



Montgomery County
Commission for Women

Annual Report

**Fiscal Year 2014
July 2013 – June 2014**

**Montgomery County Commission for Women
21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 330
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

July 2013 – June 2014

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Walker Holloway
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Montgomery County *Commission for Women*

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President's Message

Debra Bright Harris, Ed.D.

On June 11, 2014 Dr. Debra Bright Harris was elected president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women for 2014 – 2015.

As the incoming president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women I am delighted to present this annual report highlighting our many activities and accomplishments over the last year.

This is a bittersweet time for the Montgomery County Commission for Women as we congratulate, but also say farewell to our highly-esteemed Executive Director, Ms. Judith Vaughan-Prather, who is retiring after nearly 35 years of service. We look forward to working with the County Executive's office to pursue the very difficult task of identifying a new executive director to ensure that we have the critical support needed to continue our Commission's good work.

Over the course of the next year the Commission for Women will continue to focus on legislative advocacy and we are very pleased to take the lead on the new Human Trafficking Task Force for Montgomery County. Additionally, we will plan our 35th Annual Women's Legislative Briefing, which will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2015 at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville.

It is an honor to be taking on the role of president for the 2014-15 year and I look forward to working with our executive committee to provide leadership and stability to the Commission during this time of great transition.

I am extremely proud of our accomplishments outlined in this report and sincerely appreciate the hard work of the 15 commissioners who volunteer their time and talents to make a difference in our community. Very special thanks goes to our outgoing president, Chandra Walker Holloway, whose leadership and dedication has been a critical element in every one of the Commission's activities over the past two years while she served as president and the past six years during which she has been such an involved commissioner.

We are now entering a new phase for the Commission for Women. I am eager to begin the process of setting our priorities for the upcoming year so that we may continue our advocacy and education initiatives always with the goal to positively impact the lives of women, girls and families in Montgomery County.



Report of the Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather, MSW, LCSW

Introduction:

It is with such mixed emotions that I write this, my last report as the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women. I leave this office June 20, 2014 after very nearly 35 years, to accept the position of Executive Director of the Maryland state Commission for Women. I am very much looking forward to this exciting new challenge and wonderful opportunity. But, serving for the past three and a half decades as director of Montgomery County's CFW has always been an exciting challenge and an opportunity to labor at work I love, collaborating with women and men I admire on initiatives designed to improve the lives of women and girls. Who could ask for a more rewarding career?

I first started working here in September 1979, as the manager of one of the CFW's two counseling centers. I helped the CFW organize its first Women's Legislative Briefing in January of 1980 and by September, I had been appointed Executive Director.

In those early days of the CFW's history (the CFW was established by county law in June of 1972), the issues addressed were more basic and obvious than those of concern today, though they didn't seem to be, back then. In the early 1980's married women were routinely denied credit in their own names; single women had trouble getting credit cards or mortgages at all. Divorce courts typically made child support orders that left the custodial parent and children at a significant financial disadvantage compared to the non-custodial parent. Women's lesser earnings, even in the same jobs as men, were just a fact of life, and employers' refusal to hire women into certain jobs was accepted as completely understandable. Violence against women was still a topic of only whispered conversation: violence in the home was considered a "domestic matter" not a violation of law, sexual harassment and sexual assault between acquaintances was rarely brought to the attention of authorities for fear of embarrassment and retribution. Rarely did anyone talk about poverty as a women's issue. Girl's sports teams had significantly less access to the schools' resources – even their coaches, regardless of their own gender, were paid less than the coaches of the men's teams. There were few women principals in our schools and even fewer women judges in our county and state.

Over the past thirty-five years, the CFW has undertaken successful initiatives in Educational Equity, Family Equity in the Courts, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Work-Life Balance, Immigrant Women, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education and Careers for Women and Girls, including special summer camps at Montgomery College for which the CFW provided scholarships for middle school students, Single Mothers and Poverty, and a Pay Equity project that made Montgomery County the first jurisdiction in the nation to undertake a fair pay initiative without having

first been brought to court. The CFW created an on-line Montgomery County Women's History Archives recording the biographies of 43 women whose achievements are of historical significance. It has also sponsored the annual Women's Legislative Briefing for 34 years – now attended by an average of over 600 women, their advocates and legislators across the state.

The CFW was established under the James Gleason administration – Montgomery's first County Executive, and continued under Charles Gilchrist, Sidney Kramer, Neal Potter, Doug Duncan and now Isiah Leggett.

The CFW's enabling legislation provides that it has 15 commissioners, each appointed to three-year terms by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The commissioners' terms are staggered so that each year, five commissioners are completing their time on the commission. Commissioners may serve two full terms.

For 37 of its 42-year history, the CFW provided counseling services to women experiencing difficult life transitions. At one time, the staff of the CFW was 21-strong, with a budget of over one million dollars. But, as fiscal and economic troubles descended, the staff was gradually reduced until on June 29, 2011, the counseling service was abolished altogether. In FY 2013, funds were appropriated for very limited services, and in FY 14, the CFW hired three part-time temporary social workers, each multi-lingual, and has provided counseling in five languages (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Arabic) for the past year.

The Commission meets once monthly, and sets an agenda for each year at an annual planning meeting. For FY 14, the CFW's initiatives included:

- Sponsorship of the 2014 Women's Legislative Briefing
- Legislative advocacy in the Maryland General Assembly and the U.S. Congress
- Updating all the CFW's publications
- Women's History Month Commemoration

A report of each of these initiatives follows. But I must close this section of the narrative by thanking the County Executives, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the members of the County Council who have supported the CFW's work not only for this past year, but for these past 35 years. Most of all, I must thank the people who have served on the Montgomery County Commission for Women. Since 1979, I've worked with 172 commissioners – every one of them making a unique contribution. I am so grateful to all of these extraordinary individuals who volunteered their considerable expertise, talents and time to the work of this office. We have been fortunate to have been donated the brilliance of these women and men who dedicated a portion of their own lives to the betterment of others. It has been my privilege and an honor to have worked with them, learned from them, supported them, and to have shared with them the journey toward a more fair, just and promising future for Montgomery County's women and girls.

Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee

Chair: Katie Smith

Co-Chair: Bobbe Mintz

Committee Members: Maria M. Alvarado, Natalia Farrar, Lorna Forde, Maliha Ilias, Safia Qadri, Heather Reichardt, Karmen Rouland

For FY 14, the Commission for Women established an advocacy agenda that included five subject areas:

- Economic Empowerment for Women and Families
Paid leave, workplace flexibility, health care, retirement and other benefits, minimum wage, child care
- Health and Safety for Women and Girls
Domestic Violence, human trafficking, women's health disparities, wellness, risks facing teens
- Unique Challenges Facing Women
Senior women, immigrant women, single mothers, young women and girls
- Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
Educational, vocational and cultural challenges
- Fairness in Family Law
Legislative issues, access to information, representation and services

Each goal was used to establish how the CFW could support a better future for all women and girls living in Montgomery County. The 2014 advocacy platform served as a guide for legislation the CFW supported in the Maryland State Legislature, and in the first session of the 114th Congress. Each piece of legislation supported or opposed is intended to serve as a plank in the platform of the CFW's ongoing efforts on behalf of Montgomery County's women and their families.

While the opinions expressed in the positions the CFW declared are not necessarily those of the County Executive or the County Council, issues ranging from paid leave and economic health for families to public safety and immigration reform reflect the CFW's advocacy for better policies for Montgomery County's women and girls.

State and Federal legislation supported and opposed by the CFW in FY 14 is described below:

Commission for Women 2014 State Legislative Agenda

Find out more about these bills at:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>

- **HB 968/SB753: Earned Sick and Safe Time Act** – enabling all employees in the state to earn a minimal amount of paid sick leave annually
- **HB1026/SB737: Parental Leave** bill – providing up to 6 weeks of unpaid leave to employees of smaller companies not covered by the FMLA - PASSED
- **HB696/LSBL78: Human Trafficking** – making it a felony offense to traffic traffic18 – 20 year olds, even in the absence of force, fraud or coercion
- **HLB27/SB656: Healthy Births for Incarcerated Women Act** - restricting the use of physical restraints on pregnant inmates during and after delivery – PASSED with amendments
- **306/SB337: Criminal Law- Crimes Committed in the Presence of a Minor – Penalties** – Providing an enhanced penalty for committing a domestically-related crime of violence when the defendant knows or should reasonably know that a minor is present - PASSED
- **HB309/SB334: Domestic Violence – Permanent Final Protective Orders** - providing permanent final protective orders in cases of extreme or extended domestic violence - PASSED
- **HB333/SB28: Family Law Peace and Protective Orders – Burden of Proof** - changing the burden of proof required of petitioners seeking peace and protective orders from “clear and convincing evidence” to “a preponderance of the evidence”
- **HB958/SB411: Rape Survivor Family Protection Act** – denying paternity to the father of a child born as a result of rape
- **HB775/SB41: Domestic Violence – Persons Eligible for Relief** - allowing victims of dating and sexual violence to seek protective orders, rather than peace orders, which will provide heightened protection
- **HB295/SB331: Minimum Wage Act** – raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2016, linking future wage increases to inflation, raising the tipped wage from 50% to 75% of state minimum wage – PASSED with amendments
- **HB701/SB454: Child Kidnapping and Prostitution** – raising the offense of abduction of a child under 16 to a felony, similar to that for human trafficking – PASSED with amendments

At the request of Delegate Ariana Kelly, the CFW hosted a meeting on July 30, 2013, inviting other advocates interested in supporting a bill Delegate Kelly would introduce in the 2014 Maryland General Assembly. The bill, which passed with some amendments, will provide unpaid family and medical leave for six weeks for workers in companies with 15 – 49 employees. (The federal Family and Medical Leave Act only covers employers with 50 or more employees but provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave.)

Commission for Women 2014 Federal Legislative Agenda

- **Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S.744) – Support**
A bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.
- **Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013 (S.460) and (H.R.1010) – Support**
A bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.
- **Healthy Families Act (S.631) and (H.R.1286) – Support**
A bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families.
- **Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act (S.120) – Support**
A bill to expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women under the Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program.
- **Paycheck Fairness Act (S.84) and (H.R.377) – Support**
A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.
- **Peace Corps Equity Act of 2013 (S.813) – Support**
A bill to amends the Peace Corps Act to subject abortion service coverage by the Peace Corps for volunteers to the same limitations that apply to Peace Corps employees regarding coverage of abortion services. States that such provision shall not be construed to limit medical evacuation coverage.
- **Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act (S.870) and (H.R.1845) – Support**
A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make formula grants to states and, through them, competitive subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to establish or enhance educational programs and related services that enable pregnant and parenting students to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.
- **Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act of 2013 (S.649) – Support**
A bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.
- **Women and Minorities in STEM Booster Act of 2013 (S.288) – Support**
A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.
- **Working Families Flexibility Act (H.R. 1406) – Oppose**
A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide compensatory time for employees in the private sector.

In addition to advocating its own legislative platform, the MC CFW was an active member of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) – a coalition of women’s organizations across the state. MC CFW was a sponsor of the annual fall conference on October 19, 2013 where the groundwork for the legislative agenda is laid.

2014 Women’s Legislative Briefing

Planning Committee Chair: Debra Bright Harris, Ed.D.

Commission Committee Members: Maria M. Alvarado, Lorna Forde, Linda Amendt, Nick Martinez, Manar Morales, Farah Nageer-Kanthor, Safia Qadri, Karmen Rouland



The 34th annual Women’s Legislative Briefing was held on Sunday, January 26, 2014 at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. The purpose of these Briefings is to inform Marylanders about state and federal legislative proposals of specific concern to women and families, and to build a strong advocacy for these important issues. This year, over 700 people attended.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women, with the assistance of seventy-four women’s and community organizations, planned the program. Forty-four of these organizations presented colorful and informative exhibits lining the hallways leading to the main conference auditorium. The Briefing was made possible by the funding and support from Kaiser Permanente our Gold Sponsor, AARP, our Silver Sponsor, and Sustaining Sponsors Maryland NOW and Washington Parent.



A pre-conference President’s Networking Session provided the leaders of these community organizations an opportunity to meet with the keynote speaker in a conversation about social media and advocacy. It also provided a means for these groups to identify potential partners in the community addressing the same issues or implementing similar projects.

The plenary session was opened with greetings by Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, Delegate Jolene Ivey from Prince George’s County and our federal legislators: Senator Ben Cardin, Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Congressman John Sarbanes, and Congressman John Delaney. Kim Horn, President of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the



Mid-Atlantic States and Hank Greenberg, Senior State Director of AARP Maryland also addressed the crowd giving unique perspectives on the health and welfare issues being discussed.



The highlight of the plenary session was a keynote address by Joanne Bamberger, author of Mothers of Intention: How Women & Social Media are Revolutionizing Politics in America. Ms. Bamberger spoke about the growing political influence of women online, including Netroots Nation, EMILY’s List, Activism & Media & Policy Summit, BlogHer, Campaign Tech Conference and others.

A panel discussion on Women’s Issues in Local Elected Office was skillfully moderated by Joanne Bamberger. Montgomery Councilwomen Valerie Ervin, Nancy Floreen and Nancy Navarro participated along with Prince George’s County Councilwoman Ingrid Turner providing valuable insights into their experience as women legislators.

The opening session was followed by eight seminars each featuring legislators and prominent advocates: Effective Legislative Advocacy, Advocating for Older Women’s Issues, A Briefing on the Health Care Reform Act, Women in the Public Realm, Workplace Issues, Safety, Justice and Human Rights, Women, Families and Poverty, and a special presentation of *Miss Representation*, a compelling documentary the portrayal of women and girls in the media and its effects on women in the policy arena.



This year for the first time, the Legislative Briefing offered a ‘Teen Track.’ Parts of the documentary film *Miss Representation* were shown followed by small group discussions on the portrayal of women and girls in the media, objectification of women and girls and how this affects women in leadership roles, women in advocacy/civic engagement roles and girls’ self image. A panel of young community leaders discussed women in leadership, politics, advocacy and community engagement. This event was well-received by the fifty teens in attendance.





At the closing ceremony, enthusiastic participants gathered to celebrate the induction of Senator Jennie Forehand and former Councilmember Valerie Ervin into the [Montgomery County Women's History Archive](#). The archive was created in 2002 to recognize the contributions of women of historical significance to the county. The biographies and photographs of Forehand and Ervin are featured on the Commission for Women website.



The Montgomery County Commission for Women is grateful for the continuing cooperation and support it receives for the Women's Legislative Briefing. It is especially appreciative of the contributions of the seventy-four women's and community co-sponsoring organizations and the dozens of volunteers and hundreds of hours they lend to this effort, and to Kaiser Permanente and AARP without whose financial support this event would not be possible. The Commission also greatly appreciates the time and expertise donated by the 63 legislators, public officials, advocates and subject experts who donated their time to serve as speakers, panelists and moderators in the program. Above all, the Commission appreciates the hundreds of women and men who believe these issues are so important that they will give up an entire Sunday afternoon on a cold day in January to participate.



Human Trafficking Task Force Proposal

Commissioners: Maliha Ilias and Bobbe Mintz

On April 10, the CFW wrote to the County Executive recommending that he establish a Human Trafficking Task Force, with the goal of developing interagency coordination of strategies for response and prevention. The goals of the Task Force would be:

- To eliminate human trafficking through education, awareness, prevention, legislation and enforcement;
- To increase the identification and prosecution of all parties supporting the organized crime of human trafficking to include traffickers, suppliers, transporters, advertisers and demand elements
- To improve identification or and services to the victims of human trafficking

The CFW recommended that the Task Force be composed of representatives of:

- The County Executive's Office
- The County Council
- The Police Department
- The State's Attorney's Office
- The Sheriff's Office
- The Circuit Court for Montgomery County
- The Commission for Women
- The Commission on Human Rights
- The Department of Health and Human Services
- The Department of Permitting Services
- The Office of Community Partnerships
- Private non-profit advocacy organizations
- Private non-profit service providers

The County Executive has agreed to the proposal. An organizational meeting was held in his office on May 8, and the CFW received a briefing from the Police Department at its meeting that evening. A press conference was held on June 5 announcing the establishment of the task force and announcing that CFW member Bobbe Mintz will chair the task force.

International Advocacy

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather traveled to China as part of the Montgomery County Sister City delegation September 15-23. The delegation, which was led by the County Executive and included County Council members, the President and other officials of Montgomery College, the Superintendent and other officials of the Montgomery County Public Schools, business and civic leaders, visited Shanghai, Xi'an and Beijing, meeting with local officials, visiting local schools, touring and participating in cultural exchanges.

The Executive Director also traveled with the director of the county's Office of Human Resources, to Turkey as professional fellows in a program sponsored by the American Councils for International Education and funded by the U.S. Department of State. The 8-day trip, November 3 – 11, 2013 included meetings with government officials, a shelter for abused women and their families, human and women's rights advocates, LGBT advocates, and government officials in Izmir, Ankara and Istanbul She was invited to serve as a fellow to share her insights and experiences on the issues related to women and how those concerns may be addressed by local government.

Update of CFW Publications

The Commission for Women was required to move its office twice in the past four years, and of course, the services it offers have changed dramatically. The CFW has long published four informational brochures on women's rights, and a guidebook on divorce:

- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Violence in Relationships
- Employment Rights of Pregnant Workers
- Employment Guide for Domestic Workers
- Guidebook on Surviving the Legal Process of Separation and Divorce

Each of these publications is published in several languages and is available in hardcopy as well as on the CFW's website. All have outdated address and contact information and describe services no longer available through the CFW. Using a small amount of the funds appropriated for services last year, a contractor was hired to coordinate the update of the publications, including confirming and updating contact information for all the resources listed in each one, making the necessary updates, securing translation of all updates as needed, and coordinating with the Montgomery County Public Schools graphics office which designed the publications when they were first developed, to arrange for the graphic revisions and printing. The task was complicated because two of the brochures are published in six languages, one in five and one in three. The Divorce Guidebook is published in English and Spanish, and in addition to the contact changes, some aspects of family law have also changed in the several years since the books were printed. (For example, Separation as Grounds for Divorce in Maryland used to require the spouses to live separate and apart for two years, but that requirement has been reduced to one year.)

By the end of this fiscal year, all five publications had been updated, reprinted and posted on the CFW website. For two of them, the original copy in some of the languages was no longer available, and creating new versions in those languages was prohibitively expensive. As a result, some of the languages were eliminated, but all are now published in English and Spanish at a minimum, and most are available in several languages.

Women's History Month 2014 Activities:

Committee Chair: Maliha Ilias

Committee Members: Linda Amendt, Heather Reichardt

The MC CFW successfully nominated Henrietta Lacks for induction into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. Although never a resident of Montgomery County, the contributions Ms. Lacks "immortal cells" have made to biological research and medicine are almost incalculable. The development of the successful nomination package took considerable research into the life and contributions of Ms. Lacks, and coordinating with other organizations for support of the nomination.

In addition, the Commission's 2013 Women's History Month Activities included:

- An exhibit, featuring the historic contributions of 18 women of character, courage and conviction, in the Rockville Memorial Library for the entire month
- Receipt of proclamation from the County Council
- Participation in Montgomery College Women's and Gender Studies Scholarship Award Event
- Prominent feature on Women's History Month and the CFW Women's History Archives on the CFW website
- Update of all 43 biographies in the Archive to include resource and information links and other social media updates.
- Henrietta Lacks' induction to the Women's History Hall of Fame. President Walker Holloway attended the event along with Commissioners Forde, Rouland and Reichardt and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather. Governor O'Malley and Ms. Lacks' son and other family members and descendents were also present on the occasion.

Advocacy and Outreach:

MC CFW's Executive Director represented the commission at the July 23 - 28, 2013 conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW), on which she serves as a member of the Board of Directors and as co-chair of its Policy and Legislative Action Committee.

President Walker Holloway, Commissioner Smith and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather represented the CFW at the August 29, 2013 Women's Power Conference, for which the CFW was a "power sponsor" helping to publicize the event.

President Walker Holloway attended the September 7th forum on Human Trafficking sponsored by the AKA Sorority.

President Walker Holloway, along with Commissioners Ilias and Forde and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with County Executive Ike Leggett, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Director of Management and Budget and several of their staff members on September 30th. The MCCFW discussed the important work being done at the newly reopened Counseling Services.

In October, Commissioner Nageer-Kanthor participated in a national conference call focused on immigrant women's health issues.

Commissioners Smith, Montserrat Alvarado and Reichardt attended the Working Matters Coalition conference call on the 12th of November.

Commissioners Smith, Walker Holloway, Reichardt, Forde and Bright Harris attended the MLAW fall conference held on October 19th in Baltimore.

Commissioner Smith attended the Maryland Women's Conference hosted by the Frederick County Commission for Women in October. The Mc CFW sponsored the event and helped with publicity.

This WE³ (Women Educated, Empowered, Engaged) Conference, sponsored by the Prince George's County Commission for Women, was held on October 26th at the Prince George's County Community College. Commissioners Walker Holloway, Qadri, Nageer-Kanthor, Reichardt, Forde and Ilias attended the event.

Commissioner Rouland led the Commission's' 2013 Community Service project, in October, supporting the National Center for Children and Families' Comfort Care drive for the benefit of NCCF's foster children. Commissioners and staff collectively donated over \$300 to NCCF.

President Walker Holloway presented an eloquent summary of the history of U.S. women's rights legislation on February 6, 2014 in Annapolis at an event organized by the Maryland Association of Human Relations/Human Rights Organizations, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Commissioner Forde attended the event, as did Executive Director Vaughan-Prather.

Commissioner Reichardt began the development of a social media strategy for the CFW and a Facebook page was established in January.

Commissioner Smith and the Executive Director represented the MC CFW at the January 22 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) annual Legislative Reception in Annapolis. The MC CFW co-sponsored the MLAW legislative reception and also signed on in support of the agenda.

Commissioner Smith attended the October 30 AARP briefing on long-term care, modernizing Medicare, etc.

The County's teen dating violence conference, Choose Respect, was held on February 23. Several hundred attended the conference which met with great acclaim. Commissioner Lorna Forde represented the CFW on the conference planning committee and CFW President Walker Holloway not only attended but brought her Girl Scout Troop. At the request of the conference organizers, the CFW donated 150 copies each of its newly updated and printed *Violence in Relationships* brochure (in Spanish and in English) for inclusion in the packets.

At its March 13, 2013 meeting, the CFW received a briefing from the Kaur Foundation on the special issues confronting Sikh-Americans in our community.

On March 27, the CFW Executive Director represented the CFW at the Montgomery College Women's and Gender Studies Scholarship and Awards event.

At its April 10 meeting the CFW received a briefing from representatives of the Community Action Agency who discussed poverty in Montgomery County, the Earned Income Tax Credit and possible avenues for collaboration between the CFW and the CAB.

On May 6, President Walker Holloway participated in the County Executive's press conference announcing the introduction of fair pay legislation. Commissioner Amendt and Director Vaughan-Prather also attended. Ms. Walker Holloway reported on the CFW's long history on the issue of pay equity, and she was quoted in a news article covering the conference at Gazettenet.com.

At its May 8 meeting, the CFW received briefings on two important subjects:

- Delegate Kathleen Dumais discussed the purpose and work of the state's Child Custody Decision Making Task Force.
- Sgt. Kenneth Penrod of the Montgomery County Police Department Intelligence and Vice Unit discussed human trafficking as it occurs in Montgomery County.

In May, the CFW Executive Director attended the Governor's Conference on Human Sex Trafficking in Baltimore County, and the annual conference sponsored jointly by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault in Annapolis.

Commissioner Bright Harris served on the selection committee for the Maryland CFW's Women of Tomorrow awards program and attended the awards ceremony on June 26, 2014 in Annapolis.

Counseling Services: Jamila Allouane, MSW, LCSW-C, Counseling Service Coordinator

In FY 14, the County Executive and the County Council appropriated \$140,000 for counseling services through the office of the CFW. Three social workers were hired and offered collaborative, solution-focused, culturally competent, short-term counseling designed to help individuals and couples effectively address challenging life transitions including:

- Family crisis
- Relationship problems
- Separation and divorce transition
- Balancing work and family
- Effective communication
- Managing self-esteem
- Effective communication
- Senior women's issues
- Acculturation for recently arrived immigrant women

Counseling was provided by three part-time licensed clinical social workers in five languages (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Portuguese) three days a week. Services were available to women who met the following eligibility criteria:

- Montgomery County residents;
- Adults 18 years and older;
- Single with no dependent children and income less than \$50,000 per year; or
- Married with a combined income of less than \$75,000 year.
- Without access to insurance coverage for mental health counseling.

Counseling was short-term, limited to 12 sessions per individual or couple. Counselors used evidence-based therapeutic models to effectively equip individuals and couples with the skills and tools necessary to overcome challenging life situations.

A glance at the CFW client demographics

Number of client referrals received: 121

Number of clients who received counseling: 104

Number of counseling sessions provided: 809

General Demographics:

- ***Ethnic Origin:*** The clientele served at the CFW reflects the diversity of Montgomery County residents. Data collected showed that:
 - 31% of clients were Caucasian
 - 17.5 African-American
 - 31.5 Hispanic
 - 4% Asian Pacific
 - 0% Native American
 - 16% identified themselves from another ethnicity.
- ***Age:*** The demographic data submitted by clients revealed that, of the clients served:
 - 35.5% were between 18 and 34
 - 31% between 35 and 44
 - 22% between 45 and 54
 - 10% between 55 and 64
 - 1.5 % over 65.
- ***Language Spoken:*** In FY 14, the social workers on staff provided counseling in five languages, as needed or requested by the clients:
 - 71% of clients received services in English
 - 22% in Spanish
 - 2% in French
 - 4% in Arabic
 - 1 % in Portuguese.
- ***Annual Income:*** In FY 14, the CFW counseling clients reported their income as follows:
 - 43% under \$10,000
 - 23% under \$20,000
 - 21.5% under \$30,000
 - 3.5% under \$40,000
 - 6.5% under \$50,000
 - 2.5% under \$60,000.

Seminars

In addition to offering counseling, the CFW offered a total of 21 seminars, 14 focused on the legal process of separation and divorce in Montgomery County. Five of these were offered in Spanish. The legal seminars serve as an important adjunct to the counseling service and aim to assist couples facing separation and divorce and are designed to help reduce the financial and emotional costs of divorce by providing important information

on the legal process, strategies for finding and selecting an attorney, what to expect from the attorney, as well as information on property and custody issues. These seminars were organized in partnership with the Montgomery County Bar Association Family Law Division, The Montgomery County Women’s Bar Association and the Montgomery County Divorce Roundtable. Attorneys from these three organizations worked on the revision of the CFW’s guide *Surviving the Legal Process of Separation and Divorce in Montgomery County*. The revised version was published in both English and Spanish, and distributed to individuals attending legal seminars since April 2014.

The CFW also sponsored two seminars on money and divorce, another on mediation, one on financial literacy for women, and one on the collaborative approach to divorce. In addition, in collaboration with the EEO Compliance and Diversity Management Division of Montgomery County Department of Human Resources, the Commission for Women organized two seminars, one on special issues facing older women and a second on challenges confronting Muslim women in our community, especially new immigrants.

With a combined audience of 333, the seminars generated revenue of \$2569.96. The CFW used Eventbrite to collect the fees and registration. All revenues were deposited in the CFW restricted donations account.

A glance at the FY 14 CFW seminars

Date	Time	Topic	Language	Attendance
September 19, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	40
September 19, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	Spanish	5
October 17, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	26
October 24, 2013	7 p.m.	Mediation	English	17
November 21, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	17
November 21, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	Spanish	2
December 12, 2013	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	18
January 16, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	15
January 16, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	Spanish	2
February 6, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	9
February 20, 2014	7 p.m.	Divorce and Money	English	19
March 6, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	10
March 6, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	Spanish	3
March 19, 2014	11:30 a.m.	Senior Women	English	34
April 3, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	19
April 8, 2014	11:30 a.m.	Muslim Women	English	48
May 1, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	English	15
May 1, 2014	7 p.m.	Separation & Divorce	Spanish	3
May 15, 2014	7 p.m.	Collaborative Divorce	English	8
May 22, 2014	7 p.m.	Money and Divorce	English	8
June 5, 2014	7 p.m.	Money Matters	English	15
TOTAL ATTENDANCE				333

Looking Forward

At its June 11 meeting, the MC CFW elected Debra Bright Harris, Ed.D. as its president. As always, some commissioners' terms are complete and new commissioners will be appointed in July. Commissioners Lorna Forde and Heather Reichardt were elected first and second vice president, respectively, so strong and effective leadership is in place for what will undoubtedly be a year of transition. The CFW will hold its annual planning session at its September meeting, to develop its agenda for FY 15, establishing its priority areas of concern and forming committees to address each issue.

As always, new commissioners and new leadership will bring new ideas, strategies and priorities, and as always, many of the issues addressed in the past year remain unresolved and still require attention and advocacy.

New staffing will mean new challenges at first, but it will also mean new opportunities for growth and direction. The Commission for Women enters this new year committed to and clearly focused and ready to work effectively on its mandate to advocate for Montgomery County's women and girls.



Montgomery County *Commission for Women*

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