eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

2022
Tribute
TO WOMEN
AWARDS LUNCHEON

Peace

Freedom

Justice

Dignity
Welcome to the YWCA’s Tribute to Women. We are so pleased that you are here with us today.

This afternoon, we celebrate our 21 Honorees who have made an exceptionally positive impact on their communities, as the YW has done since the early 1890s. Our YW was founded by women for women. Its mission then, like our mission today, was to improve the lives of women who were new to our country and our community – immigrant women who came to work in Lawrence and Haverhill. For more than 125 years, we have looked to our past to build pathways of hope for future successes. We remain true to our mission to empower women as a social change agency.

Our annual Tribute to Women event literally brings to life the YW’s mission to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. In all that we do, the YW strives to give women tools to overcome whatever challenges stand between them and realizing their fullest potential. The women honored today have all overcome challenges on their way to becoming leaders, role models and a source of inspiration for us all today. In our work, we assist women and families in crisis; offer shelter and counseling to survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence; provide affordable housing to single women and families; link under or uninsured women to critical health services; and offer high quality childcare so that women can work to keep their families self-sufficient.

With seven sites in the Merrimack Valley, Essex County and Southern New Hampshire, we offer more than 26 programs and services which are low in cost or free. We are proud to continue the tradition started by our founders to provide safe, affordable housing in Lawrence and Haverhill for single, at-risk women, to provide transitional housing to women and their children who have fled domestic violence in their homes and to provide an Emergency Shelter for women and their children fleeing from abuse. Together with our Women’s Health Services and Youth Services, YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts continues to strive for social justice for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Our ongoing work could not happen without the support of individuals and businesses represented here today. On behalf of the women, children and families we serve, we thank all of you for joining us to honor the women we celebrate today.

Emma Campbell
YWCA Board President

Susan Staples
YWCA Executive Director
Girls Can do Anything
Tribute to Women
Awards Luncheon
May 12, 2022

Program
12:00 to 2:00 p.m.
Introduction of Honorees and of Board President ...................... Christina Minicucci
Massachusetts State Representative

Welcome Message ................................................................. Emma Campbell
Board President, YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts

Luncheon
Fresh Fruit Cup, Spring Powershot Salad with Grilled Chicken, Mixed Dessert Platter

Presentation of Twelve Honorees ......................... Sara Morin Barth and Perla Ortiz
Board Members, YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts

Break
Dessert & Coffee

Special Remarks Video ..................................................... Congresswomen Lori Trahan

Presentation of Twelve Honorees ......................... Sara Morin Barth and Perla Ortiz
Board Members, YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts

Video: “Girls Can do Anything” .......................................................... Susan Staples
Executive Director, YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts

Raffle Drawings & Door Prizes .................................................. Emma Campbell

Closing Remarks ................................................................. Susan Staples
Tribute to Women Sponsors

The YWCA Board of Directors and Staff extend our deepest gratitude to the corporate and private partners who make this event possible.

Our DIAMOND Sponsor

Pfizer

RUBY Sponsors

Eastern Bank

Pentucket Bank

SAPPHIRE Sponsors

Enterprise Bank

SalemFive

EMERALD Sponsors

Emma Campbell

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USMC

All-Brand New England, LLC

The Community Group

Century Elevator
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Pfizer, Inc.

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SAPPHIRE Sponsors
Salem Five

EMERALD Sponsors
The Community Group
Emma Campbell
US Mechanical
Century Elevator
All Brand New England

Pearl Sponsors
The Savings Bank
Susan Staples Name Only
Northmark Bank
Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
Monx Design House
Mortgage Networks and Katherine Castro Eardley

JADE Sponsors
Resource Connection
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Northmark Bank
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Monx Design House
Timothy Sullivan
Jeanne D'Arc
Align Credit Union
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Juana Naveo
Rebecca Hall
Perla Ortiz
Johanna Ortiz
Cynthia Barakatt
Haverhill Bank
Merrimack Valley Credit Union

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Mary O’Brien
Cynthia Barakatt

IN-KIND Donors
Ruth Bitchell, YWCA Board Member
Eric Cox, Media Prepared
Margaret Crockett, YWCA Board Member
Katherine Castro Eardley, YWCA Board Member
Martha Forero, YWCA Board Member
Emily Gonzalez, YWCA Board Member
Sara Morin, YWCA Board Member
Honorary Chair
Christina Minicucci, State Representative

When it comes to government, Christina truly believes that democracy is not a spectator sport. No matter the level, she is motivated to give back. This is why she currently serves as Vice-Chair of the North Andover School Building Committee, member of the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and is the Expo Coordinator for the Feaster Five Road Race. Christina is also an active member of the Franklin School PTO, North Andover Parent Advisory Council (NAPAC), her local Boy Scout Troop, and the Merrimack Valley Striders running club.

She is a former member of the YWCA Board of Directors, and sexual assault hotline advocate.

Christina and her husband, Eric Loth, are raising their two sons and one daughter in North Andover. She is a founder of Bowdoin Capital Group. Christina has a BA in Spanish from Bowdoin College, an MBA from Suffolk University, and is a graduate of the Advanced Management Degree Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Christina lived the first years of her life on Knox Street in Lawrence before moving with her parents to North Andover. She is the daughter of Louis Minicucci, Jr and Judy (McCabe) Minicucci.

YWCA: On a Mission to Celebrate Women of Achievement!

The YWCA Board of Directors and staff thank the members of the 2019 Tribute to Women Committee for seeking remarkable women from our community to be honored, as well as for their dedication to the success of this event.

2022 Committee Members
Eunice Zeigler, Chairperson; Ruth Bitchell, Eric Cox, Martha Forero, Emily Gonzalez, Monique Johnson of Monx Design House and Susan Staples

YWCA Board of Directors
Emma Campbell, President, Juana Naveo, Vice President, Patty Wilson, Treasurer, Sara Morin Barth, Denise Molina Capers, Pamela Sintros, Laura Wante, Ruth Bitchell, Emily Gonzalez, Katherine Castro Eardley, Perla Ortiz, Ellen Small Davis, Martha Lucia Forero, Michele M. Curtis
# Girls Can do Anything

## Tribute to Women Honorees

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**Girls Can do Anything**

![Tribute to Women Honorees](image1)

![Tribute to Women Honorees](image2)

![Tribute to Women Honorees](image3)
Michelle Adamic
Founder and CEO, Everyone’s A Player (EAP)

Michelle leads multiple sports-based youth development efforts in and around Lawrence, MA, entirely as a volunteer. She founded Everyone’s A Player (EAP) with three other local North Andover women, an organization that’s all about leveling the playing field for those in need by providing equipment and financial assistance so they can participate in organized sports. Before that, she worked for a handful of the region’s top marketing, branding, and research companies over the past 25+ years. These experiences included her most recent 7-year position at W3C (w3.org), the international standards organization for the World Wide Web in research. Michelle has always loved sports. She played soccer at Babson College and basketball in high school, and many other sports in between. Today her passion for sports has her playing in a competitive tennis league as well as coaching her daughter Liv’s youth soccer team. These experiences inspired Michelle to co-found EAP, which today is still run entirely by volunteers and has raised and distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment and sports scholarship resources to deserving youth and families since its 2011 inception. That work also grew and strengthened her connection to Lawrence, causing her to take on an assistant coaching position with the Lawrence High School girls tennis program, which she has held for the last five years. Her experiences at EAP and Lawrence High School highlighted the unfortunate sports and health inequities in our community, which served to further motivate Michelle’s volunteer work. To better support Lawrence youth, she co-founded the Lawrence Sports Leadership Academy in 2016 with long-time partner, Stephanie Mc Ardle of Beyond Soccer, who was a past Tribute to Women award recipient. This first of its kind, a multi-sports leadership academy for Lawrence youth, has engaged hundreds of kids every summer in Lawrence, at little or no cost to families, thanks to the hard work of Michelle and her partner.

Janet Santa Anna
President/CEO, The Resource Connection, Inc.

A Certified Staffing Professional who has worked in the industry for over 40 years, Janet Santa Anna started The Resource Connection, Inc., a full-service Staffing Services firm in 1987. An entrepreneur by nature, Janet started the company from scratch with just a few clients and built it into a multimillion-dollar operation. She overcame many obstacles over the years, including fighting and surviving breast cancer, getting through two major recessions, and facing the significant challenges that have hit the staffing industry throughout the COVID crisis. In 2011, she successfully competed against much larger regional and national staffing firms and was awarded the Commission of MA Temporary Help Services contract managing five subcontractors placing candidates at entities across the state. The innovative model she proposed and implemented saved Massachusetts millions of dollars over 8 years.

Janet serves on the Managing Board of Directors for North Shore Chamber of Commerce and is an active member and past president of the Middleton Board of Trade. She also serves on the Board of Directors as an officer and legislative liaison for the Massachusetts Staffing Association. In addition, Janet currently is on the Business Advisory Board for North Shore Community College. Janet has been awarded Top 100 Women-Led Business Award - 2019 and Business Women of the Year - Lydia Pinkham Award 2008. Along with her business accomplishments, Janet has been a tireless advocate for social justice. As President of the Board of Directors of Strongest Link AIDS Services, Inc., for nine years, Janet made a huge impact in improving HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education services on the North Shore and helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the cause. She continues to raise funds for HIV/AIDS services and over the past several years has spearheaded a local women’s Play for PINK golf tournament raising thousands of dollars for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Janet inspires others by example. In all that she does in leading her business and in giving back to the community, she exhibits integrity, respect, and compassion.
**Angela “Tita” Antonopoulos**  
Data Manager for Discover Club/ Owner Operator, Haverhill Public Schools/ Olive Drop Management

Tita has a history of working in the entertainment industry. Early in her career, she was able to get a job in radio while working full-time in the financial world. Flash forward many years, at age 40 and with a young child, Tita decided to go back to school at Bay State College. It was at Bay State that she learned about the music business and branding and earned a Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Management. When Bay State started a radio station, Tita created the radio shows, The Groove Sessions and Soul Cocktail with Tita, and became Program Director and then General Manager of the station.

During the pandemic, Tita was laid off from one of her jobs at a winery in Boston and she was working at Merrimack Valley Music & Arts, a Haverhill nonprofit that teaches music and arts to kids and adults. Tita took time during the pandemic to step back from working full-time to focus on being a single mother to a child with special needs. On April 1, 2020, Tita’s life changed forever when she found out that she had Stage 3 HER2 Positive Breast Cancer. She was forced to face her mortality while being a single parent to a child with special powers. Tita decided to not allow cancer to make her its victim. She chose to fight it and share her story with others. Because of the pandemic, Tita was forced to go to chemo treatments by herself. She recalls it being a horrible and isolating experience. Experiencing radiation and two surgeries, as well as many horrible side effects, alone was not an easy task. Tita is happily and officially in Remission. Tita is still very much involved with the community. She is on the board of the Haverhill Cultural Council and is one of the founding members of the Multicultural Festival of Haverhill as well as being on the committee for many community events such as Haverhill Restaurant Week. Tita continues to share her story to help other people get tested and to remind them that tomorrow is not promised and that we have to live life while we are still here.

**Lisa Breen**  
Funeral Director/Owner and Operator/Treasurer, Breen Funeral Home

Lisa Breen entered her chosen profession when there were only five percent women in that field. Lisa comes from a long line of Funeral Directors, yet is the first female member of the Breen Family to be a Funeral Director. Today there are close to thirty-six percent licensed female funeral directors (yet far less practice as such). The career is not only physically demanding, but also emotionally and psychologically demanding, and not a typical 9 to 5 job! By her professional conduct, Lisa is a role model not only for women in and considering entering into this service profession but also for men. She remains current and works hard to meet the requirements of the many regulations, procedures, formalities, and laws that apply to funeral services.

She is the second oldest in a family of four, who lost their father in a tragic accident when she was only ten. She is steadfastly devoted to her family, most recently nursing her mother through a long, terminal cancer condition.

Lisa interacts with people from all age groups, and different cultural and social backgrounds when they are most vulnerable, and grieving. Her perceptiveness brings sensitivity, caring, support, and serenity to all when needed most. At the holidays (a most painful time of year for the grieving), she hosts a memorial service at the mausoleum for those who have buried a loved one in the past year.

When Holy Family Hospital had a Ladies Auxiliary, she was a devoted member who took on several leadership positions, rising to the Presidency. During her time, the Auxiliary raised millions of dollars for additions, renovations, and vital equipment. Lisa is a long-standing member of the Board of Directors at Mary Immaculate Nursing Home, as well as the Division 8 Ancient Order of Hibernians, currently serving as the Sentinel. In 2016, Lisa received the double honor of being named Grand Marshall of the Lawrence St. Patrick’s Day Parade, and the first, female Grand Marshall! She was actively involved in organizing the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Breen Funeral Home – the oldest family-owned business in the City of Lawrence, in 2019!
Alicia Mam daCunha
Director, Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Residency, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC)

Alicia grew up in a first-generation Vietnamese household. As the daughter of immigrant parents, Alicia has witnessed the challenges faced by her parents in the healthcare system. Despite having a language barrier, transportation issues, and economic instability, they were provided with compassionate healthcare. Her mother never talked about how smart her healthcare providers were but only how kind and caring they were to her. Alicia’s humble beginnings started when she and her mom and brother lived in one bedroom at a friend’s home. Alicia served as a translator for her mother and brother, including translating for medical appointments; which may have led her to her current passion for helping patients. Alicia attended Lowell High School and worked at a retail pharmacy to afford college. Alicia received her Doctor of Pharmacy, Magna Cum Laude in 2010 from Mass School of Pharmacy. This is a six-year doctorate program. Since 2010, she has worked tirelessly for Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC) patients. She speaks English, Khmer, and Spanish.

As a pharmacist at GLFHC, Alicia has the opportunity to make an impact on patients’ lives with their medication management. In the past 10+ years that she has worked at GLFHC, Alicia has been fortunate to help establish a Clinical Pharmacy Services program and develop its Pharmacy Residency training program. Alicia finds it gratifying to help patients improve their medication adherence and work with patients’ primary care providers to optimize their medication therapy to better control their diabetes. Alicia feels privileged to be able to expand GLFHC’s services with an incredible team of pharmacists and technicians as well as be able to help train future clinical pharmacists. Alicia is an inspirational speaker to young students seeking a career in healthcare.

Diana DiZoglio
Senator, Massachusetts Senate

Diana DiZoglio serves as State Senator for Massachusetts’ First Essex District, which includes the Cities of Amesbury, Haverhill, Methuen, and Newburyport, the Towns of Merrimac, and Salisbury, and portions of the Town of North Andover. After serving in the Legislature as an aide, as Chief of Staff for the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts, and for local nonprofits and community organizations, Diana won her first race for public office in 2012. She served three terms as State Representative for the 14th Essex District. In 2018, she was elected to the State Senate. In addition to working for years to support youth services, Diana takes on young professionals as interns and staff members and spends a substantial amount of her time on their professional development. She shows them what public service looks like, and gives them agency and the opportunity to learn to be leaders themselves.

Diana tackles the large issues; she is also the champion of the small issues that affect each one of us. Diana works tirelessly to address those issues and help people - whether it is helping a domestic violence victim find a safe place to stay, working to help a veteran make a connection for services, or helping to secure funding for a much needed municipal improvement to a park or roadway, or even for help addressing litter - Diana is there to help. She is “there” in that she will do the work to resolve the issue, but amazing she is PHYSICALLY “there” to meet in person, look her neighbor in the eye, and assure them she will get the job done. This type of committed service is almost a lost treasure, and Diana’s commitment to keeping it alive is something that should be celebrated.
Kristen Eagleston
Interim Supply Chain Director, Pfizer

Kristen has had an extensive career working at the Pfizer Andover site in the Supply Chain organization. She has contributed directly to the success of the Andover site and Pfizer’s mission of making Breakthroughs that Change Patients’ Lives. Specifically, Kristen has been responsible for oversight of the site Master Production Plan. Additionally, Kristen sits on the Site Leadership Team for Andover, which is responsible for the site operations. Kristen is people-focused in all she does. In the Pfizer community, Kristen organizes the Christmas family sponsorship program and has done so for many years. Through this annual event, she brings together colleagues to support some families in need and in doing so creates a tremendously positive environment amongst her team. Additionally, Kristen organizes the annual YWCA camp cleanup day for the Supply Chain team - gathering several colleagues to help clean up the camp before opening day.

Kristen was born and raised in Reading, MA, and is the youngest of three, with one sister and one brother. After graduating from Reading Memorial High School, Kristen went to Merrimack College and earned her B.A. in History and Elementary Education. She went on the following year to get her M.Ed. at Boston College. However, with all that education she never ended up teaching full time. After working at Fisher Scientific for 5 years, she started in Andover at Pfizer (previously Genetics Institute) as a Buyer and after 20+ years, she is still at the Andover Site as the Interim Lead for Supply Chain/Site Operations Management. Kristen loves the site, and the people she works with and feels fortunate to work in an industry that is helping to bring medicines to all patients in need.

Rebecca “Becca” Fortado
Vice President- Branch Manager, Salem Five Bank

Becca loves and believes in Salem Five and it shows in all of her work within the organization and with the greater public. She oversees several branches in the area and has been instrumental in the opening of several branches just in the last 4 years or so. She has been a key part of internal company initiatives that focus on career development and training as well as mentoring up-and-coming bank employees. Becca is the face of Salem Five Bank in the Merrimack Valley. You can find her at any number of community-based events several nights a week and acts as a community liaison in so many instances, not because it is her job, but because her heart is in the work. Becca takes her work as Vice President - Branch Manager at Salem Five Bank well beyond bankers’ hours. You can find her at community events or starting initiatives that benefit so many or supporting those who are making our cities and towns in the Merrimack Valley better. From the environment - a member of The Trustees, to business - Executive Board Member, Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, to families and children - supporter and advocate at both the Greater Lawrence Boys & Girls Club and the YWCA of Northeastern MA, Becca selflessly gives her time, expertise and attention on so many levels.

Ever since she was a little girl, she felt a passion and fire to help others. Becca remembers her mom telling her stories of what life was like for her growing up and the struggles her family faced, including poverty and food insecurity. As a result, Becca knew that growing up, she was destined to help others and to do so in impactful and meaningful ways. Watching her mother ultimately thrive and help others as a Regional Director of a non-profit agency on the North shore is what has driven Becca to give back to those in need, value service over self, find creative solutions, engage with her community, and donate her time and energy to multiple boards.
Mai Kim Le
Co-Founder & CEO, Haystack Diagnostics

Mai Kim Le is a Vietnamese American who plunged into a new culture at the age of three after starting her journey traveling by boat from war-torn Vietnam to the U.S. Her family moved around along the west coast from Seattle, WA to sunny Anaheim, CA to work in garment factories and on strawberry farms. Mai’s family finally settled in Lawrence, MA, which became her beloved childhood hometown. She attended the Bruce School, the Robert Frost School, and Lawrence High where she graduated as valedictorian before heading off to Bowdoin College and Princeton University.

Mai’s career path has zigzagged since she graduated from Bowdoin College and Princeton University. She spent most of her 20’s saving the world in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. However, she digressed from all of that for love, to be with her college best friend, and she moved back to the Boston area to raise her three beautiful kids and two furry friends. The rest of Mai’s trajectory involved finding new passions and interests that she never knew she had. Her true passion is to find ways to give back and create a positive impact through her service to humanity. From her work internationally and domestically, in the public and private sectors, Mai has given back in ways that have helped local businesses, farmers, and refugees. Mai’s wanderlust world travels were motivated by personal, professional, and educational aspirations and took her from the banks of the Mekong Delta to many distinctly different places around the world such as Rwanda, Yemen, and Paris where people’s stories are similar to her own. Mai is currently the CEO and co-founder of Haystack Dx, a medical device start-up whose mission is to improve the lives of those suffering from nerve and muscle disorders through better and early detection and monitoring of diseases. You can find Mai either at Tripoli grabbing the breadsticks that she has found comfort in since her childhood days or picking up her favorite fried chicken at Jacqueline’s, both of which are in Lawrence.

Michelle Leger
Consultant and Founder of Methuen Arts

As a Wellesley College graduate, Sally earned her Ph.D. at Cornell University and began her Michelle traveled the world for 20 years doing consulting domestically and internationally in London, Singapore, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, and Australia. She eventually returned to the Boston area, where she grew up. Michelle continues to be inspired by the passionate innovative energy in Boston. With a fine arts degree and a systems engineering graduate degree, Michelle developed a deep appreciation for the design of computer apps and user interface design for users of computer systems to do mission-critical work for corporations. With her strong finance and internet/enterprise systems background, Michelle is a professional skilled in business processes, Requirements Analysis, ITIL, Agile Methodologies, and Project Management Methods. Michelle currently works at MKS Instruments, a company that develops equipment that supports manufacturing in many industries including the semiconductor industry, synthetic diamonds, and medical technologies. As a project manager at MKS, Michelle drives product development and process improvements and brings enthusiasm for working together to create. Her fine arts experience and her ability to analyze creative work have enabled Michelle to lead crucial conversations with colleagues to make improvements and deliver solutions.

In addition to her job, Michelle serves as the treasurer of Boston CHI, the local Boston chapter of SigCHI, where top sponsors IBM, FutureWei Technologies, Google, Microsoft, and Bentley University, support the advancement of an independent lecture series focused on Computer-Human Interaction. The diverse presentations herald the innovation in our community and bring volunteers together to learn about this field, vital to the advancement of technology. Michelle has also been an innovator in her community, as one of the founders of Methuen Arts, an initiative in the Arts Institute Group of Merrimack Valley, with a focus on engaging Methuen citizens to bring their arts to the community. Methuen Arts has undertaken over a dozen creative projects in just a few years, developed with volunteers in Methuen. One recent initiative in progress is the launch of the Light the Falls, a colorful light show on a naturally occurring waterfall in the center of Methuen, bringing diversity, inclusion, technology, and the arts together in the historical heart of the downtown.
Cathy Lopez
Director of Human Resources, Berkshire Grey

Cathy is a Human Resource professional with over 20 years of experience primarily with technology companies, such as Kronos and Kiva Systems. She is currently Director of Human Resources at Berkshire Grey, Inc., a rapidly growing robotics and artificial intelligence company located in Bedford, MA. Cathy’s colleagues, friends, and family would all attest to her steadfast commitment to making her community a more equitable and better place to live. She leads by example and has a special ability to compassionately and lovingly inspire and encourage those around her to be better. Cathy’s passion for community service started from childhood as she watched her parents and grandparents prepare food boxes for the less fortunate. She feels blessed that her husband shares her passion for service, and together they continue to work on making a difference with the youth of Lawrence. In 2013, Cathy joined the board of directors of Youth Development Organization (YDO), an organization well aligned with her passion for helping the City’s youth through enrichment programs, including STEM and leadership development opportunities. She was elected President of the YDO Board of Directors in 2019.

Cathy is a strong believer in servant leadership and strives to provide whatever tools and support are necessary for children to be successful. Since 2016, she has been involved with Socratic, Inc., an organization that awards scholarships to high school students from the Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence. In addition, Cathy previously served as a board member of New England Hoops Academy (NEHA), a nonprofit organization founded by her husband with the mission to provide affordable year-round basketball and mentoring programs. Cathy has also joined the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) for Lawrence Public Schools’ Abbott Lawrence Academy (ALA), and she is excited for a new opportunity to serve the ALA family as co-vice president of the PTO. She remains a strong proponent of family involvement in education and believes that collaboration in school environments is key to fostering student growth, both academically and personally. Cathy lives in Lawrence with her husband of 20 years, Max. She is the proud mother of Camille, a senior at ALA, and Marcus, an 8th-grade student at Lawrence Catholic Academy.

Eunice Lopez
Director of Housing Programs, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC)

Never one to succumb to obstacles, Walki’s life has been marked by many a challenge and Eunice Lopez is a first-generation Latina American woman born to a Cuban mother and a Puerto Rican father. She was born and raised in Lawrence Ma, attended Lawrence Public Schools, and graduated from Lawrence High School in 2006. Eunice is currently [Director of Housing Programs] at GLCAC. Eunice empowers women within her work setting by role modeling strength, resilience, and wisdom. Eunice has mentored young high school interns and young staff. She supports women in the field and advocates for inclusion and equity.

Eunice is not one to shy away from impossible situations, for within these situations she finds the possible. Eunice is an active member of many community-working groups and strives to combat housing insecurity and homelessness. Eunice works diligently on aligning with other community partners to meet the complex needs of the residents. As an example, she has developed a relationship with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to support homeless families in securing shelter placements. She regularly attends outreach events within the community. She has advocated at Lawrence City Council Meetings for support for housing insecure residents of Lawrence and also has worked with the Methuen Housing Authority to develop a residential housing caseworker. Eunice networks in every aspect of her life to support residents, from negotiating with moving companies and property owners to finding access to free cell phones for low-income families. Eunice has been critical in supporting the efforts of Heal Lawrence, an organization that helps victims of fires or other disasters in Lawrence. Eunice ensures that our marginalized families receive the support they need to be housing secure.
Melissa Marrama
Manager, Insurance and Investments, Borislow Insurance
Melissa is a leader in the insurance and financial services industry, having been with Borislow Insurance since 2003. Melissa specializes in researching strategies and products in an ever-changing, competitive marketplace and helps match the solutions to best suit the client’s needs. Utilizing her vast knowledge and problem-solving skills, Melissa helps clients evaluate their life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income protection, and investment needs. Melissa holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Bentley College in Waltham, MA. As a registered representative with Royal Alliance, she can provide security products including mutual funds, general securities, and annuities. She is a member of NAIFA and the Million Dollar Round Table, a prestigious organization of insurance executives that sets the standard for professionalism. She has co-authored a book with two colleagues, If Only I Had Known, which contains checklists, and guidance to prepare for before and after a loved one dies. Her book provides guidance and draws on her experiences helping others through the passing of a loved one.

In 2020, Melissa will be recognized by the Boston Celtics as a Hometown Hero for her role in donating protective masks to New England residents and for creating a food program that serves meals to the homeless. She started the Kindness Collaborative with three friends, a partnership of community members, local businesses, and charitable organizations making amazing things happen to help people and promoting kindness throughout the Merrimack Valley and beyond. More recently, Melissa has become involved in helping coordinate support systems for some of the 150 Afghan refugees resettling in the Merrimack Valley and Greater Lowell. She is a role model to all her employees, clients and so many more throughout the community. She is greatly respected and has made a huge impact in every life that she has touched. Her moral code is stellar and anyone that has seen her in action knows how positive, hardworking, and inspirational Melissa is to be around.

Colleen McKenna
Program Director for CBHI Services Northeast Family Services
Colleen has worked in the Family Mental Health Services field for over 30 years. She has helped to improve the lives of hundreds if not thousands of individuals and families in the Merrimack Valley over this time. She has gone from providing direct service to individuals and families, to hiring and training others to do the same, to managing and directing programs that provide these services to families throughout the Merrimack Valley. She has worked with several different agencies along the way and always worked with the highest ethical standards, aiming to provide the best possible care and service to families in need.

She is inspired and motivated to do this work because of the help and benefit it provides to families in need. Her friends and colleagues in the business attest to her dedication, professionalism, and knowledge of the family mental health field. Colleen has helped to improve the lives of so many individuals and families in the Merrimack Valley over the years.

Originally from Lowell, Colleen and a proud Lowell High School alum. She continued her studies at Clark University, earning her BA in Psychology and Sociology. She later obtained her M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology at Cambridge College. In 1993 the state of Massachusetts launched the Mental Health Counselor Licensure exam. Colleen became one the first Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) in Massachusetts. Among her many accomplishments with her loving family husband Tim Clough and their two children Emily age 28 and Samuel, age 25.
Elecia Miller

Health Task Force Coordinator, City of Lawrence Office of Planning & Development

For the last eleven years, Elecia Miller has worked for the City of Lawrence Mayor’s Health Task Force (MHTF), a public health coalition whose vision is to make the city and its environs, a “… healthier, safer, and more thriving community.” In her role, she oversees the daily operations of the coalition. Over the years, under the guidance of the Community Development Director and with the help of the members of the Task Force, Elecia has helped to bring public health education and awareness to the city and beyond. A long-standing partner in this critical community-building work has been the Center for Community Based Research at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, headed by Dr. K. Vish Viswanath. Elecia played a pivotal role in the initiation of the Lawrence Youth Council. Although she was faced with the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Elecia rose to the challenge. She learned new ways to maintain and grow collaborations with other health and government allies to provide the help the community needed at the time. Elecia leads the Healthy Active Living Working Group, the Behavioral Health Working Group, and the Research Initiative Working Group, and participates in the Homelessness Initiatives Working Group of the MHTF.

Today, Elecia is the coordinator of the coalition, overseeing health initiatives such as Mass in Motion, a statewide initiative that examines access to physical activity and healthy eating, and Lawrence Ciclovía, an open streets activity. She is a member of the Community Advisory Board for the Harvard Catalyst Community Engagement Program, the Public Health Advisory Boards at Northern Essex Community College, and most recently, the University of Massachusetts, Lowell Campus.

Elecia is dedicated to reaching and educating as many residents of the Greater Lawrence area as she can through the work of the Mayor’s Health Task Force. She believes in working together to create effective messages with a unified voice, educate community residents, and foster good relationships, as well as positive behavioral change. Elecia is also part of the Public Health Advisory Committee for the Community Health Worker Certificate and Public Health Associate degree at Northern Essex Community College.

Maria Gonzalez Moeller

CEO, The Community Group.

Maria Gonzalez Moeller was born and raised in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and moved to the U.S. mainland to attend college. While in graduate school at Bentley, she met her husband and decided to stay in Massachusetts. In 1994, Maria joined The Community Group (TCG) in Lawrence as a project consultant. She quickly found a community at TCG and in Lawrence. She was inspired by the organization, its mission, and by the city of Lawrence, and soon transitioned into a permanent, full-time role. TCG manages a range of educational programs, including a network of early childhood and out-of-school time programs, a network of charter schools, consulting and training programs, and a child care resource and referral program. Over the past 28 years at TCG, Maria has held a variety of roles, from Operations Manager at Community Day Charter School to HR Manager for the organization, to Chief Operating Officer for Child Care Services. Three years ago, Maria took over from her longtime mentor Sheila Balboni and became the new CEO of the organization. Maria assumed the role of CEO full of ideas about what she wanted to do as a leader but had to completely rethink all of those ideas just a few short months later when COVID became a global pandemic.

Maria currently serves as a board member for the Massachusetts Association of Early Education and Care and was appointed in 2021 by Governor Baker as a member of the Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission. Locally, she is a member of the Lawrence Alliance for Education board. Last summer Maria completed the Lawrence Partnership’s LEADS Executive Leadership Program. In June of 2021, Maria’s LEADS project team was awarded $15,000 to establish the Lawrence Welcome Center that will connect Lawrence residents to information and services in the city. She is currently working with the library and other community members to launch this program.
**Nomsa Ncube**

Community Liaison and Food Pantry Director, Somebody Cares New England

Nomsa was born during the time of Colonial Rule in Zimbabwe, where the Colonial Masters made choices for its people and where residential suburbs and schools were divided by the color of their skin. She recalls not coming from plenty but always having a meal at the table because her mother worked very hard to provide for her family. Nomsa’s childhood home was a community home where hungry children would come and sit with her family at the table. Nomsa’s mother taught her that food was love and that it should be shared. Nomsa is who she is because of her mother and the lessons she learned from her mother. From a very young age, Nomsa learned to mobilize people to vote in the General Elections in Zimbabwe. She was involved in Civic Education and Election Monitoring. Nomsa worked with women and children because she understood that in most countries’ women, children, and the elderly suffer the most. Her heart for Community Service and Education enabled Nomsa to travel to faraway places and countries. Today, she is still committed to helping others, defending human rights and making sure the Haverhill community is fed.

Nomsa is the Community Liaison and Food Pantry Director at Somebody Cares in the Mt Washington Neighborhood Haverhill. In this role, she assists women, seniors, and families in need with food programs and clothing, addresses homelessness by helping those in need find suitable rental housing; and hosts community forums. In addition, Nomsa has been an unsung volunteer to those impacted by Covid delivering food and other needed supplies to those impacted by Covid and unable to leave their residence. She is an unselfish volunteer, a leader in bringing together the resources of the city to help those in need, a woman who never says no to someone in need and an inspiration and mentor to kids. She has recently been recognized by the City of Haverhill and appointed by the Mayor on several city Boards/ Commissions.

**Tram T. Nguyen**

State Representative, Massachusetts House

Tram T. Nguyen is the State Representative for the 18th Essex District, which includes parts of Andover, Boxford, North Andover, and Tewksbury. She is a first-generation Vietnamese-American immigrant and was the first person in her family to graduate from college and law school. She earned a Bachelor’s Degree from Tufts University and a Juris Doctor from Northeastern University School of Law. From the start of her legal career until she took office, Tram worked at Greater Boston Legal Services as a legal aid attorney and advocated for domestic violence survivors, workers, seniors, veterans, and children. She also engaged in legislative advocacy and worked with statewide coalitions, lawmakers, and lawmaking bodies to push for laws that address issues of racial and economic justice and protect the rights of the most vulnerable populations.

Tram was first elected into office in November 2018 and is the first Vietnamese American woman in elected office in the Commonwealth, the first Vietnamese American elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, the first Asian American on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, and the first Asian American woman to serve as vice-chair of a committee. Tram is currently vice-chair of the Labor & Workforce Development Committee, and a member of the House Committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement; the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery; and the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government. Tram believes “Representation Matters.” Women, AAPI people, and young people should see themselves represented in the State House, and Tram will speak to any group about the importance of representation. Recently Tram read to an elementary school class, and two young AAPI girls told her they had never seen a leader who looks like them. Now they have.
Lenis Perez

Associate Executive Director of Youth Development, Merrimack Valley YMCA

Lenis Perez is the Associate Executive Director of Youth Development at the Merrimack Valley YMCA. Lenis was born in the community of Lawrence, MA, and was involved in many youth programs as a youth. She moved to New York to go to school and while there began a career at the YMCA of NEW YORK. Lenis worked with the schools in New York City to help youth get into programs, do well in school and become better leaders. The Merrimack Valley YMCA was fortunate to find Lenis and the match was a win-win situation. Lenis was able to return to her hometown - Lawrence and continue her career working with youth. She is committed to raising strong youth leaders and getting youth into the high school of their choosing. She meets the teens where they are at and sets high expectations for them, which are achieved, because of the high level of respect the youth have for Lenis. Lenis is part of the leadership team at the YMCA. Lenis has enabled the YMCA to add more programs and get more youth to participate. She is involved with many collaborations and is instrumental in all that happens at the Lawrence Branch - YMCA. She is an amazingly strong woman looking out for others.

As a native of Lawrence, Lenis is intimately familiar with the struggles, as well as the potential within the city. She has a keen ability to relate to and communicate with youth of all backgrounds, and is known for her honesty, passion, spunk, and energy. Her own experiences have allowed her to see the tremendous impact that community-based organizations can have on families and communities, and she cherishes the opportunity to be a conduit for that positive change. Lenis holds a bachelor’s in Business Management from St. John’s University and is currently obtaining an MBA with a concentration in non-profit organizational leadership.

Caroline Pineau

CEO, STEM Haverhill

Caroline Pineau is an entrepreneurial trailblazer. She owns Stem Haverhill, the first female-owned and locally owned cannabis shop in the Merrimack Valley, and one of the first Economic Empowerment cannabis businesses in all of Massachusetts. Caroline is also a philanthropic leader in Haverhill, with Stem having contributed more than $100,000 to local charities since 2020. Stem’s presence in downtown Haverhill has helped further the city’s goal of revitalizing its downtown business district. Caroline has gained significant recognition in the cannabis industry through her efforts to highlight unfair local impact fees and her advocacy for communities disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs. She started her career in sports marketing and sales positions with XOS Digital and Experience Sports LLC (producer of the excellent Denver Marathon). After that, Caroline turned toward a more entrepreneurial path. She founded the community-centered yoga studio, The Yoga Tree in Haverhill MA in 2010. Caroline ventured next into Massachusetts’ nascent adult-use cannabis industry, and in May 2020 opened Stem. As one of Massachusetts’s first Economic Empowerment Applicants, Caroline operates Stem with the desire to contribute positively to the economic revitalization in downtown Haverhill, a city that has been designated as one that experienced a disproportionate impact from the earlier cannabis prohibition.

Originally, from Kennebunk, Maine, Caroline lives in Haverhill with her husband, Adam, their daughter Charlie, four, their son Bodhi, 1, and two big happy hound dogs. She loves art, yoga, and supporting local causes. Caroline graduated from the College of Charleston with a B.A. in Communication/Media Studies and Studio Art. In 2021, Caroline graduated from the Haverhill LEADS fellowship in conjunction with Harvard Business School, an executive leadership program to drive system-wide change.
Heather Rastello
RN, OMS (Ostomy Management Specialist), Holy Family Hospital

Heather graduated from UNH in 1993 with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She has worked at Holy Family Hospital in Methuen for over 32 years. Heather lives in Salem New Hampshire with her husband of 28 years and is the proud parent of four children. Her lifelong ambition of becoming a nurse was further fueled by her father’s diagnosis of cancer when she was 13 years old. She started her career at Holy Family as a nursing assistant and worked her way up to become a Registered Nurse. Her nominator says she is one of the hardest working and most dedicated Registered Nurses she knows. Heather has held many titles throughout her nursing career. She has worked on TCU (the transitional care unit), taught LPNs at Salter School, held the role of nursing supervisor at Nevins adult day center, and most recently works as an RN in the Holy Family outpatient department where she specializes in ostomy management. Heather also volunteered to work in the covid unit during the height of the pandemic where she managed extremely sick patients and provided the utmost compassionate care. Heather also served as an interim Clinical Leader for the outpatient departmental Holy Family for a time. Heather has stepped up to the plate on multiple occasions with the notion of always putting patients first and providing the absolute best care possible.

Heather provides ostomy consultation to in-house patients in addition to her outpatient duties. She spends hours on end ensuring these patients feel comfortable with their new ostomy, which is no easy feat. She helps them find the right appliances for appropriate management, sets them up with supplies for home, and provides a thorough education on all things ostomy. Heather will make herself available at all hours to help the patients feel supported. She follows up with them continuously to make sure they have everything they need. She has even come in on her days off to help troubleshoot ostomy problems. She truly goes beyond providing empathetic, holistic care. In addition to these duties, Heather has recently taken on a student here in the outpatient department. She loves to educate new nurses on all aspects of care. From treatments to bedside manner, Heather truly enjoys teaching the students what being a nurse is all about.

Yaritza Rizzo
Community Organizer, Lawrence Community Works (LCW)

Yaritza was born in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, and moved to Lawrence when she was seven years old. Yaritza graduated from Lawrence High School in 1994, obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Lowell in 2002, and later achieved a Master’s in Counseling Psychology from Cambridge College. Yaritza began her professional career as a Social Worker at the Department of Children and Families where she worked for a decade. She also worked as a mental health clinician in Lawrence for six years. Her passion for helping others in her community has inspired her to lead the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) in Lawrence and she has worked alongside the faith-based community providing advocacy, and counseling. Her commitment to her community led her to her current position at LCW as a Community Organizer.

Yaritza is a long-time resident of Lawrence and a mother of two children, Alejandro and Monica. Yaritza is an advocate for special education students and their families in the community. As Chair of the Lawrence Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), she has organized parent workshops at LPS and collaborated with various local and regional agencies. Yaritza completed advocacy training with the Federation for Children with Special Needs and helped design a summer program for children with disabilities with the Mayor’s Office. Yaritza also served as a board member for Parent Leaders of the Merrimack Valley and participated in the LPS superintendent interview process. Currently, Yaritza collaborates with Massachusetts Advocacy for Children to provide training on special education laws and a support group for parents.
Christina St. Onge
Senior Branch Relationship Manager, Enterprise Bank

Chris began her banking career in 1989 working for Shawmut Arlington Trust. She started as a bank teller and through hard work and dedication, worked her way up through various roles to her current position, as a Vice President. At Enterprise Bank Chris is the Senior Branch Relationship Manager of Enterprise Bank’s Methuen location. As a leader and manager, Chris serves as a mentor and coach to her employees. She is a wonderful role model and a great example, always demonstrating how hard work and career advancement go hand in hand. Christina is a trusted advisor to her customers who come to her for advice and depend on her vast knowledge and experience to help guide them in their financial decisions. In 2021, Christina achieved great success earning the prestigious Enterprise Bank President’s Club Award for top sales. In December of 2017, Chris and her family suffered the unimaginable loss of their daughter/sister to injuries suffered in an automobile accident. Christina has said the family only survived their tragic loss due to the outpouring of love and support from their friends, relatives, and the entire Methuen community.

Chris is authentic in her personality, principles, and values. She is a pillar of strength for her family, bank team members, and community. Chris is ambitious, organized, and constantly learning. She is steadfast in her beliefs and is always open to new ideas. Chris has demonstrated leadership characteristics throughout her career. Her clients have come to know and depend on her as a trusted advisor. As a mentor, she has fostered the growth and development of her team resulting in many professional advancements. She has demonstrated a commitment to her community by volunteering her time and talents to organizations outside of work.

Stephanie Messina Sewade
Executive Vice-President/Partner, LukeJackson Benefit and HR Solutions

Stephanie Messina Sewade is a partner at LukeJackson, a human resource consulting practice that she established with her business partner. Before forming her own consulting business, Stephanie had over 30 years of human resource experience and served as the Human Resource Director for Market Basket, where she was responsible for compensation, benefits, payroll, and human resource administration and compliance for the supermarket’s 25,000 employees. Growing up with Sicilian parents that were first-generation and lived through the Depression, Stephanie was taught at an early age values such as loyalty, hard work, and giving back for all that you are blessed with. During her lifetime, she has had some great highs and some not-so-great lows. However, two things she would say have defined her life and been her greatest accomplishments. One was when Stephanie and her husband adopted their daughter Gabrielle from Russia. Being a mom and experiencing motherhood while her own mom was still alive and watching her daughter grow and flourish was at the top of Stephanie’s priority list. Although Stephanie was an older mom, being involved in her daughter’s activities, her schoolwork, and dance are one of the two major accomplishments defining her life. Secondly, leaving a 35-plus-year career as an HR director in mid-life and starting a consulting business from scratch was another defining moment. Those values she was taught as a child of hard work, staying focused and digging deep to helped her overcome self-doubt, develop confidence, and start a new career by forming a benefit consulting practice with her business partner Jack Myers.

Stephanie is also committed to giving back to her community. She currently sits on the Board of the Psychological Center of Greater Lawrence and assists with their programs and provides financial resources to the organization. She is committed to their cause of helping those less fortunate. She has also volunteered on the Board of the Haverhill Boys and Girls Club and the Florence Crittendon Adoption Agency. Stephanie is also a communicant at her parish, St. Michael's in North Andover as a volunteer Eucharistic minister for the parish and various parish events.

For Stephanie, giving back is her way of saying “THANK YOU.”
Special Thanks to our Nominators

We Depend on Our Nominators

We are especially grateful to our Nominators for bringing these exceptional women to our attention, and for telling us about their professional accomplishments and community achievements.

Nominators

Mary Jane Dinsmore  Jack Myers  Antigoni Woodland  Jessica Andors
Stephanie McArdle  Eric Cox  Peter A Konrad  Heather West Smith
Joseph Bevilacqua  Tim Clough  Katie Graham  Marcia L. Burns-Mittler
Amy Sabato  Jana DiNatale  Tayler Hale  Virna Martinez
Eric Cox  David R Jones  Amy Lovasco  Eileen Regan
Mary Lyman  RAFAEL TEJADA  Susan Fink  Annmary Connor, LICSW
Mark Kampert

If you are interested in making a nomination for next year’s YWCA Tribute to Women Awards Luncheon, visit our website early in January of 2023 for the details: www.ywcanema.org.

The Mission of the YWCA

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2022 Tribute to Women Honorees

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Emma Campbell
YWCA Board President

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The Community Group

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Today, we honor all of our Honorees for their leadership in the workplace and in the community. The strength, commitment to others and the accomplishments of our Honorees inspires us all. Congratulations!

Susan Staples
YWCA Executive Director

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