

THE STATUS REPORT



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March 1st Deadline to Nominate Unsung Heroines is Fast Approaching!

On May 16, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women seeks to celebrate 351 Unsung Heroines – one from every city and town in the Commonwealth – at a moving reception at the State House. We define our Unsung Heroines as women who quietly, behind the scenes and without fanfare perform unheralded acts in their communities and organizations. Women who use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others. They are mentors, volunteers and innovators. These women are the glue that keeps a community together and the spark that gets things started and gets things done. Most importantly, they care about others and it is evident in their everyday actions. ***They are women who don't make the news, but truly make a difference!***

We will only reach our goal with your help and the time to act is NOW! **Nominations are due by March 1.** This is the fourth year that the MCSW has sponsored its Unsung Heroines initiative and we seek the assistance of ALL residents of the Commonwealth in identifying the exceptional women from their community. We have embarked on an aggressive statewide outreach strategy which includes contacting Massachusetts' federal, state and local elected officials, colleges and universities, Chambers of Commerce, last years 240 Community Unsung Heroines, key women leaders and advocates, Women's Commissions, women's organizations, the media and everyone we can think of to generate nominations. We KNOW there are thousands of Unsung Heroines across the Commonwealth – we just need you to let us know who they are!

The memory of last year's ceremony spurs us on to make this year's event even bigger and better. Hundreds of women, every age, color and background, joined us to receive recognition and enjoy their "Just Desserts" reception provided by Boston's top female pastry chefs. They had their pictures taken, they met their state legislators, and they spent a warm, rewarding day with their family, friends or nominators. For many it was their first visit to the State House. Many more marveled at being honored, truly not understanding why they had been singled out. We were in awe of these extraordinary women who set such incredible examples for the rest of us.

Excitement is building and the initiative is already proving to have a ripple effect statewide. Local officials have been in touch about how they can assist the MCSW in reaching out to their communities to encourage their citizens to nominate women for this honor. In addition, subsequent local celebrations of those women nominated are being planned for after the State House Reception on May 16.

There is much work to be done and we cannot do it without you! Please help us find the 2007 Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts on or before March 1st. Any Massachusetts resident may nominate a woman for this honor. The nominee must be a Massachusetts resident. Nomination forms can be easily downloaded or submitted from the Commission website, www.mass.gov/women or may be requested from the MCSW office. Completed Nomination forms should be mailed to: The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, Unsung Heroines of 2007, Charles Hurley Building, 19 Staniford Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02114-2502. For more information call the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women at 617-626-6520.

Our sincere thanks to all of those who are currently assisting us, especially our own Unsung Heroine Suzette Waters at the State House. We also thank Senator Augustus for graciously offering to serve as our legislative sponsor for this awe inspiring event.

Let YOUR work begin...get your nominations in so you can join us in celebrating the 2007 Unsung Heroines at the State House on May 16th!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Executive Director Corner 2
- Commissioner Spotlight 3
- MCSW Welcomes Ruth Bramson 4
- MCSW Greater Boston Public Hearing 4
- MCSW Regional Councils News 5
- MCSW Pay Equity News 5
- Meet MCSW's Spring Interns 6
- Other Noteworthy News 7
- Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings 8

Executive Director Corner

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is seeking a few good women – 351 to be exact. This May we hope to honor an Unsung Heroine from each of the 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth at a reception at the State House. We welcome you to join us in our signature initiative because it is only through the participation of hundreds of people from every corner of the Commonwealth that we will be successful in identifying and recognizing women deserving of this honor. We are looking for women who don't make the news, but definitely make the difference in their workplaces, volunteer positions and communities.

Nominations are open to all and are due by March 1. The Commission hopes that women who are nominated will truly be “unsung” –who have not received recognition for their hard work, dedication, and commitment. Women who quietly, without fanfare, recognition and usually behind the scenes, use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others and make our communities better places to live and work. They are mentors, volunteers and innovators. These women are the glue that keeps a community together and the spark that gets things started and gets things done. Most importantly, they care about others and it is evident in their everyday actions.

The smiling faces, shown below, of the over 200 Unsung Heroines assembled on the grand staircase of the State House last year is a visual that won't soon be forgotten. And this year, with your help, we will grow the initiative. We are sure that you are familiar with many unsung heroines. We urge you to bring these phenomenal women to our attention so that they can receive the recognition they so richly deserve. We know that by showcasing the inspiring work that is being done throughout the Commonwealth, others will be motivated to mirror these efforts and as a result, further positive change will be achieved.

This is the fourth year that the MCSW has sponsored this initiative. We do not want to overlook any woman who deserves to be nominated so we would appreciate any help you can provide in spreading the word about this initiative and the nomination process.

Nomination forms are available at and may be submitted on the MCSW Web site www.mass.gov/women. Questions or requests for additional information should be directed to Paula Daddona, MCSW Program Manager at (617) 626-6520 or Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us.

We look forward to your participation with this exciting and heartwarming initiative.

Linda Bentley



Commissioner Spotlight

Susana Segat, Secretary of the MCSW, is President of SEIU Local 888, an employee organization representing education workers from head start through higher education, as well as municipal, county and state employees. Commissioner Segat is a member of the SEIU International Executive Board, a member of the MA Democratic State Committee and is active in her community and on state boards. She was the first Latina elected as an 8th Congressional District Delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention and the first woman appointed to fill a labor seat on the Massport Board of Directors. Commissioner Segat served on the Commonwealth's Assisted Living 2006 Review Committee and was an elected member of the Cambridge School Committee for three successive terms.



Susana Segat

- **How did you hear about the Commission?**

There was great excitement around the Commonwealth when the Commission's enabling legislation was passed in 1998. Massachusetts was one of the few states without a Women's Commission and the time was ripe to pass this law. In addition, we have a unique structure: commissioners are incredibly diverse because we come from four appointing authorities (In other states, the Governor is usually the only appointing authority: in MA, 19 of us are split between the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Caucus of Women Legislators.) I really wanted to be a part of this group.

- **What were your initial impressions?**

I was appointed by the Senate President as a founding Commissioner. The first 19 Commissioners met for the first time on the Grand Staircase of the Statehouse, where Governor Jane Swift swore us into office. There was so much energy and potential in that gathering – I was proud to be a part of such a historic event. I was then honored to be elected as the first Chair of this Commission, given the task of leading the group through the infancy of our development.

- **You were recently elected Secretary of the Commission; what do you hope to accomplish?**

Now that the Commission has reached young adulthood, we need to revise our bylaws and policies to support our growth, outreach and heightened expectations. The Secretary's duties are instrumental to this task and I have a great fondness for that type of wonky work. Personally, I hope that the Commission will soon have the strength and the will to lead the Commonwealth to pass the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.



Pictured left to right:
MCSW Secretary and
SEIU 888 President
Susana Segat with
Attorney General Martha
Coakley, Executive
Board member Mary
Ann Clevenger, and
Trustee Anita Christon.

*Photo courtesy of:
SEIU 888*

Commission Corner

The MCSW Welcomes New Commissioner Ruth Bramson of Dover

Ruth Bramson was recently appointed to the MCSW by former Governor Romney. She is the Executive Vice President of Human Resources for National Grid US, one of the largest utilities in the US. Prior to joining National Grid, she served as Chief Human Resources Officer and Undersecretary of Administration and Finance for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Chief Diversity Officer during the Romney administration.

In a career spanning 25 years, Ms. Bramson has held senior executive positions with several major corporations including Shaw's Supermarkets/Star Markets where she served as Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer, Reebok International, Scandinavian Design and Bausch & Lomb. She also spent several years consulting to major New England companies in the areas of succession planning, training, culture change, mergers and acquisitions, and communications.



Commissioner Bramson is the founder and chairman of the Board of Suited for Success, a non-profit organization which supports women as they transition from welfare to work, supplementing job training programs by providing the necessary skills and building confidence to give these women an equal footing in the corporate environment. Commissioner Bramson also serves on the Board of Employers against Domestic Violence and the Board of Governors of the Tufts-New England Medical Center. She is a Commissioner of the Massachusetts Service Alliance, which oversees all State funding of volunteer organizations and a member of the Board of the One Family Initiative/One Family Scholars program. She is an Advisory Board member of Junior Achievement and a Trustee of Middlesex Community College. She is a member of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education Advisory Council and the Executive Advisory Committee of Global Massachusetts 2015. She is also a longtime member of the Boston Club.

The MCSW welcomes Commissioner Bramson and the many skills and talents she brings to the organization.

COME ONE AND ALL TO THE MCSW'S GREATER BOSTON PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 28

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality, will hold a Greater Boston Public Hearing on February 28, 2007, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Urban League, 88 Warren St., Roxbury, MA. All are welcome to attend and share their thoughts and input with the Commission.

In light of its commitment to pay equity for Massachusetts women, the Commission's 19 Commissioners, who are appointed from across the state, specifically would like to hear from women about their experiences with wage discrimination and inequities, how they and their families have been negatively impacted by such and what if any action they pursued to address wage discrimination. Commissioners also want to hear how income disparities impact women's ability to access housing, healthcare, education, transportation and other inter-related issues. In addition, women are welcome to share any input or concerns they may have.

According to the MCSW's recent "State of Women: A County By County Report on the Status of Massachusetts Women & Girls," women earn less than men in EVERY county of Massachusetts - an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The Commission, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality, and state legislators, introduced pay equity legislation for this legislative session. This public hearing, along with others being held across the state, will gather women's personal experiences and provide firsthand information to support this legislative agenda.

Come to the hearing and make your voices heard! There is no admission fee and translators are available upon request. Please RSVP your attendance or secure your spot to testify by contacting the Commission at 617-626-6520 or mcsw@state.ma.us

MCSW Connecting with Women Leaders Statewide Via Regional Councils

Through its newly established network of ten statewide Regional Councils, the MCSW is connecting with and learning from women leaders from a broad spectrum of expertise and experiences. The Commission believes this contact will help amplify the work of the Commission by educating the MCSW on region specific issues, concerns and emerging trends.

Four Council meetings have been held to date - in Bristol, Hampden, Hampshire/Franklin and Essex Counties. Meetings have included representatives from the fields of business, education, health care, politics and government and social services sectors.

The Commission utilized county highlights from its recently released "State of Women: A County By County Report on Women and Girls in Massachusetts" to begin each meeting, which led to discussion about accessibility of services, education, employment and leadership opportunities, and how to integrate efforts and increase collaborations to achieve change. Common themes emerge as well as unique regional situations. Some commonalities include the challenge of securing funds to support local social services, barriers facing women running for elected office, and the challenge of providing for families while meeting the obligations at work. Minutes are recorded at each meeting and will be presented in report form at the end of the MCSW's fiscal year.

"At the end of this year, we will have met and begun to build relationships with between 200-400 key women leaders across the state," noted Linda Brantley, MCSW Executive Director. "We will be much better informed about the issues and challenges affecting women in different parts of the state and thereby better equipped to fulfill our role of providing an effective voice for the women of Massachusetts. And, these women will get to know the Commission and identify ways we might better work with them.

The Councils also afford the Commission the opportunity to identify women who can be tapped as future Commissioners, candidates for either appointed or elected office, and those who should be connected with other women around the state who are focused on similar issues.

The MCSW is looking forward to meeting with the Middlesex Regional Council in February and to further broadening the network of women leaders with whom the Commission is engaged. Should you wish to be included in this initiative, or for more information on the Regional Councils, please contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525.

MCSW Advances its Commitment to Women's Pay Equity

Knowing that women learn less than men in EVERY county in Massachusetts - an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man - the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women has made a commitment to helping move women forward to wage equality. Not only does this wage gap negatively impact a woman's ability to be economically self sufficient and provide for her family, but it also hinders her ability to access education, housing, healthcare, childcare, investments, retirement, etc. Consequently, the MCSW has been involved with several efforts to help women achieve equitable compensation for the work they perform and close the wage gap.

In order to make recommendations to bolster legislation and compile information for Massachusetts policymakers and legislators, the MCSW, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality, is holding a series of public hearings across the state to gather testimony from women about how wage discrimination and inequities affect their lives. If you are interested in attending a public hearing, please visit <http://www.mass.gov/women/calendar/> for a complete list of upcoming hearings. Both written and verbal testimony is accepted.

In other pay equity news, the MCSW is supporting two pieces of legislation that were recently filed for the 2007-2008 legislative session. An Act to Authorize the Human Resources Division to Undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System, filed by Senator Harriette Chandler (First Worcester), would require the state's human resources division, in conjunction with a state workforce advisory council of experts, to establish a job analysis study of state employees of the executive branch. The study would update the current job classification system and review class titles, job specifications, organizational relationships and job qualifications to insure that employee compensation, pensions, and benefits are free from gender and racial bias.

Continued on next page

Meet MCSW's Spring Interns

Fall/Spring interns **Lucinda Kallis-Hilbert, Aliza Krevolin and Elise Wang** have been joined by the following new MCSW interns:

Kate Loughney is a senior at Stonehill College. Her studies include a double major in political science and Communication and she is active with the Student Government Association. At the MCSW, Kate is serving as the communications intern, as well as coordinating media outreach around the Unsung Heroine Initiative.

Michelle Saltzman is a senior at Boston University. Her studies include a major in psychology and a minor in women's studies; she is interested in pursuing a masters degree after graduation. Michelle has undertaken the substantial task of growing and grooming the Massachusetts Resource and Referral Network. In addition, she will work to develop an outreach plan to increase the visibility and constituent usership of the Network.

Rebecca Stein is a junior at Colby College in Maine, where she double majors in Spanish and sociology. Colby College operates on a tri-semester schedule, including an intensive four-week term in January. Kate's time with the MCSW will be short, but her work further developing the "State of Women" report has already proved significant. Upon her departure from the MCSW, she will travel to Argentina for a term abroad.

International Women's Day Breakfast March 8

Creating Equality in Women's Health will be the theme of the annual *International Women's Day Breakfast* which will be held March 8 from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. at the Linda K. Paresky Conference Center, 300 The Fenway, 3rd Floor, at Simmons College in Boston. All are welcome to attend.

The program will highlight local and global issues relating to women's health disparities. A panel of prominent female health officials has been assembled to share their personal insights, professional expertise and ideas for necessary change. To date confirmed speakers include: Ayesha Chatterjee, Our Bodies Ourselves, Dr. Nancy Norman, Boston Health Commission, Dr. Linda Piwowarczyk, Center for Refugee and Human Rights, Laurie Robinson, Office of Women's Health, U.S. DHHS and Susan Sered, Center for Health and Human Rights. Organizers hope that the program will start a dialogue on how to address existing disparities.

International Women's Day is celebrated annually to honor women's achievements and to recommit to fighting continued injustices. The day showcases the international connections among women as well as offers opportunities to discuss strategies for working together more effectively.

The working coalition for International Women's Day includes the: MA Commission on the Status of Women, Association of Haitian Women; Boston Women's Commission; Irish Immigration Center; Center for Women's Health and Human Rights; MA Women's Political Caucus; Office on Women's Health, U.S. DHHS, Region I; Our Bodies, Ourselves; Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change; United Nations Association of Greater Boston; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Women's Bureau, Region 1, U.S. Department of Labor. There are many supporting organizations as well.

R.S.V.P. by March 1, 2006 to Diane Hammer, Director, Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change at diane.hammer@simmons.edu or 617-521-2480. A donation of \$5 is requested at the door to cover the cost of the continental breakfast.

MCSW Pay Equity News Continued

The second piece of legislation is An Act to Further Define Comparable Work, filed by Senator Patricia Jehlen (Second Middlesex), would define comparable work as "solely based on whether the two positions entail comparable skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions between employees of the opposite sex."

If you would like more information on the MCSW's efforts to support these bills, please contact Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525. Additionally, we encourage you to contact your local representative or senator and ask them to support both of these important pieces of legislation. The MCSW is also fortunate to be working with Alex Cole, a graduate student at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University who is conducting research on historic and emerging legal remedies to wage inequity. His paper will be completed in early May and will augment existing data in this area.

Other Noteworthy News:

Go Red for Women Campaign

Each year, heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases claim the lives of more than half a million women — about a death a minute. That's more lives than the next seven causes of death combined, and nearly twice as many as all forms of cancer, including breast cancer. To raise awareness of this problem, the American Heart Association has turned a special spotlight on women and heart disease with its **Go Red for Women** campaign. For more information, contact Allyson Perron at 508-935-3943 or allyson.perron@heart.org.

National Wear Red Day

Everyone (men too!) can support the fight against heart disease in women by wearing red on **Friday, February 2, 2007 -- National Wear Red Day**.

It's a simple, powerful way to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke. By joining together with thousands of women, companies and organizations, and cities across America, you'll help the American Heart Association support ongoing research and education about women and heart disease.

National Wear Red Day has its own dress code. Wear your favorite red clothes or accessory -- a red blouse, a red dress pin, a red handbag or pair of shoes -- put on red lipstick, or sport a red tie or red socks.

Show your support for women and the fight against heart disease. Go Red in your own fashion and get others to participate! For more information on how to get involved, please call at 1-877-RED DAY 7 (1-877-733-3297).

AAUW Winter Conference

This annual event will be held on **Saturday, February 3, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.** at Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA. This AAUW (American Association of University Women) mission-based Winter Conference takes a two pronged approach to the relationship between AAUW and College/University Campuses.

The cost is \$25.00 per person; Students may pay a reduced cost of \$15.00. For more information, visit <http://www.aauw-ma.org>.

*Congratulations to Beryl Domingo who has been nominated
President-Elect of the AAUW-MA*

7th Annual National Woman's Heart Day® Health Fair

On **February 16, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.** at The Shops at Prudential Center in Boston, Belvidere Arcade. Admission is FREE of charge. This is an event where women can obtain heart-health screenings, advice on reducing personal risks for heart disease, and guidance on adopting heart-healthy lifestyles. In recognition of the importance of focusing on women's heart health, the federal government in 2002 declared the third Friday in February as the annual National Woman's Heart Day®. National Woman's Heart Day® Health Fairs are sponsored by Sister to Sister: Everyone Has a Heart Foundation, Inc. Exhibitor and Sponsorship opportunities are available. To register, go to www.sistertosister.org or call Carol Mather at (508) 734-2189 for more information.

Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings

February 3, 8:30-3:00 p.m. AAUW-MA Winter Conference

To be held at Bridgewater State College; Cost \$25 per person, Students \$15

February 13, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Middlesex Regional Council Meeting

By invitation, to be held in Bedford, MA. For more information, call the MCSW at 617-626-6520

February 16, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. 7th Annual National Woman's Heart Day® Health Fair

To be held at The Shops at Prudential Center in Boston, Belvidere Arcade. Admission is FREE.

To register, go to www.sistertosister.org or call Carol Mather at (508) 734-2189 for more info.

February 28, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Greater Boston Public Hearing

To be held at the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, 88 Warren St., Roxbury, MA. To RSVP, or for more information, call the MCSW at 617-626-6520



March 1, 2007 is the last day to nominate a 2007 Community Unsung Heroine

Nomination forms are available online at www.mass.gov/women

Or call the MCSW @ (617) 626-6520 to request one be E-mailed or US mailed to you.

For a complete listing of events please visit www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm

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Do you have questions or comments about this newsletter? If so, please contact Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us