feminist Civil Rights Lawyer Priest who co-founded NOW. She was an African-American civil rights activist, who was arrested for refusing to move to the back of the bus in Petersburg, Virginia 15 years before Rosa Parks; and she organized restaurant sit-ins in Washington, D.C. 20 years before the Greensboro sit-ins. She was one of the most important thinkers and legal scholars of the 20th century, serving as a bridge between the civil rights and women's rights movements.

“If one could characterize in a single phrase the contribution of Black women to America, I think it would be ‘survival with dignity against incredible odds’…”

Go to now.org to learn more about this feminist pioneer
(Photo: public domain)

Did you know that NOW’s strategic action plan included reproductive justice? NOW’s Strategic Action Program for 2016 included: 1) End the sex-abuse-to-prison-pipeline; 2) Equal Rights Amendment: Promote ratification & inclusive interpretation; 3) Reproductive justice and access to birth control for all.

For those who may not be familiar with reproductive justice: The Reproductive Justice framework analyzes how the ability of any woman to determine her own reproductive destiny is linked directly to the conditions in her community—and these conditions are not just a matter of individual choice and access. Reproductive Justice addresses the social reality of inequality, specifically, the inequality of opportunities that we have to control our reproductive destiny. Moving beyond a demand for privacy and respect for individual decision making to include the social supports necessary for our individual decisions to be optimally realized, this framework also includes obligations from our government for protecting women's human rights. Our options for making choices have to be safe, affordable and accessible, three minimal cornerstones of government support for all individual life decisions (Loretta Ross, Sister Song Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective).

Source: National NOW website now.org (unless noted otherwise).
TOGETHER WE RISE
Crossing Boundaries, Claiming Power,
and Leading Change NOW!

CONFERENCE SPONSOR FORM &
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Individuals and organizations can be a conference sponsor. You can also honor someone else by listing their name in our list of sponsors (In honor of...). Sponsors will be listed in the conference program. Suggested donation for a sponsorship is $35.00 (this will fund one conference scholarship).

PRINT NAME AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT LISTED IN THE PROGRAM: DONATION AMOUNT: $__________

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VENDOR TABLE REQUEST FORM

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FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION TABLE $20.00 _________

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OPTIONAL CONFERENCE LUNCH $15.00 PER PERSON.

NUMBER LUNCHES: _____ X 15.00 = _______

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NUMBER OF VEGETARIAN LUNCHES: ______

NUMBER OF GLUTEN FREE LUNCHES: ______

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: $______

*MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: MICHIGAN NOW

THANK YOU!

Mail Form To:
Michigan NOW Conference
1140 Abbot Rd
P.O. Box 860
East Lansing, MI 48826
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Contact Michigan NOW at (517)485-9687
TOGETHER WE RISE
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March 25, 2017
*** New Location: UM-Flint***

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM
Individuals/organizations can register online at www.michnow.org or mail in this form.

NAME (S): __________________________________ NOW MEMBER: Yes____ No____

ADDRESS:______________________________________________________________

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TELEPHONE: ___________________________ EMAIL: __________________________

Choose the registration level that fits your budget. If you can, please pay a higher amount as it helps us to pay for the conference and to provide conference scholarships. The low income/student level of $35 is the estimated cost for food and conference materials for 1 person. It does not include other conference expenses. Thank you!

REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH IF RECEIVED BY MARCH 15TH

LEVEL 1 (BUILDING A MOVEMENT) ___ x $100 = _______

LEVEL 2 (STRENGTHENING FEMINISM) ___ x $80 = _______

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CHECK TO REQUEST SCHOLARSHIP (Limited number available)

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TOTAL NUMBER OF VEGETARIAN LUNCHES _______

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East Lansing, MI 48826

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517-485-9687
www.michnow.org

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Michigan NOW Conference
March 25th 2017
#WeRise17

Together We Rise
Crossing Boundaries, Claiming Power, and Leading Change NOW!

Register online at michnow.org