

**LWVCCA Celebrates 2024 International Women's Day with the Community...**



The enthusiastic and diverse audience of over 200 members of the community

On March 8, the League of Women Voters Cape Cod Area (LWVCCA) in a joint venture with Amplify POC, Inc., Cape Cod Cape Verdean Museum and Cultural Center, Wampanoag Herring Pond Tribe, League of Women Voters Falmouth, and the Women and Girls Fund of The Cape Cod Foundation hosted its first Cape Cod International Women's Day Breakfast. Thank you to all of the planning organizers, speakers, and attendees for a successful event.

LWVCCA spearheaded the planning of the event at the request of League member Scotti Finnegan and Andi Genser, former member of the Cape Women's Coalition (CWC). The breakfast was previously planned and hosted annually for nine years by CWC until they disbanded in 2020. After a post COVID hiatus, the revived event was well attended and by many accounts, an illuminating celebration. Over 200 members of the community attended, including multiple state, county, and local elected officials as well as other community leaders, business owners, and corporate sponsors.

The event was generously funded by multiple sponsors, including Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank, The Cape Cod Foundation, The Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod, Eastern Bank, Cape Air, LWVCCA Helen S. Aaron Educational Trust Fund, Rockland Trust, and the LWV Falmouth. Several women-

owned businesses were hired to provide services for the event including Minuteman Press of Centerville, Magic Mirror Cape Cod, International Business Relations, and Communi-T Productions. Twenty-five non-profit community organizations set up resource tables with information about services and programs for women and girls, including those focused on advocacy, business development, self-help, education, health and, wellbeing. The LWVCCA and LWV Falmouth shared a Voter Services table emphasizing voter registration and Get-Out-The-Vote 2024. The Magic Mirror digital photobooth was a big hit. Attendees took individual and group selfies with decorative backgrounds commemorating Cape Cod's 2024 International Women's Day.

The program theme was *The Power of Women and Girls Creating Change*. In the words of Serena Williams, "The success of every woman should be the inspiration of another. We should raise each other up," and to that end, our speakers were powerful examples of this belief in action. The inspiring program was introduced by Jeanne Morrison, LWVCCA Co-President as emcee. Opening remarks from Tara Vargas Wallace, President and CEO of Amplify POC, Inc. set the tone to inspire and amplify the contributions of women and girls in our community.

Bobbi Rose Brown, a Monomoy High School junior, gave a stunningly clear and uninhibited invocation about the importance of working together across differences to build community and the need for women's health equity. She cited that the United Nations states that gender equity remains the greatest human rights challenge and is still decades away from being a reality. Much advocacy, action, and support continue to be needed, and Bobbi shared how this motivated her to actively engage in advocacy for women, especially women of color. She exemplified Maya Angelou's words, "Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all women."

The invocation was followed by two wonderful panels of women from diverse backgrounds discussing what motivates them to lead and what

they are doing in their communities to have a positive impact on other women and girls. The speakers ranged in age from 19 to 60+.



Mindy Todd, of WCAI's *The Point*, moderated the first panel  
*Elected Leaders Making a Difference*

Each shared the experiences that led them to run for office, explained how they use their power to advocate for others, and the support they need to build a better community.



Erica Tso Haidas moderated the second panel  
*Young Women and Girls Making a Difference at the Local Level*

The second panel celebrated women and girls making a difference in their communities at the local level. It was moderated by Erica Tso Haidas, activist and founder of Belonging Books. Four amazing young women including a community organizer, student/activist, entrepreneur, and business owner captivated the audience as they shared their life stories and how and why they developed the courage to be a changemaker in the community. We then had time for brainstorming conversations at each table and were able to capture the essence of those conversations on paper and will be transcribing them and getting them out to attendees in the weeks ahead.

Mary Hunter Utt, Co-President LWVCCA, closed the program and thanked all attendees, panelists,

sponsors and planners. She ended with an exhortation and reminder of the importance of voting. The overall program spotlighted the critical work being done locally to foster an inclusive and equitable community through the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls.



Our final speaker, Tamora Israel shared an inspirational poem about the strength, challenges, resilience, beauty, and power of women.

Below are a few of the comments shared by participants.:

*"Seeing the collaboration between the Cape Cod Leagues and Women's Groups on the Cape is very encouraging. There is power in connection.*

*"Hope for the future generation, while honoring the contributions of past generations was the backbone of the Celebration.*

*"I was moved by the power in that room. 200 women engaged with each other and the presenters. Not only did you and the partnering organizations create a powerful opportunity for women to come together but I believe that the overwhelming success of the morning was evidence that this work to bring women together for meaningful conversations is needed in our communities."*

It was truly an inspiring and motivational morning and we are committed to a bigger event next year! If you would like to volunteer to be on the planning committee or be a sponsor, please email us at [lwvcca@gmail.com](mailto:lwvcca@gmail.com).

Jeanne Morrison, Co-President LWVCCA