



NIKE The official publication of New York State Women, Inc.

VOL. 74 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ AUTUMN 2024

NEW YORK STATE
women, INC.

Our Mission

To connect and build women
personally, professionally,
and politically.

Our Vision

To empower women to use their
voices to create positive change.

Dated Material – Deliver Promptly

Are YOU a member of NYS Women, Inc. yet?
Time to check us out at nyswomeninc.org

BE The CHANGE You WANT to SEE in the WORLD

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Positive Change: The time is now!

-Robin Bridson, NYS Women, Inc. President, 2024/2025

Hello everyone!

I'm thrilled to kick off this new year with you! We have some exciting changes and opportunities ahead, so buckle up!

Fall Board Goes Virtual

While we initially planned an in-person Fall Board in the Finger Lakes, we've decided to switch to a Zoom meeting to make it more accessible and affordable for everyone. Save those travel funds for our highly anticipated Annual Conference in Binghamton this June!

Speaking of the conference, we're thrilled that the CDO (Career Development Opportunities) will be bringing back the Reality Store on Saturday morning. We'll adjust the schedule to ensure everyone can participate and interact with the girls. It's going to be a fantastic experience!

Get Ready for Fall Board Fun

Mark your calendars for October 25th, the night before Fall Board! We're hosting a fun-filled virtual event with inspiring speakers and engaging games. The first 10 people to register (it's free!) will receive a special gift from me. Keep an eye on NYS Women, Inc.'s online

Events Calendar for more details.

Shape Our Future: Strategic Planning

This year, we embark on a three-year Strategic Plan, incorporating valuable recommendations from last year's task force. Your voice matters! If you're interested in contributing to this important process, please let us know.

We Want to Hear from You!

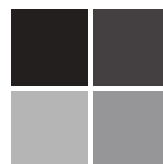
- What workshops would you like to see offered?
- Are you interested in facilitating a workshop?
- How can we make this organization an even better investment in your personal and professional growth?

Your feedback is invaluable! Share your thoughts and ideas with us.

Remember, Membership Matters!
Together, we can make this year our best one yet.

Best regards,
Robin

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2024

MONTHLY
5
Communicator deadline

OCT
15
DECEMBER NIKE
submissions deadline

OCT
26-27
Fall Board (Zoom)

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and build
women
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From the Editor

Positively Forward

CHANGING LEAVES, COOL NIGHTS, STILL-sunny days, school children waiting by the bus: it must be autumn! For many of us, this is the season when we shake the sand out of our sandals, and wistfully pick up the office or schoolroom workload again. For most of our NYS Women, Inc. chapters which take a hiatus for the summer, now is a reboot of connections, networking, friendships, and chapter meetings.

NYS Women, Inc. President Robin Bridson starts our new year focusing on positive change and that is reflected in this issue of *NIKE*. Claire Knowles asks

"Are you looking for positive change?" in her article on the next page and then gives us pointers on just how to achieve that! We have Women's Wise Words on "Creating Positive Change" and Dr. Hope Blecher Croney, a member of Professional Women of Sullivan County, chronicles her personal journal in her article, "Encouragement to use your voice," page 6.

Check out page 11 for Claire Knowles' Last Word, "Autumn: 'Tis the season to be grateful," with its inspiring words that lift you up in positive ways. 🍂



Image ©Tara Bazilian Chang

[As we head into voting season, I'd like to note this poem, inscribed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, on the title page of her personal diary. Let all of us – as members of NYS Women, Inc. – think of the good we can do for women, our community, and our nation.]

I live . . .

*For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance
And the good that I can do.*

- excerpt from "What I Live For" by George Linnaeus Banks

-Joyce DeLong

George Linnaeus Banks was born in Birmingham, England in March 1821, the son of a seedsman familiar with the plant nomenclature of Linnaeus. Banks was a British journalist, editor, poet, playwright, amateur actor, orator, and Methodist. His wife was the author Isabella Banks. He died, age 60, in 3 May 1881.

DECEMBER 2024 ISSUE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15, 2024. Add *NIKE* in your email subject line and send to the attention of Joyce DeLong, *NIKE* editor or Katharine Smith, associate editor at PR@NYSWomeninc.org. Previously published material must be accompanied by a letter from the publisher with permission to republish and credit line to be included with the article.



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE?

- by Claire Knowles

Positive change is about doing something different that leads to beneficial outcomes.

Here are just a few benefits of Positive Change*:

1. **Personal growth** – growing, learning, discovering new insights!
2. **Flexibility** – adapting to new situations, new environments, new skills.
3. **Improvements** – improving finances, job, relationships, house, etc. All of us know that nothing will improve by itself – We need to do things differently to make that happen.
4. **Life values** – re-evaluating your life and looking at things from differing perspectives.
5. **The Snowball effect** – Often we give up because we cannot accomplish the difficult task of making a huge and immediate change. That is when small changes become extremely valuable. One shift at a time, small changes will eventually lead you to the desired big one.
6. **Strength** – Positivity helps us get through difficult periods in our lives.
7. **Progress** – Changes trigger progress. Things move forward and develop because of them.
8. **Opportunities** – One never knows what each change may bring. When you turn from your usual path there will be plenty of different opportunities waiting for you. Changes will bring new choices.
9. **New beginnings** – Each change is a turning page. It is about closing one chapter and opening another one. Changes bring new beginnings and excitement to life.
10. **Routine** – if there was no change, life would become very dull and stagnant.

*Adapted from Old Way, New Way by Ani Alexander

But guess what? No one changes unless they want to...

No one changes unless they want to.
Not if you beg them.
Not if you shame them.
Not if you use reason, emotion, or tough love.
There's only one thing that makes someone change...

Their own realization that they need to do it. And there's only one time it will happen... When they decide they're ready.

Why does it take us a lifetime to learn that lesson?

Continued on page 9

Encouragement to use your voice

- by Dr. Hope Blecher Croney, Professional Women of Sullivan County

As part of the Professional Women of Sullivan County Chapter, Janet Carey, immediate past president of NYS Women, Inc., reminded me of women collectively and individually having voices and using voices to inspire. This topic has touched me over the past few months. I know it will continue during the ensuing days, weeks, and months, too.

The teacher in me has a few questions. Admittedly, I have also asked myself these questions, too. Do you physically use your voice? Do you believe your voice matters? How do you use your voice? Daily, we speak and here I mean the physical use of our vocal cords, not words in a text, email, or other sort of post.

Throughout the past two year or so, there have been numerous social media posts and newspaper articles, headlines, and radio segments about the power of using one's voice. I felt pressure to take a stance on something, to choose a topic and shout out some words. That pressure got into my head; I was able to not succumb to a knee jerk reaction. However, I started to believe that I wasn't doing enough, I wasn't saying enough, I wasn't taking a public stance.

What have you felt these past few years, months, days, minutes? While admittedly I wasn't standing with a mic and yelling, or shouting from a rooftop, or using commercial spots on broadcast networks, I also wasn't silent. Yet, I was feeling less than vocal, less than this, that and the other thing, to be cliché, the other staunchly outspoken people.

It took a few remarks by Janet to shake me awake. *Voice* is more than what comes out of our mouths via our vocal cords. *Voice* is a choice. Let's not pressure each other to physically speak up if such an action makes one sick to their stomach. Let's see *voice* as an action. In that way, I have been active and here is how it has been manifested. I share this with the hope that you feel connected and okay with yourself. I share to invite you in.

I have used my voice in the form of community engagement projects. These projects have provided me, you, and others with space to meet, talk, read, paint, write and reflect. I applied for and received a few grants for the project "Voices of Survivors: Inspiring Hope, Sanctuary, Compassion and

Community." This project has become an exhibition at two local museums. It contains photographs, poetry, prose, personal artifacts on loan, paintings, and more. What is that more? The more are words, tears, emotions, reactions, and reflections. That more comes from hugs, conversations, collegial exchanges. That more is emanating in connections and next steps into the yet-to-be-explored.

The impetus for this project came from a walk in my childhood neighborhood to during Covid. There I saw a small patch of yellow daffodils. I walked on by and then something tugged at me: I retraced my steps and there I was reading a plaque about The Daffodil Garden and the worldwide daffodil project (www.daffodilproject.net). Each daffodil represents a child who perished in the Holocaust.

That retracing of my physical steps, the reading of the words and the pause, lead me to connect with other people in Sullivan County. The result has been the planting

of over 1,500 yellow daffodil bulbs from Livingston Manor, to Liberty, from Parksville, to Monticello to Hurleyville. Perhaps there is one

of these beautiful commemorative gardens in your area?

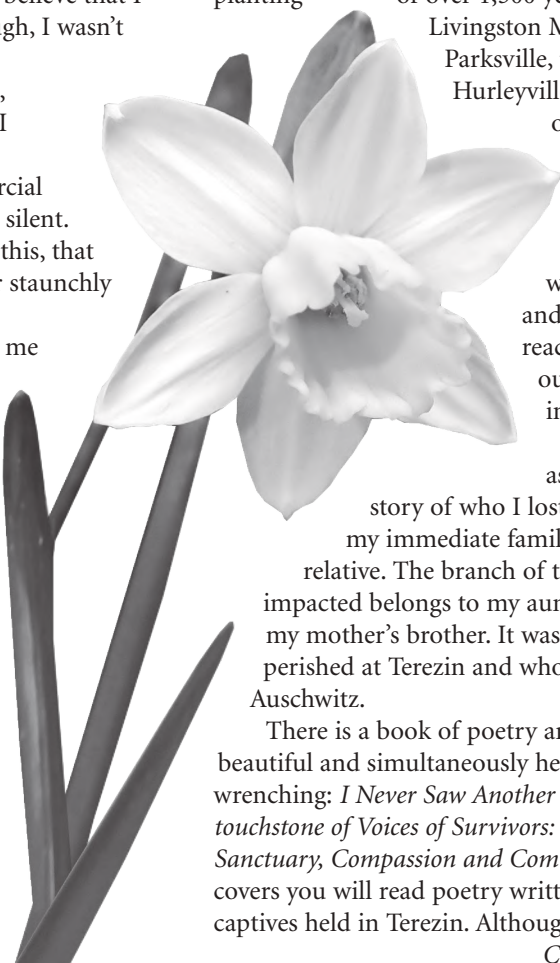
You can use the virtual map on their website to find out. If not and you are interested, reach out to me. We can use our voices and take steps in this way.

The question I am asked often is to share the

story of who I lost in the Holocaust. In my immediate family, we did not lose a relative. The branch of the family tree that was impacted belongs to my aunt through marriage to my mother's brother. It was her grandmother who perished at Terezin and whose relatives perished in Auschwitz.

There is a book of poetry and paintings that is beautiful and simultaneously heartwarming and heart wrenching: *I Never Saw Another Butterfly and this is the touchstone of Voices of Survivors: Inspiring Hope, Sanctuary, Compassion and Community*. Between its covers you will read poetry written by children who were captives held in Terezin. Although they were being

Continued on the next page



robbed of their childhood, of their humanity, they had fleeting moments to write and paint. A few of the adults made these minutes and seconds of expression possible.

These hopeful wings, the images and words, became the figurative footsteps that nudged me to action. My voice took the form of curating, for the very first time, this community learning and engagement exhibit. I have come to the realization that our footsteps are also our voices.

My steps are often taken in a pair of boots painted with a floral design that I purchased at a second-hand store in Mystic, CT. My hands marched along various keyboards and tapped numbers to make calls. A second outcome has been the formation of Hope's Compass, a project fund through The Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan, cfosny.org. Through establishing this non-profit project, we collect funds and hold garden planting projects and future exhibitions.

Throughout the iterations of this project, I have felt akin to the Lorax, a character in a book by Dr. Seuss. The Lorax speaks for the trees for the trees have no tongues. Am I a bit nervous about what will come next? Yes, because while I birthed Voices and curated Voices, it is not my personal story. It is a mosaic, a tapestry of intersections and overlays woven together into a community experience.

We can march, we can step gingerly, we can step loudly, we have options. We, the women of NYS Women, Inc. have various options in front of us. What we could do is respect the variety of pathways that exist and that we may be forging, to hear and listen to each other's voices.

Let us continue to meet, to greet, to take a seat. Let us continue to stand, to be seen and heard. Let us do it while being aware of the multiple ways in which our voices can be expressed. Tangents and wanderings are just as wonderfully poignant and expressive as straight lines. We can, and I hope we will, continue to be part of the landscape of our state in beautifully blossoming ways.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission. I encourage you to find a way that you feel comfortable expressing your voice. Robin Bridson, our current state president, has knowingly and probably unknowingly been a cheerleader for me. If you wish to share or connect, and I hope to continue in that way by offering to cheer you onwards. You may contact me at HopesCompass.org or hope@hopescompass.org. 🍂

[Submitted by Dr. Hope Blecher Croney, member of the Professional Women of Sullivan County. The views expressed here are mine and do not imply the consent of Professional Women of Sullivan County or NYS Women, Inc.]

Fall Board

The Fall Board has been switched to a Zoom meeting. The cost for the Finger Lakes area in the Fall (in the height of grape and wine season) was prohibitive so we felt you could save your travel monies toward the annual conference in June!

The Fall Board of Directors meeting will be held on Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM. "Doors" open at 8:45 AM; program speaker at 9:00 AM; board meeting begins at 10:00 AM. **For more information and register online at <https://www.nyswomeninc.org/FallBoardMeeting>**

The Fall Board guest speaker will be Theresa Davis, division director of Child and Families Services for Liberty Resources. They oversee Chenango and Madison Counties domestic violence and sexual assault programs, including "Help Restore Hope Center."

We're offering a Fall Board Friday Night fun event! Since we won't be meeting in person, we will have a fun Friday night Zoom event and it's FREE! We will have an entertaining speaker, games, and prizes. Kind of like a virtual pajama party but what you wear is up to you! The first 10 people to register by October 15th will receive a special surprise. **Register for the Friday event at <https://bit.ly/NYSIFun2024>**

Annual Conference 2024 Awards

Congratulations to our award winners from the annual conference!

President's Award: Professional Women of Sullivan County; Local Chapter Special Event Award: Buffalo Niagara Chapter; and Women in Business Month Award: Yates County Women.

The Personal and Professional Development Competition was held in two categories and our



winners were Ala Ladd, Career Recognition and Catrina Romo, New Careerist.

Pictured: NYS Women, Inc. awards presentations by Mary Ellen Morgan (front) and Patty Pollack.

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Creating Positive Change

"It doesn't matter how strong your opinion are. If you don't use your power for positive change, you are indeed part of the problem."

- **Coretta Scott King, American author, activist, civil rights leader, and wife of Martin Luther King Jr.**

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

- **Harriet Tubman, American abolitionist and political activist**

"We must be impatient for change. Let us remember that our voice is a precious gift and we must use it."

- **Claudia Flores, clinical professor, University of Chicago Law School**

"I have accepted fear as part of life – specifically the fear of change... I have gone ahead despite the pounding in the heart that says: turn back."

- **Erica Jong, American novelist, satirist, and poet**

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- **Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist, author, and speaker**

"When in doubt, choose change."

- **Lily Leung, Hong Kong actress**

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."

- **Maya Angelou, American poet, author, and civil rights activist**

"We can't be afraid of change. You may feel very secure in the pond that you are in, but if you never venture out of it, you will never know that there is such a thing as an ocean, a sea."

- **C. JoyBell C., philosophical essayist, author, and mentor**

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

- **Mother Teresa, Albanian-Indian Roman Catholic nun and missionary**

Feature: Cover Story, cont.



How often do we stay in frustration because we can see the “change” that is necessary, but can’t persuade, cajole, or force it to happen in another? We can only try to convince; we can only help them to see; we can even try the carrot or the stick approach; *but in the end we can only work on ourselves; we cannot make someone else change.*

In my years of coaching, I’ve seen people prefer to stay in their cocoons of familiar rather than to take a step forward. I’ve seen whole groups of people decide they’d rather stay entrenched in bad behaviors and dysfunction than to have to change to a better culture. I’ve seen individuals risk their job because they did not want to make a change that was necessary and required by the employer. One woman who hated change, would not and could not adapt to changing technology, even when her position would likely be eliminated if she didn’t learn anew. She chose not to adapt and had to find new work.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Abraham Maslow gave us the **Life Secret** that is at work here: *You will either step forward into growth or you will step back into safety (familiar).* Repeat: You will either step forward into growth or you will step back into safety. *We love our comfort zones!*

Mark Cuban of *Shark Tank* fame, believes that “conscious effort” is the differentiating factor for whether and when we pursue positive change.

Mel Robbins, podcast host, author and self-help guru

shares that *it is not the lack of courage to change, rather it is the unwillingness to “try.”* Robbins is the creator of the 5-4-3-2-1 (blast-off) approach. Each person’s motivation is just that...belonging to them, and each person chooses whether to put forth effort, to try, or not, and when.

Yet people do eventually decide that they need to change...when they are ready. Remember the bell shape curve? You have those blazing the trail, those getting on board in the middle, and those being dragged forward with the momentum?

“If you do not create change, change will create you.”
-Unknown

For those who are contemplating this article, here’s a little advice of how to nudge yourself forward for Positive Change when you know you should – yet are still holding back. For whatever your reluctance to change or to become better is about: (JUST START!)

- Start by doing 1 push up.
- Start by drinking 1 cup of water.
- Start by reading just 1 page.
- Start by walking 1 lap.
- Start by making one all-healthy meal.
- Start by writing one paragraph.
- Start by making one decision.
- Start by deleting one contact, one annoying e-mail ad.
- Start by making one sales contact.
- Start by refusing one dessert.
- Start by cleaning one closet.
- Start by making one phone call, writing one notecard, one email.
- Start by attending one event.

START TODAY...REPEAT TOMORROW! 📌

BNC member Claire Knowles is an author, speaker, and consultant. She works with organizations, businesses, and boards of directors, assisting them to move through difficult situations to successful outcomes, including reducing the risk of workplace violence. She is certified in mediation and is a certified personal and life coach. Contact her at www.ClaireEKnowles.com or 716-622-7753.

Chapter News



Buffalo Niagara Chapter – Region 8

- submitted by Katharine Smith, BNC member

The Buffalo Niagara Chapter celebrated its 90th anniversary on Wednesday, September 4th with a networking cocktail hour followed by a buffet dinner. Members heard from NYS Women, Inc.'s state president, **Robin Bridson** and installed its 2024/2025 officers. The chapter's 2024/2025 nonprofit "Women Helping Women" coalition partner, the Family Justice Center which helps women escape domestic violence. It provides services and support to individuals in unhealthy relationships, and the education our community needs to break cycles of relationship abuse. gave a presentation.



BNC lost long-time member **Dewella Dobson** in July 2024. She was 100 years old. Dewy was a dedicated member of our chapter, joining the then-Business and Professional Women's Club of Buffalo in 1973 and remained a member for 51 years.

She served on numerous committees during the active years of her membership and was our chapter president from 1984-1986. In recognition of her leadership and many contributions to the chapter, Dewy was named BPW Buffalo Woman of the Year in 1988.

Professional and Business Women of Rome – Region 5

- submitted by Beth Jones, president

The Rome Chapter meet on June 19th at Delta Lake Inn. We were honored to have **Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon** (holding a certificate of appreciation); **Robin Bridson**, state president; and



Lucrecia Hunt, Mohawk Valley Chapter member. The discussion

covered domestic violence and sex trafficking. We learned that some cities in our area do not have a safe house. Assemblywoman Buttenschon will be reaching out to Governor Kathy Hochul on strategies to eradicate inequalities impacting women.

Susquehanna – Region 6

- submitted by Robin Allen



The Susquehanna Chapter awarded scholarships to several young women at its June 24th meeting. Pictured (l to r) are **Lisa Bialy**; **Pam Pringle**; and chapter president, **Shelley Widrig**, with scholarship awardees **Hailey Gunther**, **Adara Tuttle**, and **Mackenzie Warner**.

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Feature: The Last Word



Autumn: 'Tis the season to be grateful!

- by Claire Knowles

Enjoy the bounties of autumn. Visit your farmers markets and fresh food opportunities. Enjoy fresh, healthy-for-you produce! Be grateful for abundant harvests.

Enjoy the invigorating fresh air of autumn. Take longer walks, increase your exercise regimen. Be grateful for clean air and clean water.

How about a winery tour with great friends? Be grateful for New York State's many wineries and the beauty of wine country.

Recognize that October means . . . the Zoom Fall Board Meeting on October 26th-27th. Be grateful for our officers and leaders who do the tedious work of leading New York State Women, Inc.

Seize opportunities to share the work of New York State Women, Inc with professional and business women you know. Learn our history – read *NIKE* from cover to cover. Embrace the span of generations from Millennials

to Traditionalists. Be grateful for the rich history of women's advocacy and recognize that every generation has a role in the baton pass of human rights. Be grateful for the Women's Rights Museum in Seneca Falls – where our story is well told and preserved.

Enjoy the beauty of autumn. Breathe. Take time to Notice the captivating spell of autumn . . . the color of the leaves, the crispness of the air, the blueness of the skies, the migration of birds, the changes in sunlight. Be grateful for the change of seasons, and for this special season of autumn.

Notice your level of energy and enthusiasm. Be grateful for the spark of creativity that resides in you and take time read inspiring words that lift you up in positive ways. Journal your gratefulness – at least three things every day. Be grateful that you have within you, a motivating force, that moves you forward! 🍂

This excerpt is from Claire Knowles' September 2015 NIKE article, "Autumn Air."



We connect and build women
personally, professionally
and politically.

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#BuildPowerfulWomen

JOIN A CHAPTER IN
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YOU!

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Staten Island Chapter

Hudson Valley/Catskills

Professional Women of
Sullivan County
Westchester Chapter

Central New York

Central NY Chapter
Professional Business
Women of Rome
Mohawk Valley Chapter

Central Southern Tier

Susquehanna Chapter
Greater Binghamton Chapter
Walton Chapter
Tri-County Chapter

Finger Lakes

Lake to Lake Women
Professional Women of
the Finger Lakes
Steuben County Women
Yates County Women

Western New York

Buffalo Niagara Chapter
716 Chapter (Clarence area)
Chadwick Bay Chapter

NETWORKING.
RESOURCES.
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INSPIRATION.

Empowering women to use their voices to create positive change.