



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

January 2018 Newsletter

www.womensclearinghouse.org

**Invitation to the January 23, 2018 Meeting of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI)
Noon-1:30 PM at the Alliance for Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 5th Floor; entrance on New
Hampshire Ave., NW. (Nearest Metro Stop: Dupont Circle, south exit)**

Update on US based International Programs to Help Girls

Thankfully a wide range of US based programs have been developed to help girls in the "Global South" (or high poverty countries) obtain an education and meet their other critical needs. Many of these programs focus on providing direct support to girls or on improving policies such as full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Some of these programs work in multiple countries such as the UN Foundation's "Girl Up". Others focus on one country such as SchoolGirls Unite which provides scholarships to girls in Mali. **Julie Willig** [Girl Up](#) Director of Impact and Programs, UN Foundation and **Wendy Lesko**, [Schoolgirls Unite](#) Director who coordinated the youth-led campaign to mobilize US support for the UN International Day of the Girl Child, will provide an overview of these efforts and a short description of their unique girl-focused projects.

Julie Willig graduated from Vanderbilt Univ. and has been with the UN Foundation since 2009 including the 2010 inception of Girl Up which has trained 32,000 girl leaders including 2,200 student groups from 102 countries. Girl Up-Uniting Girls to Change the World focuses on preventing early marriage, promoting birth registrations and expanding education for refugee girls.

Wendy Schaezel Lesko is also the President of the [Youth Activism Project](#) that encourages teens to advocate on policy issues such as gender equity and sexual violence. She co-authored several books including *Girls Gone Activist!* and *Youth! The 26% Solution*. Wendy worked as a community organizer for the United Farmworkers Union. She served as the only female reporter at the Congressional Monitor and started "Today on the Hill" on WTOP radio. The [May 2009 CWI newsletter](#) features presentations by Wendy Lesko and Pat Ortman, founder of Girls Gotta Run.

Additionally, representatives of related projects will provide a short overview or video of their projects:

Marzia Nawrozi, Feminist Majority Foundation's (FMF) Afghan Expert will provide information on FMF's [Girls Learn International](#) (GLI) with chapters in middle and high schools throughout the US. It is headquartered in FMF's Los Angeles Office. The GLI Program focuses on closing the gender gap in education so that all young people have the chance to go to school. Girls are disproportionately excluded from education, but it is crucial that girls, boys, transgender and non-binary youth, and adults all work together in order to come up with creative and realistic solutions to solve the crisis in girls' education. Afghanistan is one of 10 partner countries.

Gaby Grebski, school counselor, health educator, runner, coach and Board member, [Girls Gotta Run](#), which focuses on helping and empowering girl runners in Ethiopia, will share updates and a [video](#). As a long time volunteer, Gaby visited Ethiopia several times and served as the chief site visitor/monitor for their early programs.

Please let us know if you, or others you recommend, can attend this meeting and inform us of other related girls focused global projects.

CWI meetings are free and open to the public. Bring lunch. Weather permitting, next CWI meeting is Tue. Feb 27, 2018. Check www.womensclearinghouse.org for meeting cancellations.

Dear Current and Future CWI Members,

January 2018 is a good time for important New Years Resolutions to create a more feminist country and world!

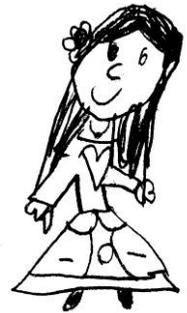
One of the ways CWI provides this leadership is to share visions of what we want to make happen. We also see our role as a Clearinghouse to increase collaboration of like-minded feminists.

Here is an outline of our vision for creating deliberately feminist progressive US and global strategies. This is a scenario that many of us want to make real!

- 1. Elect progressive pro feminist majorities in both houses of Congress in 2018 so Nancy Pelosi will be Speaker of the House.**
- 2. Disqualify current President and Vice President from serving in Office so that they leave these positions before 2019.**
- 3. Nancy Pelosi becomes President by 2019. Our new progressive Congress quickly ends all backward legislation such as the current tax law and other harmful actions from the now current Administration and establishes more effective and comprehensive permanent Health, Education and Welfare Systems to serve all in need equally well! The US also regains its positive feminist global leadership to continue and expand advances to improve the management of our environment and create world peace.**

Do you have other feminist scenarios you want to share?

CWI as an organization has recognized the need to increase collaboration with other organizations that specifically target issues of concern for women and girls, nationally and globally. These organizations work in specific areas such as women's health and reproductive rights, civil rights, Women's history, STEM, gender equity in education, women in the Global South, refugees, civil rights and attending to the needs of specific populations such as individuals with disabilities, LBGTO, individuals with low incomes.



Drawing By 5yr. old feminist

There are many strategies that we can use to implement our feminist visions and scenarios for needed change.

CWI provides necessary information presented by our monthly speakers to serve as a catalyst for action. We are now increasing our efforts to link likeminded organizations to provide coordinated action. For example, our January 2018 meeting on *US Based International Programs to Help Girls* will encourage projects working in this arena to learn about and support each other, whether they are working with multiple countries or just one. Similarly, CWI's March 27, 2018 meeting with Molly MacGregor, Director of the National Women's History Project, will focus on the development of a new *National Women's History Alliance* to help the many individual museums and historical sites work together and support each other.

We have learned the benefits of collaboration in the recent successful marches that have taken place across the US and the world. Those marches showed us the direction, but unless followed up by harnessing that energy into an action, and unless they work on common scenarios and effective strategies, this energy will not have the positive impact we need. CWI will do what we can to encourage strong models of "collaboration" among groups and like-minded individuals. This effort will gain us a more powerful voice on elections, on legislation both on the Hill and in local governments. We must make this effort to not only introduce new legislation, but to keep the gains that have been made.

To bring institutional change we need the power obtained by organizing for the long haul. Attend CWI 2018 meetings, bring guests, and let our united voices be heard and our goals be accomplished. The future generations of women and girls and feminist men depend on our efforts today.

We need to connect the dots to create a more feminist world and to end the current presidency and establish a progressive political power base.

Cordially, Harriett Stonehill, CoPresident CWI and Sue Klein, CoPresident CWI

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) Meeting Summary

#METOO on the Job and in School: Then and Now

November 28, 2017, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

At The Residences at Thomas Circle, 1330 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC

Special thanks to Harriet Fulbright and Tina Hobson for hosting the CWI luncheon and to Connie Cordovilla for organizing the engaging program and for the participation of their neighbors at The Residences at Thomas Circle.

After introductions of attendees, Dr. Sue Klein, Co-President, CWI and Education Equity Director of the Feminist Majority Foundation, opened the meeting up by passing around the 45th Anniversary "Ms." magazine issue and inviting folks to attend the upcoming Feminist Majority event, the *Women Money Power* Summit on Wednesday, December 6th at the National Press Club. This Summit will honor Senators Mazie Hirono and Dianne Feinstein, and Congresswomen Niki Tsongas and Maxine Waters.

As always, membership to the CWI is always encouraged for those interested. For \$25/year, membership includes access to CWI lunchtime programs and guest speakers, newsletters and news of interest to women, and the opportunity to share and hear more about relevant events in the area.

CWI Director, Connie Cordovilla introduced the program. As discussed during the last CWI meeting, the #MeToo movement has taken root and appears to be growing stronger and stronger as women share their stories of sexual harassment and assault. Featured guest speakers **Pat Ruess**, **Karma Cottman**, and **Ruth Glenn** interacted with each other as they spoke about and applauded the #MeToo movement. They were pleased that more women were willing to tell their stories now and that the attacks were having more negative impact on the perpetrators. They also emphasized that it is now critically important to transition this momentum to tangible actions.



Photo Left to Right: **Ruth Glenn**, **Connie Cordovilla** **Pat Reuss**, **Karma Cottman**, **Pat Reuss**, the "godmother" of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), began the conversation by asking how the #MeToo hashtag can now become a #WhatsNext campaign. It is important to take this 'emotional momentum' behind women coming out with sexual harassment stories and turn this determination into achievable actions to ensure these stories stop.

Karma Cottman, Executive Director of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, noted that there has been a large response to the #MeToo movement in her work as well. The DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence services 15 domestic violence (DV) agencies to respond effectively to domestic violence survivors and their children, 4 of these agencies assist with housing. The services offered by the Coalition center around stories similar to those coming out of the #MeToo movement. As Karma put it, the response she has seen from #MeToo has illustrated how difficult it is for women to move around in this world safely- and even more difficult for women that have experienced Domestic Violence or DV-- "this hashtag shows that sexual violence impacts us all". It's important for all to acknowledge that sexual assault is a tool of control in domestic violence, and because of that, DV victims are even less likely to speak out and seek help for sexual assaults.

Ruth Glenn, Executive Director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, was a welcomed new guest presenter who was in DC from their headquarters in Denver, Colorado. She spoke about how the conversation that began with the #MeToo hashtag must now begin in our home, educating younger girls and boys with specific attention paid to this discussion with young men.

Pat Reuss emphasized that former solutions are obviously not working at this point (EEOC, lawsuits, going to the boss or higher-ups) and instead, local and state laws must change to further protect women in the workplace and in everyday life. In DC, sexual assault training is not legally mandatory for employees—this must be changed, but be ready to fight pushback at all stages. We must get our mayors, school boards, corporations, small businesses, etc. to insist upon sexual discrimination training—that includes, but is broader than sexual harassment and violence.

Ruth Glenn pointed out the power control that allow men to get away with sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault- they maintain power in this ‘toxic environment’ because there are insufficient accountability measures in place. “It takes several women to be believed, but one man is automatically believed.” This power dynamic must cease, charged Ruth. In her experience at the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, inundating political leaders with letters that include a personal narrative can make a legitimate and powerful impact. It is essential to include not only a personal story, but suggestions for change when writing these letters.

“This current movement empowers those on the sideline to challenge the social status quo” **Karma Cottman** emphasized. It’s essential to reach out to communities of color to empower women experiencing sexual discrimination and to allow them to help take back power. It is also more important now than ever to focus on voter mobilization in the next year. **Pat Reuss’s** advice to CWI for the 2018 election is to get your phone and start making calls- “be cheery and talk fast”! Even if you live in Dc, you can still canvass and phone-bank for any candidate of your choice, whether that’s a local VA candidate or someone running in a tight race in Ohio, Illinois, etc. The important piece in speaking to constituents during calls is to make it as personal as possible.

Ruth Glenn offered her organization the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence <https://ncadv.org/> as a resource in creating phone lists of who to contact and why during the 2018 election. Another important recommendation from our speakers was that sexual discrimination training must become serious, instead of something employees can attend and promptly forget about. We’ve seen prominent leaders lose their position of power because of victims speaking out. If this is mentioned during the training, more men should realize there are legitimate consequences.

An idea that came up near the end of the meeting is an opportunity for women of varying ages and from varying communities to come and share their stories, if they so choose. The #MeToo online movement has been predominantly focused on younger women’s experiences with sexual harassment, but it is well known that generations and generations of women have experienced this and more in their professional life, personal life, and every area in between. A recorded panel was suggested to help share these stories. (Note CWI will share a video and public TV show based on this meeting.)

Participants and presenters then discussed how necessary it is to study sexual harassment training for accuracy and results; “we need to see what is working and what is not”. The passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was also brought up as a partial solution to help stop sexual harassment and assault and frequently related retaliation. If the Equal Rights Amendment was in the Constitution, these accounts of sexual assault would be clearly identified as sex or gender-based illegal discrimination and (like race and religion) would be subject to ‘strict’ rather than ‘intermediate scrutiny’ standards under the US Constitution.

On March 22, 2017, Nevada became the 36th state to ratify the ERA. If two of the following states also ratify there is a good chance we can finally get ERA in the US Constitution. Electing pro women's rights legislators in these still unratified states of: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, and Virginia is a good way to advance support for ERA and many other laws that will help prevent sexual harassment and violence as well as many other types of sex discrimination. **Pat Reuss** said "If we start the conversation with sexual harassment and #MeToo, it is possible to lead the conversation to ERA and larger movements."

The three guest speakers ended with the ERA discussion and a thought from **Pat Reuss**- "we've come a long way but have a long way to go". All are urged to continue their activism using Tweet storms, contacting legislators, and informing your communities about legislation and candidates to advance gender equality.

Coming 2018 DC Area and National Feminist Events and Resources

In 2018 we will send selected events to CWI members on our e-mailing list. Please share your upcoming feminist events to post in 2018 CWI newsletters to president@womensclearinghouse.org. Check out CWI's Facebook www.facebook.com/womensclearinghouse and Twitter www.twitter.com/CWINews pages! LIKE and FOLLOW us.

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2018 Noon to 2PM "Teaching Democratic Citizenship When Democracy Is at Risk"
[555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001](http://555NewJerseyAveNW.com) AFT Albert Shanker Institute, Lunch provided. [Register:](#)

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018. 11:30-1PM Anti-Trafficking Briefing and Rally "Disrupting Online Exploitation: Why Survivors Are Standing Up for #SESTA—A National Briefing," It will take place at the Russell Senate Office Building. To register to attend the briefing, email lauren@worldwithoutexploitation.org.

Monday, Jan. 22, 2018. 11 AM to 6 PM. Women's Equality Coalition Lobby Day in Capitol Square, Richmond, Planned Parenthood Virginia PAC [RSVP](#)

Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018. 12:30-6PM. Montgomery County Commission for Women's 2018 Legislative Briefing, [Information and Tickets](#)

Sat.-Monday, March 17-19 2018. National Young Feminist Leadership Conference 2018. Sponsored by the Feminist Majority Foundation, The Double Tree Crystal City. Contact feministcampus.org/conference/ for more information and Early Bird Registration.

Free Podcast from Montgomery County NOW. Episode 29 for Jan. 2018 is on the "World of Entertainment and Ida B. Wells-Barnett".

CWI's newsletter is endowed by friends in loving memory of our longtime editor Roslyn Kaiser.

Photos: Sue Klein, Draft of 11-18-17 meeting summary, Maggie Lohmann, AFT Intern, Newsletter edited by Sue Klein

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Membership Form

www.womensclearinghouse.org

1. Bring a check, payable to CWI, along with this form to a CWI Meeting or mail to:

Holly Taggart Joseph, CWI Treasurer
8504 Rosewood Drive
Bethesda MD 20814-1434

2. Or you may also join online using PayPal by going to the membership section of www.womensclearinghouse.org

NAME of Individual or Organization _____
 For Organizations also Provide Name and email of PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE _____
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Enclosed is a check for CWI membership **July 1-June 30** (Please fill in year/s.) _____

Individual \$25 for one year \$45 for two years \$65 for three years

Individual under 30 years old (\$15/one year)

Virtual (\$20/one year) (Email newsletter only for members outside Washington, DC area)

Organization (\$40/one year or \$100/three years)

Additional tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

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*If organizational member, indicate if you would like a link to your organization to be listed as a supporting member on CWI's website. (Listing subject to CWI approval) Circle One: YES NO (If Yes, provide url)

Membership dues and contributions are tax- deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.