



**ERIE COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Nevertheless She Persisted**

**Celebrating Women’s History Month in Erie County**



Women’s history month is an important time to commemorate those who have made great strides for gender equality, celebrate women, and highlight the issues that we continue to fight for. This year, the ECCSW is participating in many initiatives locally that reflect the national theme; Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

On March 1, the Commission hosted a kickoff event with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. The honorable Betty Jean Grant was recognized as this year’s award recipient for her dedication to the community and advocacy for women. The former Erie County legislature holds years of experience serving the public including holding positions with the Buffalo Common Council and Buffalo Public School Board of Education. She remains active in community initiatives as a member of the Mary B. Talbert Civic and Cultural Club, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, SCLC, and the NAACP. Betty Jean Grant is also the founder of an HIV/AIDS prevention education organizations as well as We Are Women Warriors, and group which supports and empowers women in Buffalo.

For more information on events happening to celebrate Women’s History Month in Erie County, go to <http://bit.ly/2tMkS6d>



Pictures from the Women's History Month Kick Off Event



**Chairman’s Book Club. March 9, 2018**  
 Panelists Rhonda Ricks, Hilary Vandembark & Sara Vescio  
 Discussed Rebecca Solnit’s Men Explain Things to Me.  
 Hosted by the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women.



## ERIE COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

### First Amendment First Vote!

The inaugural seminar for First Amendment-First Vote was a great success. There were 28 girls, grades 9-12 representing a variety of schools in Western New York in attendance. The purpose of the event was to encourage civic engagement and education surrounding the history of women's suffrage. The day included presentations on the first and nineteenth amendments, as well as panel discussions with current and former public officials from within New York State.

Attendees had opportunities to hear from panelists about their experiences in government and what inspired them to run. Participants also learned about the first and nineteenth amendments as well as history regarding the women's suffrage. The panel allowed the students to begin to imagine themselves as elected officials and be empowered to take an active role in the political process.

The students were encouraged to take steps to bring awareness of the underrepresentation of women in government, continue to educate themselves on women's rights and invite their classmates to join them at the next seminar. Those who participated in the seminar will be invited to visit the Women's Rights National Historic Park in Seneca Falls. For more information about this initiative,





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### Healthy Relationships Summit



February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. The ECCSW hosted a kick off summit for high school students and administrators from Erie County in a collaborative effort to promote advocacy and awareness of teen dating violence. Providing teens with an opportunity to learn about and make a plan for change in their schools was an empowering way for them to be involved in the conversation regarding advocacy strategies for healthy relationships.

Over 150 students representing several high schools throughout Erie County were in attendance at the summit. The day involved a variety of educational opportunities including small focus groups, role playing, and an empowering narrative by a survivor of domestic violence. The day also involved planning and organizing advocacy efforts that could be accomplished within the schools.

Themes that emerged from the planning session included utilizing social media platforms to spread messages of awareness, as well as providing more educational opportunities through assemblies, workshops, guest speakers, and peer mentoring. There was also interest in bringing content and information about healthy relationships into already established clubs within schools.

Following this event ECCSW intends to continue to support the students and their school administrators in bringing these powerful advocacy efforts into their schools. ECCSW would like to engage additional schools and reach more students as well. Next steps include convening a follow up meeting with those who attended the summit to identify opportunities for support and generate momentum around starting programs.



If you would like to get involved in this initiative, contact Karen King, Executive Director at the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women at [karen.king@erie.gov](mailto:karen.king@erie.gov)



## ERIE COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

### Women’s March in Seneca Falls

#### Upcoming Initiatives:

- April is pay equity month. This month highlights the pay gap between men and women and the earnings disparities that exist across industries and positions.
- April 10 is recognized as Equal Pay Day. This day symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year. For more information on Equal Pay Day, go to:

<https://www.aauw.org/fairpay/>

Thousands of people made the trip to march for justice on January 20th at the birthplace for women’s rights in Seneca Falls. This year, the per-Sisters for Women’s Equality rally and march at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park shed light on reproductive, economic, political and social justice as well expressed solidarity with LGBTQ and racial minorities. The day involved a number of speakers from across Western New York, including ECCSW director Karen King.



ECCSW Director Karen King speaking on economic justice



Shannon, ECCSW Intern and her mother at women’s march in Seneca Falls

Shannon Linehan, intern at the ECCSW with the UB School of Social Work, attended the march with her mother. Last year, the two of them walked together for the Women’s March in New York City, speaking out for issues that they are personally passionate about such as justice for immigrants and refugee women as well as for those with disabilities. The two have supported one another in persisting in solidarity for the rights and opportunities of Americans over the past year. The experience in Seneca Falls was a reminder of the strength and power that can come from a group of women coming together, and a refreshing motivation to keep fighting for justice.