



The New York Women's Foundation
Activist Philanthropist

Photo Credit: Girl Be Heard

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Flor De Toloache performing at NYWF's 2016 Celebrating Women Breakfast

Welcome By Ana L. Oliveira

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the August 2016 issue of *Activist Philanthropist*. Since its launch last year, this e-zine has served as a platform for an inclusive variety of voices, emblematic of our cross-cultural alliance here at The Foundation. We have learned what activist philanthropy means to some of our own supporters and gained insight on some of the most pressing issues facing women and girls.

We are thrilled, once again, to highlight writers, thinkers, and leaders who are at the forefront of philanthropy, community, and social justice efforts for women nationwide. Jean Shafiroff, Monique Morris, and Nicole Mason have each shared with us insights from their books on topics including women's philanthropy and equitable education as the key to success for women and girls. Additionally, Humera Afridi writes about women's leadership in the fight against islamophobia in communities across New York City. Nicole Mason highlights the critical need for increased investment in women of color leadership across the non-profit sector.

Like many of you, women's leadership is at the forefront of our minds as we have just seen the first woman nominated for President by a major political party in the U.S. This is a big step for our country which represents the tireless efforts of the many women who came before Hillary Clinton and paved the way for her historic nomination. Here at The New York Women's Foundation, we know a thing or two about bold, visionary women leaders paving the way for more big wins for women. And looking ahead to our 30th anniversary in 2017, the legacy of our founders and earliest leaders is front and center. We are proud to stand on the shoulders of such bold leaders and continue carry on their efforts in the future to transform the lives of women, families and communities across our city. We follow and stand with women like Barbara Brizzi Wynne, Martha Baker, Katherine H. Kim, Nathaly Rubio-Torio, Patricia Simon, and Andrea Ormeno, the community leaders in Queens, who we are honoring at our Neighborhood Dinner on September 22. And Laurie Tisch, Dina Powell, and Saru Jayaraman whose transformational leadership we are honoring at our Fall Gala on October 13. We hope you can join us.

Thank you for your continued support of The New York Women's Foundation and we hope you enjoy this issue of the *Activist Philanthropist*.

Warm regards



Ana Oliveira
President & CEO

In Depth:

In Sharp Contrast: While Women of Color Leadership was Front & Center at United State of Women Conference, in the Nonprofit Sector Not So Much **BY C. NICOLE MASON**

On June 14, 2016 more than 5,000 women from across the country joined President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and other national leaders for the United State of Women Conference in Washington, DC. The historic conference focused on equal pay, women's health care, education; violence against women, entrepreneurship and leadership, and civic engagement.

Of the more than 100 individuals who addressed the large gathering, women of color leaders made up nearly half of the speakers, providing an intersectional analysis and solutions rooted in the lived experienced of women and girls of color. In her remarks, Joanne Smith, Executive Director of Girls

for Gender Equity and Co-Chair of the Young Women's Initiative for New York City spoke passionately about the need to work across sectors and identity to build an inclusive and representative movement to end gender-based violence. Ana Oliveira, President and CEO of The New York Women's Foundation announced the launch of seven new Young Women's Initiatives nationwide following the success of New York City's Young Women's Initiative, the first of its kind nation-wide. These initiatives will be led by local women's foundations, government officials, community leaders, and young women and girls of color themselves.



President and CEO, Ana Oliveira, was joined by leading women's foundations at The White House's United State of Women Summit (USOW)

The event was closed by a heart-felt and candid conversation between Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama on self-worth and combatting the negative representation of women of color in the media and society.

While the United State of Women Conference is a prime example of intentionally centering the voices of the most affected in the work to build a more equitable and just society, the nonprofit sector has had a difficult time hiring, supporting and sustaining the leadership of women of color.



First Lady Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey in conversation at The White House's United State of Women Summit (USOW)

According to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, only seven percent of nonprofit chief executives and 18 percent of nonprofit employees are people of color. And although women continue to dominate the nonprofit space—in 2005, they made up 75 percent of the sector's total workforce, in 2009 just 16.3 percent of nonprofits with budgets above \$50 million had a female CEO. There are no women of color on half of all nonprofit boards.

Today's nonprofit employees are approximately 82 percent white, 10 percent African-American, five percent Hispanic/Latino, three percent other, and one percent Asian or Pacific Islander.

Connectedly, a survey conducted by CR2PI at the New York Women's Foundation found that nearly all of women of color surveyed began their work in the social sector as a result being directly impacted by an issue or an imminent threat to their personal or community well-being.

It also found that leaders were more likely to take a non-traditional path to nonprofit leadership, often spending years in their communities organizing around an issue before they actually enter the sector. This puts them at a disadvantage in terms of moving up the ranks because they may have lost out on years of relationship building, mentorship from senior leaders and learning the nuts and bolts of running an organization.

The lack of representation of women of color in key leadership roles in the social sector directly translates into the types of programs we see in communities and the kinds of policies and advocacy efforts we see being enacted at the state and national levels.

To increase the number of women of color in the social sector, several institutions and organizations have stepped up to support leaders. They include Philanthropic institutions such as the Novo Founda-

tion, the Ms. Foundation for Women and American Express Philanthropies, which invest heavily in the leadership of emerging leaders of color through grants and yearly gatherings.

Another effort led by CR2PI in partnership with the New York Women's Foundation is the Lead the Way Fellowship program for emerging women of color Executive Directors and Mid-level managers. Each year, the program selects two national cohorts of 15-20 Fellows each to participate in a five-day intensive leadership retreat and continued learning throughout the year.

Since its inception in 2004, more than 150 exceptional women of color leaders have participated in the program including a Presidential Appointee, McArthur Genius, a Black Lives Matter Co-Founder and many others that have gone on to have a significant impact in communities across the country.

“As a Lead the Way fellow my aspirations became actionable. I achieved my goal of transitioning into the role of a legal nonprofit executive director within months of completing the leadership retreat. I continue to grow and succeed in my role as executive director of the California Bar Foundation, thanks in part to the tools, networks, and confidence gleaned from the Fellowship program.”

— Sonia Gonzales Harb, Executive Director of the California Bar Foundation

Building and supporting the leadership of women of color and other diverse communities is an intentional and collective effort. The United State of Women Conference demonstrates that it is not only possible to lift up the voices and experiences of women and girls of color in critical conversations, but to open up the space for them to lead and generate solutions at the intersections of their lives.

Meet the Author:

Active Philanthropy: A Pathway to Positive Change, Greater Connectedness and Personal Fulfillment

*NYWF spoke to board member Jean Shafiroff, founder and host of the annual NYWF luncheon at Le Cirque, about her new book *Successful Philanthropy: How to Make a Life by What You Give*.*

BY HUMERA AFRIDI

Philanthropist and style icon Jean Shafiroff's days are driven by the inspirational guidance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s words: "Life's persistent and most urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" Passionate about living a life of service, Jean is active on the boards of several organizations, including The New York Women's Foundation, New York City Mission Society, The Couture Council of The Museum at FIT, French Heritage Society and the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. Years of committed fundraising, generously volunteering her time and skills, and donating resources to causes close to her heart have garnered Jean extensive experience of the philanthropic world. She shares the wealth of her knowledge in an insightful guide to giving.

Successful Philanthropy: How to Make a Life by What You Give, published by Hatherleigh Press (2016), lays out a democratic and inclusive definition of philanthropy. It encourages each of us to see ourselves as agents of change for a better world. The book demystifies philanthropy and illuminates the little steps that we can take to a path of great fulfillment through service. Jean's wisdom and enthusiasm inspire the reader to examine her own life and consider ways of living—and giving—conscientiously.

Prefaced with a foreword from musician, businessman and philanthropist Scott Elkins and an introduction by equestrian and philanthropist Georgina

Bloomberg, *Successful Philanthropy: How to Make a Life by What You Give* is rooted in the authentic, lived experience of Jean's own giving. Jean shares numerous insights of what she has learned—how to choose a charity; how to volunteer and, in turn, how to treat volunteers; how to fundraise for major gifts and how to handle anonymous giving, amongst other critical as-

pects of philanthropy. Without being didactic, she leads readers to a clear understanding of what the spirit of giving makes possible. Simply put, philanthropy has an impact on the giver and the receiver.

Etymologically rooted in the Greek word *philanthropos*, 'philanthropy' literally means 'love of humanity.' Jean draws our attention to the fact that, in essence, philanthropy means directing "the vital, life-changing force of love" towards our fellow human beings. "When we make a financial gift, our monetary donation is transformed from currency into hope, opportunity, and change for those who need it the most," she writes.

But, the spirit of philanthropy is not limited to the giving of financial resources. Giving of one's knowledge, skills, talent, experience and time, are equally valuable. "The ability to give is a remarkable gift in and of itself... No matter who we are, where we come from, or what kind of financial resources we have, we can all offer something meaningful. Giving is a privilege bestowed on all of us," Jean affirms.

And yet, giving does not come easily to a lot of



people, regardless of financial standing. Jean emphasizes the importance of instilling the value of philanthropy at a young age. She herself was inculcated early by her parents and the nuns at her Catholic school in the importance of helping those less fortunate than herself. “I think if a focus on giving and getting involved were incorporated into school curricula, we’d see a lot more giving moving forward,” she says. “I just would like to see people unafraid of the word ‘philanthropy.’ Too many people undervalue the value of what they can offer. The value of giving time and knowledge is so important and that value has to be raised to a higher level.”

In her early career, Jean Shafiroff worked as a New York State registered physical therapist at St. Luke’s Hospital. Her experience at the inner city facility left an indelible impression. She vividly remembers the elderly, and the many patients living at or below poverty, in the surrounding communities of Morningside Heights and East Harlem. “Working with them every day, we developed tremendous compassion for human suffering,” says Jean whose philanthropic work is informed by this hands-on experience. Later, after earning her M.B.A. in Finance at the Graduate School of Business in Columbia University, and working for a number of years on Wall Street, Jean combined her business acumen with a compassionate desire to alleviate suffering and help those in need, becoming a more skillful and effective philanthropist. “There are so many needs and not enough resources,” she says, describing her charity work not as a full-time job but as her life. “I live in New York City where 30 percent of children and 22 percent of women live at or below the poverty level. I find it impossible to live here and not take action.” Having traveled overseas, visited orphanages, and witnessed enormous world poverty, Jean is adamant to do all she can to counter the vast human suffering that exists in our world.

Of her own initiation into fundraising, Jean says it was the encouragement of mentors and others

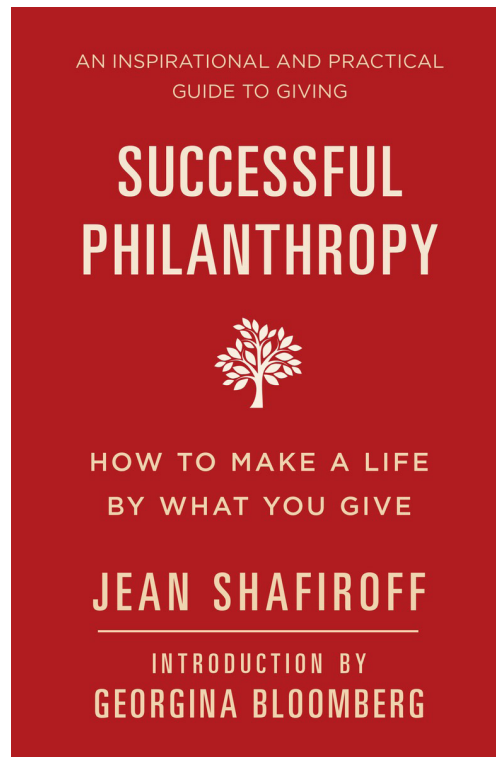
that gave her the confidence to forge past the often discouraging moments when people declined to contribute. “It’s hard when you believe very much in a cause and someone says no. But if you don’t ask, it doesn’t happen! It’s a delicate balance asking for the right amount at the right time,” she admits. “When you see the results of the fundraising—that it’s helping change lives—then it keeps you hopeful and persevering.”

Jean says that there is an undeniable element of pleasure built into the social aspect of philanthropy. Socializing for a good cause is satisfying. “To get involved with philanthropy purely for the social reasons is backwards, but if people do that and turn around and build a hospital, that’s okay, too, right? Whatever reason brought them, let it be if they get something substantial done!” she says, breaking into gentle laughter.

Jean runs eight charitable galas a year in New York City and in the Hamptons. With her signature warmth and flair for beauty, she has co-chaired The New York Women’s Foundation Fall Gala for several years. In addition, she hosts a popular annual leadership luncheon at Le Cirque for NYWF and chairs the development committee of the New York Women’s Foundation Board of Directors. Jean attributes her successful fundraising strategy to recognizing those who get the job done by offering them leadership roles and autonomy to do the work.

In 2013, Americans made gifts totaling an estimated \$335 billion. A current trend of committing 50 percent or more of their wealth to philanthropy is gaining traction amongst the exceptionally wealthy, notes Jean. Philanthropy, she writes, is woven into the very fabric of the American way of life, going back as far as the formation in the 1600’s of commonwealths—ideal societies where everyone contributed to the common resources. The raising of large sums of money, given voluntarily, is, “a jewel of an American tradition,” according to John F. Kennedy.

Jean writes: “We should all be asking ourselves these questions: When we leave this world, what did we



do? Did we leave anything of value to humanity? Were we part of a movement to affect change? Did we follow our passions letting them lead us to change?”

Start by what moves you. Find your passion and link it to your giving, advises Jean Shafiroff. “Practice intelligent giving—research the charities you’re interested in and see how they spend their money. Always adhere to the principles of kindness, dignity and respect.”

With donors and doers joining together, we can create the change we wish to see in our communities and the larger world. Even as *Successful Philanthropy* shows us how to begin this most rewarding of journeys, Jean Shafiroff reminds us not to lose sight of the small daily kindnesses.

**** *Successful Philanthropy: How to Make a Life by What You Give* by Jean Shafiroff is available on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, and at bookstores across the United States.**

Meet the Author:

How and Why Girls are Getting Pushed Out of School, and what should be done about it: An Interview with Monique W. Morris

BY C. NICOLE MASON

“The full inclusion of Black Girls in the conversation about school discipline, pushout, and criminalization is important because it affects them—and their well-being is worthy of investment.”

— Monique Morris, author of PUSHOUT and co-founder of the National Black Women’s Justice Institute

In her new groundbreaking book, PUSHOUT, Monique Morris explores the impact of the school-to-prison pipeline on the education and futures of Black girls in neighborhoods and cities across the country. She says that the over-reliance on punitive measures in schools coupled with the lack of gender specific models that address the unique needs of Black and Latina girls in the juvenile and criminal legal systems make it difficult to provide support and services to girls ensnared in the system.

With PUSH-OUT, Morris hopes to spark a long overdue conversation, help communities generate solutions and strategies rooted in the lived experiences and realities of Black girls, and tell the stories of the girls often excluded from national discussions on the criminalization of youth and discipline in schools.

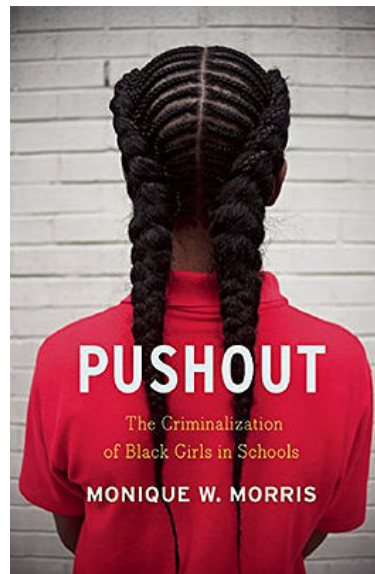
Nicole: You have been doing this work around girls in the criminal legal system for quite some time. Most

recently, you wrote a report for the African-American Policy Forum entitled, *Race, Gender and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Expanding Our Discussion to Include Black Girls*. Why did you decide to write PUSHOUT?

Monique: For a long time, there were only a handful of us doing work around the country on girls of color in the juvenile justice and criminal legal system and when we raised the question—“what about the girls,” there were few answers or models to address the unique pathways to criminalization and performance in school. It’s nice to be in a centered discussion on the impact of race

and gender on school-to-confinement pathways and to be a part of an emerging network willing to have this conversation.

I am hoping PUSHOUT will be used as a tool for personal education and to help guide our thinking on how to construct local and national policy interventions,



“Black girls are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, representing 33 percent of detained female youth, but only 14 percent of the general population.”

strategies and research around justice and education reform.

Nicole: What I like most about PUSHOUT are the voices of the young women that are weaved throughout your analysis, can you talk about why you thought it was important to include those stories?

Monique: In the mid-90s, I worked with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and visited several juvenile detention facilities. There, I spoke with young people about their pathways to confinement and how we

“Being abused and/or neglected as a child increases the risk of arrest among children by 59 percent and among adults by 28 percent.”

might work to improve the structures and systems so that they might have the support and services they needed not return to correctional facilities. And when I visited, I made sure to visit the girls’ unit. And what I heard there were stories of extreme victimization, sexual and physical abuse and violence. These stories and experiences were not making it into mainstream or national discussions and strategies about juvenile justice and education reform. Over time, I have come to understand the power of the narrative. It’s important to center the girls’ stories as we seek to understand phenomena that affect them.

Nicole: In the book, you talk a great deal about the history of the representation of Black Girls in the U.S. and how negative stereotypes and representations contribute to the criminalization of Black girls in schools and the public response when there is harm done to girls. Can you say more about this?

Monique: Black girls’ nonconformity to gender expectations that align with behaviors normed to White middle

“A study found teachers often perceived Black girls as being “loud, defiant and precocious,” and Black girls were more likely than their White or Latina peers to be reprimanded for being “unladylike.”

class ideals may prompt educators to respond more negatively to their behavior. When girls speak out, their forms of expression are often misunderstood or misinterpreted by those in positions of authority like teachers, counselors or law enforcement. For example, what might be questioning to better understand an issue or condition may be perceived as defiance. Their clothing, the way they walk, or the volume of their voices or laughter often inform how adults respond to them. Without a true understanding of culture and the lives of girls, these things are often interpreted as affronts to authority, aggressive, or disruptive.

Nicole: What do you see as the root cause of the problem of the school-to-prison pipeline for girls of color?

Monique: In schools, we have policies that promote punishment to correct behavior and that provides little to no leeway for young people to explore the root causes of their problematic behavior or to learn from their mistakes and maintain their relationships with school. We have to ask ourselves why Black girls are more likely to be victims of corporal punishment in schools or suspended and expelled at disproportionately higher rates than other girls?

Often, these girls are responding to trauma and the marginalization they experience within multiple systems. We can’t push girls out of school and think that it is solving the problem; it’s not. Pushing them out of school doesn’t create a sense of safety, respond to the root causes of their behaviors, or allow us to fully engage them as learners so that they can rebound from their mistake. I believe there is a greater role for schools and [communities] to play in facilitating and co-constructing safety with the student population that they are there to serve.

Nicole: How can PUSHOUT be used by the Young Women’s Initiative here at The New York Women’s Foundation, schools and the larger philanthropic community to support girls in school or who are involved in the juvenile justice system?

Monique: First, I believe we cannot talk about the well-being of girls without engaging this conversation about education because that’s where girls are spending most of their day, in school. When we talk about ways to facilitate their long-term development and ways to increase their earning potential over time, making sure girls

have a solid educational foundation is critical. We know that education is a critical protective factor against future contact with the juvenile justice and criminal legal system.

I also believe we need to *intentionally* invest in the education of girls. There should be support and funding for innovations at the state and federal levels that disrupt the school-to-confinement pathways and scale up programs that have demonstrated positive outcomes for girls.

Nicole: I have one last question: What can families and communities do to support of girls and push back against harmful or harsh policies in schools?

Monique: At the end of the book, I have a short set of questions and answers for parents and community members about the ways they can support girls or launch conversations in communities about co-constructing safety and resisting punitive policies in schools. Ultimately though, I believe we need to radically shift how we frame and understand “risk” and “violence” in communities and actively work to end the violence and the sexual victimization of girls.

**** *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique W. Morris is available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [Barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com), and at bookstores across the United States.**



400 supporters joined Arab American Association of New York on Martin Luther King Day in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

In Focus:

Tackling Islamophobia: A Conversation with NYWF Grantee Partners

BY HUMERA AFRIDI

Sixteen-year old Nadia,* a high school student and youth member of the advocacy group Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), was recently pulled aside by officers of the New York City Police Department in a Queens subway station. Nadia is working class, of Pakistani origin and wears a hijab—a headscarf worn by some Muslim women. As the officers rummaged through the contents of her bag, they discovered a book with Arabic script and barraged her with questions—what was the book, why she was reading it? They noted her name and address and jotted down a physical description. Terrified, Nadia wondered what this meant—not just for her, but also for her family. Ever since that incident, Nadia hurries in and out of subway stations, gripped by fear if she catches sight of a police officer.

“What we’ve found is that state islamophobia is the form of islamophobia that most impacts our communities,” states Linda Sarsour, Executive Director of Arab American Association of New York, a grantee partner of The New York Women’s Foundation (NYWF) serving a predominantly Arab immigrant community in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. “What people don’t understand is that islamophobia has been impacting American Muslims for a very long time. Policies that target our communities, whether it be unwarranted surveillance; interrogations; no-fly lists; discrimination at borders; NYPD and FBI showing up at people’s doors—these have been ongoing and are at an unprecedented high.”

Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director of DRUM, a South Asian immigrant worker and youth orga-

nization and a grantee partner of NYWF, considers “institutional forms of violence” such as anti-immigration policies; the targeting of South Asian and Arab students by school safety officers; deportations; entrapments, and detentions to be responsible for creating the environment for social violence. “It sends a message—there’s something suspicious about these communities, something wrong,” he says.

Nationally there are 3.3 million Muslims, comprising just under one percent of the US population. Twelve percent of the entire Muslim population nationwide lives in the New York region and of this population, three percent make their home in New York City. Muslim communities are far from homogenous, spanning

many continents and countries, and possessing distinct cultural traditions. Islamophobia also touches the lives of a vast cross-section of individuals and communities, including many Christian Arabs, Sikhs, and non-Muslim South Asians.

In February, at a convening hosted by the Ford Foundation of members from the nonprofit, philanthropic, and government sectors working to find solutions to combat islamophobia, community leaders voiced their concern that Muslim New Yorkers are feeling and experiencing anti-Muslim bigotry at unprecedented levels, more so than in the aftermath of 9/11. The discrimination, they unanimously agreed, is exacerbated by policies that view Muslims through a national security lens.

“Islamophobia is painful to talk about,” admits Afreen Alam, Executive Director of Chhaya, a NYWF grantee partner working on economic development and housing issues in the South Asian

community in Jackson Heights, Queens. “In an immigrant community like Jackson Heights, the folks yelling verbal assaults at visible Muslims are also folks of color. It hurts more when it comes from a person of color. It’s hard to be united as a community of color on this issue.”

Blacks, who make up two thirds of the Muslim population, often find themselves left out of a conversation that assumes, in great part due to media portrayals post- 9/11, that the face of Islam

in America is Arab and South Asian. “The history of Islam in America goes way back,” says Afreen. “Visibly Muslim African-American women have dealt with what that means for a while now. Their experiences could be



400 supporters joined Arab American Association of New York on Martin Luther King Day in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

shared with this new generation facing islamophobia. Unfortunately, there’s not enough cross-dialogue. As Muslim communities we ought to be doing more outreach.”

At a recent Ford Foundation convening, community leaders voiced key needs, among them to build capacity so that they are not merely reactive but resilient in the face of crises, and to cultivate the strength and power of immigrant communities through civic engagement and organizing. While combatting hate speech and violence, immigrant communities simultaneously contend with the very real issues of poverty, educational barriers, and lack of access to health care. “We are like people putting out fires with buckets. But this approach isn’t working anymore because the fire is so huge. We can’t just be reactionary. We need to build the firehouse,” declares Sarsour.

While the individual experiences of com-

munities may be different, the causes are the same, points out Fahd Ahmed who, like Sarsour and Alam, is deeply invested in building cross-cultural alliances. Community-based organizations have joined larger campaigns, partnering on issues of civil rights and liberties—language access, ID NYC, unfair deportations, law enforcement, police accountability, and racial profiling. The Community Safety Act and the Inspector General Bill passed in 2013, which bring accountability to the NYPD, are landmark victories and the direct result of organizations joining to create powerful coalitions.

“While the NYPD spies on Muslims indiscriminately, they’re also stopping and profiling young blacks and Latinos indiscriminately. So this idea of ending racial profiling together has been powerful and transformative,” says Sarsour. “All of a sudden New York City Council saw Muslims, Latinos, LGBTQ, Black, South Asian and interfaith groups all coming together. It was a beautiful demonstration of what it means to build power in New York City.”

Critical to community resilience is building leadership. AWAL—Arab Women Activists and Leaders—is an advocacy group of AAANY members who are mostly mothers. “In Arabic, *awal* means first. The idea is to put women first in our community,” says Linda. “We’re specifically training women, giving them resources and tools on multiple levels. First, a safe space to talk about their concerns amongst others who share them; second, showing them how to organize events, galvanize around issues they care about, and offering media training so they can tell their own stories.”

Muslims in America find themselves inhabiting polar ends of the spectrum of visibility—being hyper scrutinized on the one hand and painfully invisible when it comes to data and services. Until immigrant communities are accurately reflected in the census, they miss out on funding and other resources. In 2010 AAANY started a campaign, *Check it Right. You Ain’t White*. Thanks in part to this effort, the 2020 census will now have a box titled MENA for people of Middle East and North African origin. “This idea of being included and seeing yourself in a government document is a big deal for our community. If you don’t exist on a graph, then you don’t exist,” declares Sarsour.

Meanwhile, those on the frontlines of being visibly Muslim—girls and women in hijab—find themselves scrutinized by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Farzana Linda, Community Organizing Apprentice at Chhaya, says, “Your entire religion is being condensed into a piece of cloth. When someone from the Muslim community criticizes me for wearing the hijab—because they perceive it as a tool of oppression—I feel incredibly judged and guilty. For young women considering the hijab, there’s a lot of pressure. Within the community you’re seen as oppressed, or else held to a different standard of piety. Outside, there’s the islamophobic rhetoric of the country,” she says.

“Rarely do people speak of Islam as just a religion these days. It’s always in the context of terrorism,” says Sarsour. AAANY’s inbox is polluted daily with hate mail and Sarsour has received death threats. Alam reports that if a woman in hijab visits an apartment for rent, the family’s application is routinely rejected. Last November, a nineteen-year old woman in hijab, waiting at a bus stop in Bay Ridge, was screamed at and then kicked by a man spewing anti-Muslim vitriol. The incident created an uproar in the neighborhood.

On Martin Luther King Day, a cold, gray morning, AAANY and AWAL anticipated a group of 40 to 50 to march with them for justice. The organizers were heartened by a crowd of 400 strong, from all backgrounds and faiths, who gathered in support. AAANY attributes the turnout to the solidarity built through storytelling, going to other communities across the five boroughs to show who Muslims are and how they live.

“It’s been transformative,” says Sarsour, adding, “I have hope because I know what it was like to be a Muslim in America before 9/11. I think we can get back to either that time or even a better time moving forward.”

***Name has been changed to protect identity.**

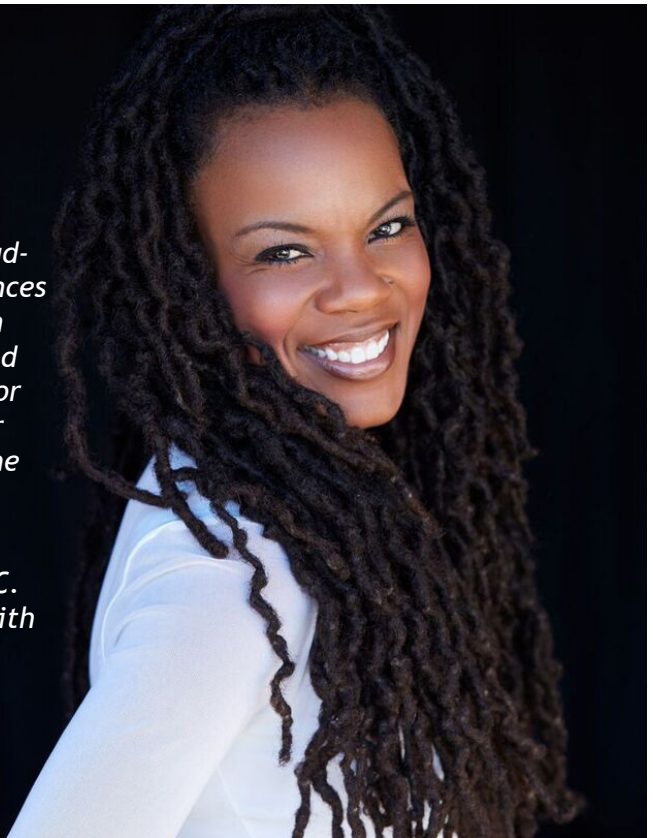
Meet the Author:

Interview with C. Nicole Mason

*“Standing on the stage, I felt exposed and like an intruder. In these professional settings, my personal experiences with hunger, poverty, and episodic homelessness, often go undetected. I had worked hard to learn the rules and disguise my beginning in life...” C. Nicole Mason, author of *Born Bright* and Executive Director of the Center for Research and Policy in the Public Interest (CR2PI) at The New York Women’s Foundation.*

*In her recently released memoir, *Born Bright: A Young Girl’s Journey from Nothing to Something in America*, C. Nicole Mason shares her own journey out of poverty, with reflections that highlight the continued importance of investing in economic security and justice for girls and women of color.*

BY GAEL BLACK



Why did you write this book?

In *Born Bright*, I wanted to tell a different story about growing up in America and to humanize the issue of poverty. I also wanted to include the voices and experiences of the people I cared most deeply about, my family and communities. Black women and girls are at the center of the story.

I also want readers and experts who work on issues related to economic security on a daily basis to really understand the sacrifices, challenges and hard choices low-income families make in order to survive. I tell the story from the inside out, rather from the outside in. This is really important.

In your book, you talk about how critical your education was in terms of not only your professional development and success, but personally. Can you expand on this?

As a child and then as a young person, school was one of the few places that I felt safe, heard and seen. It was also a place where I excelled. Along the way, I found a few teachers and counselors who saw my light and potential.

Unfortunately, many young women and girls experience school very differently than I did as a young

person—from overpolicing and the criminalization of girls in schools to the deepening school equity divide whereby schools in low-income communities are without adequate resources. Even when I acted out, which I talk about in the book, I did not fear that I would be manhandled by a security guard or taken to jail. Today, this is not the case.

How does your own life story inform your policy and academic work?

I came to my work on economic security, social justice and social change because of my life and the experiences of the women and girls in my family and in my communities. Most people and women of color do, because it’s about our survival.

I began my social change work on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC where I founded the first feminist organization on campus. I also volunteered at a local Battered women’s shelter. Those early experiences were transformative and decisive in terms of my thinking about my life’s work.

When I am writing or teaching, I try not only to hold my experiences, but the collective experiences and stories of the women and girls in all of the communities of which I belong. I bring them forth in attempt to

challenge the stereotypes and dominant perceptions of who we are in society--and of course to change policy.

Social media has created more opportunities for individuals to get their voices out there on the issues that matter to them and to share their personal experiences. What advice do you have for young women finding and sharing their voices online?

Social media is a truly revolutionary medium in terms of its ability to insert marginalized voices into conversations that not even 10 years ago we would have been excluded from.

My advice to young women finding and sharing their voice online is to *just do it* without fearing whether or not they'll be considered an expert on the subject. We need all of our voices in the conversation, particularly during this time, when it feels like our country and our communities are undergoing a complete transformation. In many ways, we are under assault.

What progress that has been made in the last decade do you think would have made the biggest difference for you as a young woman?

I believe the intentional investment in young women and girls of color, and communities of color at the national level and by philanthropic institutions is HUGE—we've never seen anything like it, I don't believe.

What's also amazing is that women and people of color are leading and shaping many of the conversations around investing and what should be done. These leaders are not only articulating the problem using intersectional frameworks and analyses, but generating solutions rooted in the lived experiences of women and families. It's been a long time coming.

What are the greatest issues facing girls and young women today, particular low-income girls and young women of color?

For low-income girls and young women, the biggest issues that stand out for me are: poverty and economic vulnerability. For many girls and young women, poverty itself and the conditions created as a result of it, is the number one barrier to escaping poverty—inadequate schools, violence, lack of access to the full range of reproductive health options, geographic isolation, and other related challenges.

I also believe the criminalization of young girls in schools and in their communities is also a huge problem. It feels as though young girls of color are being punished for being who they are with consequence or penalty.

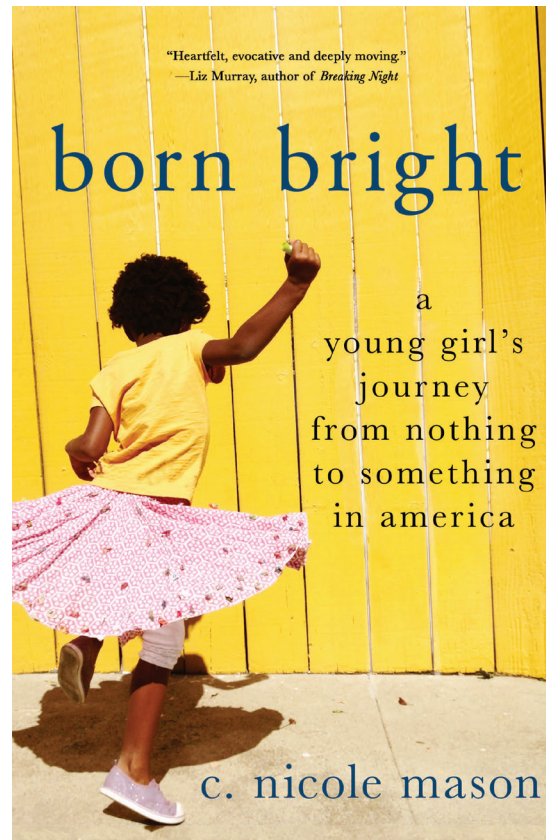
Lastly, just not being allowed to be free, to have a girl hood or discover one's self without it being infringed upon or snatched away by violence or abuse or by the systems meant to help or protect, but instead are failing them. This is a huge issue. What would our society,

the world look like if young girls of color felt free?

What's next for you after the release of the book?

I plan to continue my research and work through the Center. I am doing what I consider to be my life's work. I hope to continue to tell our stories in a way that shifts narratives, opens doors and brings resources to our communities.

**** *Born Bright* by C. Nicole Mason is available on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, and at bookstores across the United States.**



Philanthropy in Action:

A Conversation with Juliana Pereira

Juliana Pereira, Director of Marketing at Smartling, and a team leader of The New York Foundation's Grants Advisory Committee, is an ardent activist philanthropist. She speaks about her volunteer work in the nonprofit sector and of causes close to her heart.

BY HUMERA AFRIDI

Juliana Pereira, Director of Marketing at Smartling, and a team leader of The New York Foundation's Grants Advisory Committee, is an ardent activist philanthropist. She speaks about her volunteer work in the nonprofit sector and of causes close to her heart.

Minutes into conversation with Juliana Pereira, Director of Marketing at Smartling Inc., it is clear that she has extraordinary passion and diverse interests. Juliana heads the marketing team for Smartling, a business-to-business, software-as-a-service tech platform. She describes the start-up's technical product as a "translation management system on steroids" designed to help companies translate their websites, apps and digital content into several languages with speed and efficiency.

Juliana is, too, a dedicated team leader on New York Women's Foundation's Grants Advisory Committee (GAC), a volunteer role that she has served with aplomb for six years. "I like that my work with GAC is meaningful and has an impact. I can invest my intellectual equity into it," she says of the participatory grant-making process in which volunteer team members—acting as The Foundation's "eyes and ears"—review proposals from prospective grantee partners, conduct



site visits, and make recommendations for funding.

"I get to meet amazing organizations, learn about their programs, understand their organizational management, and discover many issue areas," explains Juliana. "We report our findings to the NYWF's programs team and give recommendations to the board—it's win-win! Just understanding all the areas of activism of the Foundation—issues that I don't have a day-to-day connection with—has been a huge learning for me, personally, but also professionally."

Through her participation in GAC, Juliana has deepened her knowledge of certain

areas of The Foundation's work, including the needs of the LGBTQ community, survivors of sex-trafficking, and formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning into life outside prison. "The question is: how do we promote healthy lives, educational opportunities, and the resources people need to feel integrated into society? Not all of the organizations are ready for funding. They may need to rethink or tweak their program. I'm passionate about working with NYWF to help provide the support to make these programs successful," she says.

An art history major at Brown University, whose career began at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Juliana fretted about venturing out of the nonprofit sec-

tor years ago when she left the Metropolitan Museum. Since then and prior to joining Smartling, she has earned an M.A. degree in Media Studies from the New School and has worked in diverse industries beyond nonprofit arts. “I thought how am I going to find a company that’s not only looking at the bottom line but also has a mission that means something to me? Where’s the connection to the larger community or some greater aspiration? I love my career, I love what I do at Smartling,” states Juliana, “but the most meaningful work I do is with GAC at The Foundation. I don’t have to work at a nonprofit to feel fulfilled because I’m getting that by doing the Grants Advisory Committee. I’m building community around my volunteer work, and I’m part of something bigger. I find that very enriching.”

An avid musician and violinist, Juliana also runs a concert series for alumni of the School for Strings, a Suzuki-based music school, of which she is a graduate, and on whose board she now sits. The School for Strings recently celebrated its 45th anniversary and Juliana helped to organize the alumni orchestra which performed at the 45th Anniversary Celebration Concert at Carnegie Hall on June 11.

“Most nights of the week I’m playing music,” declares Juliana. “Various musicians and friends come over to my apartment and we play quartets and quintets, Beethoven and Brahms... everything! Music plays a significant role in my life.”

Music is in Juliana’s blood as is philanthropic giving. Her parents, who immigrated to the United States from Brazil, met in a choir in São Paulo that traveled to New York City to sing at Lincoln Center when it opened in the 1960’s. Her mother was a singer for many years and is currently a piano teacher. Juliana’s parents are actively engaged with charitable causes that focus on children and education. They remain deeply involved with orphanages in Brazil, and in addition, sponsor school and college tuition for several students.

“I have strong memories of when I was little—we always traveled with our violins because of Suzuki—I remember going to favelas (slums in urban areas of Brazil) and local orphanages. My siblings and I would perform a few pieces on the violin for the kids there and we would spend the rest of the day playing together,” reminisces Juliana.

Her parents’ philanthropy has certainly influenced and shaped Juliana’s own giving, especially in the

areas of music education and her generous contributions to The Foundation, as a volunteer and donor. Additionally, Juliana is as fervent about equitable pay for women as she is about women being placed in leadership roles with meaning and intention, not merely as a token. She is an active member of a team in her company that looks strategically at the idea of people and culture—how the company is perceived by others, how it sees itself. “I made a very big point of being on this team because I want to be the voice for women, particularly in the Tech industry where leadership roles are typically held by men,” she states passionately.

At The New York Women’s Foundation, Juliana’s project management excel sheets are held in high regard! She self-declares that one of her best-honed skills at her job is managing complex projects. She brings some of those tools to her GAC work, streamlining the process of managing a team of volunteers. Later in her career, Juliana intends to return fulltime to the nonprofit sector and her knowledge of data gathering will be a valuable asset. “In nonprofits, how you measure, what you measure and how frequently you’re measuring and looking at the data is critical for success,” she says. Juliana also brings learnings from her volunteer work to her job—thinking critically about how companies focus their efforts and funding most efficiently, and how businesses can consider social responsibility in their approach.

Musician, art historian, philanthropist and prescient business woman—Juliana Pereira is each of these and more. The varying facets of her life reflect and illuminate her aspirations for career and community work. “The way I think about music is not that you’re just technically proficient,” she states. “Music is also a celebration of life. And I find that the best musicians are also the people who’ve experienced the broadest range of emotions. They’ve been able to feel a lot of things and they bring that to their music. It’s the same thing with philanthropy. You can offer your intellectual equity and your emotional being to help other people in a meaningful way.”

Radiance Photo Corner

Nancy Carin, Business Outreach Center (BOCNET)



*“I feel destiny comes from what you do, not from what you think.
If you aren’t doing good things that help other people and
make a difference in a positive direction, then your destiny
isn’t going to be positive either.”*

– Nancy Carin

In March, 2015 NYWF released RADIANCE, a striking photo book celebrating 46 grantee partners of The New York Women’s Foundation – some of the most powerful and daring activists, visionaries and community leaders transforming and illuminating New York City. In an inspired partnership with renowned photographer Emmanuel Andre, NYWF embarked on a journey to honor and raise the visibility of leaders who work valiantly to create a better New York City for all. Visit www.nywf.org/radiance for more information.

THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION®

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

39 Broadway, 23 Floor,
New York, NY 10006

tel: 647-564-5981

email: info@nywf.org

Twitter: @NYWomensFdn

Facebook: NewYorkWomensFoundation

Instagram: @nywomensfdn