



*"As a leader, it's a major responsibility on your shoulders to practice the behavior you want others to follow."*

*-- Himanshu Bhatia*

## Justice Committee: Fighting Back

By: Brenda Freeman Short, J.D.



The Justice Committee is diligently working on issues to help improve the quality of life for women, especially those who seemingly do not have a voice or whose voice has been silenced. The U.S. Constitution gives freedom of speech under the covering of the First Amendment. However, many countries do not provide this protection, especially for women.

At each monthly meeting I share a news article relevant to women or highlight a woman who has contributed to the betterment of women. Recently I shared a story published in the New York Times of the 2014 kidnapping of school girls from a boarding school in the village of Chibok in Nigeria by the radical Islamist group Boko Haram who hold the belief that women should not be educated. The militants stormed the school, loaded the girls into trucks and hauled them away at gunpoint. An outcry was heard throughout the country and a hashtag, #BringBackOurGirls was circulated on social media sites attracting appeals from politicians and celebrities including former First Lady Michelle Obama.

Many female captives of Boko Haram have been forced into being sex slaves and suicide bombers. In January of this year the New York Times published an updated story and group photo of the Chibok women provided by their captors; some had given birth while in captivity and were holding their babies. What was most disturbing to me was the forlorn – pitifully sad and lonely because of isolation – look on each woman's face. Their eyes reflected such hopelessness. Since their capture, many of the Chibok women have died, some have been set free through negotiations by governmental entities and yet others remain in captivity. These young women's lives have been changed forever. Their youth was stolen and their destiny interrupted.

Reading this story reinforced the commitment of the Justice Committee to the issues at hand; human trafficking, women and violence, and sexual harassment. Justice Committee members are working together to present their White Papers understanding that their work product will be a resource for the betterment of women and a tenacious voice to government officials that changes in policy and laws must take place.

## Economic Empowerment Committee Update

By Jennifer B. Harper, CFP



Page 2

The Economic Empowerment committee has reviewed the responses of the participant surveys from the Statewide Women's Policy Conference held this past February and we were excited to see the results.

Based on these results, we will continue our existing efforts to develop an alternative to predatory lending while seeking to reduce the negative effects this practice has on vulnerable segments of our community.

In addition, we will begin working on several new topics:

- Pay Equity
- Ageism
- Financial Education

Each of these additional topics directly correspond with the feedback we've received and we look forward to seeing the results of this work in our community going forward!

Each of these core focus areas have significant impact for the women in our community. If you're looking for a way to get involved, please join us at our meetings: the 4th Thursday of each month at 9am in the Veranda Room of City Hall.



## Join a committee!

The Mayor's Council for Women invites the participation of all women interested in making a positive impact in our community. Join us at any of the following monthly committee meetings:

- ◆ Economic Opportunity
- ◆ Education Committee
- ◆ Health Committee
- ◆ History Committee
- ◆ Justice Committee
- ◆ Leadership Committee
- ◆ Healthy Sexuality Subcommittee

***Meeting times and locations vary. For more information please visit:***

**<http://connect.chattanooga.gov/councilforwomen/councilforwomenabout/>**



**T**he Healthy Sexuality Education Work Group has been focusing on the absence of comprehensive, evidence-based, healthy sexuality education for children and youth in the public school system. We have learned from youth in Chattanooga about the deleterious impact this lack of adequate education is having on their lives and futures.

To address this issue, our work group has been focusing on two different points of intervention. The first is developing a pilot workshop for parents and guardians that will educate them about how to speak with their children about topics including anatomy, body image, adolescence, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, and healthy relationships. The workshop will be held at UTC on Saturday, September 29 from 10-2. More details will be shared in upcoming newsletter articles.

The second point of intervention is providing the Youth and Family Development Center (YFD) with a checklist of age appropriate topics that according to the National Sexuality Education Standards are essential for comprehensive healthy sexuality education. These standards have been compared to programs offered by A Step Ahead, the Boys and Girls Club (specifically the Passport to Manhood program), Kids on the Block, OnPoint, the Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults, and Girls Inc. to identify what's covered and where there are gaps. The goal is to provide YFD with a guide to what's available and what programming needs to be identified or developed so that children and youth get an age appropriate comprehensive education.



## Save the Date!

### **Mayor's Council for Women Quarterly Luncheon**

**When:** Thursday June 14, 2018 @ 11:30 am - 1:00pm

**Where:** Bessie Smith Cultural Center

200 E. M L King Blvd - Chattanooga, TN 37403

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**T**he Education Committee now has four workgroups that are exploring various issues. Each workgroup has as a central tenet of the core goal of the Education Committee --to identify and address the barriers that girls and women face in completing secondary and attaining post-secondary education. The workgroups are: The Impact of Violence on the Educational Success of Girls and Women; Inadequate Out of School Time Opportunities; Youth and Education; and CPR as Policy.

### **The Impact of Violence of the Educational Success of Girls and Women**

Feedback from an exit survey following CPR training for women at the Family Justice Center last November indicated that some attendees desired training on how to deal with domestic violence. For example, some of the women who drop out of UTC, do so because their partners have become abusive, as the woman appears to become more qualified than the man. This negatively impacts these women's ability to complete their post-secondary education. Additionally children who experience violence—within their own families or in external environments—are traumatized which has deleterious effects on their ability to succeed academically. This workgroup is currently in the beginning stages of establishing possible solutions including policy recommendations. This includes doing research on current educational resources and the best mechanisms for making them easily accessible to girls and women. We will be partnering with the Justice Committee on this issue.

### **Inadequate Out of School Time Opportunities**

For many children, from kindergarten to high school, after school time, and spring, fall, and summer breaks are devoid of opportunities for supervised, educational activities. Lack of access to out of school programming negatively impacts the achievement gap. There is a lack of quality summer programs for many children in our city, including our special needs students. This workgroup will be exploring potential solutions to this challenging issue.

### **Youth and Education**

Acquiring secondary and post-secondary degrees and credentials is critical for girls and women to succeed economically. In order to provide appropriate assistance to them, we need to ascertain the challenges they need to see addressed. To that end, a survey will be developed and distributed to youth across the city at sites such as Girls Inc., the Mayor's Youth Council, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and various high schools.

### **CPR as Policy**

Tennessee mandates CPR training in schools. However, it is uncertain if this training is happening in all our high schools. This workgroup is endeavoring to ascertain why this policy may not be fully implemented. Once the research is complete they will be in a position to make policy recommendations.

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## The Leadership Committee is Strong on Soft Skills

*By Jelena Butler, Leadership Committee Chair*



Page 5

**Y**ou may have seen on LinkedIn the recently published 2018 Workplace Learning Report entitled 'The Rise & Responsibility of Talent Development in the New Labor Market'. As part of research they interviewed 4000 people across a myriad of organization and industry types with the consensus being that the top workforce development need today is 'soft skills.' They are talking about aptitude in communication, collaboration, leadership, problem solving, work ethic, and time management. These are areas women can and do excel in. The women of the Leadership Committee have an abundant supply of these 'soft skills'. Read on to find out how they use them.

In response to the labor shortage reported by the construction industry All Lanes Open demonstrates its problem solving skill by gathering a group of 20+ construction-related firms to participate in a career fair. The event which will be held in late August is an opportunity for women of all ages to envision themselves in career tracks they may not have considered. Participating companies are interested in high school seniors just entering the job market. They also want applicants starting anew in their second or third career. They have assured group lead Sabrina Butcher that there is a broad range of jobs available and while some require a specific skill set others accept newbies and provide on the job training and just in time learning of role specific skills.

Political Participation has been exercising its leadership skills these last few months while actively recruiting women to run for office, preparing candidates, organizing meet and greet events and campaign fundraisers. A few races still have no women running but currently Hamilton County has more female candidates than ever before. Female political participation is up all over the county and it shows in terms of donations, volunteerism, and sheer awareness of what is going on in local and statewide races. Aply led by April Goebeler this workgroup collaborates with other woman-centered organizations around Chattanooga to bring about real and positive change to the political landscape. They are showing their soft skill in spades.

Women With No Limits is communicating the need for companies to utilize technology to prevent professional disconnect of women while they are on family leave. In the age of Skype, FaceTime, Facebook Live, etc. individuals who are away from the office caring for family need not miss important business meetings and conferences. Technology can be utilized effectively to achieve inclusion. It can also facilitate collaboration and continuity of workflow. Miracle Hurley, Ashely Williams, Cortney Hewett, Whitney Standefer with others are instrumental in getting the message across to area employers.

*continued on Page 6*

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**For more information please visit:**

<http://connect.chattanooga.gov/councilforwomen/councilforwomenabout/>

Think back to the beginning days of your work life and you will likely remember someone who taught you the ropes, all the things that operations manuals didn't cover. Magic Moments in Mentoring's leader Marj Flemming understands this as she herself has been both mentee and mentor. She sees that the need for mentoring doesn't go away as you progress on the career path. If we are to be life-long learners then teachers are important all along the way. At the same time ethically, we have a responsibility to pay back and mentor people coming up the ladder. These tenets and more are what Marj teaches attendees at the Leadership Committee meetings every month. These teachable moments work incrementally to improve our soft skills.

It takes coordination, collaboration and lots of time and effort to pull together a recurring publication such as the Leadership Matters Newsletter. This is particularly true when the work is a side hustle and your full time gig is being an executive with Habitat for Humanity as editor Dominique Brandt is. The contributors are volunteers with careers of their own. Their common ground is the passion they feel for expanding the role of women in our world. They bring a strong work ethic to the job of informing the public on the Mayor's Council for Women's activist activities.

I invite you to join me each month at the Leadership Committee meetings on the first Friday of the month at 8:30 am in the Veranda Room of City Hall. Your need for time management is honored as I stick to a one hour format. So time block 60 minutes to spend with smart, interesting women who come together to communicate, problem solve and otherwise fine tune their soft skills. I look forward to seeing you soon.

*Leadership Matters* is published quarterly and is the voice of the Mayor's Council for Women.



Contributors to this issue include: Jelena Butler, Dr. Nicola Crisp, Jennifer B. Harper, Bea Lurie, Brenda Freeman Short, and Jan Trousdale.

Layout by Kensington Wieland.

*Leadership Matters* is edited by Dominique Brandt.

# LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

*By: Jan Trousdale*

By now most of you have read many articles written about Christy Gillenwater, the first female President and CEO for the Greater Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce. In case you missed some of the highlights, allow me to further acquaint you with the Cincinnati, Ohio native. She holds a Master of Business Administration from Ball State University – Miller College of Business and a Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs Management from Indiana University Bloomington. She served as President and CEO of the Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce, receiving two awards while under her leadership; Indiana Chamber of the Year by ICEA, and 2016 National Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. When Chattanooga Area Chamber won the same award in 2017, it was Gillenwater who made the presentation.

Unlike many successful leaders today, Gillenwater always knew the general direction her studies and career would take. While enrolled in her senior year at Indiana University Bloomington, she was taking a nonprofit management course that required her to either submit a 20-page essay or engage in an internship and



**“Maximize the time you have. Time management is of utmost importance.”**

journal about her experience. On the advice of her father to get involved with the chamber of commerce, she approached the Bloomington Chamber and offered to intern with them for free. As fate would have it, Gillenwater worked for the president of the chamber that year and later served in that same role.

With her substantial experience, I asked Gillenwater to share some tips for professional women. She had a wealth of information and advice to share: 1)

Learn by listening. It’s important to know when to listen. 2) Find one or more mentors that enrich you. Gillenwater expressed that in addition to her father, she had mentors that had no knowledge they were her mentors or the impact they had in her life. 3) Maximize the time you have. Time management is of utmost importance. Gillenwater stated that she has learned a great deal more from her mistakes than any of her successes. 4) Balance. By this she means to be intentional about becoming a whole person that sleeps well, relies on others for help when needed, and forgive yourself for seeking that help. She emphatically stated, “You do not have to be the sole person to nurture your children. They can learn so much from others that spend time with them.”

The advice that Gillenwater offers to professional women to become leaders is wise and we should embrace it. We sometimes forget that we can’t be that whole person she speaks of unless we take care of ourselves. No one can do it alone. Many thanks to Christy Gillenwater for her leadership to our community and becoming a part of our history.