

Women's Day March at MSU

Organized by Women's March MSU/Lansing and Women's Council at MSU. There was a great crowd, especially for such a cold day. MI NOW President Nina Muckenthaler was a guest speaker.



Administrative VP Update

The MI NOW board voted to appoint Grace Haubert of the Young Feminists Council to fill the vacant position of Administrative VP. Grace will hold this position until the next state chapter elections are held. Welcome Grace!

Michigan NOW State Board Elections

The annual state chapter meeting and conference is set for **March 29, 2019**. Chapter elections will be held to fill positions on the state board. Members in good standing who have been members for at least a year (as of the meeting date) are eligible to run for office. **All eligible Michigan NOW members are encouraged to run for positions on our board.** Please send your contact info to minow@danamgt.com if you are interested in running for a board position or have any questions.

Voices of Michigan NOW Young Feminists

Gen Z Feminists

Carolina Gutierrez

Forbes magazine keeps on warning leaders about the **oncoming plague of Gen Z employees**, and *Business Insider* is incredibly eager to tell readers how to market to the new, hip generation of consumers. But when news coverage of Gen Z shows teenagers eating Tide Pods and driving blindfolded, adults are probably wondering what today's young people can bring to society, and particularly to the feminist movement.

First, here's a quick breakdown of what's different for this generation. Gen Z is generally considered kids born from the mid-1990s to the mid to late-2000s, so some of us aren't even kids anymore. The formative years of Gen Z included the Great Recession, the Obama administration, and the 2016 election. Most notably, however, **we were raised with the world at our fingertips**. Smartphones, Google, streaming, and social media have been around for so much of our lives that we can't remember life without them.

So what does it all mean? To be completely honest, I can't tell you if any of those things about Gen Z are good or bad, but I can tell you what it's created.

Movements, for us, start online and are **fueled largely by the powerful engine of the internet**. We've grown up in a time where a Twitter campaign can both destroy and create careers. Getting in touch is easier than ever, and in a few weeks, a movement born from a handful of Florida's teenagers can turn into a nationwide **protest of two million students marching for their lives**.

Furthermore, we are not patient and we cannot turn a blind eye to issues. Maybe it's because the internet has made everything accessible in a split second, or maybe it's because we **watched inaction destroy the economy and let a person I think is a sexual harasser get elected president**, but we are not about to hold our tongues and wait our turns. I have classmates that worked on political campaigns before they could vote or **started non-profit organizations before they got their driver's license**. Just this September, a high school senior testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on her experiences with gun violence.

I can't promise you that we're going to be the generation of feminists that closes the wage gap or eradicates transphobia or makes birth control accessible to everyone. News outlets like to tout us as the most inclusive, least racist, queerest generation ever, but we have a long way to go and **we carry the same societal ills with us as the older generations do**. However, I can tell you this about the newest generation of feminists: we're getting started now and we are armed with the resources to do so from our phones. Feminists before us have created a society for us that is vastly different from the one of their own youth, but we've seen the issues

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that persist and are ready to start eradicating them now, **even if we can't hold offices or vote**. Our parents, teachers, and mentors have taught us to **be the change we wish to see in the world**; Gen Z feminists have taken that to heart, and **we're not wasting any time getting started**.

Rvive: For Menstrual Equality

Ashi Kumar

I met a woman who had experienced **period poverty**. She told me her story and explained that how even today, **living paycheck to paycheck**, it is hard for her to afford sanitary products. As she was telling me her story, my emotions came in three waves. **I felt guilty** that I didn't even know the prevalence of period poverty. I felt angry that she had to experience this and that no serious action had taken place, but most importantly, **I felt motivated to help my community**. I listened to more women who expressed how menstruation was one of their biggest challenges. The stories I heard from women and the articles I read about period poverty served as the electric cord that **energized me to start my own nonprofit called Rvive**. It's a youth-run nonprofit that makes and sells buttons/badges with all profits going to buy feminine products for homeless shelters in Michigan. These products are non-synthetic and free of pesticides, dyes, and

Contact us at:
ashikackumar@gmail.com
www.rvive.org

fragrance. Thus far we have distributed **over 1,000 menstrual products to those in need**. Each button costs \$1.00 each and you can customize your own button(s) for \$2.00 each through the form on our website. Direct Donations can also be made through our website. **As little as \$2.00 can cover a menstrual cycle**.

Girls of the Crescent: Empowering Muslim Girls Through Books

Zena and Mena Nasiri

We are Mena and Zena, two Muslim girls living in Michigan, ages 14 and 15, respectively. We are both high schoolers and are in Robotics, Diversity Club, and the Muslim Students Association at school. We are interested in science, math, and art, but most of all we enjoy reading. We have loved reading our whole lives and have visited our local public library countless times, checking out book after book. Books have provided us with information, fun, adventure, humor, and understanding. But one thing was missing from all of the books that we read. We never saw ourselves represented.

When reading picture books, we never saw **characters that looked like us**; when reading chapter books we would never read about **characters with our names**; when reading novels, we never felt personally connected to the characters we were reading about. In 4th grade, we were given a school project to research a person we looked up to. We both went to our public library with **female Muslim women** in mind that were huge role models to us and **we couldn't find any books** about them. Later we began to realize the same thing occurred in other genres, that there was **a shortage of books about Muslim girls**. In fact, the first time we saw

ourselves represented was last year when we read *The Lines We Cross*, by Randa Abdel-Fattah. The feeling that we experienced when reading about **characters like us** was indescribable and we were astonished that we never experienced it before. Books have an **immense impact** on how children behave, socialize, and see themselves in the world, and if young kids **didn't see themselves represented**, there is a certain feeling of not belonging or not fitting in.

We knew that we had to address this problem and do something to help **empower Muslim girls** like us. We decided to start our own non-profit organization, **Girls of the Crescent**. The purpose of Girls of the Crescent is to collect books with **female Muslim main characters** through donations and then gift them to **school media centers** and **libraries around the community**. We have compiled a list of books on our website that includes **strong Muslim female protagonists**, ranging from elementary grade books to young adult and adult fiction. People are always surprised to see how long the list of books is because **most of them are not included** in our local library or school collections. We are hoping to provide awareness for these books that are so important for diversity. A few of our favorites from this list are: *The Lines We Cross*, *Under the Persimmon Tree*, by Suzanne Fisher Staples; *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*, by Hena Khan; *The Librarian of Basra*, by Jeanette Winter; *Ayesha Dean and the Istanbul Intrigue*, by Melati Lum; and *Ms. Marvel*, by G. Willow Wilson and Sana Amanat.

We started off in our schools, talking to our school PTAs and asking them for donations. Through this approach, **we managed to collect almost 200 books that have been added to the library collections of 21 schools in our district**. We have been receiving money donations from neighbors, friends, and other organizations, and even authors have been donating copies of their own books with female Muslim main characters to Girls of the Crescent. As a result, we have donated books to several libraries and schools including, Rochester Hills Public Library, Lake Orion Public Library, Bloomfield Township Public Library, Troy Public Library, several elementary schools in our district, and an ESL Class at West Hills Middle School. This school year we hope to get our books in other schools around the community and **present our endeavor to mosques**. We hope to hold a fundraiser in a high school and middle school in our school district to get more funds for buying books.

We have been featured in Channel 4 WDIV News, Amy Poehler's Smart Girls, The Malala Fund magazine called Assembly, the Oakland Press, the Royal Oak Tribune, the C & G Newspapers: Rochester Post, and the Rochester Hills Public Library webpage

Word is spreading about our organization and we have been featured in **Channel 4 WDIV News, Amy Poehler's Smart Girls, The Malala Fund** magazine called Assembly, **the Oakland Press, the Royal Oak Tribune, the C & G Newspapers: Rochester Post, and the Rochester Hills Public Library webpage**. Girls of the Crescent has established a fund

within the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester, a **federally approved 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation** to manage donations. Girls of the Crescent has its own website, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook that you can check out to see the work that we are doing. In our spare time, we are writing a book of our own

Follow Us!

Instagram: @girlsofthecrescent

Twitter: @GirlsCrescent

Facebook: @girlsofthecrescent

about 50 great Muslim women who have achieved inspirational things and plan to publish it soon. We hope that the work we are doing will help Muslim girls feel included and spread awareness about the importance of representation and diversity in books.

Prioritizing Mental Health

Josie Wenzell



Mental health may seem obsolete, but in fact it speaks **great volumes**. One’s mental state effects, your mood, how you interact with others, how you perform in activities, and overall who you are as a person. There are **ways to combat negative energy**, and outlets to boost oneself. One of these ways in by writing.

Writing is a way to express feelings, without them having to be verbally communicated. In some cases writing

something down is a way to **normalize a situation** making it easier to share aloud. Closing off and keeping those feelings inside can be unhealthy as they disrupt the normal thought process. After conducting a study at Harvard regarding journaling tied with victims of traumatic events, an article from **Women’s Health** by writer Erin Rooney concluded, “Writing also **allows people to regulate their emotions** and break out of the cycle of rumination, which can be very harmful and cause stress.”

One does not need to endure a life changing event to feel the need to write down their emotions. The struggles of everyday life are enough to record their thoughts. This does not even mean the writing has to be organized; it could even just be a list of things recently on the mind.

One high school sophomore named Claire, who typically uses writing as her outlet to de-stress, explains why she does it, “When you don’t want to ‘trouble’ others with your issues, you can write them down. You can write for as long as you need, **and write as much as you need too**, without directly sharing with another person. It’s also good to look back at where you were at a certain point in your life. Writing can capture self growth. You can get lost within your own mind which most people aren’t lucky enough to experience.”

Another way to reduce stress is by **drawing or painting**. A study conducted by Girija Kaimal, assistant professor of creative arts therapies at Drexel University, found that “45 minutes of **creative activity significantly lessens stress in the body**, regardless of artistic experience or talent.”

You do not need to be Picasso to relieve stress. After the study showed such promising results she published the book called, “**Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants’ Responses Following Art Making**” . One of the many ways therapy patients go about their sessions is by painting, drawing, and any kind of art form really. Directly speaking with a therapist one-on-one is not always a beneficial method for everyone. **Using a creative medium** is a way to maximize your well-being. Many millennials like Claire feel the same way, with the pressures of everyday life. Boosting the mindset and creating a more positive attitude allows for a healthier way to live.

Local Chapters in Focus

Washtenaw County NOW

Georgina Hickey, Past President

Washtenaw County NOW has had a busy year, learning more about gun control and safety, supporting feminist candidates for office, sharing information about local marches and actions, and being engaged in the political scene on all levels.

We nurtured our own networks and engaged in good reflective practice with informal “feminist happy hours” throughout the year, a very successful discussion of Alice Walker’s, *The Color Purple*, and a group outing to see RGB, the documentary on Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

We learned about and shared some of the chapter’s history while exploring its future with a Women’s History Month program in cooperation with Skyline High School NOW chapter entitled, “Feminism Across the Generations: The History and Future of Feminism in Washtenaw County.”

Our Anti-Street Harassment “fashion show” came out for another performance in the spring, this time on a busy part of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus (we first did this guerilla theater at a local bus station in 2017, you can see a short video of it here <https://youtu.be/QCrOjoiQdU>)

The highlight of our summer was, once again, tabling at Art Fair, where we collected nearly 500 signed postcards urging the governor to grant clemency to survivors of domestic violence who were given life sentences but not allowed to introduce evidence of the violence that shaped their crimes. We also sold stickers and our own button designs to hundreds of visitors from around the region who stopped by to chat all things feminist with our volunteers.

The chapter held its annual meeting a few weeks ago. We made signs for upcoming marches, voted on a few by-laws changes designed to streamline the governance of our chapter, shared cake to celebrate the fourth anniversary of re-forming the chapter, and elected a new board. Shannon Basalla will serve as chapter president for the coming year, with Margo Czinski (treasurer), Cheryl Farmer (recorder), and Judy Shackleford

(at-large) all re-elected for another term. I have rotated into the immediate past president role and we are welcoming two new board members, Janine Capsouras and Rachel Sienko.

In March we'll be gathering to discuss Brittney Cooper's book *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*. See our Facebook page for details!

Washtenaw County NOW anti-street harassment demonstration, UM main campus, April 2018

We need people to work for equality in local communities. Please contact us if you are interested in helping to organize a chapter or a task force in your area.



SAVE THE DATE

March 29 MI NOW feminist conference and state chapter meeting at UM-Flint.

Registration info and conference updates will be posted on the MI NOW website when it is available (www.michnow.org)

April 2 Equal Pay Day

July 19-21 NOW national conference: Looking and Moving Forward 2019 In Minneapolis. Go to www.now.org for more info.

***Thank You for supporting Michigan NOW
And Thank You for working for equality in our state!***

MI NOW 2019 CONFERENCE SPONSOR/VENDOR REGISTRATION FORM

***Working Across Our Differences
To Make a Stronger Movement***

March 29, 2019

**University of Michigan-Flint
<https://maps.umflint.edu/>**



Registration Opens at 8:45. Vendors should arrive by 8:15.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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Mail Form To:

**Michigan NOW Conference
1140 Abbot Rd
P.O. Box 860
East Lansing, MI 48826**

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THANK YOU!

MI NOW 2019 FEMINIST CONFERENCE

***Working Across Our Differences
To Make a Stronger Movement***

March 29, 2019

University of Michigan-Flint

<https://maps.umflint.edu/>

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Register online at www.michnow.org or mail in this form.



NAME (S): _____ NOW MEMBER: Yes____ No____

ADDRESS: _____

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. Thank you!

STANDARD _____ x \$30 = _____

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Donation to Michigan NOW = _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

CHECK HERE IF YOU NEED A CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP _____

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WALK-INS WELCOME*

Conference Location
University of Michigan-Flint
Flint, MI

Registration opens at 8:45
Conference starts at 9:30
Chapter meeting following
conference

Lunch will be served

Go to michnow.org for
updates

Lunch
Check here if you need a vegetarian or gluten-free lunch:

Vegetarian lunch _____ Gluten- free lunch _____

Mail Registration Form To:
Michigan NOW Conference
1140 Abbot Rd
P.O. Box 860
East Lansing, MI 48826



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P.O. Box 860
East Lansing, MI 48826
517-485-9687
www.michnow.org**

Return Address Requested

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2019 MI NOW Conference

**In partnership with the University of Michigan-Flint
Center for Gender and Sexuality**

**Working Across Our Differences to Make a Stronger
Movement**

March 29, 2019

