



# NIKE

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

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NEW YORK STATE  
**women, INC.**

**Our Mission**

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

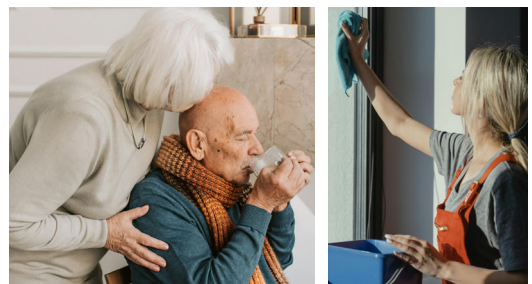
**Our Vision**

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](http://nyswomeninc.org)

Women's Work • Invisible labor • Set up market stall • Cook • Update calendar • Child care • Clean house • Elder care • Take care of the family • Walk the boss's dog • Sew the caps • Make coffee for meetings • Set up the calendar • Carry the water • Put the kids to bed • Take mom to doctor • Emotional labor • Rinse and repeat...



calendar • Child care • Clean house • Elder care • Take care of the family • Walk the boss's dog

# NYS Women, Inc. – The State of the State



## So proud to have served as your NYS Women, Inc. president!

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

Hello everyone!

As I write this message, I find myself reflecting with both gratitude and pride on the past two years serving as your State President. It has truly been an honor to work alongside such a dedicated, passionate, and inspiring group of women. Your participation, support, and genuine friendship have made this experience not only meaningful, but unforgettable.

Together, we have embraced change, tackled challenges, and made several important updates that will help strengthen and sustain our organization for years to come. These were not always easy decisions, but they were necessary ones – and I am incredibly proud of how our community came together with openness, resilience, and a shared commitment to our mission.

As I complete my second year in this role, I am excited to pass the torch to our incoming officers. Their energy, vision, and leadership will continue to move us forward in powerful ways. While I look forward to taking a step back, I will always remain one of your biggest supporters, cheering on all that you will accomplish next.

Thank you again for the trust you placed in me, and for the countless moments of connection, collaboration, and camaraderie. It has been a privilege to serve you. 🐾

Best,

Robin Bridson  
NYS Women, Inc. president 2025/2026

**NEW YORK STATE**  
**women, INC.**



**2026 ANNUAL**  
**CONFERENCE**

motivate ■ support ■ network

Registration is now open for our Annual Conference being held Friday – Sunday, June 12–14, 2026 at Tioga Downs. It kicks off Friday at 6:00 PM.

### What's in store?

Join us for a dynamic and engaging weekend featuring:

- Friday night welcome mixer (hosted by the Tri-County Chapter) and may include a horse race
- Keynote lunch speaker: Amanda Popovski, presenting “Confidence as a Business Strategy”
- Water exercising presented by Janet Carey
- Laughter yoga presented by Kelsey Donnelly
- Two interactive workshops
- Vendor shopping
- Live entertainment on Saturday night – TEZZA (hosted by the Greater Binghamton Chapter)
- Two business sessions

### Meals are on us!

Thanks to State support, all meals are fully covered for attendees – so you can focus on learning,

networking, and having fun. This year's Saturday dinner theme is “Hawaiian” so dress accordingly! (If you bring a guest to Saturday's dinner, the cost for your guest is \$45.)

### Lodging

A discounted room block is available at \$139.99 per night at Tioga Downs. (Book early – availability is limited.)

Call 1-888-WIN-TIOGA (1-888-946-8464) and use group code 3064.

### Conference registration link:

<https://www.nyswomeninc.org/Conference>

- Early Bird Registration (by 5/17) - \$50
- Regular Registration (after 5/17) - \$75
- On-Site Registration (6/12 -6/14) - \$100

This year's conference blends business, wellness, and celebration into one unforgettable weekend. Whether you're coming to sharpen your skills, grow your confidence, or reconnect with colleagues, we can't wait to welcome you! 🐾

2026

MONTHLY  
7 Communicator deadline

JUN  
12-14 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
Tioga Downs Casino  
Resort, Nichols, NY

JULY  
15 SEPTEMBER NIKE  
submissions deadline

### NIKE Submissions

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## From the Editor

# Our economies are built on the backs of all this unpaid labor that women do. -MELINDA GATES

Our June *NIKE* probes an issue that women across the globe recognize, but most men and indeed most nations don't: the fact that without women's unpaid labor, our world wouldn't run.

***Women and girls do 16 billion hours of unpaid care every day – powering families, communities, and economies. Yet, this work remains largely invisible, undervalued and unequally distributed.***

How often have *you* gotten up in the morning with an endless to-do list? I know I have throughout the years: make breakfast; wash the dishes; get the kids/grandkids off to school; double-check my husband has taken out the trash for garbage day; make sure everyone gets to their doctor appointments, soccer practice (*with the right gear!*), or early morning work meeting; check work emails; update the family's calendar for the coming weeks. . . and that's just before noon! This is just some of the unpaid work women do day in and day out. For some it can be caring for children, for others the caregiving is for an elderly parent or spouse, or, for those "fortunate" few, both. All while carrying the "mental load" of organizing, planning, strategizing, working.

Our cover story "What is unpaid care work and how does it power the economy?" on page 5 comes from UN Women, the lead United Nations entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. "Women's Work: The Foundational Fabric of the World" by Claire Knowles, page 6, explores how *women's work is often invisible because it is so deeply embedded in the fabric of everyday life*. "The Value of Women's Work – Still Unfinished" by Rosemarie Dressler (page 8) is a *generational reflection on the visible and invisible labor women carry*.

On page 9, our article on "Women in the Global Informal Economy" describes the worldwide impact of women's "informal" labor where employment is often invisible in official statistics, and how their work is undervalued, underreported, and underpaid. Throughout this issue we've included statistics and updates on just how much women's unpaid work keeps families, businesses, farms, nations, and the global economy running.

Rosemarie Dressler broaches a woman's progress in the workplace and how her success, instead of drawing others forward, can seem to create distance. See page 20 for "The Unspoken Truth: Not Everyone Comes with You."

Please check out page 16 for Ramona L. Gallagher's update on NYS Career Development Opportunities, Inc. and the named grant recipients.

And see you at conference June 12th to 14th! 🐾



Image ©Tara Bazilian Chang

-Joyce DeLong

**SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE DEADLINE: JULY 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.

# What is unpaid care work and how does it power the economy?

Women and girls do 16 billion hours of unpaid care every day – powering families, communities, and economies. Yet, this work remains largely invisible, undervalued and unequally distributed.

from UN Women, lead United Nations entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Every day, women around the world do 16 billion hours of unpaid care work. Cleaning, cooking, fetching water, looking after children and the elderly – these are just some of the essential and daily tasks women and girls predominantly take on.

But imagine a world where women and girls stopped working and went on an unpaid work strike. Communities would grind to a halt, and economies would collapse. A global emergency would unfold because this work, which goes unnoticed and unrecognised by governments and business, is so essential that life simply cannot function without it.

Despite its central role in the global economy, unpaid care work is rarely counted in statistics or given the value it deserves. It is invisible in GDP and overlooked by governments, even though women do more than half of the world's work (52 per cent) – and nearly half that work goes unpaid.

What is unpaid care work and why is it invisible?

Unpaid care work is the daily labour that keeps households, families, and communities running – work that is mostly done by women and girls without pay. It includes raising children, caring for older or sick relatives, and supporting a person with disabilities, as well as cleaning, cooking, washing and collecting water



or fuel. It also includes organizing schedules and anticipating household or community needs – often called the “mental load,” unpaid care work is the invisible force that holds households and communities together.

Unpaid care work also extends beyond the home and also includes voluntary community care, such as running community kitchens, neighbourhood childcare groups, and informal support networks.

Caregiving is deeply meaningful. Many women and men describe it as a privilege to nurture their children, support parents, and accompany loved ones through life's vulnerable moments. Care is what connects us all. It builds trust and belonging and fosters healthy families and strong communities.

While essential to life, much of this daily work is physically and emotionally demanding, and skilled. Yet, it goes unseen and taken for granted. With its true economic and social value

hidden and uncounted.

The impact on caregivers is long hours, physical effort, emotional strain, stress, lost earnings, and persistent time poverty that narrows many women's choices and opportunities. But when we invest in care systems that

*Continued on page 11*

## Feature: Women's Work



# Women's Work: The Foundational Fabric of the World

by Claire Knowles, Buffalo Niagara Chapter

*"If you want work to be done well, ask a busy woman."*  
(-Lucille Ball.) This has touchstone impact for New York State Women, Inc. members. No one needs to convince us that women's contributions are essential for navigating this complex world. Indeed, *Women's Work is never done.*

Sometimes our work is highly visible, influencing organizations, politics, health care and social movements. Sometimes our work is almost invisible and perhaps taken for granted, yet crucial for the success of our

families, business teams, networks and organizations.

Women's work is often described in fragments – as if it belongs to separate compartments: the office, the kitchen, the nursery, the hospital ward, the classroom, or in professional capacities, the back room or the boardroom. **In truth, Women's Work is one continuous thread, woven through every space where life is built, sustained, and renewed. It is not defined by a single title, paycheck, or role. Rather it is a force – steady, adaptive, enduring, and ever present.**

Women are leaders and nurturers building the foundations and skills needed for our culture to survive and thrive. We honor the connectivity we bring to bear to make things better.

To be a woman in the world today is to carry many names and roles at once. Businesswoman. Professional. Mother. Daughter. Grandmother. Aunt. Niece. Caregiver. Teacher. Leader. Nurse/ Doctor. Lawyer. Professional. Cook. Child-rearer. Healer. Builder of lives. Keeper of memories.

Still, none of these names alone fully capture the work we do.

Women's work begins long before recognition and continues long after applause fades. It is in the early mornings, when plans are made not just for meetings, but for meals, moods, and milestones. It is in the quiet calculations – how to stretch time, energy, and resources so that everyone entrusted to her care has what they need to grow.

As businesswomen, women navigate systems not always built with them in mind – bringing not only competence, but creativity, resilience, intuitive knowing, and emotional intelligence. We lead teams, build companies, and shape economies, often while carrying invisible responsibilities that never appear on a résumé.

As mothers, we are architects of the future. We raise not just children, but citizens, dreamers, and thinkers. Our lessons are not confined to words, but lived daily – in patience, in sacrifice, in unconditional love.

As daughters and granddaughters, we become bridges between generations – honoring the past while shaping the future. We carry stories, traditions, and wisdom, ensuring that no life lived before us is forgotten.

As caregivers – whether to children, aging parents, or those in need – we perform some of the most sacred work there is: **showing up**. Again, and again. In sickness and in health. In clarity and in confusion. In strength and in vulnerability. **We show up**.

As teachers, professionals and leaders, women extend their care beyond family into the wider world. They heal bodies, ignite minds, and guide communities. They do not simply fill roles – they transform them, infusing them with humanity. Women are leaders and nurturers building the foundations and skills we need for our culture to survive and thrive. Women's work includes being the glue that holds things together.

Then there are the roles that never come with titles: the emotional anchor, the peacekeeper, the one who notices what others overlook. The one who cares. The one who remembers birthdays, senses unspoken pain, and holds everything together when life begins to unravel. Caring, concern, empathy are woven into this Women's Work congruence.

Women's work is often invisible because it is so deeply embedded in the fabric of everyday life. It does not

## Sidebar: Connecting the Dots

Steve Jobs famously stated, "You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards." This quote emphasizes the importance of trusting the journey of life and having faith that experiences will come together in the future. When we think on this from the perspective of Women's Work. . . how many different elements of Women's work have you incorporated in your journey so far? How have the dots connected in your life? (i.e., daughter, businesswoman, networker, friend, caregiver, leader, wife, mother, author, etc., etc.) Now, celebrate yourself! Celebrate the multidimensional YOU! Celebrate the many, many ways that you **show up** in this world! Women's Work – manifested! 🖱

always demand attention – but without it, everything would fall apart.

It is strength that bends without breaking. It is love that persists without condition. It is labor that builds not just structures, but souls.

And perhaps most importantly, women's work is not small.

It is not secondary.

It is not supplemental.

It is foundational.

It is the quiet architecture of families, communities, networks, and nations. It is the heartbeat behind progress and the hands that steady the world when it falters.

To honor women's work is not simply to acknowledge what women do – it is to recognize who we are: creators, sustainers, leaders, and life-givers in every sense of the word.

Women's work is not just work.

It is legacy. 🖱

*[Attribution Note. This article is submitted by Claire Knowles, Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. for this NIKE issue's focus on Women's Work. With her vast experience, she engaged Chat GBT (Open AI) by asking a series of focused questions; then revised and edited some suggested content to reflect her own understanding, her voice, her writing – testing AI against personal experience and context. Thus, this article reflects the best of both worlds that we now live in . . . the real world of women's work through the eyes of the writer, blended with the backdrop of the artificial intelligence world.]*

# The Value of Women’s Work – Still Unfinished

**A generational reflection on the visible and invisible labor women carry – and why recognition, equity, and protection still lag behind.**

by Rosemarie Dressler, Staten Island Chapter

Social media has opened a window into lives we might not otherwise see – and what I am seeing more often are stay-at-home mothers, years into marriage, suddenly confronting divorce with little control over their finances and, in some cases, their own lives.

It is a quiet but frightening reality.

These are women who have spent years doing the work that makes a family function – raising children, preparing meals, tending to illness, managing every detail of a household. Work that is essential to the stability of a home and, by extension, to society itself.

And yet, because it is unpaid, it is often unprotected.

I have seen this before.

My grandmother was a stay-at-home mother when her husband became ill. She cared for him while continuing to run the household – managing every responsibility, every need – until he passed away, leaving her with two young boys and the full weight of a life she had been holding together all along.

She was left, as many women were, to carry the financial burden of her family – at a time when women were neither expected nor equipped to do so. Even when work was available – in factories, domestic service, or hospitality – it was typically low-paying and unstable, offering little security for those suddenly responsible for supporting a household.

She worked her way through a male-dominated system, eventually rising into a management position. Each day, she returned home to a second shift – the unrelenting work of raising two boys on her own.

At the same time my grandmother was sharing her

experiences with me, my mother was navigating her own path. She had begun working at a Manhattan bank

as a part-time receptionist, studying at night with the goal of moving into management.

I would listen as she came home from work and spoke about the many obstacles standing in her way. Too often, she was told that the experience she had gained at home – managing a household, raising children, keeping a family functioning – was not considered relevant or transferable, as though the

skills required to run a life did not count as work at all.

She was eventually promoted into management, but her salary remained lower than that of her male counterparts. It stayed that way until the broader climate began to shift.

By the early 1970s, voices like Gloria Steinem’s and the rise of a national conversation about women’s rights were beginning to make an impact. Banks and corporations could no longer ignore the issue.

It was only when that pressure became impossible to ignore that my mother was finally paid what

she had already earned. That shift in attitude created an opening – one that allowed her to begin climbing the corporate ladder.

It was not an easy climb. But I watched her rise from a part-time receptionist to retire as a senior vice president at a major financial institution.

The struggles of both my mother and my grandmother became a quiet education for me.

From those moments, I began to understand

*Continued on page 17*



# Women in the Global Informal Economy

## What Is the Informal Economy?

THE INFORMAL ECONOMY, comprising activities that have market value and would add to tax revenue and GDP if they were recorded, is a globally widespread phenomenon. According to the International Labour Organization, about 2 billion workers, or 60 percent of the world’s employed population ages 15 and older, spend at least part of their time in the informal sector. The size of the informal sector slowly decreases as economies develop, but with wide variations across regions and countries. Today, the informal sector still accounts for about a third of low- and middle-income countries’ economic activity – 15 percent in advanced economies (see chart).

*Originally published December 2020 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) online at <https://www.ilo.org/publications/women-and-men-informal-economy-statistical-update>.*

*CORINNE DELÉCHAT is a division chief in the IMF’s African Department, and LEANDRO MEDINA is a senior economist in the IMF’s Strategy, Policy, and Review Department.*

## Challenging economic conditions are pushing more workers into informal employment

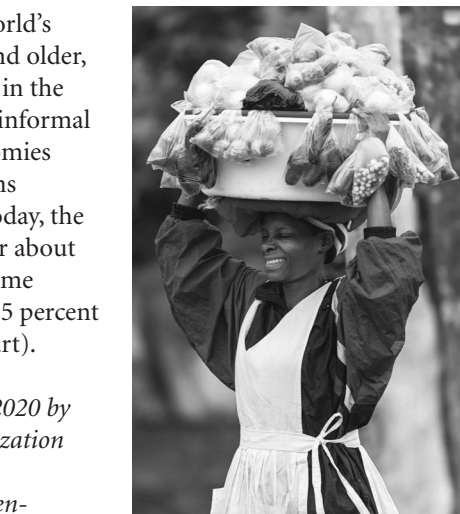
BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, the incidence of informal employment had been slowly declining, from 58.6 per cent in 2015 to 57.8 per cent in 2019. However, COVID-19 lockdowns and containment measures resulted in disproportionate job losses for informal workers, particularly women. The subsequent recovery was driven by informal employment, which saw a slight uptick, reaching 58.0 per cent in 2022. This corresponds to around 2 billion workers in precarious jobs without social protection.

The situation was most alarming in LDCs, where informal employment stood at 89.7 per cent in 2022, with no improvement since 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia also continued to have high informality rates, at 87.2 per cent and 84.8 per cent,



respectively. Women have been worse off during the employment recovery, with four out of five jobs created in 2022 for women being informal, compared to only two out of three jobs for men.

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/Goal-08/>



## Women in the Informal Economy

THE INFORMAL ECONOMY, often invisible in official statistics, plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of millions of people. Within this shadowed workforce, women’s participation is both significant and disproportionately challenging. Despite contributing substantially to the economic fabric, women in the informal sector face a myriad of obstacles that stem from deep-rooted gender biases and systemic inequalities. Their work is often undervalued, underreported, and underpaid, reflecting the broader societal undervaluation of women’s labor.

**Predominance in low-paying jobs.** Women are overrepresented in the lower echelons of the informal economy, such as domestic work, street vending, and home-based industries. These positions typically offer little security and are marked by irregular incomes. For example, a woman working as a domestic helper may earn less than her male counterpart in a similar role, highlighting the gender wage gap.

**Lack of social protection.** The absence of formal employment contracts leaves many women without social security benefits, health insurance, or pensions. This vulnerability is exemplified in the life of a female artisan who, despite her skill in creating intricate handicrafts, may have no safety net in times of illness or economic downturn.

**Balancing work and family responsibilities.** Women in the informal sector often juggle work with disproportionate family care duties. A street vendor mother, for instance, might have to manage her stall while also caring for her children, a dual responsibility that can limit her business growth and personal well-being.

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The Buffalo  
Niagara Chapter  
proudly supports  
**Laurie Albertsson**  
for  
President-Elect

NEW YORK STATE  
**women, INC.**  
buffalo niagara chapter

“Women have always worked. They have worked unpaid, underpaid, underappreciated, and invisibly, but they have always worked. But the modern workplace does not work for women. From its location, to its hours, to its regulatory standards, it has been designed around the lives of men and it is no longer fit for purpose. The world of work needs a wholesale redesign – of its regulations, of its equipment, of its culture – and this redesign must be led by data on female bodies and female lives. We have to start recognising that the work women do is not an added extra, a bonus that we could do without: women’s work, paid and unpaid, is the backbone of our society and our economy. It’s about time we started valuing it.”

-Caroline Criado-Pérez  
“Invisible Women: Data Bias  
in a World Designed for Men”



*Tri County Chapter is with  
President-Elect Patti Layton.  
You have made us very proud.*

NEW YORK STATE  
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tri-county chapter

*If women's unpaid work were given a monetary value, it would exceed 40 per cent of GDP in some countries – that is more than entire sectors like manufacturing or transport.*

## About UN Women

Since July 2010 UN Women has existed to advance women's rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of all women and girls.

As the lead United Nations entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social norms, and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements, and the private sector, coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations, deliver lasting changes. We make strides in four areas: leadership; economic empowerment; freedom from violence; and peace, security, and humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.

### Status of women

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth. Yet gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched in every society. Women lack access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. They are too often denied access to basic education and health care. Women in all parts of the world suffer violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

Over many decades, the United Nations has made significant progress in advancing gender equality, including through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Working for the empowerment and rights of women and girls globally, UN Women's main roles are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality, as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, reward and represent care workers, and resource care systems with adequate funding, everyone benefits, and families and economies thrive.

What is the hidden economic value of unpaid care work?

Care is the backbone of life. It feeds families, strengthens communities, and powers economies. Without it, everything else would stop.

If women's unpaid work were given a monetary value, it would exceed 40 per cent of GDP in some countries – that is more than entire sectors like manufacturing or transport. Still this essential labour remains largely invisible in national statistics and budgets. And that invisibility is one of the biggest drivers of poverty and inequality worldwide, with lifelong consequences for women.

When care work is not counted, women's time, talent, and income shrink. It limits the hours women and girls have for learning, leisure, and rest, while also crowding many into low-paid and precarious jobs.

When care work counts, so do women. When we value care work, we value the people who keep the world running.

Why is unpaid care work still seen as "women's work"?

Across the world, women still take on most unpaid care work. Social norms still cast care as "women's work," while men are seen as breadwinners. In homes, classrooms, and workplaces, those expectations shape choices: who stays at home when a child is sick, who takes the part-time or more flexible job, or who is praised for being a "helpful daughter."

On average, women undertake 2.5 times more hours every day on unpaid care work than men. Girls

*Continued on page 12*



learn this early and provide 160 million more hours every day on unpaid care and domestic work than boys.

Where public services and infrastructure are scarce, the gap widens. In rural areas, in households without running water or electricity, and in families without access to affordable childcare, women's unpaid working hours stretch even longer.

This inequality doesn't end with unpaid work. Women hold most paid care jobs too – as nannies, domestic workers, live-in carers, nurses and childcare workers – but these jobs are often informal, low-paid, and provide limited protections such as healthcare or paid leave. Around 80 per cent of domestic workers are women, many of them migrants, often excluded from labour laws and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Strengthening domestic worker rights is key to protecting the millions of women in this sector.

What are the consequences of inequality in unpaid care work for women?

When women do most of the world's unpaid care work, it doesn't just affect them – it affects us all. The cost is measured in time, income, lost opportunity, and potential.

- Time poverty: Women have less time for learning, decent paid work, rest, or civic participation. Globally, 45 per cent of working-age women are not included in the labour market because of unpaid care responsibilities, compared to just 5 per cent of men.

- The motherhood penalty: Motherhood often marks a turning point in a woman's earnings. In Europe, 60 per cent of the gender pay gap is linked to motherhood: not because women lose ambition, but because they cut back paid hours or leave paid work altogether when childcare is unaffordable and parental leave policies aren't adequate. In the United Kingdom, one in three mothers with children under five has left paid work unwillingly due to their caregiving responsibilities.

- Lost potential: Every extra hour of unpaid care work shrinks a woman's chance for paid work by 38 per cent and higher education by 34 per cent.

- Stress and burnout: Long hours of housework and caring for others, with little rest or recognition, leave many women exhausted and stretched to breaking point in what's often called caregiver burnout.

What do men lose by not sharing care fairly?

When men share care, families get more time together. Across countries, 85 per cent of fathers say they want to be more involved in their children's lives.



But stigma, workplace cultures, and weak parental leave policies are often stacked against fathers. In many countries, paternity leave is short or unpaid, making it hard for fathers to take time off. Yet the will is there: in north Africa and the Middle East, over 80 per cent of men and women support paid paternity leave, even though only a handful of

countries in the region offer it.

By contrast, countries that make leave equal and well-paid show what is possible. In Iceland, each parent gets six months of paid leave and fathers take nearly 90 per cent of theirs. In Denmark and Sweden, leave for fathers has boosted their participation at home and narrowed gaps at work.

In Eastern Europe, UN Women's Fathers' schools are helping men build stronger bonds with their children easing pressure on mothers. Men report higher satisfaction and wellbeing, better communication at home, and more equal sharing of chores.

Sharing care between parents supports children's wellbeing and gives each parent time for work, rest, and for self-care. But until both parents can take time to care without stigma or penalty, women will continue to carry an unequal share, and men will keep missing out one of life's most meaningful connections.

Why does investing in care make for smart economics?

Care work is a public good and one of the smartest investments a country can make. When nations put money into care systems, the returns come fast and last for generations:

#### 1. Fuel for economies

Investments in the care economy could create nearly 300 million new jobs by 2035 – almost three times more than the same investment in construction, and with 30 per cent fewer emissions. Every dollar invested in care generates two to three times more jobs than other industries and increases tax revenue, helping to offset the costs.

#### 2. A game-changer for women's employment

Affordable childcare, parental leave, and quality care services give women time to earn and lead. When care work is shared and supported, women can access and continue in paid work, closing pay gaps and fuelling growth.

#### 3. Healthier, fairer societies

Good care systems raise healthier children, reduce poverty, and create stronger, more resilient communities.

Access to quality childcare lets parents, especially women, balance paid work and family life. Quality care services for older people and disability- inclusive services allow everyone to live and age with dignity and autonomy.

What needs to change to make care work visible and valued?

UN Women is calling for a care revolution with six actions:

- **Recognize** care work – both unpaid and paid – as essential, skilled work that sustains societies, by prioritizing care in laws, policies and budgets.
- **Reduce** time-intensive tasks (like water access and clean cooking) with better infrastructure and technology.
- **Redistribute** responsibilities more fairly between women and men, households and the state, families, communities and businesses, through quality and affordable care services – such as childcare and long-term care – and care policies – such as parental carers’ leave, flexible working, and social protection.
- **Reward** paid care workers with fair pay, protections, and dignity. Too often these are underpaid work roles, despite being essential.
- **Represent** caregivers’ and care receivers’ needs and

rights in policymaking, unions, and decision-making spaces.

- **Resource** care systems with public financing for care policies, services and infrastructure.

Care is our collective power – our future depends on it

Unpaid care work might be invisible in statistics, but it is everywhere in our lives. It fuels economies, shapes futures, and connects us all. For too long, care work has been dismissed as “women’s work,” when, in truth, it is a shared responsibility and the work that makes all other work possible.

When care is invisible and unequal, it deepens poverty and inequality. When it is valued, supported, and shared, it becomes a force of progress.

UN Women is calling for a care revolution – one that places people and the planet at the heart of a care society and that guarantees the rights and wellbeing of all those who give and receive care. 🐦

*[Originally published online on October 23, 2025 at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/faqs/faqs-what-is-unpaid-care-work-and-how-does-it-power-the-economy>]*

Women spend 250 million hours daily fetching water globally: UN  
by Vishal Kumar

*[<https://bodhiwire.com/world/women-spend-250-million-hours-daily-fetching-water-globally-un/>  
Originally published online March 19, 2026]*

Women and girls across the world spend an estimated 250 million hours every single day collecting water [far more than men and boys], highlighting the scale of unpaid labour sustaining the global water crisis, according to a United Nations report.

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2026, released by UNESCO ahead of World Water Day, said gender inequality continues to shape access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

In a majority of unserved rural households, women and girls are primarily responsible for fetching water, often travelling long distances and facing unsafe conditions. 🐦

Collecting water is tedious and it adds to the unpaid domestic and care work whose inequitable distribution is at the root of Gender inequalities. For women and girls, the opportunity costs of collecting water are high, with far reaching effects:

For girls, it means less time spent at school or dropping out of school altogether – at the expense of their future prospects

For women, in particular when they are mothers, it

means less time for income generating activities, which increases their vulnerability to poverty and violence

Gender disaggregated Time-Use data is critically important to develop public water infrastructure and services that will reduce the time and efforts that women and girls put into this strenuous and unpaid work.

Time-Use data already underlies target 5.4. of the UN 2030 development agenda, and Member States have committed to “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services and infrastructure.”

Unfortunately Time-Use Surveys are seen as complex and expensive, and according to the ILO, only 72 countries have conducted such surveys at least once, with only 27 of those having done so at least twice. 🐦

*[<https://makemothersmatter.org/200-million-hours-spent-by-women-and-girls-fetching-water-every-day/>]*



## President, 2026/2027



**PATTI LAYTON**  
**INCOMING PRESIDENT**

I believe deeply in the mission of New York State Women, Inc. and the power it holds to transform lives – just as it transformed mine. Through my membership, I found my voice, unlocked my leadership potential, and began to genuinely believe that I am a strong, enthusiastic woman capable of leading others. Now, it is my time to pay it forward and help women across New York State reach their own personal and professional apex.

A lifelong New Yorker, I grew up in New Hartford, spent 18 years in Sullivan County, and now call Sherburne home. Education has been a cornerstone of my journey. I earned my associate's degree in accounting from Sullivan County Community College with honors, my bachelor's degree in accounting from SUNY Empire State College, and my MBA from Walden University with a 4.0 GPA.

Professionally, I have over 30 years of experience in finance and currently serve as the pharmacy manager at Bartle's Pharmacy, where I have led efforts to streamline billing procedures and identify new revenue opportunities. My dedication to advocacy also extends beyond the workplace. I proudly serve on the board of directors of Amelia's Voice, a nonprofit focused on raising awareness about domestic violence and supporting women in breaking free from abuse and control. In addition, I serve on the Aunt Mary's House board of directors. The leadership roles that I undertake are all focused around helping people to thrive in their environment whether it be in my role as a mom, grandma, manager, president, or board member.

I have always taken immense pride in being a mother, but nothing compares to the joy of being a grandmother. My granddaughters are my world, and they inspire me daily to live with intention, strength, and purpose.

In recent years, I have also prioritized my health and wellness, finding joy in walking and embracing a lifestyle of movement and mindfulness.

My journey with NYS Women, Inc. resumed in June 2017, and since then, I have been fully engaged in its mission: 2018: PPD Career Recognition Award winner and finance vice chair; 2019-2023: state treasurer and registration chair; 2024-2025: state vice president; 2018-current: Tri-County Chapter vice president; current: state president-elect.

## Slate of Candidates 2026/2027



**LAURIE ALBERTSSON**  
**Candidate for Election for PRESIDENT-ELECT**

I joined the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. in 2019. Immediately after I joined, the chapter elected me its treasurer. I also served as the chapter's president-elect, president, and I am now immediate past president.

As state co-treasurer, I reorganized its QuickBooks to be a more efficient accounting system. I created a renewal process within the software so NYS Women, Inc. members can pay their invoices directly through QuickBooks. This has decreased monetary fees, not only for the state, but also for members, in addition to being more efficient.

I helped create the state's new strategic plan; currently we are using that plan to bring transparency and strong connections between the state and chapters. I also created a new "Call for Action" email so our members immediately know if there is an important issue or item they should act upon. I enlisted Kathy Cerullo (BNC member) to clean up the NYS Women, Inc. email database. I was instrumental in getting the executive committee to approve paying for the majority of attendees' expenses at this year's annual conference.

Currently, I am the owner/VP of operations at Fernwood Capital & Leasing. We are a full-service commercial equipment finance company. I also own LFA Bookkeeping with two clients (Rotary Club of Buffalo and St. Vincent de Paul). In addition to the businesses I run and the boards I serve on, I like to spend time with family and friends, and travel.

**As of NIKE's publication date the candidate positions for VICE PRESIDENT and TREASURER are still open. This may change by the time of voting at NYS Women, Inc.'s annual conference when it takes place June 2026 in Nichols, NY.**



**LAUREN PRINGLE**

**Candidate for Election for SECRETARY**

Lauren Pringle is the current state secretary and has held the position for the last two years. She is also the current Susquehanna Chapter secretary and has held that position for the last decade. Lauren has been Susquehanna Chapter's fundraising chair since 2017 and has been the communications/PR/social media chair since 2016. She also holds a position on the state strategic planning committee helping to formulate and implement a strategic plan for the foreseeable future in the organization.

Lauren currently works as a neurosurgical device sales consultant providing surgical support, hardware, biologics, and patient care for a network of eight neurosurgeons spanning multiple hospital networks. She has four degrees, and is also a nationally registered EMT. Lauren has taught in some capacity (teaching assistant, lab assistant, associate faculty) since 2014. She has been a NYS EMS instructor since 2018 as well as an ASHI and American Red Cross First Aid/CPR instructor.

Lauren has been a member of the Junior League of Albany, NY for the last decade, where she uses her skill set to help impact the community for women and children by helping to organize the Touch A Truck event that involves the community as well as grosses a large sum of money to put towards the annual partnership program. She also manages their social media accounts to best promote the vision and mission of the organization.

Those positions as well as her nine years of undergraduate and graduate education have taught her many ways to work well with others, forge solidified plans, execute plans with integrity, and incorporate her skill sets into the work at hand. In her free time, Lauren enjoys reading, dancing, antiquing, and spending time with her loved ones and furry companions.

Lauren is extremely proud to be the third generation of Business and Professional Women/NYS Women, Inc. members, following in the footsteps of her favorite role models, her grandmother Karenlea Kretsch and her mother Pamela Pringle.

## Annual Conference 2026

**Meet our lunch keynote speaker!** Amanda Popovski is a confidence coach, speaker, and author dedicated to helping ambitious women get out of their heads and regain their true inner confidence. She's been featured in outlets like TinyBuddha (3M+ readers monthly), recognized as a Buffalo 40 Under 40 Professional, and is regularly invited to keynote speak on leveraging confidence as a business strategy. Amanda's debut book, *CONFIDENT AF* with audiobook companion, will launch in the spring of 2026 to her audience of 12k+. Amanda's ideas inspire thousands every month through social media and her email community. She will have her book with her for purchase.

**Morning workshop** "The Networking Circle" presented by Joyce DeLong and Katharine Smith (Buffalo Niagara Chapter)

This interactive presentation will take participants through the "networking circle," an organic approach to creating close client contacts. It is structured to help business owners as well as NYS Women, Inc. chapters with their membership growth. The process starts with attendance at an event and leads to "meet & greets" with ideas on ice breakers, the type of questions to ask, and the exchange of business cards and/or contact info.

**Afternoon workshop** "No Woman Climbs Alone: Building Powerful Mentorship Networks That Open Doors" presented by Dr. Adrienne Morton (Buffalo Niagara Chapter)

*Overview:* Many successful women can point to a moment in their journey when another woman offered guidance, opened a door, shared wisdom, or simply reminded them of their power when they could not yet see it themselves. Mentorship is more than professional advice, it is a catalyst for confidence, leadership development, and expanding access to opportunity. In this engaging and interactive workshop, Dr. Adrienne Morton explores the transformative impact of women intentionally supporting other women through mentorship.

**For annual conference info:**

<https://www.nyswomeninc.org/Conference>

NEW YORK STATE  
**women, INC.** | **2026 ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**  
motivate • support • network

## Meet the Named Grant Recipients

by Ramona Gallagher, NYSCDO, Inc. Chair, Grant Committee

In March, the NYSCDO, Inc. Grant Program selected two New York State women, **Cassidy Gage** and **Catherine Puma-Webber**, to receive Named Grants in the amount \$1,000 and \$750 respectively to assist them in pursuing their educational goals to enhance their livelihoods. As mentioned in the *NIKE* article in 2025, the Named Grants offer anyone an opportunity to establish a monetary grant in honor or in memory of someone they choose. A minimum donation of \$250 is required to sponsor such a grant; there is no maximum.

CDO President Helen Rico remarked that “This allows CDO to help women to widen their horizons in continuing their education, attending a conference, paying for equipment or clothing for their job, whatever the particular need might be. I hope that more people will join us in this effort. Or, encourage someone in your life or chapter to apply for a grant in the future.” I am so grateful to our members who spread the word about this new opportunity. Such donations are important as we aspire to enable women to continue to enhance their skills and training to pursue their occupational opportunities, in whatever field they choose. Further, the NYSCDO, Inc. is thrilled to award these grants to the women highlighted here and wish them continued success and achievements in the years to come.”

Catherine Puma-Webber received a grant in memory of **Lucille Argenzia** and **Audrey McDougall**. Ms. Gage received a grant in memory of **Carol Metcalfe, an anonymous donor**, and **Mike Dzuba**, husband of **Debbie Dzuba**, a member of the Binghamton chapter.

For more information on eligibility requirements and application instructions, visit the web site at [nyscdo.inc.org](http://nyscdo.inc.org) or contact Ramona Gallagher at [MMistymo@aol.com](mailto:MMistymo@aol.com). If you are interested in supporting this effort monetarily, consider joining the CDO organization as a member – dues are \$25 per year. Donations are always welcome and checks may be made payable to NYSCDO, Inc. and mailed to Sara Ayala, Treasurer, at NYSCDO, Inc., P.O. Box 133, Rome, NY 13442-0133. Such donations are tax deductible.



### Cassidy Gage

My name is Cassidy Gage and I applied for this grant to help me go to Panama on an educational trip, organized through my college. I wanted to go on this trip as an education major because not only was it tailored to education, it would also give me the opportunity to immerse myself

in a different culture. This allowed me to learn more about the different cultures that are in Panama. While we were in Panama we went to a handicap foundation, donated clothing and school supplies to an elementary school, visited a coffee farm, volunteered at a local animal shelter, went hiking, white water rafting and many other activities. When visiting the handicap foundation we interacted with the other volunteers, those in need and their families by playing games, putting together puzzles, playing outside with them to bring them joy. We also cooked a full meal called “El Mono” which is a traditional Panamanian dish with chicken, corn, and plantains, then served it to all of the families there. At the end of the day they were all able to choose some items to take home with them that were donated to the handicap foundation. Part of the challenge of being in Panama was navigating language barriers and getting used to a new climate. As a teacher this helped me develop my skills for navigating a new environment, similar to how I will have to when I am adjusting to a new classroom. This helped me learn how to better support the students I will have in my own future classroom by allowing me to understand how to work with kids who come from different cultures and backgrounds. As a full time, first generation college student working a part time job, I was not able to afford this trip all on my own. This grant gave me the opportunity to go to Panama where I had the chance to gain knowledge, friendships, and amazing experiences that will aid me in becoming the best teacher I can be. I am very grateful for NYS Career and Development Opportunities for putting their trust in me by funding this trip in conjunction with my college.

### Catherine Puma-Webber

My journey back to higher education has been one of perseverance and purpose. After exploring different paths in my early twenties, I stepped away from college to gain life experience through travel and work. However, the sudden loss of my daughter’s father in July 2024 transformed my world, placing the weight of being a primary parent solely on my shoulders. Motivated by a need to build a stable, prosperous future for my family, I returned to Mohawk Valley Community College in the spring of 2025. Now a health major, I am balancing the demands of motherhood and full-time employment while maintaining the grades necessary to qualify for the



*Continued on page 23*

## Buffalo Niagara Chapter – Region 8

- submitted by Katharine Smith

The Buffalo Niagara Chapter will honor its 2025/2026 Women in Leadership on June 3rd. Honorees include BNC member **Becky Brubaker** (pictured right) who served as the chapter's 2022/2023 president. She helped revitalize and energize BNC as it transitioned from Zoom fatigue into real life meetings. She led with professionalism and a firm, but cheerful nature, giving structure and meaning back to the group.



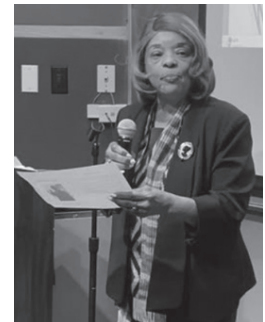
BNC will also recognize **Simone Ragland** (pictured left) who is CEO of Bits and Bytes STEM Foundation. The foundation provides access to STEM learning for underserved youth – especially girls, non-binary youth, and youth of color – by addressing racial and gender disparities and partnering with schools and community organizations to create opportunities.

BNC will also hold a basket auction that evening which will benefit its Women Helping Women program partner **Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network**.

## Staten Island – Region 2

- submitted by Rosemarie Dressler

Staten Island's Women in History meeting in March 2026 with guest speaker, Pat Salmon (shown below at left); also pictured the Women in History Month committee (middle); and Lucille Herring (pictured right), Staten Island Chapter member, was a guest speaker at



Richmond University Medical Center on March 5th. She discussed her Connection NYS Women as well as the historical site, Sandy Ground.

# The Value of Women's Work – Still Unfinished

*Continued from page 8*

something fundamental: the work women do is layered – woven together with the needs of others, often unseen, often uncredited, yet essential in every sense.

And even then, it was clear to me that if women were to be fully recognized, they would have to work not only to contribute, but to be seen.

Their experiences – and the shifting attitudes of the time – led me to believe I had options.

I believed the message.

In retrospect, I can see how unprepared I was for the realities I would encounter when I entered the workforce. And later, when I became a mother, those challenges deepened. I found myself navigating the search for reliable childcare while confronting a familiar imbalance – earning less than equally qualified male counterparts. I had

reached an executive position, as my grandmother and mother had before me, and still faced many of the same



challenges.

It has been quite a journey. What have I learned? Women have made

undeniable progress, yet far too many – like those whose stories now surface on social media – are still confronting the reality that women's work is too often undervalued.

The lesson is no longer hidden.

My grandmother knew it. My mother lived it. I came to understand it.

The question now is whether we are finally prepared to act on it. 🇺🇸

*Rosemarie Dressler is past president of the Staten Island Chapter; a seasoned communications professional, writer, and community advocate with decades of experience shaping public dialogue across the New York–New Jersey region. Her work reflects a deep commitment to civic engagement, leadership, and elevating the stories that connect communities.*

## Feature: “Women’s Work”

- Invisible labor • Start the day • Check the calendar • Child care • Cook • Meal prep • Clean • Elder care • Organize the household • Take care of the family • Walk boss’s dog • Make coffee for meetings • Set up the calendar • Carry the water • Put the kids to sleep • Emotional labor • Rinse and repeat...

Women Handle 75%+ Of All Unpaid Labor. Their Health Pays The Price.

by Eva Epker

[<https://www.forbes.com/sites/evaepker/2023/10/31/women-handle-75-of-all-unpaid-labor-their-health-pays-the-price/>  
Originally published online October 31, 2023]

“There is no universally recognized term or definition for unpaid labor – also referred to as unpaid work, unpaid care work, domestic labor, or household labor – but it is considered broadly inclusive of all responsibilities and tasks done to maintain a household and its family members without any explicit monetary compensation.”

“So childcare is a big one, and relatedly so is care for people with disability, health conditions or who are elderly. But it also includes domestic work like laundry, food preparation, cleaning, running errands, and outdoor tasks,” she added.

“We know that men commonly do the less time-sensitive jobs within the household, such as outdoor or maintenance tasks. . . Ervin said that “a good example is that you can delay mowing the lawn until the weekend, for instance, when you are less time-pressured, whereas you cannot delay feeding a hungry child or driving a dependent to a medical appointment.”

Every day, before the rest of the world wakes up, millions of women are already working – cooking, fetching water, caring for children, tending crops, and supporting elderly relatives. . . This invisible layer of labor is not marginal or incidental – according to UN Women, women do more than half of the world’s total work, and nearly half of that work goes entirely unpaid.

The conventional definition of “work” in economics is narrow: it means activity that generates income in the formal market. Everything else – raising children, caring for the sick, cooking meals, cleaning homes, collecting water and firewood – is classified as something else. Something personal. Something natural. Something women just do.

This framing has enormous consequences. UN Women defines unpaid care work as the



daily labor that keeps households, families, and communities functioning – including childcare, eldercare, cooking, cleaning, and managing household logistics, often called the “mental load.” It is the invisible infrastructure on which all formal economic activity rests. Without it, paid workers could not show up to their jobs. Without it, children would not grow into productive adults. Without it, communities would not survive.

The most direct measure of what is being lost is monetary. UN Women estimates that if women’s unpaid work were assigned a monetary value, it would exceed 40 percent of GDP in some countries – more than entire sectors like manufacturing or transport. The UNDP calculates that at minimum wage rates, global unpaid care work would amount to approximately \$11 trillion, or around 9 percent of global GDP. 🐼

‘The extra shift’: The unpaid emotional labour expected of women at work

by Kate Morgan

[<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20240313-invisible-emotional-labour-women-in-workplace>  
Originally published online March 14, 2024]

Women largely bear the brunt of invisible workplace responsibilities. The work is taxing – and uncompensated.

It’s not just jobs like caregiving and service positions that demand emotional labour – every workplace requires it in some capacity. By and large, tasks like planning parties, service days and team-building exercises, maintaining relationships, and building community all fall to women within mixed-gender workplaces. Studies show women provide much more of the “office housework” – tasks that are associated with “low promotability”.

“A lot of women entering workplaces that were previously male dominated are finding that they are expected, by virtue of being women, to provide an added shift of emotional labour,” says Hackman. Research has shown that, especially in white collar workplaces, that “extra

shift” is a requirement for women to get ahead. A paper in the journal *Human Resource Management* showed men could advance by being – and appearing to be – good at their jobs, but women also needed “prosocial orientation”.

“In an engineering firm, say, to get ahead, a male engineer has to be two things: confident and competent,”

says Hackman. “For a female engineer to get ahead, she has to display the same attributes, and then she also has to be kind and reassuring and a team player.”

In other words, women also must be confident and competent, plus considerate and compassionate. But ironically, while women will be left behind if they don’t do the extra work, it doesn’t do much to help them rise to the top. “All the extra services women perform at work – raising money for things, planning events, remembering occasions – that sort of stuff doesn’t count,” says Ramsey. “It takes a lot of organisation and multitasking; there’s some solid skill sets in that kind of labour. But then when it comes time to be promoted, none of that work is part of the equation.”

#### Women’s Unpaid Work and the American Economy by Damla Onder

[<https://theeconreview.com/2022/09/01/womens-unpaid-work-and-the-american-economy/> Originally published online September 1, 2022]

Economically, we do not value our women: “Women have always worked. They have worked unpaid, underpaid, underappreciated, and invisibly, but they have always worked... We have to start recognizing that the work women do is not an added extra, a bonus that we could do without: women’s work, paid and unpaid, is the backbone of our society and our economy. It’s about time we started valuing it” (142), Caroline Criado Perez states in *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*.

The concept of gross domestic product (GDP) was developed around 1929, at the beginning of the Great Depression, by Simon Kuznets. GDP is a tool used to measure the economy through the total value of goods and services a country produces in a year – it is a metric that provides information about the strength and size of the economy. While GDP is used to help rebuild, develop,

“We like to think that the unpaid work women do is just about individual women caring for their individual family members to their own individual benefit. It isn’t. Women’s unpaid work is work that society depends on, and it is work from which society as a whole benefits.”

– Caroline Criado Perez

understand and analyze economies, it devalues unpaid work in the house.

Unpaid work usually consists of cleaning, cooking, taking care of children and elderly family members, running errands, looking after those who are ill, etc. Throughout history up to the present day, unpaid work tends to fall more on one

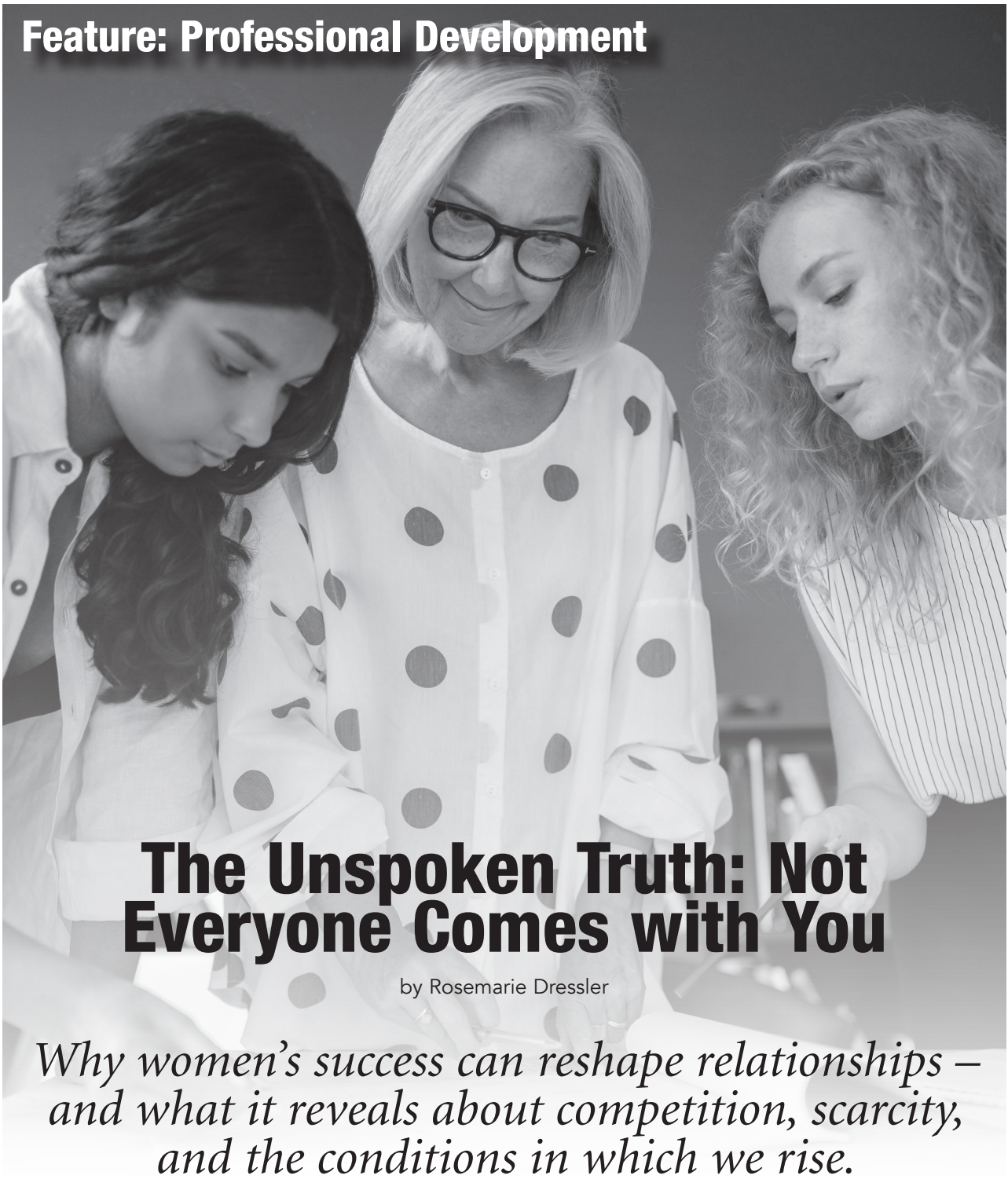
demographic: women.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), today in America, women spend approximately 4.5 hours per day in unpaid work while men spend only approximately 2.78 hours. On the other hand, for paid work, women spend 4.1 hours while men spend 5.5 hours. In total, women spend more hours working in a day (8.6 hours) compared to men (8.29 hours). The big difference, however, is that men are more likely to be compensated for their work and women are not. This wage disparity is highlighted in a Pew Research Center study using data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Based on their data, in 2019, women with full-time careers earned 82% of their male equivalents. There are a number of factors that lead to a gender wage gap, one of the most influential being motherhood.

Putting a monetary value on these statistics can further highlight how unpaid work influences the economy. The global organization Oxfam created a method to calculate the monetary value by multiplying the number of women (above the age of 15) with the number of hours spent on unpaid labor on average per year. With the total number of hours, they multiplied it by the national minimum wage of the country. Using Oxfam’s method of calculating the value of women’s unpaid labor on a global level, Gus Wezerek and Kristen R. Ghodsee concluded that, in America, if women were compensated for their unpaid work with minimum wage, they would have made \$1.5 trillion dollars in 2019. For reference, that is almost 130 times more than Amazon’s net income in 2019 (\$11.588 billion). Yet their unpaid work remain unrecognized when it comes to calculating GDP.

In addition to unpaid labor’s monetary value and its drastic influence on our economy if it was recognized and appreciated, the social pressure for women to take unpaid labor also has the power to pull down women’s participation rate in the labor market.

*“If women’s unpaid labour wasn’t framed as moral duty; how many of us would ignore the dust on the floor, and order takeout without feeling guilty?” -Farida D.*



## The Unspoken Truth: Not Everyone Comes with You

by Rosemarie Dressler

*Why women's success can reshape relationships – and what it reveals about competition, scarcity, and the conditions in which we rise.*

For years, I've watched a quiet, uncomfortable dynamic play out among women – one that rarely makes it into public conversation, but is unmistakable when you see it.

A woman succeeds – earns the promotion, builds something of her own, steps into visibility – and instead of drawing others forward, her success can seem to create distance. The reaction is not always admiration or inspiration. Sometimes, it is cooler. Quieter. More complicated.

There are moments when accomplishments are

minimized. When credit is questioned. When support is withheld in subtle ways that are difficult to name but easy to feel. And beneath it all is a tension that raises an uneasy question:

Why does another woman's success sometimes feel like a loss?

Years ago, after years of hard work, I finally stepped into a position that was, by most measures, enviable. It came with visibility. It came with recognition. And it came with a level of public acknowledgment that marked it as a clear professional milestone.

“She was naming a reality: that progress for women, especially visible progress, reshapes relationships. It alters how others see you, and sometimes how they position themselves in relation to you.”



I understood what it had taken to get there – higher education, long hours, persistence, and the steady accumulation of experience that, over time, made the opportunity possible.

What I did not fully anticipate was the shift in how some other women responded – women in the workplace, in my community, and even within my own family.

Looking back, I am certain not everyone felt that way. Many had no reason to see me as a threat, but rather as a colleague, a friend, a family member. But theirs were not the voices I heard at the time.

What I heard – what stayed with me – were the constant, quiet jabs from those whose reactions were noticeably different. Occasionally overt – “She’s too much.” But more often subtle. Persistent enough to register. Enough to shift the atmosphere.

It was disorienting.

My supervisor, a pioneer in her own right, had spent decades challenging the status quo and accomplishing what had once seemed unthinkable for women of her generation. She understood the terrain in a way I was only beginning to.

One day, she called me into her office.

“It is really lonely at the top,” she said. “Making peace with that will help you move forward.”

At the time, I heard it as a warning.

Now, I understand it differently.

She was not speaking about isolation for its own sake – although that was certainly part of it. She was naming a reality: that progress for women, especially visible progress, reshapes relationships. It alters how others see you, and sometimes how they position themselves in relation to you.

The hard truth is this: not everyone comes with you.

Not everyone can – they have not positioned themselves in a way that allows them to.

Not everyone will. And some will respond in ways that have less to do with you than with what your movement represents to them.

That is the part no one prepares you for.

Not the work. Not the responsibility. But the subtle

recalibration of the room – the way success redraws lines you didn’t know were there.

The shift can be unsettling. It can tempt even a steady mind to step back toward what once felt familiar.

But progress requires something more.

It requires the resilience – and the discipline – to keep moving forward anyway.

What I have come to understand is this: these reactions are not simply personal – they are shaped by the conditions in which women have long been asked to succeed. When opportunity feels limited, when advancement is perceived as scarce, and when identity becomes tied to relative standing, the success of one woman can feel, to another, like a narrowing of her own path.

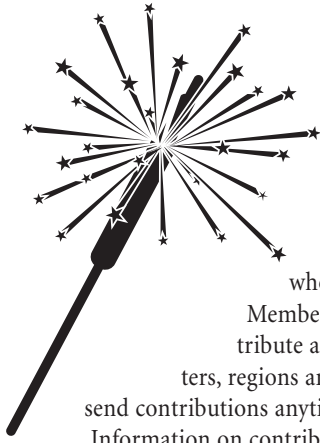
And this dynamic does not disappear at higher levels. In fact, it can intensify. I have seen women with similar titles – women who have achieved positions of real authority – work against other women of equal standing. Not out of pettiness, but out of the same underlying calculation: that status must be protected, that ground once gained can still be lost.

That reality is discouraging – and it needs to be acknowledged.

Because until it is named, it cannot be addressed.

Women working together is one of the most powerful resources we have – and one of the most underutilized. Imagine a workforce where we recognize one another’s talents, celebrate them without reservation, and create an environment where each woman is lifted toward her full potential, not measured against it. That is not idealism. It is what becomes possible when success is no longer treated as a limited resource, but as something that expands when it is shared. 🇺🇸

*Rosemarie Dressler is past president of the Staten Island Chapter; a seasoned communications professional, writer, and community advocate with decades of experience shaping public dialogue across the New York–New Jersey region. Her work reflects a deep commitment to civic engagement, leadership, and elevating the stories that connect communities.*



## NIKE All Stars

The 2024-2026 *NIKE* All Star Campaign is in full swing and thank you to our loyal supporters who have already sent their listings in.

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**Mail form and check(s) to:** Sue Mager, *NIKE* Business Manager,  
3406 McKinley Parkway, Apt C-11, Blasdell, NY 14219  
E-mail: [NIKEmgr@NYSWomeninc.org](mailto:NIKEmgr@NYSWomeninc.org)

**Publication** July 30th/Sept. issue      Oct. 15th/Dec. issue  
**Deadlines:** Jan. 15th/March issue      March 15th/June issue

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“Emotional labor, as I define it, is emotion management and life management combined. It is the unpaid, invisible work we do to keep those around us comfortable and happy.”

- Gemma Hartley

# Women in the Global Informal Economy *Continued from page 9*

**Limited access to credit and resources.** Financial institutions frequently overlook informal workers, especially women, who may lack collateral or a formal credit history. This restricts their ability to invest in their businesses or respond to emergencies. A case in point is a female farmer who struggles to purchase seeds and equipment due to her ineligibility for loans.

**Barriers to collective action.** While unions and cooperatives can offer support, women often face hurdles in joining or forming such groups due to cultural norms or time constraints. Yet, when they do organize, as seen with women's savings groups in some communities, they can significantly improve their bargaining power and working conditions.

**Policy neglect.** Policymakers frequently overlook the specific needs of women in the informal sector. Tailored interventions, such as providing childcare facilities or recognizing home-based work in legislation, can make a substantial difference, as demonstrated in regions where such policies have been implemented.

The experiences of women in the informal economy are marked by resilience and ingenuity in the face of systemic challenges. Addressing the gender divide requires a multifaceted approach that includes recognizing the value of women's work, ensuring equitable access to resources, and implementing supportive policies.

*"Informal Sector: The Unseen Workforce: Life in the Informal Sector" published by Faster Capital was updated April 1, 2025 online at <https://fastercapital.com/content/Informal-Sector--The-Unseen-Workforce--Life-in-the-Informal-Sector.html#Women-in-the-Informal-Economy>*



often over-represented. Although working conditions and earnings vary, workers in informal employment have this in common: they aren't recognized or adequately protected under labour laws, nor can they access employment benefits or protections.

**Domestic workers.** Domestic workers are employed to provide services for households. There are over 76 million domestic workers in the world, most of them women. They provide a range of services: cleaning, cooking and caring for children, older people and disabled people; they also provide gardening, driving and security services.

**Home-based workers.** Home-based workers produce goods or services in or near their homes for local, national and global markets. There are over 260 million home-based workers in the world, most of them in Asia. They are present in many industries: stitching garments, weaving textiles, assembling micro-electronics, providing IT services and more.

**Street vendors.** Street vendors sell goods and offer services in public spaces, including open-air spaces, transport junctions and construction sites. Market traders work in stalls or built markets on publicly or privately owned land. They offer everything from fresh vegetables, prepared foods, building materials and crafts, to auto repairs and haircuts.

**Waste pickers.** Waste pickers make a living collecting, sorting, recycling and selling materials that someone else has thrown away. It is estimated that 20 million people worldwide make their living from recycling waste.

**Garment workers.** Workers in the garment and textile industry work in various parts of the manufacturing process, often outside of factories. Homeworkers and home-based workers form a significant portion of the garment worker sector. 🇺🇸

*Published online by WIEGO. <https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/> Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing is a global network that supports the movement of workers in informal employment.*

## Occupational Groups in the Informal Economy

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION of urban informal employment around the globe falls into these four occupations: domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and market traders, and waste pickers.

These are also occupational groups where women are

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## Grant Recipients

*Continued from page 16*

college's competitive health programs. I have chosen the dental hygiene program, a 2-year program, and will apply this fall, as well as the final prerequisite classes. I

am deeply honored to receive support from New York State Women Inc., which allows me to continue this vital investment in my family's future. 🇺🇸



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