



Maryland Commission for Women

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2016 – JUNE 30, 2017

Maryland Commission for Women

JULY 2016 — JUNE 2017



Mythili (Lee) Bachu, Chair



A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair



Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary



Homayara Haque Aziz



Tawanda Bailey



Marianne Hyang
Nam Brackney



Tammy Bresnahan



Deborah Cartee



Gloria Chang



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Nicole Ingram



Velvet Johnson



Doris Hillian Ligon



Bonnie Nelson Luna



Marion C. Manski



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Carole Jaar Sepe



Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen



Ummu Bradley Thomas



Tamara England Wilson



Marylou Yam



Yun Jung Yang

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MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

The Maryland Commission for Women was first established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office in the Department of Human Resources, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include:

- Study the status of women in our state
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination
- Recognize women's accomplishments and contributions
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state

Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate, and serve without compensation.



Members of the Maryland Commission for Women with First Lady Yumi Hogan at the March 16, 2017 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Ceremony. Pictured from left to right, first row: Lorna Forde, Marianne Brackney, Diane Williams, Mrs. Hogan, Lee Bachu, Wandra Ashley-Williams, Carole Sepe. Second row, L-R: Anita Riley, Gloria Chang, Corinna Shen, Bonnie Luna, Tamara Wilson, Marylou Yam, Deborah Cartee, Tawanda Bailey, Homayara Aziz, Nicole Ingram, April Nyman, Judith Vaughan-Prather (Executive Director) and Yun Jung Yang.



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is the state's primary social service provider, serving over one million people annually. DHS, through its 24 local departments of social services, aggressively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services, and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City. We are also home to the Maryland Commission for Women.

The Commission for Women helps DHS achieve its goals by serving as a voice for over half the population of our state – and for some of our most vulnerable residents. The Commission's role as an advocate for the women and girls of Maryland positions it as a valued advisor on issues including domestic violence and sexual assault, human trafficking, mothers and poverty, work and family, equal access to opportunity, and much more.

Throughout this past year, Commissioners have traveled around the state asking the women of each region to talk about their concerns, as women. Hundreds of Maryland's women and girls have participated, lending their voices to this important project. While the Voices of Maryland Women initiative continues into the next year, we look forward to the information it will garner and the recommendations it will generate.

We are inspired by the lives of the eight extraordinary women who were inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and the five exceptional young women who were honored with the "Women of Tomorrow Award" in March of this year. We commend the Commissioners' work to recognize women's contributions to our state's history and to encourage young women to exceed all expectations as they create our state's future.

DHS so very much appreciates the hard work, expertise and time donated by the 25 volunteer members of the Commission to help make Maryland a place where all our residents lead productive lives as respected members of our community. We are proud to have the Commission as our partner as we pursue our vision of a Maryland where people independently support themselves and their families and where individuals are safe from abuse and neglect.

Lourdes R. Padilla
Secretary, Maryland Department of Human Resources



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR MYTHILI “LEE” BACHU

“I raise up my voice—not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.” —Malala Yousafzai

With this simple statement, and her extraordinary acts of courage, this young woman, Malala Yousafzai, has inspired all women, young and old, everywhere around the world, to stand up and make their voices heard.

The Commission for Women launched its Voices of Maryland Women project in July 2016 and continued its work on this initiative throughout the year. We have already visited 12 jurisdictions from across the mountainous western panhandle to the lower Eastern Shore asking the women of Maryland to “talk to us” about the concerns they encounter in their lives. Although the project is far from finished, we have already learned much: Women like to be asked for their input. They feel valued when given an opportunity to speak, and they appreciate it when you seek their input instead of always expecting them to come to you.

We have been impressed by the wide range of issues the participants in the Listening Tour have presented – from child care and equal pay to environmental issues and the need for better public transportation, from the needs of the impoverished to the needs of the elderly, concerns about careers for women in science, technology, engineering and math, and concerns about women who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. We have heard about the needs of businesswomen and the needs of incarcerated women, and much, much more.

Listening to these Marylanders is perhaps the most important role the Commission for Women can play – to hear the words of women and girls in our state, to provide a channel for communicating their needs, their concerns, their voice.

It has been my privilege to collaborate with 24 incredibly dedicated and caring commissioners as we worked on this initiative and the Commission’s other signature projects, including the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, the Women of Tomorrow Awards and our legislative advocacy in the Maryland General Assembly. I am honored to serve as the Chair of this organization and to have the opportunity to serve the women of our state in this way. Women have much to contribute to the discussions, deliberations and decisions of making public policy. The Maryland Commission for Women is an important avenue for their voices.



REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JUDITH VAUGHAN-PRATHER

This year was one in which the challenges and transitions during the past two years really began to show their value. At its June 16, 2016 meeting, the Commission re-elected Lee Bachu as Chair, A. Diane Williams as Vice Chair, and Wandra Ashley-Williams as Secretary. Committee Chairs for the coming year were appointed, the committees formed, and an ambitious agenda was set in motion that would take the commission to the far corners of the state, and almost everywhere in between, including inside the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, and the halls of state government in Annapolis, advocating on behalf of the women and girls of this state.

The work of the Commission is carried out primarily by its standing committees:

- The MCW fully launched its Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour with its first public forum on July 13, 2016 in Washington County, then traveling to 12 jurisdictions to conduct the forums and an online survey throughout the year. The MCW even traveled to the Republic of Moldova to help replicate the project in that Eastern European nation.
- In October, the MCW convened a meeting of all the Commissions for Women (CFWs) in the state to share training, information, resources and strategies.
- In the first few months of 2017, the MCW supported an active legislative agenda, advocating passage of eight bills, supporting both the platform of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) and a robust partnership in the Women's Legislative Briefing in January.
- The 2017 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony on March 16 was spectacular, inducting eight extraordinary women and celebrating the accomplishments of five bright, talented and accomplished girls.
- The Education and Outreach Committee distributed more than 85 issue alerts throughout the year, and supported the Women Moving Forward Conference at the state women's prison.
- The Health and Wellness Committee further expanded the MCW's online health information and resources directory for women, and issued 16 Health Alerts to the MCW's substantial distribution lists.
- The Communications and Public Relations Committee continued its update and expansion of the MCW's social media presence.

The reports of each of these committees follow, and the Commission engaged in a number of other important activities in its efforts to serve the women of Maryland:

- Vice Chair Diane Williams, who chaired the 2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame when former WWII Women Air Force Service Pilot (WASP) Elaine Danforth Harmon was inducted, represented the MCW at a beautiful memorial service at the Women in Military Services for America (WIMSA) Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery on September 7. Ms. Harmon was the first woman to be inurned at Arlington after enactment of the Women Air Force Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act.



- On October 12, the MCW wrote to the Secretary of Public Safety and Corrections supporting the recommendation by the Women Legislators of Maryland that DPSCS initiate an assessment of the conditions of and programming for the women incarcerated at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in Jessup.
- At the request of the Governor’s Office on Minority Affairs, the MCW helped advertise the October 18 conference: *Ready, Set, GROW! Honoring Women Business Owners*, and sent a delegation of commissioners and staff to the event.
- The MCW co-sponsored the WE3 conference; coordinated by the Prince George’s County Commission for Women. Chair Lee Bachu and Vice Chair Diane Williams attended the awards reception on Friday, September 23, where Vice Chair Williams received a Legacy Leadership Award and spoke to the audience about the MCW’s Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour. The MCW also created and staffed an exhibit table at the event. Commissioners Tawanda Bailey and Ummu Thomas represented the MCW at the continuation of the conference on December 12.
- The MCW sponsored and sent a delegation of six commissioners to the Maryland State Conference NAACP’s first WIN (Women in the NAACP) event on October 29. The purpose of the NAACP WIN program is “to enhance the leadership role of women; (and) serve as an advocacy vehicle for social, economic, political, educational, and health and welfare issues affecting women, girls and children.”
- MCW Chair Lee Bachu was the speaker at a meeting of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in Prince George’s County on December 1, 2016, where she described the work of the MCW and especially the Listening Tour.
- On December 19, MCW Chair Lee Bachu spoke to a large crowd at an event celebrating the 2016 Summer Olympians from Montgomery County. Two of those Olympians are women who won gold medals and broke world records, and were to be inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame in March 2017. Chair Bachu’s remarks included information on the history of women’s participation in sports and especially this year’s Olympics in which women outnumbered men both as members of the U.S. team and as medal winners.
- The MCW sent a delegation of two, Commissioners Tammy Bresnahan and Deborah Cartee, to the January 17 legislative reception of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) in Annapolis.
- On January 31, 2017, the MCW sent a delegation of nine commissioners and staff to the annual briefing sponsored by the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, in the House Office Building in Annapolis.
- In the 2016 session of the Maryland General Assembly, a law was passed establishing a Task Force to Study Family and Medical Leave Insurance, and requiring that the MCW Executive Director be a member of the group. The Task Force met several times during the year and is working toward to development of recommendations on this issue.





- On April 24, four members of the Maryland Commission for Women, including the Chair, were honored by The Daily Record as Maryland's Top 100 Women: Lee Bachu, Tammy Bresnahan, Bonnie Nelson Luna and Marylou Yam.
- Commission Vice Chair Diane Williams and the Executive Director represented the MCW at day-long conference in Washington DC, with Bella Owns, Baltimore County CFW Chair, sponsored by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, Wellesley College and Spellman College.
- Commissioners served as liaisons with formal relationships between the MCW and other organizations, including:
 - * Maryland Women's Heritage Center (Chair Bachu)
 - * Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women (Vice Chair Williams)
 - * The Maryland Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Chair Bachu and Vice Chair Williams)
 - * Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams)
 - * Steering Committee for the Women Moving Forward Conference (Commissioner Tawanda Bailey).



The Commission was assisted in its work by two volunteers over the course of the year, in addition to the Professional Fellow from the American Councils for International Education. Bev Thoms worked in the office two afternoons per week for the entire year helping with the staff support to the various committees, especially developing the Health Alerts for the Health and Wellness Committee. Sidwell Friends High School student Sydney Yi worked for two weeks full time, helping with the Listening Tour, updating the resource directory for women and girls in STEM careers and other outreach efforts. Both will continue their support of the MCW's work into the next fiscal year, and are very much appreciated.



2016 MARYLAND COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN

ROUNDTABLE MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2016

ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE | ARNOLD, MARYLAND

For the second consecutive year, the Maryland Commission for Women convened representatives of the county Commissions for Women around the state for a roundtable discussion following the annual fall conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. The MCW contributed \$1000 to support the MLAW Conference and to cover the registration fees for 25 commission representatives.

The goal of this endeavor is two-fold. First, it encourages participation by the members of county Commissions for Women in the MLAW conference which provides them with training on legislative issues and legislative advocacy. It improves their leadership and advisory capacity by connecting them with other state-wide and local organizations working to improve the status of women and girls in Maryland and gives them information important to their role as commissioners. Secondly, convening the roundtable meeting immediately afterward provides the commissioners an opportunity to share strategies and concerns with others doing the same kind of work, and to engage as a team advocating for the women and girls of our state.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for the MCW to share invitations to submit nominations for its Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Awards programs and to encourage the county commissions to join in the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour project.

This year, twenty-four representatives of nine of the Commissions for Women in the state attended. Each Commission was asked to share its structure, priorities, activities and challenges.

Anne Arundel County

- Established in 1975 by County Executive Orders
- 21 Commissioners
- Conducted the first Anne Arundel County Women’s Expo offering seminars and training
- In the process of developing a strong strategic plan

Baltimore County

- Authorized by the County Council
- Enjoying its 39th year
- Priority issues include:
 - * Human Trafficking
 - * Special Issues confronting Muslim women
- Sponsoring a Woman of the Year Event to celebrate its 40th anniversary

Charles County

- Authorized by the Board of Commissioners
- 15 commissioners representing a very diverse population

- Priority issues include
 - * Homelessness
 - * Youth, especially the increased abuse of drugs
 - * Domestic Violence
- Other activities include:
 - * Developing a clothing bank for victims of domestic violence
 - * Recognizing trailblazers, including junior trailblazers

Frederick County

- Priorities and activities include:
 - * She Leads – leadership training for high school girls
 - * Human Trafficking
 - * Leadership Alliance–fundraiser

Garrett County

- Authorized by the County Commissioners
- 12–15 Commissioners
- Priorities include:
 - * Reorganizing and re-activating the CFW
 - * Assessing the needs of the women in Garrett County



- * Challenges facing women of low income
- * Garrett County Women’s Hall of Fame
- * GEMS program – Garrett Empowerment program for Middle School girls

Montgomery County

- Authorized by county law
- 15 Commissioners
- Priorities and activities include:
 - * Re-entry program for incarcerated women
 - * STEM scholarship for students at Montgomery College
 - * Women’s Legislative Briefing
 - * Women’s Economic Empowerment
 - * Human Trafficking Task Force

Prince George’s County

- 11 appointees and 4 ex-officio commissioners
- Priorities and activities include:
 - * Domestic Violence

- * Human Trafficking
- * Girls and STEM careers
- * Family Justice Center
- * WE3 (Women’s Education, Engagement and Empowerment) Conference

Washington County

- Established in 1987 by the County Board of Commissioners
- 10 active commissioners and 5 vacancies currently
- Priorities and activities include:
 - * Heroin addiction and overdoses
 - * Financial literacy
 - * Families of incarcerated women
 - * Families in transition, including those affected by domestic violence
 - * Breast Cancer Walk
 - * Circle of Sisters event in Women’s History Month

Following the roundtable discussion of individual CFW activities, the group identified some common themes and lessons learned from each other:

- Focus on advocacy, not only seminars and events
- Meet with the elected officials, face to face, to discuss issues
- Actively recruit strong women to serve on the Commission
- Develop partnerships with other women’s organizations in the community or jurisdiction
- Consider establishing a “Presidents Council” of the leaders of those women’s organizations
- Create good and extensive distribution lists and networks to get the Commission’s message out, and be sure that the list of contacts and the Commission’s networks can transition as the leadership does





LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: COMMISSIONER TAMMY BRESNAHAN

MEMBERS: COMMISSIONERS WANDRA ASHLEY-WILLIAMS
LORNA FORDE, NICOLE INGRAM, UMMU THOMAS

The MCW's enabling legislation charges it with the responsibility to "inform the executive and legislative branches of government on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on these issues before legislative and administrative bodies."

In carrying out this duty, the MCW undertook an ambitious work plan setting its own legislative agenda and supporting other advocates for women.

In the fall of 2016, the MCW served as a sponsor of the annual conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) and MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams served on the MLAW board of directors throughout the year. The MCW sent a delegation of nine to the MLAW wrap-up briefing at the end of the Maryland General Assembly.

MCW was also a co-sponsor of the 2017 Women's Legislative Briefing, a conference coordinated by the Montgomery County Commission for Women and attended by over 600 men and women from around the state. The MCW participated on the planning committee for the event, staffed an exhibit table there all day and provided speakers for several of the seminars: Commissioners Tammy Bresnahan, Tawanda Bailey, Marylou Yam and Yun Jung Yang were all presenters. MCW Vice Chair Diane Williams represented the MCW in the pre-conference Presidents Networking Session.

During the 2017 Maryland General Assembly, the MCW developed an agenda of eight (three cross-filed) bills to support. Written testimony was developed and sent to the committee hearing the bills. Below is a description of each of the legislative issues supported by the MCW and the outcome of each.

HB 214 Discrimination in Employment – Conditions related to Childbirth

This bill would have made clarifications to Maryland's existing law to ensure pregnant workers were not forced into taking leave-without-pay as an alternative to a "reasonable accommodation." The bill also allowed for accommodations for lactation-related needs. While the bill did not get out of committee, this is one of the issues on which progress is expected during the 2018 legislative Session.

Outcome: Failed.

HB 428/SB 574 Rape Survivor Family Protection Act

Current law gives rapists who cause a child to be conceived the same rights as other biological parents. Additionally, if a rapist-parent cannot be located, current law requires that the victim's name be published in the newspaper. MCASA (the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault) continues to support legislation to limit the parental rights of rapists when the child was conceived through rape and to increase protections for rape survivors who have a child conceived through rape. This is the same standard used in other family law cases that result in the termination of parental rights.

Outcome: Failed. The MCW wrote to the chairs of both committees, after the session, expressing its hope that these bills will be considered favorably next year.

SB 217/ HB 429 Criminal Law - Sexual Offenses – Physical Resistance

This bill, referred to as “No Means No”, clarifies and modernizes Maryland’s sexual assault statutes by making it clear that rape victims are not required to physically resist sexual assault. It creates a fundamental and important improvement in Maryland’s response to sexual assault survivors and is one of the most important changes to the criminal law in recent years.

Outcome: Passed, signed by the Governor.

SB 232/HB 616 Pregnant and Parenting Teens – School Attendance Policy

Young women who are pregnant or parenting often struggle in school due to lack of support from the school district. Students need excused absences for medical appointments or to care for their children, and they need resources to make up the schoolwork missed during that time. This bill creates an attendance policy in schools for pregnant and parenting students for their medical and legal appointments.

Status: Passed, signed by the Governor.

SB 636 Commission on the Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution

This bill expands the membership of the Commission on the Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to include a member of the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.

Status: Passed, signed by the Governor.



MCW delegation to Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women briefing in Annapolis. Pictured from left to right are: MCW Legislation and Public Policy Committee Chair Tammy Bresnahan, with Commissioners Carole Jaar Sepe, Anita Riley, Wandra Ashley-Williams (Secretary), A. Diane Williams (Vice Chair), Tawanda Bailey and Lorna Forde.

**2017
MARYLAND WOMEN'S
HALL OF FAME**

CHAIR: MARIANNE BRACKNEY
MEMBERS: DEBORAH CARTEE, NICOLE INGRAM, BONNIE LUNA, APRIL NYMAN, CORINNA SHEN, YUN JUNG YANG

**2017
MARYLAND WOMEN
OF TOMORROW**

CO-CHAIRS: LORNA FORDE AND CAROLE JAAR SEPE
MEMBERS: HOMAYARA AZIZ, MARIANNE BRACKNEY, TAMMY BRESNAHAN, APRIL NYMAN, WANDRA ASHLEY-WILLIAMS



Lee Bachu, MCW Chair and First Lady Yumi Hogan



Marianne Brackney

On March 16, 2017, a crowd of well over 200 attended the culminating ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of Maryland women and young girls. The Maryland Commission for Women along with the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly inducted eight women into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame at a program in the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis. The ceremony included the introduction of five middle and high school students who were presented the Women of Tomorrow award. Delegate Aruna Miller, President of the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly, guided the program as Mistress of Ceremonies. Maryland's First Lady Yumi Hogan attended the ceremony presenting a proclamation of Women's History Month in this state and presenting each of the honorees with a citation from Governor Larry Hogan.

The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1985 as a joint initiative of the Commission for Women and the Women Legislators to recognize and honor Maryland women whose accomplishments are of historic significance to the state and to provide an archive of their biographies. Since 1985, more than 170 Maryland women have been inducted into the Hall of Fame including Rachel Carson, Harriet Tubman, Clara Barton, Billie Holiday, Henrietta Lacks and Former Congresswoman and Ambassador Connie Morella. An exhibit of the Hall of Fame is on display at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center: www.mdwomensheritagecenter.org. The biographies of all the inductees are posted on the website of the Maryland State Archives: <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/whflist.html>.

The Calls for Nominations for both the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow Awards were issued in October, 2016. For the Hall of Fame, the Commission received 23 nominations of extraordinary women from all walks of life and from all across the state. An independent, all-volunteer selection committee was formed to review the submissions and make the difficult decision of whom to induct into the Hall of Fame in 2017. The Selection Committee members included:

- Theresa Foster, President, Business and Professional Women of Maryland

- Dr. Catherine Gira, Maryland Women’s Heritage Center
- Michelle Daugherty Siri, Esp., Executive Director, Women’s Law Center of Maryland
- Delegate Shelly Hettleman, Maryland General Assembly, Baltimore County
- Eileen Menton, President, American Association of University Women (AAUW Maryland)

The individuals inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame in 2017 are:

- **Marsha Coleman-Adebayo, Ph.D.** Government reformist and author of the Pulitzer Prize nominated book *No FEAR - A Whistleblower’s Triumph*
- **Carolyn W. Colvin** Former Acting Commissioner, U.S. Social Security Administration
- **Donna Edwards** U.S. Congresswoman (MD-04, 2008 – 2016)
- **Mary Elizabeth Garrett** (posthumous) Suffragist, Women’s Education Activist, Philanthropist
- **Katharine Blodgett Gebbie, Ph.D.** (posthumous) Astrophysicist who founded and administered a department at NIST whose scientists won four Nobel Prizes
- **Kathleen Ledecky** 2016 Summer Olympic Gold Medalist, Swimming
- **Helen Maroulis** 2016 Summer Olympic Gold Medalist, Wrestling
- **Lilian Welsh, M.D.** (posthumous) Physician, Educator, Suffragist

The Women of Tomorrow Award was established by the Commission for Women in 1997 to recognize and honor extraordinary young women who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. Nominations are received from educators, civic, community and religious leaders across the state.

This year, 73 students representing 16 Maryland counties and Baltimore City and 57 different schools were nominated. An all-volunteer selection committee reviewed every one of the nominations, and met in Annapolis to make the final decision.

The members of the 2017 Women of Tomorrow Selection Committee were:

- Dr. Debra Franklin, Dean of the School of Arts, Sciences and Business at Notre Dame of Maryland University
- Attorney Chandra Walker Holloway, representing the Girl Scouts of America, and
- Kiesha Houghton, Managing Director of the Maryland Women’s Business Center

From that large pool of outstanding students, the five honorees selected were:

- **Isabella Hessler**, 8th Grade, Perry Hall Middle School, Baltimore County
- **Hazel Montgomery-Walsh**, 8th Grade, Arbutus Middle School, Baltimore County
- **Dia Brown**, 12th Grade, Huntingtown High School, Calvert County
- **Laura Espinoza**, 11th Grade, Montgomery Blair High School, Montgomery County
- **Sarah Perez**, 12th Grade, Tuscarora High School, Frederick County



Carole Jaar Sepe and Lorna Forde

The Commission for Women invited sponsorship to help cover the cost of the ceremony, and was generously supported by **Gold Sponsor PNC Bank** and **Silver Sponsor AARP Maryland**. In addition, the Women Legislators of Maryland, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP were all Bronze Sponsors. Their donations, plus a number of smaller donations from attendees were all deposited to the Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women.



2017 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame honorees with members of the Commission for Women and First Lady Yumi Hogan (center).



2017 Maryland Women of Tomorrow with members of the Commission for Women and First Lady Yumi Hogan (center).



EDUCATION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: TAWANDA BAILEY

MEMBERS: MARIANNE BRACKNEY, NICOLE INGRAM, VELVET JOHNSON
BETSY RAMIREZ, YUN JUNG YANG

The primary goals of the Education and Outreach Committee for this year were to increase public awareness of the issues of concern to the women of Maryland, to support the Women Moving Forward Conference at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, to assist with outreach for the Listening Tour project, and to organize the annual Round Table Meeting of Commissions for Women in Maryland.

The Commission for Women shared a total of **87 Alerts over the past year, each going out to distribution lists totaling more than 725 people. Of these, 16 were about the Listening Tour, 16 were Health Alerts and 55 were Issue Alerts** covering topics such as Title IX, Women's Equality Day, women and retirement, and announcements of events related to women's issues. The Commission also conducted the very well received CFW Roundtable meeting last fall.

In addition, the committee co-sponsored the Women Moving Forward (WMF) Conference at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women. Commissioner Bailey participated actively on the WMF Steering Committee and the MCW offered two workshops at the conference. Approximately 150 – 180 residents attended the conference to help MCIW residents prepare for the transition from incarceration back into work, family and community. MCW Chair Bachu led a seminar on financial literacy, and Commissioners Ingram and Yang, with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather, conducted a session of the Listening Tour as a seminar there. Commissioner Johnson attended the WMF conference as well, assisting with job interview technique seminars.

During the March 2017 Women's History Month, the MCW undertook a number of activities:

- Chair Bachu represented Maryland's First Lady Yumi Hogan at the Women's History Month program of the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority on March 4 in Annapolis.
- Chair Bachu and Commissioner Brackney represented the MCW at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center event unveiling the expansion of its Maryland Women's Hall of Fame exhibit on March 5 in Baltimore.
- Chair Bachu and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather spoke at a meeting of the Korean American Women's Society on March 12 in Rockville. Commissioners Brackney and Yang convened that event and were in attendance as well.
- Commissioners Ingram and Bailey represented the MCW at the Circle of Sisters event sponsored by the Washington County Commission for Women on March 30 in Hagerstown. MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams and Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams, at the invitation of the Washington County CFW, helped evaluate all the nominees for its "Woman of the Year Award" presented at that event.
- Vice Chair A. Diane Williams represented Maryland's First Lady at the Harford County CFW's "Women of Tomorrow" event on March 30.

The Education and Outreach Committee also coordinated the MCW's participation in the 2017 Women's Legislative Briefing in Montgomery County and the 2016 WE3 Conference in Prince George's County. The MCW was a co-sponsor of these two conferences, had exhibit tables and provided speakers at both events.

The Committee plans to continue to support the Listening Tour project, and to use that information to guide its work for the coming year. In addition, Commissioner Bailey and Commissioner Wilson have will serve as co-liaisons to the newly established Women Offenders Network.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

CHAIR: MARYLOU YAM, PH.D.

**MEMBERS: DR. HOMAYARA AZIZ, DEBORAH CARTEE
GLORIA CHANG, MARION MANSKI**

In FY 15, the Health and Wellness Committee developed an on-line Women's Health Information and Resources Directory that is posted on the MCW's website. To help structure the work of the committee, it identified each of the nationally designated "months" that relate to women's health, for a full year, such as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month," and researched resources for information and services for each of those. The site was further developed the next year, and in FY 17, the Committee's goal was to develop strategies to make the information in the Directory more easily accessible and to add important women's health issues not currently included in the Directory and to develop new sections for those issues.

An alphabetical directory of all the topics covered in the "Year of Women's Health" resources was developed, with links from each subject to that section of the website, so that visitors can see every topic in the site without having to scroll through. A section on Oral Hygiene was added to the resource directory, bringing the total number of health issues covered to 22. New sections on Substance Abuse and Addictions, and a section on Human Trafficking are nearly completed at the end of the fiscal year. They are more extensive than just a listing of resources and therefore may be posted as separate sections of the website.

With the assistance of the MCW's volunteer, Bev Thoms, a total of 16 health issue alerts were developed and sent to distribution lists totaling well over 730 recipients. These "alerts" are typically one-page documents describing the health issue and how it impacts women, and then list resources available to women in Maryland. Those alerts covered:

- Heat Exhaustion
- Breastfeeding
- Family Caregivers
- AIDS
- Women's Health and Holiday Stress
- Cervical Health
- Thyroid Health
- Heart Health
- Teen Dating Violence
- Endometriosis
- Osteoporosis
- National Women's Health Week
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Congenital Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Awareness
- Elder Abuse
- Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness



COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

CHAIR: BETSY RAMIREZ

**MEMBERS: HOMAYARA AZIZ, NICOLE INGRAM
APRIL NYMAN, UMMU THOMAS**

The goal of the Communications and Public Relations Committee for FY 17 was to enhance MCW outreach across the state, improve its visibility and credibility; and increase use of social media and traditional forms of communication.

To accomplish this goal, the Committee completely updated its Facebook page which had been relatively dormant in recent years, and began actively posting information about the MCW’s activities on Facebook. It has now garnered 2738 “friends,” 1165 “followers,” and is growing as an outreach venue for the MCW’s work.

The Committee continued its work updating and upgrading the MCW website, posting reports of its activities and in collaboration with the other MCW Committees, further developing the resources it makes available to Maryland women. The Committee worked with the Listening Tour Committee and the Education and Outreach Committee to help the MCW reach out to communities across the state. As each session of the Listening Tour is held, for example, the email addresses for the attendees are added to the MCW’s distribution lists so that when Issue Alerts or Health Issue Alerts are sent, they are reaching individuals and organizations from the Western Panhandle of the state to its Eastern Shore. The MCW email distribution lists now have well over 730 subscribers from urban, suburban and rural communities in every region of Maryland.



BYLAWS REVIEW AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

CHAIR: MARION MANSKI

**MEMBERS: TAMMY BRESNAHAN, MARIANNE BRACKNEY
DEBORAH CARTEE, LORNA FORDE, CAROLE SEPE, UMMU THOMAS
DIANE WILLIAMS, YUN JUNG YANG**

To review the current Bylaws for compliance with state law and state policy and to ensure Commission business and meetings are conducted effectively and efficiently was the goal of this committee for FY 17. The Committee met five times over the course of the year, thoroughly considering many issues including the designation of committees, the designation of committee chairs, the number required for a quorum at MCW meetings, the process of election of MCW officers, associate and ex officio members, and other items. Hours of review and deliberation were dedicated to this process. In April, the Committee presented a report with recommendations to the Commission. Decisions on those recommendations will be considered in the next fiscal year.



THE VOICES OF MARYLAND WOMEN LISTENING TOUR

CO-CHAIRS: NICOLE INGRAM AND YUN JUNG YANG

MEMBERS: TAWANDA BAILEY, TAMMY BRESNAHAN, DEBORAH CARTEE
BONNIE LUNA, APRIL NYMAN, BETSY RAMIREZ, CAROLE SEPE,
CORINNA SHEN, UMMU THOMAS, MARYLOU YAM, TAMARA WILSON



The Listening Tour project was initiated at the MCW's October 2015 meeting and spent that first year in development. The goals of this project are to:

- Assess needs of women across Maryland's diverse regions
- Identify and define challenges facing the women of our state
- Strengthen collaboration with and among local women's groups, service providers and county Commissions for Women
- Develop an action plan to address identified issues

The project involves a series of structured two-hour town-hall style public forums held across the state inviting women in each region or jurisdiction to talk about the challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. The MCW Listening Tour is titled "Voices of Maryland Women," and the MCW has invited the Commissions for Women and other organizations in each county or region to partner with it in organizing a session in their communities.



At the forums, participants are invited to "talk to us" about the needs of women in their community, and together, they draw up a list of the issues presented. The participants are then asked to prioritize the issues on the list, and to develop recommendations for solutions - whether they require changes in law, program or policies. The participants include individuals, service providers, advocates and organization representatives from each community. A report of each forum is published on the MCW website.

To increase the number of women who may contribute their voices to this project, the MCW is also conducting an on-line survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/VoicesofMarylandWomen. The survey is available in four languages: English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese.

At the end of the project, the Commission will compile a report of the entire Listening Tour to be presented to the Governor and the state legislature.

In FY 17, a total of 12 sessions of the Listening Tour were conducted:

- Washington County
- Baltimore County
- Garrett County
- Notre Dame of Maryland University (Women of the World Conference)
- Howard County
- Prince George's County
- The Maryland Correctional Institute for Women (Women Moving Forward Conference)
- Calvert County
- Montgomery County
- Frederick County
- Charles County
- Anne Arundel County





The total combined audience at these forums has been 562 individuals, so far, response to the surveys has also been good with 847 being submitted in the four languages by the end of this fiscal year.

In addition, a special outreach was conducted at a July 2016 meeting of the Korean American Women's Society conference in Salisbury, describing the Listening Tour and making the survey available in Korean.

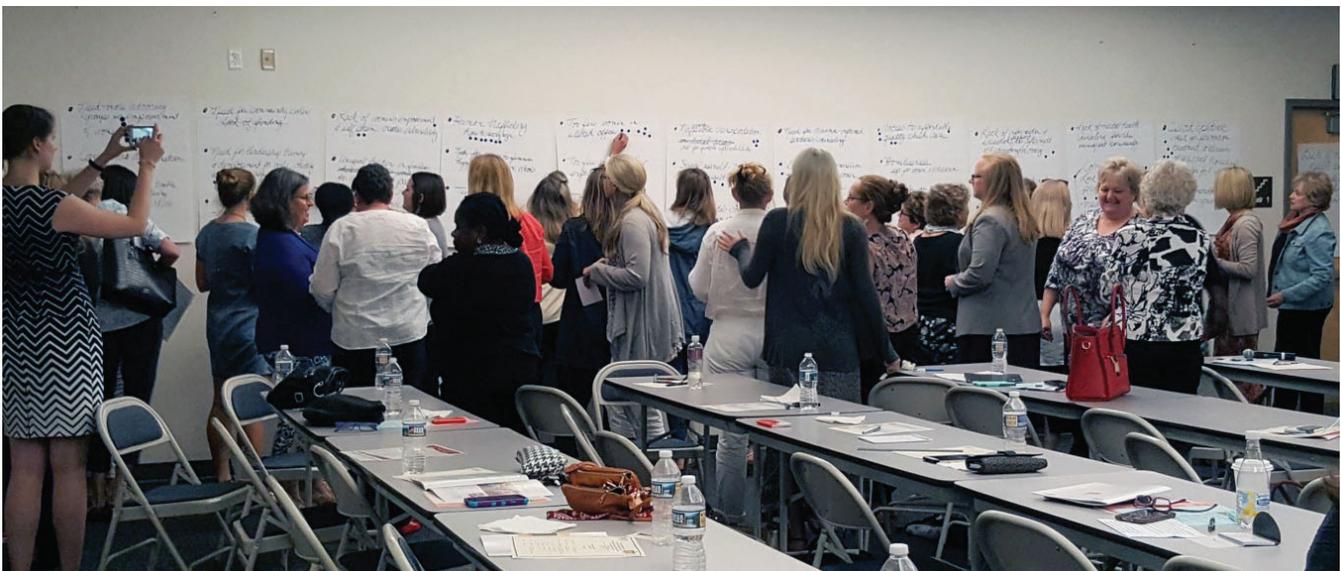


The Committee plans to complete the Listening Tour and the survey by December 2017, with several more forums either already scheduled or in the planning stages to take place before then:

- Harford County
- Worcester County and the Lower Shore Region
- Baltimore City
- St. Mary's County
- Allegany County
- Mid-Shore Region
- Girl Scouts of Central Maryland



In an interesting and unanticipated development, the MCW was invited to send a delegation to the Republic of Moldova in Eastern Europe to help initiate a similar project there: The Voices of Moldovan Women. A report of that visit follows.





MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN TRAVELS TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

COMMISSIONER: YUN JUNG YANG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: JUDITH VAUGHAN-PRATHER

In the fall of 2016, the offices of the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) hosted a Professional Fellow from the Republic of Moldova, working full time for four weeks. In the spring of 2017, two delegates from the MCW visited Moldova for a week.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Professional Fellows Program (PFP) is administered by the American Councils for International Education for the nations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The PFP affords promising young professionals from developing democracies the opportunity to gain practical experience in and exposure to U.S. government, innovation ecosystems, and other fields depending on their professional background. (<http://professionalfellows.americancouncils.org/>)

Nighina Azizov, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Speaker of Parliament in the Republic of Moldova, worked as a Professional Fellow in the office the Maryland Commission for Women from October 17 to November 11, 2016. During this time she helped with several of the Commission's projects, made a presentation to the Commission at its October meeting, visited the State House and the Legislative Houses in Annapolis, attended a state-sponsored conference for women business owners, helped staff the Commission for Women Roundtable Conference at the Anne Arundel County Community College and attended committee meetings, including the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, helping to organize and staff a session of the Tour in Prince George's County.

Each professional fellow working in this country is required to develop an "outbound project" proposal, detailing how they would implement what they have learned during their experience here back in their home country, if they could bring a representative of the U.S. (typically their PFP supervisor) back for a week or so. Ms. Azizov's proposal was to develop a "Voices of Moldovan Women" Listening Tour in her homeland, bringing the MCW Executive Director and a co-chair of the Listening Tour Committee to consult on the initiative. The project was approved, and funded by the American Councils. Commissioner Yun Jung Yang and Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather visited Moldova March 30 – April 5, 2017.



“One of Europe’s poorest countries and a former Soviet Republic, landlocked Moldova is a parliamentary republic of roughly 3.6 million people, with another 400,000 living in the breakaway region of Transnistria. An estimated half of its ¼ million workforce work abroad, their remittances accounting for at least a quarter of the nation’s GDP.

“While Moldova has made international and national commitments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and various ILO Conventions, implementation lags. Women still face discrimination and inequality in social, economic and political life and their representation in Moldovan politics and decision-making remains below international benchmarks.

“Women in Moldova face specific education and labor market barriers. Persistent patriarchal attitudes limit their educational choices and employment options. Women also face discriminatory practices. These include significant wage disparities, segregation into lower-paying occupations, unequal sharing of work and family responsibilities and limited access to childcare. Women entrepreneurs face barriers getting access to bank loans and state-funded business and entrepreneurship development programs.

“Violence against women in Moldova is serious and widespread. Commissioned by the UN in Moldova in 2011, the study “Violence against Women in the Family” conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, found that 63 per cent of women experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence from their husband or partner and one in 10 experienced economic violence at least once. Rural, elderly and separated or divorced women had the highest rates of multiple types of violence.”

Background (excerpted from (<http://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/moldova>))



During their visit, Yang and Vaughan-Prather met with Liliana Palihovici, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament at the House of Parliament and then traveled with her to the State University of Moldova where they made a joint presentation to a class of 60 students and faculty in the department of Political Science, in Chisinau, discussing women’s issues in the U.S. and in Moldova and how Commissions for Women address those issues in the U.S.



They then visited **La Strada**, an organization that offers social services, legal representation and legislative advocacy for victims of human trafficking, domestic and sexual violence, where they met with the director. The organization provides training for judges and for flight attendants (to help them recognize signs that a passenger may be a victim of human trafficking), provides a 24-hour “Trustline,” peer-to-peer training, and other advocacy services.



On Sunday morning, April 2, Commissioner Yang and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather helped launch the **Voices of Moldovan Women Listening Tour** by staffing its first public forum in the village of Puhoi. The event was hosted by the mayor of the village and was held at the village high school. It was attended by 65 women who, after an initial reluctance, eagerly shared their concerns, as women, mothers, workers and members of their communities. Altogether they identified 21 issues, ranging from environmental concerns to domestic violence.



In addition to the mayor, the event was attended by the director of the school, an assistant to a Member of Parliament, a member of the District Council and a village councilmember.



On Monday, April 3, the delegation visited the **Casa Marioarei**, a non-governmental organization providing long-term shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children, where the director provided a tour and discussed the challenges facing the residents and the organization, which is a model of wrap-around services to this population, including housing, job training, counseling, and other support services.



Later that day, they met at the **U.S. Embassy in Chisinau** with embassy staff and staff of the Professional Fellows Program in Moldova. They then visited the offices of the **U.N. Women in Moldova**, meeting with staff and the Country Director. U.N. Women works to advance women's participation and leadership in decision-making structures, both private and public, advocates policies to combat violence against women, and supports the economic empowerment of women.

On April 4, they met with the **International Republican Institute (IRI)**, discussing women's empowerment and the role of women in public life. The IRI encourages and trains women to run for public office, working with all political parties.

That evening, they made a formal presentation and participated in a round table discussion at a meeting of the **Moldova Chapter of the International Women Democracy Network**, including the local chapter of LeaderSHE (a young women leaders academy) and the Civil Society Advisory Group at the Ministry of Agriculture, again discussing women's empowerment and the role of women in public life.

Later that evening, they met with actress and women's rights activist **Mihaela Strambeanu**. She is a national celebrity in Moldova and has used her fame to further advocacy for women's issues, especially raising awareness of violence against women.

At almost every meeting following the Listening Tour session in Puhoi, Ms. Azizov was congratulated on the success of the initiative, and by the next day, she had already received an invitation from another mayor asking her to bring the Listening Tour to his village. Staff at the Embassy and the UN Women all expressed support for that project.





The Outbound component of the Professional Fellows Program emphasizes the exchange of information, resources and strategies for addressing issues. It is always hoped that the Professional Fellow will bring back specific ideas that can be implemented in her home country. In this case, Ms. Azizov is actively exploring the possibility of implementing at least five initiatives she experienced while working in the offices of the Maryland Commission for Women:

1. Initiation of the Voices of Moldovan Women Listening Tour (already in process)
2. Development of a system similar to the Amber Alert she experienced in Maryland to make it possible for the public to help police find missing children quickly (Mrs. Palihovici has introduced legislation to make this possible.)
3. Establish a Women of Tomorrow Award program in Moldova to recognize young women with records of academic excellence, community service and exceptional leadership
4. Establish a Commission for Women, or possibly several Commissions for Women in Moldova
5. Support for local women-owned businesses (Ms. Azizov modeled this practice by identifying a woman-owned catering service to use as the vendor for both the first session of the Listening Tour and for the final roundtable meeting with the International Women’s Democracy Network.)

Finally, we have established a relationship that will last far beyond the week-long visit to Moldova. We are staying in touch via email and Facebook, and have already shared documents and templates for the Listening Tour and the Women of Tomorrow Awards program to help Ms. Azizov as she continues her important work.

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Maryland Commission for Women
Staff and Volunteers
2016 - 2017

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Tammy Wise, Management Associate
Bev Thoms, Volunteer Program Specialist
Nighina Azizov, Professional Fellow, American Councils for International Education



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