

# International Women's Day



A celebration of the global women  
of YAP, Inc.



# Lori Burrus

YAP, Inc. National Disabilities Coordinator

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"My parents are my heroes. My mom, she died of breast cancer when I was 12, but she left an impact on us and made us more independent. Definitely my father also, a Black American man in a white community, raising three kids."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"I love seeing an individual with a disability shine, have a choice, and a voice."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"We need to be leaders, that should be the goal for young women, and not to feel guilty because you have kids and you got married."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Mary J. Blige has a song called 'Good Morning Gorgeous'. She's not talking about the physical aspect, she also talks about the emotional aspect. So for me, for young women, you can do all that stuff, but what is your soul? What's your heart?"



Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

01/10

# Gabriela Altman

Siembra Bien Executive Director



Guatemala City, Guatemala

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"My mother. Despite suffering an illness, she was perhaps the strongest person one can know. She was positive, never gave up, and stood behind her values and principles."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"It is getting to the point where you can see results. To see the transformation of the community or that you contributed to the living conditions for the mothers, or see the children smile. You contributed to that transformation."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"So much needs to change. End gender-based violence. We need economic justice for work done. Sexual and reproductive health and rights prioritized. Access to education. Equal opportunities for girls. Leadership opportunities for girls and young women. There is a lot of work to be done."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Be who you are. Decide what your morals, principles, and ethics are and let them guide you. Be a role model for other young people."



02/10

# Dorienne Silva

YAP builder 1992 - 2023

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"My Christian beliefs inspire me. Other women inspire me. People who have not sacrificed, but have put aside their own needs on behalf of others, inspire me."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"I don't have favorites, I have a lot of things I love. I love meeting different people. I love being able to have such a board range of work. The opportunity to coach and mentor people. Change policy and systems, bring new ideas on how to help youth and families remain together and strengthen and empower them."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"First the obvious, old attitudes and stereotypes. Every woman has a different circumstance, different belief system, different background, and that needs to be supported. Just let people be able to be their unique and true self."

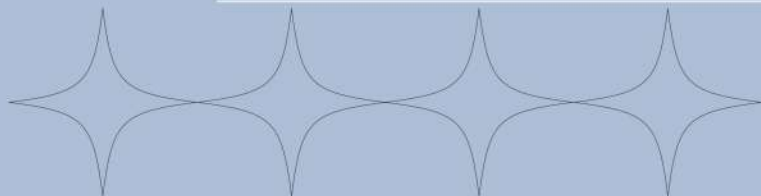
## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Never stop learning and growing. Always, always, always have empathy for people. Be true to yourself, know who you are."



Georgia, U.S.A

03/10





# Rebecca Escobar

YAP, Inc. Program Director

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"My mother. She was a great example of a woman fostering her own path at a time that it wasn't easy."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"In the ministry of love, our job is to put in the seeds of knowledge, of hope, of resiliency, of empowerment, all those little seeds, put them in their heart as much as we can. And then at the end, hopefully we will see them grow."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"We need to continue empowering girls early on with the tools they need to actually identify and pursue their passion. We should also continue to ensure that we push for equal treatment, equal partnership, and equal pay because it's going to trickle down to our future generations. The future is female, and I really believe that slogan is a true statement."

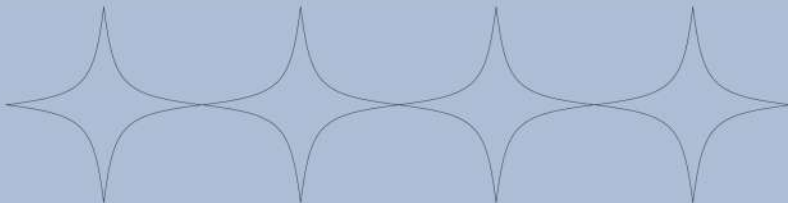
## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Don't give up. It only takes one person to take a stand to be that agent of change, and that is going to trickle down to others. That's how being a leader is; you start first, then go from there... Don't let fear or others get in the way of your mission in life or what it is you want to do."



New Jersey, U.S.A.

04/10



# Siobhan O'Dwyer

YAP Ireland Chief Executive Officer



Dublin, Ireland

WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"The suffragettes would have inspired me when I was younger. Now McCafferty and Nelson Mandela would inspire me. Lots of different people over the years have and continue to inspire me."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"The strengths-based model really, and the fact that we accept everybody where they're at."

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"The biggest issue is obviously poverty and deprivation... The lack of opportunity and the lack of hope continues on and there are no magic wands. That is the biggest barrier to both girls and boys actually achieving their full potential."

WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Think about what it is that you want to do and that you are going to be happy doing. They need to take those risks, stand up for themselves, and believe in themselves."



05/10

# Anna Gambiroza

Queensland YAP Advocate

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"I really love Brene Brown. She brings the best of both worlds. Having the ability to speak to people and having the brains and passion to use her knowledge and make it so accessible."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"Every little thing I do has a purpose and makes a difference in someone's life. You have been that person that's been there throughout it all and you've seen them at their lowest and at their highest."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"We need to speak more about what women are capable of. It's about enabling and encouraging girls to do what they want to do in school or outside of school or with friends. It needs to be spoken about that they're so much more than just looks."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"If you want something, you'll find a way. It won't be easy or straightforward, but if you know it's something you want to do, there's a way to meet people and go places. You've got to hold on to the belief that you can make it happen, and you will."



Brisbane, Australia

06/10



# Alexandra Gheorghica

Community Engagement Exchange Fellow at Los Angeles YAP  
Program, California, U.S.A.

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"A lot of people and things inspire me. I had my godmother... and then a team that inspires me because I have hardworking people, and people that really love their work."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"... Definitely seeing the participants getting more comfortable and more confident... especially when you have participants who are shy and take initiative and really start to do their own thing in their communities."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"Normalizing women being part of the decision making process and encouraging them to do that... getting involved in these kinds of advocacy campaigns and collaborating with authorities. Women can be part of the decision making process and encouraged to do that."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Try and see what is out there. Once you find something you love, do it and don't let others try to keep you from it."



Bacau, Romania

07/10



# Aisling Madden Nodwell

YAP Ireland Service Manager



Kildare, Ireland

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"At my placement in college I had this mentor and the connection I made with her was so impactful. She created a positive learning environment that was very experiential and inclusive. It gave me a lot of learning opportunities."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"It gives you the best of both worlds. That practical side where you can meet the young people and applicants, get to see what the outcomes are, and hear stories on the ground, while also having data management and that strategic element where the focus is on how we can grow the organization."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"I'm about to go on maternity leave and I've never questioned for a minute if that's going to hamper my progression or career; but if I was in a different organization, maybe I would feel differently. Those are the conversations and considerations. Then you have the whole pay parity, and childcare. It disincentivizes women going back to work."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"It is important for women to put themselves out there, be confident in their abilities, and find those support systems both professionally and personally."



08/10

# Suellen Lembke

YAP Australia Manager

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"It's the women who've made discoveries or created, designed, or developed cures or products who have been unsung and had little recognition at the time."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"I think it is seeing young people develop self-agency, the ability to make good decisions or to make decisions and know why they've made them and see them develop self love."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"There are still so many systemic barriers that impact girls and women significantly and they're the critical pieces. Women have got to have ownership of their own bodies and the right to determine what happens to them. It is about equity, isn't it? Seeing women as equal."

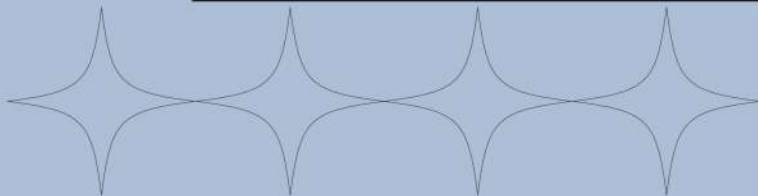
## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"Don't raise the drawbridge. If you get to a position of leadership or where you have influence, don't make it hard for the women behind you to get an opportunity."



Sydney, Australia

09/10



# Ajara Bomah

SLYAP Executive Director

## WHO INSPIRES YOU?

"My mom is an inspiration because she left early on and moved to America as a first generation African woman and had to work her way up to different challenges. She was navigating the paths and open doors in the US without anyone to direct her."

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

"At the end of the day, I feel good when I go to sleep and feel that I've been able to create impact and touch lives. I want to be someone to leave a legacy of impact as I'm developing and I'm building my own footprints on this journey called life."

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WORLD TO SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS?

"We need to raise boys that understand the value and importance of having women in their lives, not just as partners or mothers, but as co-creators. As women, we should always stop limiting ourselves, the possibilities are limitless, let's keep raising the bar and pushing forward opening doors that have been closed to our gender."

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN/GIRLS?

"I believe in the power of mentorship and having positive female relationships. Don't take no for an answer until you can't do anything but take that. Keep knocking on those doors and keep pushing."



Freetown, Sierra Leone

10/10





March 2023