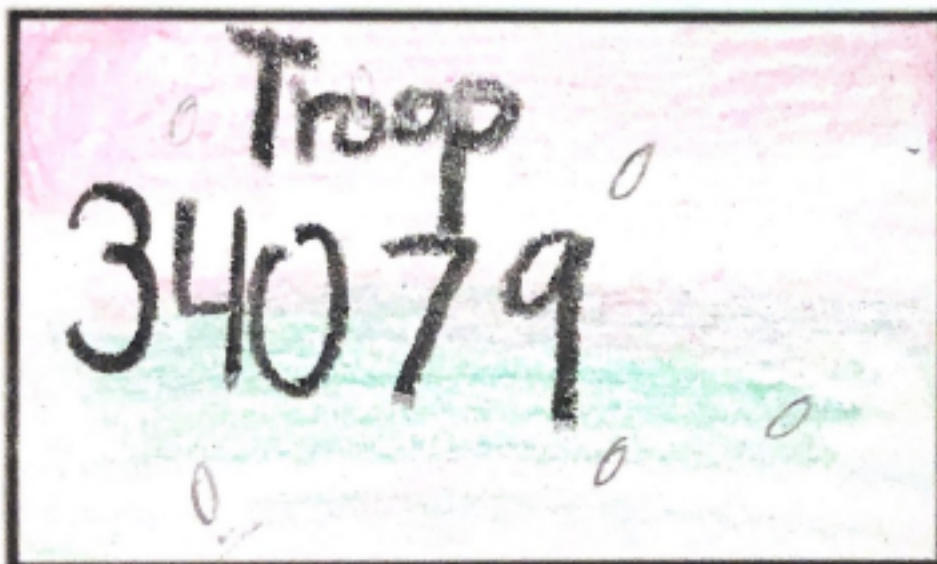


By: Colette Jaksic



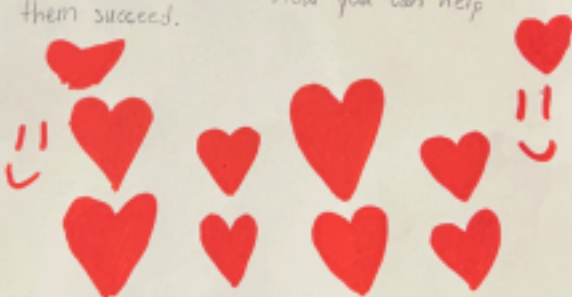


Morgan - 3/10/23

Remember the children

Remember the children you used to be.
Remember the children who are now like me.
Think of all that we hope for.
There needs to be a way to open the door.
Make sure all the security is tight and safe.
So we can all have a better place.
More resources is the key.
Especially for artsy kids like me.
When you try to leave women and girls out.
We won't back down. We will speak out.
Because when you try to bring us down.
And try to make us frown, we will use
our kindness to turn the world around.

You women, are making this world change
To make this world a better place.
You made dreams seem real: ~~to possible~~
Even though we couldn't feel them.
You are the people us girls and women
look up to. But we all know it wasn't easy
for you. So remember the children you
used to be. And now, how you can help
them succeed.



By: Morgan Alexis Johnson

Hello council members,

I'm Mya Twyman, I attend Forest Oak Middle School as an 8th grader. Congratulations to the newly elected women majority.

I'm glad to see how much I'm being represented with the history making of the election with the first majority women county council. As advice to the newly reelected council, I've come up with 3 things we can do to make women in general feel safe and encouraged in the community.

This is important because a lot of women didn't feel included in the decision making. Many times they feel as though they are the government's last concern and nothing would really benefit them. They never felt represented in the government given that all they saw was a bunch of men making decisions to benefit themselves. After years of going through this, women finally got the breakthrough they were dreaming about. The County elected their first women majority council. With this new council, things could change for young women growing up. Not only do I speak for myself, but all the young girls my age. Here are my three suggestions for the council.

1. Outreach

There are many women who are struggling, who feel alone in the world thinking there is nowhere to go. A community that cares is key to making anyone feel safe. I think we should hold more outreach in the community. We should have circle meetings where women can come and express how they feel about the world, life, or anything in general without the fear of being judged for what they think. I believe if young women see the way people reach out to them, they will feel comfortable reaching out to others. There should be clubs where women can discuss problems they face daily.

2. Community boxes

When you see women getting raped it can be very scary. It can make you feel as though you are not safe in the world and that we have to change ourselves to feel safe against violence. I think that a community box where women can write their thoughts about what goes on around them and remain anonymous would be great. Just writing your thoughts down on paper can make a person feel so much better.

3. Be there

Today it's a lot of women vs women and not women vs the world. We need to learn that we are all in this together. We want justice for all of us. Definitely having women council members involved in the community is great but sometimes it's more than that. Making efforts to let the community know you care, by your actions and not just saying it because you are on television. Making someone comfortable requires a lot of transparency. To protect against the attacks coming towards us as women, we need to be each other's shield.

Sincerely,

Mya Twyman

Girl Power Essay

In recent times, we have witnessed a significant shift towards creating a more inclusive and diverse society. One notable example is the election of six women to the County Council, which is a positive step toward gender equality. Therefore, I will provide advice on how the County Council can make our community a safe and encouraging place for women and girls.

Firstly, education and awareness are crucial in promoting gender equality. The council can initiate awareness campaigns that emphasize the importance of respecting women and girls. This can include gender equality lessons in school curriculums to help young people understand the value of equality. These campaigns should promote gender diversity and inclusion in all areas of life. When people understand that gender equality is essential, they are more likely to support the council's initiatives to make our community safe and inclusive.

Secondly, the council can install additional streetlights in areas with high foot traffic and provide security cameras in public places. Additionally, the council can partner with local businesses to promote safe environments, such as providing transport for women working late at night. These measures will help women feel safer in public spaces and reduce the risk of gender-based violence.

Thirdly, promoting equal opportunities for women and girls is essential. The council should encourage young girls to pursue their dreams and provide resources to help them succeed. By doing so, the council can create a level playing field where women have the same opportunities as men.

Fourthly, the council should provide support services such as counseling, legal aid, and medical assistance to women and girls who are at risk of violence. The council should increase the availability of hotlines, shelters, and safe spaces for women and girls facing gender-based violence.

Fifthly, the council should encourage the community to get involved in creating a safer environment for women and girls. Programs that involve men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women should be encouraged. The council can also engage with community leaders to help create a safe and inclusive environment for women.

Finally, the council should embrace diversity and promote inclusion in all areas of life. Women come from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and the council should celebrate these differences. The council can encourage women from different backgrounds to participate in community activities and events to foster a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, the election of six women to the County Council is a positive step toward creating a safe and encouraging community for women and girls. However, there is still work to be done to promote gender equality and ensure that women and girls are safe and encouraged to achieve their dreams. By implementing these measures, the county council can help create a community where girls and women feel safe and encouraged to do anything they dream of.

By: Marilyn Zhang

By: Morgen Thompson

WE NOW HAVE 6 WOMEN ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL! WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM TO MAKE SURE OUR COMMUNITY IS A PLACE WHERE WOMEN AND GIRLS CAN FEEL SAFE AND ENCOURAGED?

Who runs the county? GIRLS! In this case, six spectacular women - the Montgomery County Council's first female-majority council.

Coincidentally, the number six is meaningful to me. It is my favorite number. It is the number of my best friends. It is one of my favorite musical comedies, *Six*, by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss. *Six* is a modern retelling of the lives of the six wives of Henry VIII in the form of a pop concert. Each of the wives, Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anna of Cleves, Katherine Howard, and Catherine Parr, take turns telling their story, to see who suffered the most from Henry VIII.

My advice to the 'Spectacular Six' for ensuring our community is a place where women and girls can feel safe and encouraged is inspired by the musical *Six*.

Dawn Luedtke: Prioritize families, not politics, as they are essential to a strong society. Families have a crucial role in social development and endure the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of children. Remember mothers and daughters when legislating for educational programs, health care, reproductive rights, etc.

Kate Stewart: Who saves the world? GIRLS! Legislate for environmentally friendly changes in local government buildings, clean commuting initiatives, reduction of methane emissions, mandatory recycling, etc. Our future depends on it. Fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being will be challenging. "A strong woman knows she has strength enough for the journey, but a woman of strength knows that it is in the journey where she will become strong (author unknown)."

Kristin Mink: Listen to community voices, especially girls and young adults. Considering the voices and perspectives of young adults on issues directly affecting them is essential. Anyone can take action for change, no matter their age.

Laurie Anne Sayles: Promote women inclusion regardless of zip code. Inclusion ensures all girls and women feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, providing a psychologically safe space to contribute diverse perspectives. Who doesn't want to be treated with respect, politeness, and courtesy, and be heard?

Marilyn Balcombe: Keep being the only woman in the room, like Nancy Pelosi. It is perfectly fine and boss! Your courage has and will continue to inspire girls and other women to be confident even when outnumbered. "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair (Shirley Chisholm).

Natali Fani-Gonzalez: Support public libraries and organizations because history and education are paramount. Book banning, racial cleansing, and erasing or rewriting history will not change facts. The knowledge of history teaches us who we were as a people so we better understand who we may become.

My advice applies to all of the 'Spectacular Six.' Collectively, you can and will transform Montgomery County so young girls and women won't have to suffer at anyone's hands!

The Tapestry of Mentorship

The group of queens lead the way
Holding a tapestry embedded with resources of support
Threads of methods for the girls to manage stress and feel confident every day
Invitations for them to share their personal stories within their fort

For the ones whose backs ached from the issues and people
Making them feel unsafe in their community
The queens found all their potential and talent to make them feel peaceful
Wrapping the fabric closely around them for immunity

They uplift the local women-led groups
That make a difference which moves the fabric
The queens add a new design they weave with loops
That they carry with honor like magic

This tapestry becomes a cloth for their table they organized
Voices lifted like lanterns during conversations
The young girls education was prioritized
So they can become the next leaders in their nations

To hold this tapestry high and continue being role models in the right direction
Just like the queens that break economic and health limits
To ensure women's rights to protection
Bringing all women to equality for any girl who visits

By: Daniela Martinez

Authentically Me

By: Natalie Jean



Authentically Me



Natalie Jean
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11



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<https://youtu.be/FBe34y38yu4>

We are Always Counting on More

Natasha Shangold

Growing up, as a Girl Scout, especially in the early 2000s, I had the privilege of meeting Senator Barbara Mikulski in a world where there were only “9 [women] and counting” in the Senate. Nine out of 100 potential people. Only 9% in the early 2000s.

The significance of this introduction is the “and counting” part. We continue to strive for more, for better. Even in *Nine and Counting*, since its first publication, four more women were added to the list, making it thirteen, and currently the Senate has 25 women, making it 25%. Though it may not seem like it at first, this is a huge leap!

As for the Montgomery County Council, at its inception, the first council only had one woman represented, and she was formally known as “Mrs. Ralph E. Himstead” so even her own name was not warranted to publicly publish. So, now out of the 11 members, 6 are women. The majority! Who would ever have thought that one day, women would represent the majority of constituents.

It is imperative that we continue to strive for the best for society, representing the most of what we all need. I implore this council to realize and recognize women’s potential without disregarding and/or shaming other people in the process. We can continue to grow, one woman at a time.