



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

VOL. 75 ■ ISSUE 2 ■ NOV/DEC 2025



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

“There is no power for change greater
than a community discovering what it
cares about.” **-Margaret J. Wheatley, author**

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NYS Women, Inc. – The State of the State



Our community of women

-Robin Bridson, NYS Women, Inc. President, 2025/2026

Dear Members,

As we move into this season's work and celebrations, I want to take a moment to talk about something that often falls to the bottom of our to-do lists – our own health. As women in business, in our communities, and in our families, we are often the steady force holding things together. But strength isn't just about showing up for others. True strength is also found in recognizing what we need and honoring it. Listening to your body – its energy, its stress levels, its need for rest or movement – is not selfish. It's a powerful act of leadership.

Taking care of ourselves doesn't have to mean dramatic changes or big commitments. In fact, the most meaningful shifts often begin with small, intentional steps. These might look like taking a short walk during the day, scheduling that overdue annual appointment, making sure we stay hydrated, or simply giving ourselves permission to pause. Every small choice we make in support of our well-being builds momentum. Bit by bit, these choices become habits – and those habits support our resilience, confidence, and clarity.

This month, I encourage each of us to choose one thing that moves us closer to feeling our best. Share it

with a colleague, friend, or family member – and celebrate the progress, no matter how small. As we support our own health, we also strengthen the foundation of our organization: women who are energized, inspired, and ready to lead. Here's to honoring our health, our strength, and the incredible women we continue to become.

We have exciting things planned for this year! Our meeting's committee is working hard on planning a fantastic annual conference in June. We also have Zoom workshops running, so please keep an eye to the events calendar for the latest updates.

Take care and be well! 🍷

Sincerely,

Robin Bridson

NYS Women, Inc. president 2005/2026

SAVE THE DATES:

- Winter Board: February 28th (via Zoom)
- Annual Conference: June 12th – 14th, Tioga Downs Resort, Nichols, NY

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Conference & Vendor Event

Tioga Downs Casino ■ Nichols, NY

JUNE 12-14, 2026

NEW YORK STATE
women, INC.



**2026 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

motivate ■ support ■ network

LOTS OF NEW ADDITIONS THIS YEAR PLUS A LOWER COST!

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Night Mixer | ■ Tezza Dzuba – Nashville Star |
| ■ Raffles | ■ Morning Walk With the President |
| ■ Live Q&A | ■ Water Aerobics (tentative) |
| ■ Awards | ■ Workshops |
| ■ Fun | ■ Networking |
| ■ Theme Party | ■ Vendor Event |
| ■ Welcome Ceremony | ■ Leadership |
| ■ Dynamic Speakers | ■ Connections |
| ■ Closing Ceremony | ■ Laughter Yoga |
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2026

MONTHLY

5

Communicator deadline

JAN

15

MARCH NIKE submissions deadline

FEB

28

WINTER BOARD MEETING via Zoom

MAR

15

JUNE NIKE submissions deadline

JUN

12-14

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Tioga Downs Casino Resort, Nichols, NY

NIKE Submissions

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NIKE is a quarterly informational magazine for New York State Women, Inc. members and other professional women. Published 4 times per year (September, December, June, and March). Circulation: approximately 350. Payment must accompany all advertisement requests. *NIKE* reserves the right to refuse to publish any advertisement. © New York State Women, Inc.

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NIKE (ISSN 0271-8391, USPS 390-600) is published quarterly in September, December, March, and June by New York State Women, Inc., 173 Audubon Drive, Snyder NY 14226. Subscriptions are a benefit of membership in New York State Women, Inc. Periodical postage is paid in Buffalo, NY and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *NIKE* Editor, 29 Falmouth Lane, Williamsville NY 14221. RETURN POSTAGE ACCOUNT at Buffalo, NY Main Post Office 14240.



NIKE Volume 75, Issue 2 Nov/Dec 2025

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Contribution Rates

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1 issue: \$400 • 4 issues: \$1,400

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1 issue: \$300 • 4 issues: \$1,000

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1 issue: \$37.50 • 4 issues: \$125

From the Editor

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

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



Image ©Tara Bazilian Chang

"COMMUNITY –

A unified body of individuals: such as the people with common interests living in a particular area.

A body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests.

A social state or condition." -Merriam-Webster

It's important to remember, that as members of New York State Women, Inc., *TOGETHER*, we are a community – a community of strong women, dedicated to helping each other and women across the state. And this issue of *NIKE* brings focus to our community.

On page 5, Buffalo Niagara Chapter member Claire Knowles, in her article "The Nature and Formation of Community," discusses how, in coming together, NYS Women, Inc. members rediscover what it means to belong – and what it means to build something greater than themselves.

"The Power of Community: Why Connecting with Others Is So Important for Civic Engagement" empowers us to make a difference, from activism and community organising to individual changes (page 13).

Staten Island Chapter member Rosemarie Dressler outlines how women in New York State are still battling for equal pay in her article on page 8, "From Buffalo to Broadway: Closing the Gap, But Not Enough."

"Convention Days 2025: Ripples of Reform in Seneca Falls" by Adrienne Emmo, Lake to Lake Chapter, celebrates Seneca Falls as it once again became the epicenter of reflection, celebration, and activism during its annual Convention Days in July – a tribute to the 1848 Women's Rights Convention that ignited the American women's rights movement (page 12).

As we head into the holiday season, let us all take action and use our "*community*" of NYS Women, Inc. members to make each of our *communities* a better place to live. 🐾

-Joyce DeLong

MARCH 2026 ISSUE DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2026. Add *NIKE* in your email subject line and send to the attention of Joyce DeLong, *NIKE* editor (joycedelong55@yahoo.com) or Katharine Smith, associate editor (ksmith@whiterabbitdesign.com) 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.



The Nature and Formation of Community

...how this informs New York State Women, Inc. and you as a member!

by Claire Knowles, Buffalo Niagara Chapter

Community: a group of people connected by shared identity, purpose, or circumstance.

Communities form through shared values or need, strengthened by catalysts that bring people together, and grow through deliberate effort, empathy, and active participation.

NYS Women, Inc. is a group of women, with chapters all over New York State, of all ages representing a broad spectrum of industries, ages, and ethnicity. Since our Charter in 1919, we have promoted full participation, equality and economic self-sufficiency for all working women.

Emphasis: In a world that often isolates, community reminds us that we are not alone. It begins with shared humanity, grows through shared purpose, and thrives through shared action. In coming together, people rediscover what it means to belong – and what it means to build something greater than themselves.

Such is New York State Women, Inc.

Continued on page 6

Category	Definition	New York State Women, Inc.
Community	Community is more than a collection of people; it is a living network of relationships bound by shared values, goals, or experiences. From neighborhood groups to online circles, communities form when individuals recognize their commonality and <i>choose</i> to connect. They give people a sense of belonging, support, and purpose – things essential to human well-being.	Our mission: to connect and build women personally, professionally, and politically.
Vision	Communities often begin with something simple: a shared interest, a local need, or even a moment of crisis. When people come together to solve a problem or celebrate a passion, connection forms naturally. Yet, most communities require a catalyst – an event or motivation that compels individuals to act. A neighborhood might unite after a storm to rebuild, or students might organize a club to advocate for change. The catalyst ignites awareness that people are stronger together than apart.	<p>Our vision: to empower women to use their voices to create positive change.</p> <p>Throughout the years, three major issues shaped BPW's legislative agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of sex discrimination in employment • The principle of equal pay • The need for a comprehensive equal rights amendment
Purpose	Purpose sustains a community beyond its initial spark. Without direction, enthusiasm fades. Whether the purpose is practical, such as ensuring neighborhood safety, or emotional, like providing mutual support, it gives members a reason to stay engaged. Shared goals create accountability and deepen trust, turning acquaintances into allies.	NYS Women, Inc. helps connect and build powerful women personally, professionally, and politically. We foster the success of women in the workforce throughout New York; offering career advancement resources, work/life strategies, leadership development, personal and professional connections, and much more.



“There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals.”

-Idowu Koyenikan, *Wealth for All: Living a Life of Success at the Edge of Your Ability*

Category	Definition	New York State Women, Inc.
Expanding	To expand a community, inclusion is key. Growth happens when members reach out, welcome diversity, and create space for new voices. Communication, collaboration, and openness help maintain a balance between expansion and cohesion. A healthy community values both continuity and change – honoring its roots while embracing evolution.	<p>Our quarterly publication, <i>NIKE</i>, provides insight into our vision and mission by its offerings of articles of interest to women and its display of the activities and achievements of our local chapters. Our advertisers also demonstrate their support of our goals and accomplishments. We also provide our members with our monthly <i>Communicator</i>, a newsletter that provides current information about the inner workings, plans and events of the organization. Communications and networking are ongoing through email and on Facebook. Check out our membership categories, which are designed to meet the needs of any working woman. <i>We continue to evolve as we try to expand our membership to e-member status to involve women with the greatest interest but the least amount of time to attend meetings in person.</i></p>
Building and maintaining	Building and maintaining community requires action. Listening, volunteering, mentoring, and leading with empathy are not abstract ideals; they are daily practices that keep connection alive. True community does not exist by accident – it is created, nurtured, and renewed through the <i>consistent effort of those who care.</i>	<p>Visibility: Being involved in an organization that has a local, regional and state network can help you increase the visibility for you and your business. This visibility can lead to important personal and professional opportunities.</p> <p>Helping Others: This organization has a strong history of women helping women. Being involved in this group provides you the opportunity to become more involved in your local and New York State community. From volunteering at a local not for profit or presenting at a local meeting or attending a state meeting and participating in the process, there are endless opportunities to help other women.</p> <p>Friendships: The most significant and lasting benefit of being a member is the reward of developing lifelong friendships with your fellow members. Imagine being in a room full of powerful women that are focused and energized on a common cause or issue. There is nothing quite like it. Whether it is laughing or working together, the relationships you make will be long lasting.</p>

Continued on page 11

From Buffalo to Broadway: Closing the Gap, But Not Enough

*The numbers show progress, but the stories reveal persistence:
women in New York are still battling for equal pay.*

by Rosemarie Dressler, Staten Island Chapter

When I was an intern in the New York City Council President's Office under Carol Bellamy – during Mayor Ed Koch's administration – the fight for equal rights and equal pay was at the center of political life. I was young, but even then I could feel the urgency of the moment. Women leaders were pressing for fairness not just in words, but in salaries, in promotions, and in legislation.

It's worth remembering how recent some of these rights were. Just a few years before my internship, a woman could not even apply for a credit card in her own name unless she was married. Banks routinely required a husband's signature for a wife to open an account, secure a loan, or apply for a mortgage. Only in 1974, with the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, were women granted the legal right to financial independence.

That context made the fight for equal pay even more urgent. In 1980, women in the United States earned roughly 60 cents for every dollar earned by men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Pay equity was not a theoretical debate – it was about whether women's work would ever be valued equally, whether they could build credit, own property, or secure their futures on their own.

As Bellamy herself often reminded her colleagues,

"Women are not a special interest group. We are the majority. And we cannot continue to be treated as if our rights are negotiable."

- Carol Bellamy, New York City Council President (1978–1985)

Carol Bellamy also gave me a personal lesson in reality. I was proud to be graduating, having

worked my way through college and landing an internship in city hall. One day, as I was bent over my desk, she leaned over my shoulder and offered unsolicited advice about my future. Her voice was gentle, but her words were not sugarcoated: if a job were available and it came down to me or a man, there was a very good chance the man would get it.

"Get back to school," she urged.

At first, I resisted. I didn't yet know the struggles these women had endured, or the trials that had shaped their determination. But it didn't take long before I saw her point – education and persistence would be my strongest tools in a system that was not yet built to value women equally.

And then there was Bella Abzug. I remember passing her as I walked up Broadway to City Hall, her wide-brimmed hat unmistakable as she assertively made her positions clear to anyone within earshot. Yet I also remember a quieter moment: one afternoon inside city hall, she paused to speak with me, asking softly about my school studies. It was a reminder that behind the fiery speeches and commanding presence was a woman who cared deeply about the next generation of women stepping into public life.

I look at young women today who do not know the struggles of those who came before them and sometimes take for granted the gains they now enjoy. They look at women like Carol Bellamy and Bella Abzug, as I once did – almost like foreigners, with a fire in their bellies. They didn't experience the daily injustices that lit that fire.

How would I have felt if my own brother had been issued a credit card while I was denied one solely because of my gender? Or if I had been refused a personal loan, even after working my way through college? Or if I had been turned away from higher education because a



From Buffalo to the Hudson Valley, the wage gap has narrowed thanks to persistent advocacy, supportive policies, and collective action.

university decided it had already admitted “enough women?”

These were not distant possibilities – they were lived realities for countless women just a generation before me.

According to The New School’s Center for New York City Affairs, both upstate New York and the downstate suburbs have made significant progress in closing the wage gap over the past 25 years. Upstate New York women’s earnings climbed from 79% in 1997 to 88% in 2022. Downstate suburbs (Suffolk, Nassau, Westchester, Orange, Rockland) improved from 74% in 1997 to 87% in 2022.

Statewide, women now earn about 87.3 cents for every dollar earned by men – one of the smallest gender pay gaps in the nation (Office of the New York State Comptroller, Gender Wage Gap Update 2025). This compares favorably to the national average of about 81 cents on the dollar (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).

Yet New York’s story is not uniform. While upstate and suburban regions have marched steadily forward, New York City has stalled. Despite being home to a global economy and more executive-level opportunities than any other region in the state, women in the city have not seen the same gains. The gender wage gap has remained stubborn, and for women of color it is even more profound.

According to Women Creating Change (2023), Latina women in New York City earn just 59 cents, and Black women about 65 cents, for every dollar earned by white men.



“The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says: ‘It’s a girl.’”

- Shirley Chisholm, U.S. Representative from New York (1969–1983)

The pay gap is not simply about fairness on a paycheck. It is about lifetime earnings, family stability, retirement security, and generational wealth. According to the New York State Department of Labor (2024), a woman who earns 12 cents less on the dollar each year will lose more than \$362,000 over a 40-year career. That’s the down payment on a home, the tuition for two children, or the cushion that allows her to retire with dignity.

When women are paid less, families suffer. Communities suffer. The economy loses the full measure of its potential.

“The story of women’s struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist, nor to any one organization, but to the



collective efforts of all who care about human rights.”

- Gloria Steinem, feminist leader and co-founder of Ms. magazine

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady and human rights champion

Progress in much of the state shows what’s possible. Across most of New York State, women can take pride that their work to move forward is working. From Buffalo to the Hudson Valley, the wage gap has narrowed thanks to persistent advocacy, supportive policies, and collective action.

But New York City tells a different story – one where the gap remains stubborn, where the costs of living and caregiving weigh heavily, and where women of color face the steepest inequities. Now it is time to bring that momentum to New York City – ensuring every woman, in every region, can share equally in the rewards of her labor.

When I look back on my days in City Hall, I hear Carol Bellamy’s voice reminding me that determination and education were essential in a system still stacked against women. And I see Bella Abzug, hat perched firmly on her head, marching down the street making her case with fire – and then, in a quieter moment, pausing to ask about my studies.

Their lessons echo today. Bellamy’s realism reminds us that progress does not come easily – it must be fought for with persistence. Abzug’s duality – her bold public demands and her private encouragement – shows us that advocacy is both a collective battle and a personal responsibility.

Now it is our turn to carry those lessons forward. The movement for pay equity is not just about numbers on a chart; it is about women’s lives, opportunities, and dreams. To honor the voices that came before us – and to secure the future for the women who will come after – we must ensure that every woman, in every region of New York, can share equally in the rewards of her labor.

Because when women in every region of New York earn what they deserve, families prosper, communities grow stronger, and the entire state moves forward together. 🗽



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023); The New School’s Center for New York City Affairs (2022); Office of the New York State Comptroller, Gender Wage Gap Update 2025; Women Creating Change (2023); NYS Department of Labor (2024).

Chapter News

Buffalo Niagara Chapter – Region 8

- submitted by Katharine Smith

The Buffalo Niagara Chapter celebrated “Women in Business Month” during its October 1st dinner meeting with a shopping showcase of local women business owners and artisans.



Members browsed local offerings ranging from artisan chocolate, Buffalove original designs, homemade granola, hand-printed note cards, to handpainted glassware and a create-your-own charm bar. Vendors included So Good Granola, Dark Forest Chocolate, Reimagine That!, Eutierra Candles, Joan Cofield-Bridges Painted Glassware, and That Dream Girl Shop Charm Bar as well as BNC members Jodi Wroblewski, The Lazy Printer; RJ Bent, The Edgy Gazelle; and Katharine Smith, Buffalo Gals.

NYS Women, Inc.'s precursor, Business and Professional Women, created “Women in Business Month,” a celebration of women in business in October 1928. It's become a national event, since it was recognized by President Herbert Hoover, in 1938.

Funds raised during the event benefit the chapter's nonprofit partner, Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, which focuses on improving pregnancy outcomes and promotes better maternal and infant /child health care for low income residents in Erie County.

Greater Binghamton – Region 6

- submitted by Tonya Robinson

The Greater Binghamton Chapter held its annual fall “Sip & Shop” event on Sunday, November 16th. Attendees shopped with 65 vendors; partook of food and appetizers with a cash bar. The event included a 50/50 draw and hourly door prizes. The first 150 shoppers scored a tote bag with goodies inside!



Staten Island – Region 2

- submitted by Rosemarie Dressler

From Seneca Falls to Staten Island:

The Vision Continues: Staten Island Women

Honor the Pioneers of Equality

The members of the Staten Island chapter of New York State Women began their new year after a summer break at a recent monthly meeting with their annual Tea Cup Presentation, a tradition that bridges past and present.

This ceremony welcomes new members by commemorating the first conversations among suffragette leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. Over a simple cup of tea, these visionaries imagined a world where women's rights would equal those of men. From that conversation grew the drafting of the Declaration of Sentiments and the organization of the historic Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, which launched the women's suffrage movement in America.

“The Staten Island Chapter continues the commitment of these visionaries by elevating the voices of women and advocating on issues important to working women – workplace equality, financial planning, health care, building self-esteem, and preventing



domestic violence,” said Barbara Strype, president.

New members inducted are

Julie Cadunzi, Michele Callahan, Roseanne Devincenzo, Susan Fenley, Judy Hafner, Sharon Mineo, Jasmine Robinson, and Nicole Sanguinedo.

As new members were inducted, the presentation served as both a welcome and a reminder of the movement's roots. “A simple cup of tea sparked a movement,” Strype added. “Today, here on Staten Island, we keep their vision alive by welcoming new members and working for women today.”

Staten Island Women Celebrate Virginia Allen's Legacy of Service

Members of the Staten Island Chapter gathered to celebrate their long-time member, Virginia Allen, who was recently recognized by the Staten Island Art Lab for her lifetime of service and dedication to the community.

Allen, a longtime advocate for women, families, and the arts, has been an inspiration for Staten Island members for decades. Her tireless



volunteerism and leadership have uplifted countless initiatives, leaving a lasting impact on Staten Island's civic and cultural life.

"Virginia represents the heart of our mission," said chapter president Barbara Strype. "Her commitment to service and to advancing the better good in our community has left an indelible mark. We are thrilled to see her recognized by the Staten Island Art Lab."

Allen's story is as inspiring as it is historic. At just 16, she left her hometown of Detroit with the encouragement of her aunt, a nurse, and arrived in New York City in 1947. She began working as a nurse's aide while pursuing her nursing license – the start of a career that placed her among the pioneering nurses known as the Black Angels.

Today, Virginia Allen stands as one of the last living members of this extraordinary group. The Black Angels were a dedicated team of nurses who, beginning in the late 1920s, cared for patients suffering from tuberculosis – often called the "white plague" or "black lung disease" – at Staten Island's Sea View Hospital. Their compassion, courage, and unwavering commitment to healing earned them the name Black Angels from the very patients whose lives they touched.

Her belief in the restorative powers of fresh air, healthy food, and rest guided her work with children at Sea View. "The children thrived with the fresh air, very

rich diet and plenty of rest," she recalled.

Allen also recognized the healing power of art. A longtime board member of the Art Lab, she has also lent her talents and support to the Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, the National Council of Negro Women, the Staten Island Ballet, and numerous other organizations.

The Staten Island Art Lab honored Allen for her decades of civic engagement, mentorship, and cultural advocacy. Over the years, Allen has been a quiet but powerful presence across Staten Island, strengthening bonds, building bridges, and uplifting women, families, and cultural institutions alike.

As the celebration drew to a close, members reflected on the true measure of leadership – not in titles or accolades, but in the countless lives touched by one individual's steady, selfless service.



Staten Island after their monthly meeting celebrated the season with a potluck dinner and a few rounds of Bingo. A fun evening! - Rosemarie Dressler

The Nature and Formation of Community

Continued from page 7

Worth remembering: In a world that often isolates, community reminds us that we are not alone. It begins with shared humanity, grows through shared purpose, and thrives through shared action. In coming together, people rediscover what it means to belong — and what it means to build something greater than themselves.

Such is New York State Women, Inc.

Learning and Growth:

Peter Block is a well-known business author who wrote the book on "Connectivity." For over a decade his book has challenged leaders and changemakers to rethink how we create connection and transform our neighborhoods, organizations and lives. The third edition of *Community: The Structure of Belonging* will be released in March, 2026.

Best-selling author Jennie Allen shows us how to make true emotional connections with the right people so that our authentic relationships can be healthy for all. *Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World* was published in 2023.

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

-Mother Teresa

"One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone."

-Shannon L. Alder

Convention Days 2025: Ripples of Reform in Seneca Falls

by Adriene Emmo, Lake to Lake Chapter

From July 18–20, 2025, Seneca Falls once again became the epicenter of reflection, celebration, and activism during its annual Convention Days – a tribute to the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention that ignited the American women’s rights movement. This year’s theme, “Ripples of Reform,” honored not only the legacy of that historic gathering but also the bicentennial of the Erie Canal, whose waters carried ideas of equality and justice across New York State.

Activities and Highlights

The weekend was packed with events that blended history, art, activism, and community spirit. Living history performances: Visitors met Elizabeth Cady Stanton (portrayed by Dr. Melinda Grube) and Frederick Douglass (Nathan Richardson), bringing 19th-century reformers to life. Historical panels and talks: Susan Goodier and Karen Pastorello explored the Erie Canal’s role in the suffrage movement. Terry C. Abrams examined the canal’s impact on Haudenosaunee communities. Bill Hunt connected early pump-makers to environmental awareness and the Seneca Falls Convention.

Victorian games hosted by the Seneca Falls Historical Society and interactive exhibits at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park kept all ages engaged. Fall Street buzzed with vendors, musicians, artists, and speakers, creating a vibrant downtown atmosphere. Free Speech Squawk Box: A space for open dialogue and protest, honoring the spirit of democratic expression. Be a signer: Allowed individuals to purchase a commemorative pen and to sign the Declaration of Sentiments Addendum written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s Great, Great Granddaughter Coline Jenkins and former mayor of Seneca Falls, Diana Smith.

Special exhibits included the debut of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s songbook and the “Enterprising Waters” Erie Canal exhibit from the New York State Museum added depth to the historical experience.

Girl Scouts’ Annual Historical Passport Tours: Nearly 60 girl scouts from across the state together with 30 troop leaders and parents met at the Stanton home

where they were introduced to Coline Jenkins. Scouts were given passports and purple umbrellas for their procession to the Women’s Rights National Historical Park where their tour continued and then to other sites including the First Presbyterian Church for boxed

lunches and an introduction to the Equal Rights Amendment as presented by Alice Paul, portrayed by Rev. Dr. Leah Ntuala. Once their passports were properly stamped, each scout received a fun patch which displays the “three ladies statuary” depicting when Susan B. Anthony was introduced to Elizabeth Cady Stanton by Amelia Bloomer.



Sponsorships and Community Support

Convention Days 2025 was made possible through a coalition of sponsors and partners: Town of Seneca Falls; Town of Seneca Falls Convention Days Committee; Women’s Institute for Leadership and Learning, Inc.; Convention

Days, Inc., Women’s Rights National Historical Park; Fingerlakes1.com; Shrike Piping Studios; Lake to Lake Women Chapter of NYS Women, Inc.; Seneca Falls Business Association; MRB Group; Seneca Meadows, Inc.; Waterloo Container; Seneca Falls Central School District; Seneca Falls Fire Department; Womenmade Products; Ladies Who Lunch – a Seneca Falls Friday Thinktank; Rev. Dr. Leah Ntuala and the First Presbyterian Church in Seneca Falls.

Sponsors also included local businesses and donors, many of whom contributed to the commemorative pen campaign, allowing attendees to symbolically “sign” the Declaration of Sentiments Addendum. Sister City Delegation: Tenaflly, NJ, joined the celebration, reinforcing the national and international reach of Seneca Falls’ legacy.

Saturday Luncheon Spotlight: A Tale of Two Cities

A standout moment was the Saturday luncheon, “A Tale of Two Cities: Seneca Falls and Tenaflly,” featuring speakers Emil Bove and Kathy Jans Duffy. The event

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The Power of Community: Why Connecting With Others Is So Important for Civic Engagement

Feeling overwhelmed? You're definitely not alone out there.

Every day, fresh headlines seem to inundate our timelines detailing a new onslaught of overwhelming global challenges. From the climate crisis to political unrest, it's easy to feel powerless under the weight of so much information.

But if there's one thing that's certain, no matter whether you're a historian, political scientist, or psychologist: Belonging to a

community is one of the single greatest catalysts for change, both individually and collectively. Engaging with others who share or light up your passions is not just emotionally uplifting, but also a powerful driver of civic action and societal transformation.

Everyone, everywhere, has the power to make a difference.

From activism and community organising to individual changes, write down one more thing that you can start doing.

The world always needs more love and kindness – and that can start with you. Make one change to impact the world around you.

At its core, civic engagement happens when people take the initiative to try and make tangible change within their communities. Whether through local grassroots efforts or national campaigns, individuals who come together can ensure that their voices collectively matter and their actions have the chance to shape collective futures.

Built for Connection

That's because humans are hardwired for connection. It might sound obvious, but a strong sense of community reduces loneliness. Research shows that



individuals who report feeling connected to others experience lower levels of anxiety and depression – and with mental health concerns rising at alarming rates, we could all probably benefit from a little stress alleviation in our lives.

As the well-known (if somewhat ambiguously sourced) proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far,

go together.” While individual efforts can light a spark, lasting momentum often depends on collaboration. That's because working within a group expands the repertoire of resources at your disposal – just like in a choir, everyone can sing their individual part and trust the melody will continue building.

In times of crisis, a supportive network can serve as a lifeline and antidote to widely shared fears, such as climate anxiety, which disproportionately affects young people. As many young climate advocates have learned, the best cure for anxiety is action – especially when that action is taken alongside others.

Belonging to a community offers the opportunity to learn from different perspectives, grow, and develop an invaluable sense of purpose, all while building empathy, honing new skills, and growing more resilient.

How to Connect

So how can you get more involved? The very best answers are going to be context-specific and address the needs of wherever you live. You can look up local events, join civic organizations doing work related to topics you care about, volunteer, or even just have meaningful conversation with your neighbors to learn more about issues impacting those you live near.

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Convention Days 2025: Ripples of Reform in Seneca Falls

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highlighted the Stanton family's enduring influence and the shared values between the two communities.

Sunday Brunch Spotlight: Honoring the late Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner

An organic brunch meeting to honor the late Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner whose groundbreaking research and leadership at the Matilda Jocelyn Gage Foundation spotlighted Haudenosaunee matriarchal values and their lasting legacy. Dr. Wagner, was a leading scholar of women's history who founded the Matilda Joslyn Gage Museum and Center for Social Justice Dialogue in Fayetteville, NY. At the brunch her friends, relatives and colleagues told their "war stories." The storytellers included Marilyn Tedeschi of WILL; Coline Jenkins, Stanton's great, great granddaughter; Michelle Schenandoah of the Oneida Clan of the Haudenosaunee; Wagner's daughter, Beth DeCaprio; Dr. Wagner's partner, Carol Corwin, and others. This will become an annual brunch to remember and honor her work in promoting human rights.

Lessons Learned

This year's Convention Days offered several key takeaways. Intersectionality matters: Programming that included Indigenous history and environmental themes broadened the scope of women's rights conversations. Community engagement is vital: From Victorian games to open mic protests, the event thrived on active participation. Symbolism has power: The act of signing the Addendum to the Declaration of Sentiments reminded attendees that the fight for equality is ongoing – and personal. History is a living force: By connecting the Erie Canal's legacy to modern movements, organizers showed how infrastructure and geography shape social change.

Convention Days 2025 was more than a commemoration – it was a call to action, a celebration of progress, and a reminder that the ripples of reform continue to spread. 🌊

The Power of Community

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In an era where an unprecedented number of people report feeling disillusioned from institutions and socially disconnected, building up a sense of community can be a rather radical act. It's also essential to a thriving democracy. Engaged citizens are more likely to hold leaders accountable, influence policies, and ensure that governments are acting in the best interest of the public they serve.

Taking that first step is the hardest – but we have a few ideas to get you started. Check out VolunteerMatch to search for local opportunities near you by specific cause or location. Local organizations can help connect you with like-minded folks in your area, and no matter where you live, there's bound to be similar organizations working in your own backyard. The options are nearly endless.

So if you're feeling overwhelmed, one of the best things you can do is to start small. Talk to someone you might not reach out to otherwise. Join a local event. Reach out to a group whose work you admire and find out how you can get involved. Once you connect with others who feel the way you do, you'll quickly realize that you're not alone at all – and you'll be able to go further than you ever thought. 🌊

[Source: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-power-of-community-and-connecting-with-others/> Victoria MacKinnon; published July 17, 2025]

What's at stake?

Disconnection, isolation, and anxiety are on the rise alongside escalating global challenges. Without a strong sense of purpose and belonging, individuals are more likely to fall into inaction – and when you zoom out, that turns into a society-wide problem of indifference.

What can we do?

The answer is simple – connect with those around you. Start local by attending nearby events, joining organizations, or getting to know your neighbors and what matters to them. Building community improves well-being and amplifies collective impact, benefiting individuals and groups alike. 🌊

**"We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community."
-Dorothy Day, Catholic American journalist, social activist, and anarchist**



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