

Women Commission for Oakland County 2008 Report

The first meeting of the Women's Commission for Oakland County met on January 30 at the Oakland County Auditorium. Officers elected were Wanda Lohmeier, Chair, Pam Bard and Christina Kou Co-Chairs, Ann Erickson- Gault, Recording Secretary, and Joni Hubred, Corresponding Secretary.

The commissioners elected four issue topics that were to be studied and assessed throughout the year; Health and Wellness, Economic Autonomy, Leadership, and Safety/Violence against Women. A Public Forum was decided as an avenue to obtain information from the general public to assess the needs and status of the women of Oakland County.

Public Forum Chairperson, Joni Hubred-Golden was appointed to form a committee to plan the event. The Forum was unprecedented with an overwhelming response from the general public and community leaders with over forty speakers desiring to speak on various community needs. Information obtained from the forum was disseminated throughout the issue groups to study. Our work in the committees came from the requests of the forum. Commissioner Golden also obtained the Open Meetings Act to ensure the commissions compliance in all our meetings.

Wanda Lohmeier, Chair made the following appointments:

- 1- Commissioner Alexa Stanard as Finance Director to research and study funding.
- 2- Commissioner Nickol Atkins, as Parliamentarian to maintain Roberts Rules of Order at commission meetings and the public forum.
- 3- Commissioner Cristina Kou, to Chair of Public Relation, to coordinate the publicity of the commission meetings and the public forum.
- 4- Commissioner Pam Baird to Chair of By Laws to draft the By Laws for the Women's Commission and they were approved in August.

While the general commission met seven times throughout the year for Commission business, the issue committees held individual committee meetings, elected chairs, co-chairs, and secretaries, developed mission statements, and short and long term goals for the year. The effort, energy, and commitment by the commissioners into the issue committees have given the women's commission a foundation to make a difference in tradition issues that plague our community such as domestic violence, mental health, leadership and economic autonomy. The committees are partnering with other groups to insure their success in benefiting the community. Each issue committee has a report on their activities for the year.

- Safety/ Violence against Women's –
- Health and Wellness –
- Leadership –
- Economy Autonomy –

The Women's Commission work has just begun. The talent, passion, and abilities of the women committed to serving their communities are unprecedented.

We respectfully ask that you support our request for an extension of the Women's Commission for Oakland County for a two year period so that we may continue to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wanda Lohmeier, Chairperson
Women's Commission for Oakland County.

**Women's Commission for Oakland County
Subcommittee
Safety / Violence Against Women**

Final Report

Members:

Commissioner Pauline Abbo – Chair	Commissioner Pamela Bard
Commissioner Mary Young – Vice Chair	Commissioner Alexa Stanard
Commissioner Calleen Barkham – Secretary	Commissioner Wanda Lohmeier

As the result of the Commission's open forum, significant data were collected and analyzed by this subcommittee. Because of the overwhelming appeal to identify the issues of domestic violence, the service providers and the gaps with legislative, judicial, and law enforcement support, we determined that our focus would be violence against women, and how to effectively address the issues presented at the forum. Even though violence against women is a traditional issue for several organizations, our mission as a subcommittee was to develop an innovative plan that will educate, prevent and support.

Accomplishments:

- Open Forum speakers – Honorable Sosnick, Haven representatives, Captain Keely Reyes, South Oakland Shelter representative, Commissioner Eric Coleman, Shannon and Beverly (victims).
- Distributed Petition for Personal Protection Order handouts with instructions to our Commissioners.
- Attended Oakland County Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee.
- Toured Haven facility in support of the START program.
- Met with Senator Gilda Jacobs and Cheryl Guyer to initiate partnership and format an action plan.
- Involved the National Silent Witness Program in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October).
- Attended Rise and Shine Breakfast for Haven, delivered gifts.
- Met with Senator Jacobs, Cheryl Guyer, Susan Cuevas, from the City of Southfield to introduce our Plan and develop timelines/stakeholders.
- Met with the Superintendent of Southfield Schools to introduce the Plan as it pertains to the adolescents.

PLAN OF ACTION

The *Violence Against Women* Subcommittee is proud to present a pilot program in the city of Southfield, in partnership with Senator Gilda Jacobs, Haven, Mayor Brenda Lawrence and Southfield Public Schools, that will systematically educate women with informational material that will be supplied in women's restrooms across the city. Finalizing and implementation of this Plan is forthcoming and has been received with visionary success.

Leadership Committee Final Report

Committee Members:

Nikhol Atkins, Ann Erickson-Gault, Joni Hubred-Golden, Sandra Hanna, Terry Margolis, Laurie Renchik, Chair and Wendy Zdeb.

Mission: Based on testimony provided at the May 6, 2008 public hearing, the Leadership subcommittee will create opportunities for leadership and advocacy training for young women with an emphasis on facilitating mentoring relationships with women in leadership positions; ultimately showing young women how to get involved at any age.

Short Term Goals:

1. Committee members will contact local school districts to determine whether they had leadership programs specifically for girls and whether they would be interested in working with the Leadership subcommittee to offer such a program in their district.
2. The Committee will partner with a women's leadership group (such as the Women Officials Network) and The White House Project to provide leadership training and a mentor connection event. We will involve students; middle school age up to recent college graduates, with the goal of developing leadership and networking skills in young women.

Long Term Goals:

1. Increase public awareness regarding leadership training resources
2. Support programs that promote tomorrow's women leaders
3. Connect with schools in Oakland County
4. Partner with League of Women Voters, Women Officials Network and other women's leadership groups
5. Network with other subcommittees to establish the Women's Commission as a point of connection for the wide range of organizations in Oakland County that focus on providing services to women.

Accomplishments:

Survey Results: Commissioner Renchik talked to Dr. Marlana Krolicki, Learning Services, Oakland Schools to inquire about leadership programs for girls beginning in middle school for all public schools in Oakland County. Commissioner Hanna received a positive response from West Bloomfield Schools, and Commissioner Hubred-Golden received a positive response from Farmington Schools. Additional details are necessary to determine willingness to participate as the public schools have gender equity guidelines to follow under Proposition 2 that was passed in November of 2006.

Community Event: Contact has been made with The White House Project, through Shannon Garrett, Michigan Field Director. Ms. Garrett is very willing to facilitate a Go Lead training program. Deb Macon of the Women Officials Network has also expressed an interest in involving WON in the planning and presentation of this program.

Leadership Connection: Thanks to networking within the Women's Commission, Commissioner Dianthia Spann participated in Michigan Go Run leadership training.

Oakland County Women's Commission Health and Wellness Committee – Progress Report 2008

Introduction

The Health and Wellness Committee of the Oakland County Women's Commission consists of four Commissioners: Chairperson, Dr. Jessica Jenkins, Secretary, Ms. Dianthia Spann, Ms. Cristina Broomfield and Ms. Carla Schwartz. In addition, in order to increase our community impact and productivity, the Health and Wellness Committee recruited members of the community to serve as members at large:

- Ms. Helaine Zack – Oakland County Commissioner and Beaumont Hospital Employee
- Dr. Sonia Pone – Licensed Psychologist and President of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Foundation
- Dr. Jan Tomakowsky – Licensed Psychologist and Chairperson of the Public Education Committee for Michigan Psychological Association
- Ms. Malkia Maisha Newman – Community Educator, Community Network Services
- Ms. Jacqueline Castine – Community Education Specialist, Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority

Additionally, the Health and Wellness Committee was pleased to collaborate with Dr. Judith Kovach, Executive Director of the Michigan Psychological Association and Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Michigan Partners for Parity.

Accomplishments

The Health and Wellness Committee selected mental health issues as their primary focus. Specifically, the committee sought to address the topic of mental health parity: discrimination, restrictions and limitations on coverage for mental health care. To date, the Health and Wellness Committee has:

- Provided Women's Commission members and committee members with informational brochures (provided by the Michigan Partners for Parity) to promote knowledge and awareness of the mental health parity crisis in the State of Michigan.
- Organized a special topic presentation given by Dr. Kovach to the entire Women's Commission regarding mental health parity.
- Collaborated to draft a resolution to be presented to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners requesting support for mental health parity in Michigan.
- Received support from the Women's Commission for a recommendation for a resolution to be presented to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Future Goals

Pending the renewal of the Oakland County Women's Commission, the Health and Wellness Committee plans to continue to focus on mental health and parity. Future goals include:

- Receive approval from the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for a resolution to support mental health parity in Michigan.
- Receive support for mental health parity from Oakland County government leaders.
- Continue to work with our community partners to develop a presentation for business leaders in the community to educate them on the need for mental health parity in benefit planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Oakland County as members of the Women's Commission. We look forward to the opportunity for continued service in 2009.

Jessica Jenkins, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Health and Wellness Committee

Economic Autonomy Committee

Committee Members

Christina Kuo, Cheryl Fried, Sunsaria Baldwin, Julie Apple Plotnick, Tamra Ward, Carol VanSpybrook

Activities

- Toured United Way 2-1-1 facility, listened in on phone calls and met with Operations Manager to discuss partnership.
- Had spokesperson from United Way 2-1-1 present to Women's Commission on what they do, who they serve (demographics), the services requested and the agencies referred. Rack cards were made available to all commissioners to distribute.
- Developed a letter, to be distributed to organizations, which may be good partners for 2-1-1 and potentially added to the database. The letter also asked the organization to consider adding a link to 2-1-1 on their website as a resource for others.

Accomplishments

- Partnership developed with United Way 2-1-1
- Arranged for Oakland County operators to be trained to refer people to 2-1-1
- Had 2-1-1 logo and link to website put on Oakland County Board of Commissioners website
- Arranged to have 2-1-1 logo and link to website added to the general Oakland County government website

Short-Term Goals:

1. Disseminate information through Oakland County about United Way 2-1-1.
2. Reach out to groups about United Way 2-1-1 so their contact information and services are listed in the United Way 2-1-1 database.

Long-Term Goals:

1. Ensure Oakland County women have access to information on economic issues that affect their everyday lives.
2. Educate women about the ways they can become more economically independent and stable.
3. Empower women to take control of their economic lives.

Women's Commission for Oakland County 2008 Finance Report

The WCOC receives no public funding. This year we were able to execute all of our duties with no budget, with things like photocopies and refreshments coming through donations.

However, the commission early in the year stated its wish to develop funding for the purposes of administrative help and support for potential member projects. Finance Director Alexa Stanard composed a solicitation letter for individual funders that all members were free to use. Additionally, the Finance Committee, working with the Executive Committee, explored various fundraising options, including grants and events.

Substantial research located a number of possible grant sources. However, those grants proved difficult to obtain in the short term, as funders generally have set deadlines for applying and provide funds several months after those deadlines. No organizational funding sources that provide short-term grants were located.

It is the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the incoming commissioners, both as a body and in subcommittees, quickly address their funding needs so that grants may be applied for and received in a timely fashion. Funding for the work of the commission as a whole may best be sought through a combination of individual donations and fundraising events, while grants that support work with specific goals may be the most promising avenue for the subcommittees, which have clear and specific projects.