

Issue 7/Volume 1/June 2021

The Beacon

A Newsletter of the New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women, Inc.

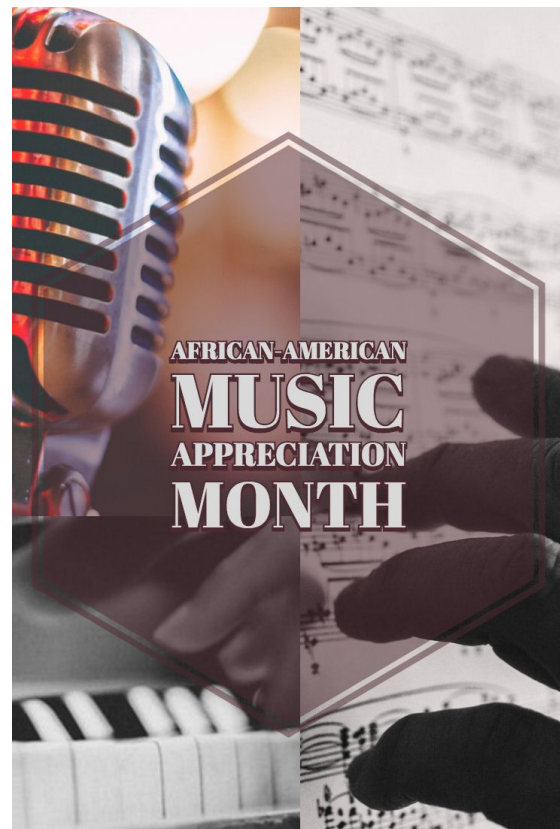
P.O. Box 2555, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163

Email: nycobwcoalition@gmail.com **Website:** www.cobwfounders.org

Telephone: 212-517-5700

DID YOU KNOW THAT JUNE IS AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC APPRECIATION MONTH?

The United States has been celebrating African-American Music Appreciation Month in June since 1979. The month of June is set aside to appreciate the contributions of African-American musicians, composers, singers, and songwriters to American culture. The month honors the history and rich African traditions that gave birth to different styles of music such as rap, hip-hop, jazz, rhythm and blues, barbershop, and swing. It is also the month to celebrate creative inspiration and appreciate the impact that African-American music has had on generations of performers and music lovers! From tales of slavery and racism and fighting for their basic human rights to finding their heritage and values in their lyrics, black music covers a vast range of topics that have great significance for this community. Over the years, we have seen black musicians reach great heights, not only on official music record charts but also at entertainment award ceremonies. While President Jimmy Carter designated June as Black Music Month in 1979, it wasn't until 2000 when the presidential proclamation for the month was signed. President Barack Obama, in 2009, went on to rename the month from Black Music Month to its current name, African-American Music Appreciation Month.



NEW YORK COALITION OF ONE HUNDRED BLACK WOMEN

ROLE MODEL SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

The Role Model Program of the New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women was started 42 years ago at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. The young women students were provided with mentors and participated in workshops to prepare them for life after graduation.

After operating for several years, a decision was made to bring the Role Model Program to New York and the colleges of the City University of New York were invited to participate. The students accepted into the program stayed overnight in New York City hotels where workshops were held, and students were provided with mentors to help them navigate successfully in their chosen field of study.

The Coalition was extremely fortunate when a corporate sponsor was secured, L'Oreal, USA. L'Oreal not only supported the Coalition monetarily, but also offered their office space in midtown Manhattan and provided select staff to assist with the preparation and presentation of the Role Model Program.

In 2020, the world was overtaken by a pandemic and for the first time in 41 years, the New York Coalition did not have a Role Model Program, but we were fortunate to still receive corporate sponsorship from L'Oreal, USA. In 2021, faced with restrictions imposed by the continuing pandemic that again prevented the Coalition from offering its Role Model program, an Ad Hoc Scholarship Committee was formed to award scholarships to outstanding students. Working with CUNY school coordinators, fifteen young women applied for Role Model scholarships. On May 1, 2021, a program was held via Zoom to introduce the students, recognize the scholarship winners and to hear encouraging words from keynote speaker Nkechi Ogbodo, founder of Kechie's Project.

Four young women were awarded \$2,500 scholarships: Djenabow Bah, Tiffany Lacroix, Farida Chickerie Ramkaran, and Lucretse Tato. The other eleven students received honorable mention and will receive \$300 to help with school expenses. Each student will also receive a tote bag as a gift from the New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women.

During the virtual program President Barbara Kairson, extended her appreciation to the Scholarship Committee chaired by 1st Vice President Dorothea Thompson-Manning and to Committee members: Robin Bell-Stevens, Hope Danville-Quinlan, Cheryl Green-Foster, Sharon Long, Dr. Karen Myrie, and Marjorie Phillips for continuing the Coalition's mission to assist young women in pursuit of their higher education and for working diligently under difficult circumstances to make "lemonade out of lemons".

Submitted by Dorothea Thompson-Manning



An Act of Kindness from the Coalition

As part of its Adopt-a-School initiative, on May 14, 2021 Dr. Janet Kiley and Dr. Carmen Pannell of the Education Committee delivered 45 gift bags containing hygiene items and Foodtown gift cards for homeless students enrolled at PS 30M, also known as the Rafael Hernandez/Langston Hughes School, located in East Harlem.

In December 2020, the Education Committee decided to make adopting a school one of its program initiatives and after news reports of an increase in students experiencing food insecurity and homelessness, the Committee began planning to support a school with a large population of homeless students. PS 30M became the focus of the Adopt-a-School initiative through the efforts of Coalition sister Marjorie Phillips. Once contact was made, the school informed Dr. Kiley that the greatest needs of the students were food and clothing. The Committee thought it would be feasible to provide gift cards in the amount of \$25.00 per student for food purchases at a local supermarket. Support was obtained from Dr. Barbara Kairson, President, and the Board of Directors to move forward with this initiative.

Coalition sister Maxine Spence generously donated toothbrushes, toothpaste, and soap for the students and East Harlem Foodtown store managers Andy Almonte and Stephanie Reynoso graciously provided a 10 percent discount for the gift cards as a contribution to the community. The discount enabled the Committee to purchase additional hygiene items (washcloths and bottles of hand sanitizer) to include in the students' gift bags, which were adorned with the Coalition's colors of black and gold.

The Education Committee was pleased and excited to support the students in need at PS 30M. Principal Leonna Austin and Assistant Principal Chioma Hauenstein were very appreciative. The Committee looks forward to continuing the Adopt-a-School partnership by supporting the school in other endeavors.

The Education Committee is chaired by Dr. Janet Kiley and is comprised of members: Janet Collins, Cheryl Green-Foster, Dr. Carmen Pannell, Yvonne Sterling, Dorothea Thompson-Manning, and Evangeline Vaughan.

Submitted by Dr. Janet Kiley

A Danger Lives Among Us

On May 22, 2021, following the membership meeting, the Global Affairs Committee, Chaired by Abaynesh Asrat, hosted an informative panel discussion on human trafficking. Human Trafficking is an insidious practice that is taking place in many of our communities and around the world and the results can be life-altering and sometimes lethal.

The panel consisted of Rev. Que English, Founder and CEO of Not On My Watch (NOMW); Jonsey, parent of a child who was trafficked; and Coalition member Dorothy Burch. Each of the panelists provided information and some shared personal stories about human trafficking systems and how elaborate networks and individuals working in our own neighborhoods can seduce and impact the lives of unsuspecting girls, boys, and their families.

For the past 8 years, Rev. English has led Not On My Watch, the only survivor led and people of color led organization in New York City solely focused on combating human trafficking. Panelist Jonesy told how she tried several times to rescue her daughter from traffickers. Unfortunately, she was not successful and her daughter lost her life in January. Jonesy now works tirelessly as a Trainer/Speaker and the Manhattan Director of the NOMW Family Advocate Support Group. Coalition member Dorothy Burch, a Registered Nurse and military veteran, shared background information on the origins of some programs and organizations working throughout the country to combat human trafficking.

The emotion displayed at the end of the program was not diminished by the virtual platform. Coalition members shed tears while listening to the harrowing stories and pledged to continue to work with Not On My Watch in their ongoing fight.

The Coalition expresses its appreciation to the Global Affairs Committee Chaired by Abaynesh Asrat and to Laura Green, Co-Chair as well as to Committee members: Dorothy Burch, Geraldine Cobbs, Dolores Dixon, Jean Dixon West, and Carolyn Hubbard-Kamunanwire for a job well done.

Ranked-Choice Voting?

On Thursday, April 29, 2021, the Political Awareness Committee, chaired by Katrina Rawlins, Esq., hosted a discussion on the new Ranked-Choice Voting system that will be used in the June 22, 2021 Primary election in New York City. The guest speaker for the event, Nicole Yearwood, MPA, of Rank the Vote NYC shared important information with Coalition members who joined the discussion via Zoom.

But what exactly is Ranked-Choice Voting?

Peter Brann, a visiting lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School, describes Ranked-Choice Voting as follows:

"Ranked-choice voting (RCV), also called instant runoff voting, allows voters to rank their preferences in order—one, two, three, etc. Voters can also do what they always have done, for example, just vote for their preferred candidate. In races in which there are more than two candidates, if no candidate gets over 50% of the first-choice ballots, the lowest-ranked candidate is dropped, and the second choices of his or her voters are counted and added to the higher-ranked candidates. This process continues until a candidate gets over 50% and is declared the winner".

If you still have questions about Ranked-Choice Voting, you can contact Rank the Vote NYC at www.rankthevoteny.org or call them at 212-691-6421. You can also contact the New York City Board of Elections at: 866-868-3692.

Finally, please make note of the following dates:

June 15, 2021 - Last date to request Absentee ballot

June 12 - June 20, 2021 - Early Voting Dates

June 22, 2021 - Primary Election Day



*Happy "May" and "June" Birthday to
Coalition Sisters*

May

Dorothy Burch

Hope Danville-Quinlan

Laura Green

Janet Kiley

June

Jean Dixon West

Beatrice Dupont

Carmen Pannell

Yvonne Sterling

Margaret Wilson