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On the cover: Batalá New York performing at the 30th Anniversary Celebrating Women Breakfast on May 11, 2017
Dear Friend,

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2017 issue of Activist Philanthropist. We thank you for your continued support as we bring together a variety of voices, stories, and issues pertinent to our mission of promoting economic security and justice for women and families.

This year is our 30th anniversary, and we remain as committed as ever to supporting women, communities of color, immigrant communities, and LGBTQ people. There is much work to be done and now more than ever we will be looking to the vision and leadership of our founders and grantee partner leaders upon whose shoulders we stand.

In this issue, Feminista Jones profiles the leadership and work of Vivian Nixon, Executive Director of College and Community Fellowship, a Foundation grantee partner. Artist and activist, Camonghne Felix, shares her insight on the power of poetry and the significance of uplifting women, people of color, and LGBTQ voices. And inaugural New School IGNITE! Fellow, Sayoni Nyakoon, conducts our very first Radical Generosity interview with former Board Chair, Anne Delaney. We are thrilled to share these articles with you and more!

We appreciate your engagement and support as we look to build and better support our community, and also celebrate the leadership and community whose strength and resilience helps us move forward in our mission.

Enjoy this issue of Activist Philanthropist!

Warm regards,

Ana Oliveira
President and CEO
At The New York Women’s Foundation’s 30th Anniversary Celebration Women Breakfast, Vivian D. Nixon received the Celebrating Women Award in recognition of and with gratitude for her work with the incarcerated people in New York. Vivian is the executive director of College & Community Fellowship, a program designed to assist formerly incarcerated women in achieving their goals of obtaining higher education, and has committed her life to being in service to others. Her work has had a positive, lasting impact on the lives of many.

Nixon grew up in public housing in Port Washington, Long Island, born into a family of domestic workers who cleaned the houses of Long Island’s wealthier families. While her parents had to pinch pennies, the refrigerator in their lower-middle class home was never empty. Education became the top priority for her and her two younger brothers; her family supplemented what they learned in school with discarded books from those wealthy families.

Nixon recalls the tension between her parents wanting her to do well and them not understanding how to help facilitate that. “You don’t help people do well through punishment and shame,” she said, remembering what she felt were impossible demands that no child could meet.

In college, Nixon majored in theater at first, but when she shared her dreams of becoming an actress, her mother said “You’re too ugly to be an actress. You are not Farrah Fawcett.” Discouraged, she changed her major to political science because her mother said she should be a lawyer, but dropped out of college after only one year—the year her father passed away. His loss had a major impact on her and she became vulnerable to influences that would come to negatively impact her life.

Nixon was sentenced to three-and-a-half to seven years in prison for crimes committed during this difficult time in her life. Her first year in county jail offered no functional programming to help with rehabilitation. When she was transferred to Albion Correctional Facility, she got a work assignment
with an adult education/ GED preparation program for the women in custody and began to help them obtain their high school diplomas. And though she had no real mentors and no support for her own struggles, Nixon went on to become the president of the Inmate Liaison Committee and it was then that she began to advocate on behalf of other women imprisoned with her.

Nixon was granted parole on her first hearing and she recalled one of the parole officers insisting she had to be a repeat offender. “This is the only crime you’ve ever gotten caught for but I’m sure you’ve done more,” he told her. These kinds of discouraging messages can shake anyone’s resolve, but Nixon was determined to stay focused on her own rehabilitation. When she was paroled in 2001, she received a flyer advertising services that included helping women coming out of prison go to college. It was from the College and Community Fellowship (CCF).

CCF welcomed Nixon, connected her with mentors, and helped her find a college program that worked with her work schedule as a hospital clerk. She enrolled in SUNY Empire which offered distance learning for adults. Nixon built a strong connection with the women in her CCF cohort and with the program itself, and in 2004, she was offered a position there as a Lead Community Organizer. She was faced with the decision to work her way up through the hospital system or follow her passion and values with a non-profit organization that might not exist in two years. “That’s when I decided to lead my life with my values and not my economic status,” she says.

In her role, Nixon grew the organization’s operational budget of $150,000 annually to almost $2,000,000. The New York Women’s Foundation was the first foundation to give CCF a grant over four figures. After taking a year off to do a Soros Justice Fellowship, she returned to CCF when they offered her the appropriate title (and salary) of Executive Director. She and her small staff were able to strengthen the fellowship. The fellows are connected with mentors who help them develop personalized plans for success and connect them with other supportive service organizations, creating a holistically supportive community environment.

While at the helm of CCF, Nixon began networking with others working in the same field of helping the formerly incarcerated, eventually forming a coalition, the Education from the Inside Out Coalition (EIO). The coalition immediately began looking at policy barriers to obtaining higher education for this population. “The Box” or the question about whether or not an applicant had ever been convicted of a felony, the lack of education inside of prisons, and the 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill which made incarcerated people ineligible for Pell Grants were at the top of the list. Nixon includes among the EIO’s biggest accomplishments: raising awareness about lack of education in prisons, working to have the SUNY system remove questions about past felony convictions, and increasing the number of college programs accessible to incarcerated people (there are now 68 colleges in 28 states serving 20,000 incarcerated students).

Nixon continues to work with women who were formerly incarcerated and remains a passionate advocate for a population often cast aside and regarded as being unworthy of the time or effort required to help them succeed at life. “What brings me joy is that at least once a year, I walk into a room filled with family
members who are watching people walk across a stage to get their college degree when nothing in their lives would indicate that,” she says. She continues to stress the importance of being educated about your rights, thinking critically, and making the best decisions to set you on the path you choose for yourself.

As for her own future, Nixon says she will likely transition out of her role in the next few years and will continue being an intellectual voice in the dismantling of institutional racism. “If you do what you are called to do and you are making a positive contribution to humanity and human dignity, you will always be alright,” she advises. Thank you, Vivian D. Nixon, for your commitment and your service to the women of New York.

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Empowering Women to Be Leaders After Motherhood: A Profile of Randi Zinn

Randi Zinn, Founder of Beyond Mom, has served as a member of The New York Women’s Foundation Celebrating Women Breakfast Steering Committee. The Foundation spoke with Randi about philanthropy, pursuing your passions, and motherhood.

After the birth of her first child, Randi Zinn felt something was missing from her motherhood experience. “It was motivation, support, and reinforcement that it’s not only okay to take really good care of yourself as a woman, as a mom, but that it’s truly imperative as an individual,” she says. “You’re a human being born on this planet and it is your right to be happy and healthy; put everyone else aside!”

Randi founded Beyond Mom in 2013 to create the inspiration she was missing: a comprehensive community that encourages women to maintain their individuality while embracing motherhood. Her website features articles on the body/mind connection, entrepreneurship, style; and motherhood.
She profiles inspirational mothers discussing how they pursue their dreams as entrepreneurs, business executives, fitness gurus, or artists on her podcast and in feature articles. She also hosts fitness and networking events to bring mothers together in wellness.

When Randi discusses Beyond Mom, you can tell she’s found her true north. But her path wasn’t always crystal clear. She jokingly describes herself as a classic Libra: passionate about many things and prone to indecisiveness. For instance, she loved dance and writing so much she majored in both at Skidmore College. After college, she moved to New York City to pursue a Master of Arts in Media Studies from The New School.

There are defining life moments that transform a person for better or worse. Randi’s moment was the loss of her father, Michael, who tragically died in a plane crash in 2005. His sudden death was devastating, challenging, and it “pushed me in ways I never could’ve imagined.” While grieving she also faced the difficult task of managing her father’s business affairs, including becoming the owner of his private airport in her hometown, Kingston, N.Y.

As a way to calm her mind she began taking yoga classes near her apartment in Murray Hill. She ended up finding a deeper connection, one in which she learned how to get herself back after her father’s death. “Yoga was literally my safety space, my constant, and the place I could heal and feel and be,” she says. In 2008, she successfully received her 200-hour yoga certification at the Laughing Lotus College of Yoga. She taught for several years and though her focus has shifted to her current endeavors, the precepts and practices of yoga are a constant part of how she lives her life and runs her business. She has always loved to teach people how to find their happiness through using their bodies and breaths and that hasn’t changed.

“My dad was extremely passionate about making a positive impact in the world. He was an entrepreneur, an environmentalist, a philanthropist. I, for sure, use his spirit as motivation to not only give back, but I also take his life as a message that we have to live every day to the fullest and do what we love.”

Motherhood was the spark that finally united all her passions: writing, speaking, yoga, wellness, business ownership, and creativity. Yes, she’s a wife to Marquise and a mother to Micah, 5, and Zarah, 1, but Randi lives out what it means to go “beyond mom,” actively cultivating her own interests. Her latest
accomplishment is her first book, *Going Beyond Mom: How to Activate Your Mind, Body, and Business After Baby,* which will be released in September and is available for pre-order on Amazon.

She is a brand ambassador for Athleta, a women’s athletic clothing company whose mission is to “ignite a community of active, healthy, confident women and girls who empower each other to realize their limitless potential.” She hosts in-store events to introduce women to the brand; her book launch will be held at Athleta’s Flatiron store on September 19. Randi also hosts one-day wellness retreats for moms called “Finding the Om in Mom.”

Though her business and family keep her busy, a few years ago Randi sought volunteer opportunities with organizations that empower women; she wanted to do more. She was looking for authenticity, for a place that brought together New Yorkers of diverse backgrounds to benefit other New Yorkers. She found her match with the New York Women’s Foundation and has been a member of the Celebrating Women Breakfast Steering Committee for three years. On the committee, she assists with fundraising, corporate sponsorships, marketing, and entertainment.

Every year, Randi hosts a table at the breakfast and invites a new group to join her to ensure that she introduces as many people as possible to the work of the Foundation. “Without fail, every single year people are just floored [by the breakfast]. It was beautifully done, well organized, and really inspiring. This year’s honorees were very timely and I think everybody

Andrew Goodman Foundation, which inspires young people to embrace civic involvement, vote, and become activists.

Randi uses her voice in a myriad of ways: as a small-business owner, yoga teacher, and author, to guide people toward their best selves. She makes the time to nourish the

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In the future, she’d love to join the NYWF committee that visits grantees to see how they are helping their communities in person.

In addition to her work with the Foundation, Randi and her husband’s philanthropy can be found in the culture of New York City. Her husband is a board member of the Lowline, a project to create the world’s first underground park on the Lower East Side, and they share a love of dance and support the Joyce Theater. They are also friends and great supporters of the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which inspires young people to embrace civic involvement, vote, and become activists.

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Q: Tell us about yourself and the roots of your art and activism.

C: My name is Camonghne Felix, I’m 25. I’m a New York City native—I grew up in the Bronx. Not only did I grow up in the Bronx, but I grew up in the poorest congressional district in the country. Though my mom was an attorney, I grew up in some poverty. I went to maybe 3 or 4 different high schools due to a lot of childhood trauma. I was a big fighter and was really aggressive. I didn’t understand authority and didn’t respect authority. I still think it’s because of what I was going through at home and because what I was going through in my everyday life felt so counter to what they were trying to teach me at school.

I started writing poetry both as a reprieve and as a way to just say what I wanted to say. At 16 I didn’t really think much of it, I just started writing. I saw the Malcolm X movie at school and I cried my eyes out when he died.

And then I wrote a poem about it, and then one of my teachers was like, “Hey, have you ever tried to write poetry?” and I was like “No, what is that? And why would I ever want to do that? That sounds really corny.” And she asked me to perform my poem for the school, so I did. I still thought it was kind of corny, but there was something about it that was exhilarating for me and people kept saying like, “Wow, that was really good. It was really interesting.” And so I started watching YouTube poetry videos and came upon this place called Urban Word NYC. And that’s pretty much where my investigation of slam poetry and how poetry feeds into social justice and what poetic activism and what artistic activism looked like began. Finding poetry was the first time I felt committed to see something through. So I walked into one of the Urban Word workshops one day and there was this girl sitting at the end of the table and she read this really incredible poem. And I remember thinking to myself, “I’m not shit until I write a poem that’s as good as that.” That girl wound up being my best friend, her name is Alexis Marie, and we are both better poets now than we were then, by far. What was so empowering about that is, as a kid who felt like a failure, academically and otherwise, I finally felt like I could be good at something, and improve at something. It was the first time in my life that I wanted to work hard at something and wanted to see my own development. And through that, I started to realize a lot of the inconsistencies in
the teaching system. I started to see all of the things that I hadn’t been taught, all the things that had I been taught would have allowed me to be more engaged in school. And so I tried to take some of that education into my work, as a teacher, as a workshop leader and as a mentor.

Q: You’ve talked a lot about art and the impact of poetry on an individual level, and how it impacted your life. On a broader level, can you talk about the role of art in social change?

C: I don’t think that art saves lives. I think that art communicates things about community; about the way that we’re supposed to live; about the way that we’re supposed to be allowed to live; and about the way that we should be allowed to exist. I think that in arts education we recognize the ills of the world and we recognize how people aren’t being treated right. I think that in arts education we recognize the ills of the world and we recognize how people aren’t being treated right. I think that in arts education we recognize the ills of the world and we recognize how people aren’t being treated right.

I think that poetry allows people in from different access points. Whether it’s spoken word (which is an inherently African American genre) or a haiku, there’s just so many ways that poetry allows the everyday person to be subversive, to be critical, and to take on different ideas that other people have to spend 30, 40, or $50,000 on to gather.

Q: If you don’t see people who look like you, who have experiences like yours, reflected and having a voice, you often don’t believe you have a right to the space.

Are you seeing progress in the field in terms of both access and representation?

C: One of the things that has been the most empowering for me in the last year or so is that so many of my friends are in the Top 10, Top 15, Top 20 poetry manuscripts and poetry books in the country right now. And most of them are black and brown. Most of them! You’re seeing more and more kids—we did a reading yesterday and looked out into the crowd and you see at least half the crowd is made up of young people. That’s incredible! I grew up on spoken word. I grew up on slam poetry. I know there’s an accessibility to it that written poetry or read poetry doesn’t have. But the fact that these kids are showing up and listening to poems being read quietly, shows that, not only are they here because they like poetry, but they’re here because they understand the poetry that we’re putting out. And the poetry that we’re putting out is as good, if not better, than what our white and straight and heterosexual and cis-gendered counterparts are putting out. And just that, in and of itself, tells them that that reading black poetry doesn’t mean that they’re reading poetry that is less good than the rest of the genre. They get to revel in that. And they get to hear their experiences and their life be told back in ways that are impressive. And it doesn’t feel like anybody is cutting corners. I think that
that’s another thing that really attracts young people. When they feel like their experiences are represented in a way that is dynamic. It’s not “I’m black and things are bad.” Or “Oh, I’m a woman and things are bad.” It’s like, “Yo, I’m black and here are 20,000 reasons why being black is lit and also here are all the critical ways that I feel repressed.” And it happens over 50,000 poems. Right? It’s not just 1 poem. So I think that’s a big part of it too, just young people being able to know that they’re not just black, or just a woman, or just queer. They’re all of those things and have the chance to have those intersecting identities being read back to them in a way that they understand but also in a way that they have to investigate. They have to do work to get to it. And I think that kids like to work.

Q: In addition to people of color, queer people, women, etc. seeing themselves represented and feeling like they have a space, this work is not just being consumed by those who have traditional been left out. You now have white people, cisgender people consuming art, broadly speaking, by people of color, by transpeople, by queer people. What’s the impact of that?

C: I think the first and most formative impact is that for so long people have just assumed that the best poets were white and straight and male. You walk into classrooms and you see Jack Keats and you see Shakespeare, but you don’t see women. You don’t really see women of color unless it’s Emily Dickinson or Maya Angelou. That’s pretty much where it stops. I think for people who are coming in who are not like us and who get to experience it, it’s enlightening for them.

We know that we’re doing an incredible, heavy work. And the validation of someone walking into an undergrad classroom and they’re teaching R. Erica Doyle and C. A. Conrad and Mahagoony Brown and Morgan Parker and Safia Elhillo, and knowing that they’re leaving that classroom with a formative education in poetics that didn’t have to happen through Shakespeare. It changes the way that they talk about poetry which gives us better access. There are some classes that would never have looked at my work 10 years ago, but will definitely look at it now because there’s somebody who works at some press who came to some reading that was like, “We need to look at this narrative.” So that’s number 1. And then beyond the sort of marketability aspect, I think that the media can be very myopic about the way that it talks about race relations. Opportunities where people who are not of color or queer people get to come in and hear about our experiences in ways that they never heard them before give people the opportunity to actually think critically about their positioning. When you walk into a room and you’re a white person and every reader in front of you is black, you’re forced to look at yourself, to look around, to look at the person talking to you, and really think about who you are and why it matters in the world. Really. And I know that there are people who grew up in the poetry community, who are much more critical about race, about gender, about sexuality, simply because they had access to those conversations through poetry.

I think that it changes people. The way that they identify with other people; the language that they use to identify with other people. And if nothing else, the best thing poetry can give to the world is a different language.

Q: Who are your favorite activist artists?

C: There are so many. Let me think about it... There’s a woman named ____, I won’t put her whole name because I don’t know how she would feel about it but she works with an organization called Women of the Calabash. They are African Caribbean women and African American women who drum and write traditional African music and traditional African folktales. She’s one of my favorites simply because when you go into her home, you see all of these instruments on the walls—3 decades of being an artist and traveling the world. You recognize that the world would not be the same if you weren’t in it. And then there is Mahagoony L. Brown, who’s like a mom to me. And she’s saving black girls’ lives and
their identities all the time, by just showing up and telling them, “You deserve to be seen. You deserve to be here.” And I guess there would be Marlon Peterson who—I don’t know if he’d consider himself an artist—but he’s a writer and he’s a good one. And he works a lot with recidivism and with anti-prison movements. Of course there’s Angela Davis, who I felt would call herself an artist, but she absolutely is. She is a constructor and a builder. And I guess the last person would be Elizabeth Alexander. She is a poet but she also wrote one of the most important books about mass incarceration in the last two decades. And she’s an incredible poet. She would be top of my list in terms of obvious people. And of course my friends.

When I Say The Hood Made Me, I Mean:

A sheer violence and a bed embalmed in it, a small girl pretzel legged at the center, soft stones placed at the north and west of her frame, crystals stapled at the southernmost point, the new world a salt capsule, a one way entrance. Before her nana died there was a brief quiet and then the spirits came and she was besieged with rupture, and talked with them only through series’ of bloodlettings, the blade cold against the stiff brown skin, the dare ripe with noise, so much noise, and is anyone listening (except the pores of these walls) to this girl shrugging out of the mud, sopping with it but limbs activated nevertheless and the stones with a tide of tension below pushing them up up until the spirit exhausts and the crystals fall back into the bowl of the bed, the sugar sticky and stark, a soft voice initiates the beginning of a new life

and then

a hum.
In Focus Where Women Stand: The First 100 Days of the New Administration

By Michele Thomas

The first question elicited a scoff, a nervous titter from the packed auditorium at New York University as panelists Jessica González-Rojas, executive director of the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, L. Joy Williams, national political strategist, and journalists Rebecca Traister and Kiran Nazish, founding director of the Coalition for Women in Journalism reflected on the first hundred days of the new presidential administration. The question had come from Nazish, who was moderating the panel. “In the first hundred days, how do you see social justice impacted?” she asked.

There was a lot to consider. Of the 13 Congressional Review Act resolutions and 30 executive orders signed by Donald Trump, several contained provisions or initiatives for equal pay, child care, paid family leave, health, and immigration that severely impact women, particularly low-income women and women of color. According to Traister, journalists are struggling to keep up with the deluge of news coming out of about the development, roll out, and actions of the Trump administration. “There’s so much,” she said. “It’s like being hit with a fire hose...As a journalist, I’ll start writing about something at 9a.m. and by 4, it’s not just my editors that are saying this is old news, even I [am saying it].”

“The first hundred days have been downright hostile to women, to people of color, to immigrant communities, and where we work is at the intersections of all of that,” said González-Rojas.
The first hundred days have been downright hostile to women, to people of color, to immigrant communities, and where we work is at the intersections of all of that.

For instance, in addition to the controversial appointment of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions—who has been repeatedly faced political backlash for past actions that can be considered racist—the Trump administration, with support from many in the House of Representatives, has also launched extensive, widely publicized efforts to do away with wage transparency, overturn Roe v. Wade, and a deportation agenda that has left women in some immigrant communities afraid to send their children to school after hearing about people such as Maribel Trujillo Diaz, the Ohio mother of four U.S.-born children who was detained and deported to Mexico, despite having no criminal record. The result of this unprecedented barrage of challenges and the accompanying media attention, according to L. Joy Williams, is that social justice advocates are forced to play defense of a handful of issues, obfuscating the bigger picture and depleting resources that would otherwise be used to focus on other issues facing women in the U.S. today.

“The political atmosphere that we’re in right now is that we’re forced into this sandbox created by our opponent that we have to fight in,” she said. “So, this is not where we are determining the rules of engagement or what the issues are that we’re trying to advance and get past, and then negotiate from that standpoint. We are facing an administration and facing individuals that are defining for us what the terms are, what we have have to fight against, and what tools we can use to engage in that fight, which further puts us at a disadvantage.”

For example, Williams noted, in centering abortion in the fight to protect funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides important women’s health resources in all communities, that don’t have universal access to doctors and medical facilities, the ability to campaign for other critical needs for women, such as prenatal and post-childbirth medical care, cervical cancer screenings, and mammograms. That the overwhelming number of areas served by Planned Parenthood and similar agencies are traditionally economically disadvantaged communities of color means that the Trump administration’s attack on the organization is not just about abortion, but also preventative and prescriptive healthcare for the people who need it the most.

Indeed, these same constraints can be found in the areas of criminal justice, equal protection under the law, and education reform, Williams said. “Our fights, our political fights, our fights for justice, our fights for funding, our fights for equal justice under the law are being constrained and dictated by an opponent.” In a memorandum issued by the U.S. Attorney General’s office last March, the Justice Department issued a directive to roll back the number of federal
investigations into misconduct and abuse, including the use of excessive force by local police departments, in favor promoting officer safety and morale. “We now have a justice department, an attorney general who has not only signaled in language and hearings, but has actively withdrawn itself from court fights...the very department and institution that led a crusade—a successful crusade—against the Ku Klux Klan, many of which were in law enforcement is now saying they’re not responsible for that oversight.” Opponents of the new directive are forced into a defense position, severely limiting the resources available to push for much needed criminal justice reform.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ recent call for a funding increase for charter schools, despite an overall 13.5 percent cut in the Department of Education’s budget, move centers “school choice” in the debate about education reform, effectively preventing more in-depth discussions about standardized testing, arts programs and equal access to resources, for example.

Despite the challenges, Trump’s first hundred days seem to have ignited a return to progressive activism and civic engagement by women, as evidenced by grassroots efforts such as calling campaigns and most notably, the Women’s March last January. “One of the things about the first hundred days, that’s a good thing, is that you’re seeing women in particular participate in so many varying ways in the resistance to Trump,” Traister said. There’s also been new attention on women leaders, such as California congresswoman Barbara Lee, who helped introduce legislation that would ensure reproductive healthcare for all women regardless of insurance or coverage, and federal judge Anne M. Donnelly, who issued the first stay of Trump’s Muslim travel ban.

“We’re trying to create the next big movement, the next big protest,” Williams said, in a critique of how many approach movement work, including social and criminal justice. “We’re trying to garner the media attention and write our page in history before we’ve even done the work.”

The specific strategies for some of that work are still in the process of being discovered through trial, error, listening and challenging beliefs and behaviors within and beyond the movement, especially those which unwittingly reinforce existing structures of paternalism and privilege. This is the grunt work of progressive activism. The panelists agreed that this grunt work of sustained civic engagement, self and community education, that will be critical for women through the duration of the Trump administration and beyond, even as they acknowledged the problematic history of women, especially women of color, bearing the bulk of this work. Effecting real change involves fighting for justice over the long haul, a concept fundamentally at odds with the breakneck pace of the world we live in.

“Get a table. Bring the table, and the chair, and create the space where you are...All of the movements you think about...they began, most often with women, with a small table, just a few of us.”
On a cool, sunny day, Anne Delaney sat down with The New York Women’s Foundation to discuss Radical Generosity and how we can, in the words of Foundation CEO Ana Oliveira, “come as you are, and give what you can.”

Her Story: Anne Delaney is an artist, activist, philanthropist, and former board chair of The New York Women’s Foundation as well as the founder of the Lambent Foundation and Starry Night Fund.

How she got involved with The New York Women’s Foundation: The Celebrating Women Breakfast! I was new to the women’s funding world and the Breakfast was sort of my introduction to it. The Foundation models a different way of being in the world. The fact that there was this network of women, who were all caring and passionate, I just was not aware of it. The Breakfast was an eye opener. It was exciting!

The New York Women’s Foundation’s tagline is Radical Generosity. What does this mean to you: Of course, everyone has different orientations to the word radical—it brings up different things to different people. Some people thought it had connotations of overthrowing an establishment, or government, or dark times, but the origin of the word means “rooted”. So,
Radical generosity allows me to ask myself, “What kind of personal commitment do I want to make to help others. How willing am I to accept the status quo without doing something about it, especially when I know that organizations like The New York Women’s Foundation change lives."

radical generosity means change from the roots; generosity from the roots.

To me, radical generosity means putting forward a paradigm shift. We want people to think differently about generosity—generosity as a way of being in the world. As Ana says, we can’t save the world with just dollars. But we can change the world if we are committed. Maybe radical generosity means that we see opportunity to help others in in both big and small ways. We can take a personal interest in someone who needs help by making a connection to a job, or a program, or simply see her life as not so different from our own. Radical generosity allows me to ask myself, “What kind of personal commitment do I want to make to help others. How willing am I to accept the status quo without doing something about it, especially when I know that organizations like The New York Women’s Foundation change lives.” In NYC, I am one of the people who live with plenty when many around me do not have enough, and that starts to feel untenable. Radical generosity encompasses the question of how much is enough? We tend to wonder, when making our donations, if there will be enough left over for ourselves, and our family, and we err on the side of overly cautious. We forget that our lives are immediately richer when we are connected to each other, and the wider that circle of connection, the better. We live in a culture that tells us to hold on to things. But if you have a big boat or big house, with no one to invite in, then we have missed out on life.

What has Ana Oliveira done to inspire you: She sees possibilities everywhere. We love working with her because she is a visionary and so much fun to work with. She values everyone in the organization and their ideas, and she makes sure that our programs are helping as many areas and people of NYC as possible.

Early on, she realized that we have amazing alumnae and she wanted to make sure that they still felt connected to The Foundation. She really honored their original values that created The Foundation and has allowed us to grow. She saw that we have an incredibly loyal and diverse donor base and that they are invaluable. All of our donors have built The Foundation.

Speaking of innovation, in what other ways does The Foundation recognize its supporters?: We really aim to emphasize giving at all levels, which means supporting all donors at all levels, from those who are able to donate an abundance of resources to those who give less often and those who give their time as volunteers. We appreciate them all.

Who coined the term “Radical Generosity”: It was a group effort and Ana Oliveira has been the driving engine. We worked with our board and communications team and eventually realized that this term reflected our intentions and hope for the future.

The Foundation is for everyone. One of the biggest ways to get involved is to join the Grants Advisory Committee (GAC)—this is a committee of volunteers who fan out across the city and speak with our potential
grantee partners. They work together in small groups, and they get to know the issues, as well as each other. It’s a great way to reach women who want to get more involved.

And we have events, some of which are free. We have the Neighborhood Dinner in all 5 boroughs. It’s not as expensive of a ticket and the focus is to honor community leaders who have positively impacted their community. We have all types of events so people can contribute and attend where they feel comfortable.

In what ways is The Foundation radically generous?

The Foundation bridges all types of women. Recently, we created an initiative to help young women of color. These young women were really suffering and living in difficult circumstances. Immigrant women, or children of immigrant parents who were translating for their parents and babysitting and attending inadequate schools—a lot was piling up on them.

We had an amazing researcher, Susan Leicher, who put together a report on ways to best serve this community. Based on the research, we created the Young Women’s Initiative and partnered with NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. After the City Council announced that they were investing $10 million in this effort, we partnered with the NoVo Foundation and announced a match, which would be used to support efforts in alignment with the initiative. The best thing about this new program is that it’s something that can be replicated, and it has inspired other funds across the nation to work with their local governments, and donors. We don’t always get happy progress reports in philanthropy, but this is a great one.

How she stays optimistic: One way that I stay optimistic is working with others who are optimistic and have positive energy. You can find this at The Foundation. One reason why people get attracted to and stay working there is that it models a just world. I mean, we don’t live in a just world, especially now, but when you step into the realm of The New York Women’s Foundation, people are treated with respect. Part of philanthropy is believing that we all have the capacity to change our world. Pretty soon you come to the realization that we are all in this together. Best to be positive about that!
Spring 2017 Events

In Focus Women InJustice: Gender and the Pathway to Jail in NYC

Alison Wilkey, Director of Public Policy, Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) and report author.

Neighborhood Gathering in Brooklyn: The Power of Immigrant Communities

NYWF President & CEO Ana Oliveira; Panelists: Julia Jean-Francois, Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, Cathy Dang, CAAAV, Ana Maria Archila, Center for Popular Democracy, and Janis Rosheuvel, Black Alliance for Just Immigration; Board Alumna Yvonne Quinn, and Board Member Hyatt Bass

The Foundation’s grantee partner, VOCAL-NY with panelists, Hon. Jonathan Lippman, Chair, Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform; Hon. Judy Kiuger, Sanctuary for Families; Vivian Nixon, College and Community Fellowship; and Diana Ortiz, Women's Community Justice Project.

Guests at the event.
Spring 2017 Events

In Focus Where Women Stand: The First 100 Days of the New Administration
Kiran Nazish, Journalist; L. Joy Williams, National Political Strategist; Rebecca Traister, New York Magazine; and Jessica González-Rojas, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

Family Reunion
Board Alumnae Kathryn Weill, Betty Terrell-Cruz, and Keiko I. DeLille
Board Alumnae Taina Bien-Almé and Anne Delaney, and Board Member Hyatt Bass
Spring 2017 Events

30th Anniversary Celebrating Women Breakfast

Celebrating Women Breakfast honorees Cecile Richard, Planned Parenthood, Vivian Nixon, College and Community Fellowship, Donna Lieberman, NYCLU, Linda Sarsour, Arab American Association, speaker NAME, former honoree, Leymah Gbowee, Vision Award honoree, Anne Delaney, and NYWF President & CEO Ana Oliveira

CWB Honoree Marley Dias, Social Activist and Founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks

NYWF Honorary Chair Abigail Disney

Kwanza Butler, NYWF Board Vice Chair, Tina Tchen, Former Chief of Staff to Michelle Obama and Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls, Valerie Jarrett, Former Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama and Chair of the White House Council on Women and Girls, 2008 Celebrating Women Breakfast award recipient Marie Wilson, and 2017 Celebrating Women Award recipient Cecile Richards

Neighborhood Gathering in the Bronx: Art, Gender, and Social Justice

Guests at the event.

Alicia Grullón, Artist, Caridad De La Luz “La Bruja”, Spoken Word Artist/Activist, Marta Effinger-Crichlow, PhD, Director/Producer, Little Sallie Walker, and Victoria Sammartino, Founder & Executive Director Emeritus, Voices UnBroken

Panelists with NYWF President & CEO, Ana Oliveira
The New York Women’s Foundation is a voice for women and a force for change. We are a cross-cultural alliance of women catalyzing partnerships and leveraging human and financial capital to achieve sustained economic security and justice for women and girls. With fierce determination, we mobilize hearts, minds and resources to create an equitable and just future for women, families and communities in New York City.