

WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS 1915 - 2008

*The Women's City Club of New York
is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization
that shapes public policy through education,
advocacy and citizen participation.*

**WOMEN'S CITY CLUB
OF NEW YORK**

307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1403 | New York, NY 10001 | Phone: 212-353-8070
Fax: 212-228-4665 | E-mail: info@wccny.org | Web: www.wccny.org

WHAT DOES THE WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK DO? FIGHT!

ERNESTINE FRIEDLAENDER
WCC PRESIDENT, 1975 - 1982

In this city of millions, there is a group of women advocating for policies of fairness, equity and inclusion for all New Yorkers. That group is the **WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK** - an organization unique among civic organizations. Its special character has grown out of a pattern of non-partisan and multi-issue activism that has been an effective force for social change since its founding in 1915.

From its beginnings on the eve of women's suffrage, members recognized that winning the vote would carry certain obligations. They took their citizenship seriously and grasped the opportunity to learn, understand and scrutinize every phase of municipal governance. They seized the chance to educate themselves and other women about the issues and how to become involved in policy debates and the political process. And, they identified ways to enlighten public officials, thus becoming an influence for responsive government and a body of opinion that could not be ignored. Its early members, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Frances Perkins and Belle Moskowitz, were prominent forces in American history, and its current ones command the attention of public officials who call WCC members "*reasoned citizen-advocates who know the way to City Hall.*"

Early on, the WCC established itself as it:

- organized a rally for safe working conditions in garment factories (1915)
- campaigning to allow physicians to give birth control information (1917)
- financed and sent a volunteer ambulance unit to France during WWI (1919)
- fought for playground space and free lunches in public schools (1922)
- drafted and ensured passage of NYS's first child labor laws (1924)
- led a delegation to Albany in support of a multiple dwelling bill (1928)

Today, WCC's legacy continues as it advocates for:

- universal access to affordable, quality health care
- smaller classes and fairly funded schools
- an adequate supply of affordable housing; informed urban planning
- environmental initiatives to ensure clean air, water and energy
- expanded public transportation options
- reproductive justice, equity and equality for women and girls
- an end to human trafficking and domestic violence
- social programs to lift and keep people out of poverty
- preservation of New York's cultural and historic heritage, and
- government reforms to ensure participation, accountability & transparency.

The selected highlights in this publication document WCC's tradition of activism, service and leadership since its founding in 1915. For more information, please visit our website at www.wccny.org.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WCC ACHIEVEMENTS

1915 - 2008

2008

- Urged federal officials to rescind directive that would drastically reduce number of children eligible for State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- Urged Congress to increase welfare grant
- Supported state funding for redevelopment of parks and infrastructure of Governors Island to enable it to become a great civic and educational space
- Supported development / implementation of cost-effective programs that mandate and/or provide incentives for reduced energy consumption in NYC buildings
- Supported pilot congestion pricing program with revenues devoted to mass transit improvements; urged tax provisions to mitigate burden on low-income people
- Asked city officials to clarify criteria for emergency shelter placement of families
- Urged City Council to support *Green Cart Legislation* to increase access to nutritious food for New York City children
- Urged Jets to eliminate sexual harassment of women at home games.

Public Programs: Three-Part Series: Changing Health Care 2008 - Information Leading To Action; Poverty: The Forgotten Cause; Affordable Housing: How Far Have We Come?; Impact of Budget Cuts on NYC's Public School Children; Greening the Code: Overview of NYC's New Construction Codes

2007

- Urged Congress to expand Earned Income Tax Credit to working poor families and extend Child Tax Credit to childless workers.
- Urged Congress to eliminate rule requiring families seeking subsidized child care to participate in child support enforcement efforts
- Urged Congress to support bipartisan legislation expanding SCHIP: State Children's Health Insurance Program and to oppose President's threatened veto
- Supported federal amendment to fund and expand school based health centers
- Supported U.S. National Health Insurance Act that would create a single payer health care system (Medicare-For-All bill)
- Urged Department of Labor to maintain integrity of Family & Medical Leave Act
- Acknowledged threat of climate change and pledged to work to mitigate effects
- Supported passage of NYS legislation that would criminalize human trafficking
- Supported bill to update New York's reproductive rights laws
- Wrote members of State Senate and Assembly in support of goals of PlaNYC
- Urged Governor to sign bill to promote sustainable wage jobs and nontraditional employment for workers receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Commented on proposed State regulations for assisted living residences; urged that residents be permitted to "age-in place" with all the enhanced care necessary
- Urged state officials to support Housing Opportunity Fund to provide greater access to affordable and supportive homes for New Yorkers
- Recommended that City's homeless services provide families placed in housing with information about resources in their new neighborhoods, and expand the newborn home visiting program to families in Work Advantage Programs
- Supported increased funding of NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

- Expressed concern that NYC may not be fulfilling the State's mandate for use of funds from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit
 - Asked Independent Budget Office to report on progress of Mayor's New Housing Marketplace Program to create and preserve affordable housing; issued press release examining plan's likelihood of success
- Public Programs: The President & The Constitution Today; Diversity in the Workplace; Impact of Global Warming; Are You a Feminist? A Male Perspective; Tragedy of Human Trafficking: Slave Trade in the 21st Century

2006

- Opposed federal requirement that all NYS English Language Learner students in US for one year or more take same English Language Arts test as all students
 - Supported increasing federal minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour
 - Urged US to protect rights of women and girls in Afghanistan
 - Opposed federal "stop over-spending" bill as it would lead to massive cuts in most domestic programs while shielding tax cuts from fiscal discipline
 - Supported parity bill, "Timothy's Law," preventing health insurance companies from limiting behavioral health coverage for certain mental illnesses
 - Supported improved health care access for New Yorkers, including immigrants
 - Opposed proposed state tax credits that divert public money from public schools
 - Supported an exception to the five-year statute of limitations in rape cases
 - Joined *amicus brief* filed by Campaign for Fiscal Equity that challenged NYS's school finance system as it underfunds NYC's public schools
 - Urged city to permit formerly homeless recipients of housing subsidies to keep their rent supplement when they transition from welfare to work
 - Urged Mayor to pursue federal waiver allowing able-bodied, childless single adults to receive food stamps
 - Recommended ways Board of Elections can ensure voting system confidence
 - Supported city funding of Naumburg Bandshell to restore and repair buildings
- Public Programs: What Ever Happened to Good Government? Power of One in Movement for Justice; Are You a Feminist? An Intercultural Perspective; The State of Transportation in New York City - Priorities and Challenges

2005

- Supported amendment to ban inhuman, degrading treatment of detainees
- Opposed proposal to discontinue data collection on women's employment
- Supported reauthorization of Violence Against Women Act
- Opposed "flexible fund family services" block grant proposals
- Opposed Medicaid cuts at federal and state levels
- Endorsed *Unlock the Block: Release the Vote* challenging disenfranchisement laws preventing individuals convicted of a felony from voting
- Supported reauthorizing Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); urged women US Senators to assume leadership role for this effort
- Opposed proposals that require closing TANF cases while families reapply for safety net benefits, and, impose 45-day waiting period for benefits to resume
- Supported full repeal of provision in Higher Education Act that mandates the denial of financial aid to students with prior federal or state drug convictions

- Supported City Council resolution calling upon Bush Administration to abandon efforts to dismantle the current Social Security system.
 - Urged City to increase number and quality of training for poll workers
 - Testified before City Council in support of increased accountability and transparency of Landmarks Preservation Commission
 - Testified before City Council opposing Hudson Yards sports stadium
 - Supported Women’s Restroom Equity Act
 - Published updated WCC report: Snapshot of NYC Charter Schools
- Public Programs: Revitalizing Citizen Participation for the 21st Century; DNA Exonerations as A Learning Moment; Social Security Debate: Impact on Women; Civil Rights, Voting Rights: Past and Present; Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; Solid Facts About Solid Waste; Emergency Contraception: The Politics of Women’s Health; Are You A Feminist? An Intergenerational Dialogue

2004

- Participated in March for Women’s Lives in Washington, DC
 - Endorsed “EPIC WORKS” principles for affordable prescription drug coverage
 - Urged NYS to support efforts to extend federal fiscal relief for Medicaid
 - Urged development of Hudson Yards include affordable housing; transparent decision making; no football stadium; expanded Javits Center; extended #7 line
 - Testified before NYS Assembly in support of mandatory inclusionary zoning
 - Joined *Roadmap for Reform*: 10 steps lawmakers can take to change Albany
 - Supported electronic voting machines with verifiable paper trail
 - Urged City to adopt debt-pay-down policy
 - Joined Rekindling Reform Coalition promoting need for quality health care
 - Supported City Council efforts for lead-safe environment policy
 - Reaffirmed commitment to arts education in public schools
 - Testified before City Council in support of reduced class size
 - Testified before City Council urging appointment of Board of Elections Commissioners who support transparent voting procedures
 - Published reports: NYC’s Affordable Housing Crisis: What Can Be Done? Problems Experienced by Community Groups Working With Landmarks Preservation Commission (in collaboration with other NYC preservation groups)
- Public Programs: Public Authorities: Time for Change; Prescription Drug Discount Cards: For Better or Worse; Human Cost of Rockefeller Drug Laws; Shortchanging NYC’s School Children; Incredible Shrinking Safety Net: Welfare Reform; Well-Being of NYC’s Children; Immigrants, Politics and the Ethnic Press

2003

- Opposed Medicare Modernization Act; opposed federal and state Medicaid cuts
- Urged moratorium on federal tax cuts
- Opposed replacing Section 8 Vouchers with federal block grant
- Supported regulating assisted living facilities in NYS
- Supported coordinated construction act for lower Manhattan
- Opposed nonpartisan elections for NYC candidates
- Opposed tuition increases for CUNY senior colleges and restructuring of tuition assistance programs that would disadvantage low-income students

•Report: NYC's Welfare Programs-Impact on NYC, Danger Signs Ahead (Part II)
Public Programs: Remaking Schools: Future of Charter Schools in NYC; Trends and Issues of Aging of America; Albany Health Care Budget Battle: Putting All New Yorkers at Risk; How Can We Meet the Need for Affordable Housing?

2002

- Opposed death penalty at state and federal levels
- Supported Neighborhood Reinvestment Act of 2002
- Urged NYS to ensure affordable, healthy drinking water supply
- Supported bill to provide comprehensive health care to NYS women
- Supported New York City Living Wage Bill
- Testified before Community School Governance Reform Taskforce in support of defining responsibilities and accountability, adequate resources to support instruction, parental involvement
- Published reports: Snapshot of NYC Charter Schools; New Welfare: Outcomes of Welfare Reform and Implications for New York City

Public Programs: Making Health Care a Reality for New Yorkers; Campaign Finance Reform; Alternatives to Incarceration for Women with Children; Women Have Changed the Practice of Law; NY Rebuilds - Are We Getting It Right?

2001

- Opposed term limits for public officials
- Supported better training/higher pay for poll workers, improved communication between polling place/borough election headquarters

Public Programs: What You Should Know About Assisted Living; Impact of Market Forces on Public Health and Hospital System; HIV/AIDS - A Women's Issue; Capital Punishment: Political and Ethical Issues; Leveling the Playing Field: Women Athletes and Title IX; Battered Women and Feminist Lawmaking

2000

- Social Security positions: remain as defined benefit, no reduced benefit levels, supported cost of living increase, supported current retirement age for full benefits, opposed diverting payroll taxes to individual private investment accounts.
- Supported employees' right to organize
- Condemned brutal system of gender apartheid imposed by Taliban on women and girls in Afghanistan
- Supported discretionary work release for women convicted of striking back at their abusers
- Supported allowing victims of sexual assault, while on the job, to sue in court if their employer's negligence led to the assault
- Urged state and city correction institutions to enforce proper discharge procedures for inmates with diagnosed mental illness
- Opposed highway expansions that threaten New York's water supply
- Supported Park Avenue Armory as shelter for homeless women
- Urged NYPD to improve how they deal with emotionally disturbed persons
- Testified before City Council in support of renewing rent regulation laws
- Testified before Interagency Coordinating Council on Homelessness in support

of increased permanent housing options, comprehensive psychiatric services in facilities, transfer of operations from city to nonprofits, including permanent housing placement in discharge plans from prisons, psychiatric wards, hospitals, reevaluating assessment system for women, planning for benefit time limit gaps
Public Programs: Urban Summit: Making Ourselves Heard; Women's Business Ownership; Term Limits and Gotham's Government; The Children of Bedford Hills; Stepping Up to Power: Political Journey of American Women

1999

- Supported development of affordable assisted living facilities; contracts defining policies and resident rights; mandatory licensing for units that house residents with dementia; state oversight of discharge procedures
- Supported NY/NYII: Housing for Homeless, Mentally Ill People
- Urged adequate legal counsel for victims of domestic violence
- Joined Brooklyn Bridge Coalition to ensure public access to waterfront
- Testified before NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services opposing rules limiting press conferences and demonstrations at City Hall
- Published report: Homeless Women: New York's Permanent Emergency
Public Programs: Second Avenue Subway: Dream or Reality; Role of Public Hospitals in NYC; Non-Traditional Jobs for Women; Teen Mothers, Infant Deaths

1998

- Supported Campaign Finance Reform
- Supported court restructuring
- Supported School Board elections by registered voters and by parents of children attending schools regardless of citizenship
- Opposed NYC Charter revision
Public Programs: The Conscience of the City: Women and Their Organizations; Work Fare and Fair Work; New Directions in Zoning: Does the Public Benefit? Why are the Heroes Always White?

1997

- TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) positions: opposed vouchers, supported education and training as work, supported childcare provisions
Public Programs: Microcredit as a Means of Alleviating Poverty; How Can Our Libraries Prepare for 21st Century? Sweatshop Legislation and Job Training; Economic Discrimination Based on Sex; Roe v Wade: Anniversary Remembrance

1996

- Opposed proposed changes to NYS nursing home regulations
- Opposed cuts in NYC recycling program
- Reviewed foster care housing subsidy program for NYC Comptroller
- Testified before City Council in support of manufacturing zones for retail
- Testified before the Arts Commission opposing signs and kiosks in Central Park
- Published report: Job Training: A New Imperative for Women
Public Programs: Economic and Social Developments in the Bronx; NYPD Quality of Life Initiatives; Should Casino Gambling Be Legal in NYS? Thumb Print of a Community: Patterns of Violence Against Women and Children

1995

- Published report: An Emergency That Won't Disappear - follow-up report that studied NYC's shelters for homeless single women
- Produced 28 minute video: Meeting the Challenge: HIV/AIDS Awareness Among Youth (*utilized by New York City Board of Education*)

1994

Public Programs: Privatization: An Analysis of the Issue; A Call to Revitalize Arts Education in NYC Public Schools

1993

Public Programs: The City as Contractor: Perspective of Six Not-for-Profit Service Providers; Multicultural Education in NYC Schools

1992

- Published AIDS Education in NYC High Schools 1989-91: Lessons to be Learned
 - Published Housing Resource Directory for Homeless Women, 2nd edition
- Public Program: Improving the NYC Women's Shelter System.

1990

- Published Directory of Housing Resources for Homeless Women
- Public Program: AIDS: Its Impact on Children and Their Families

1989

Public Program: NYC Zoning: Need for Reform

1988

- Part VIII: Women in Executive & High Level Positions in NYC Government
- Organized 61 organizations into the Coalition for Homeless Women

1986

- 70th Anniversary Conference: Goals for NYC for the Year 2000

1985

- Published Handbook for Research Projects

1984

Public Program: Strengthening the Vital Link: The School Child and the Arts

1983

- Report of Six Board of Education Centers: Giving Dropouts a Second Chance

1981

- Published summary: Study of Women in Executive Positions in NYC Government
- Part V: Women in Executive Positions in NYC Government: Women in the Human Resources Administration

1980

- Part I- IV: Survey of Women in Executive Positions in NYC Government: NYC Public Schools; CUNY; Planning, Building, Housing, Sanitation, Environmental Protection Agencies; Health Service Agencies in NYC
- Published report: The Critical Years, A Study of Junior High School Title I Reading Programs in Two NYC School Districts

1979

- Report: Factors Affecting Attendance in a Sample of NYC High Schools
- Criticized media who fail to cover news from civic groups
- Public Program: Does Community Management Have a Future?

1978

- Organized Coalition for Improved Nursing Home Care
- Public Programs: NYC Constitutional Convention of 1967; Improving New York City's Complaint Handling System

1977

- Published Reports: With Love and Affection: A Study of Building Abandonment; Early Reading Experiences in Selected NYC Public Schools
- Public Program: Open Admissions: A Good Start, A Good School

1976

- Published Report: The Privileged Many: A Study of The City University's Open Admissions Policy, 1970-1975

1975

- Helped establish NYC Commission on the Status of Women
- Urged immediate completion of Second Avenue subway
- Conference on New York City's fiscal crisis: recommended public review of NYC budget, reforms and proposed cuts; citywide wage/hiring freeze to avoid massive layoffs; NYS financing of welfare, corrections, education, courts

1972

- Opposed federal funding cuts of local health centers, family planning, mental health programs; opposed shifting burden to insurance companies and patients

1971

- Criticized NYS legislature for drawing district lines without input from voters

1970

- Urged City Planning Commission to oppose requests by developers to change zoning to allow more and larger buildings in already crowded areas of city

1968

- Criticized federally funded Projects to Advance Creativity in Education because they "are cloaked in mystery" and a "hoax that raised false hopes"

1967

- Published study of building maintenance, relocation in Bellevue South Urban Renewal Area; found significant deterioration of buildings after City took control
 - Opposed State constitutional guarantee of tax exemption for property owned by charitable, religious, educational organizations
 - Published report: Opening the Door: Survey of Community Colleges of CUNY - recommended adding new colleges accessible to less privileged communities
 - Supported development of Waterside site to include low, middle-income units
- Public Program: Proposals for a New Constitution: Recommendations to the New York State Constitutional Convention of 1967

1966

- Published 3-year study: How Shall We Raise the Money? Proposals for Financing City Government that supported taxation rather than borrowing
- Public Program: Performance and Promise: NYC Local School Boards Revisited

1965

- Celebrated Fifty Years of Civic Service: Golden Anniversary, 1915-1965
- Public Program: Out-patient Clinical Services

1964

- Published Report: Housing Primer - explained federal, state and city housing agencies; defined housing terms; explained city's multiple dwelling code
- Supported Brooklyn Bridge urban renewal; criticized little low-income housing
- Criticized City's plan to expand subway system, its choice of location of Queens subway tunnel at 63rd Street and vagueness of plans for connecting lines

1963

- Recommended single primary in presidential election years
- Participated in March for Freedom and Jobs in Washington, DC
- Supported legalizing off-track betting
- Report: Study of Code Enforcement in 5 New-Law Tenements - found 1319 violations in 50 apartments; attributed problem to shortage of inspectors
- Conducted study: Bricks Without Straw: multi-trade vocational high schools

1962

- Conducted study of City Community Colleges
- Published Pamphlet: Housing Primer - explained types of housing constructed for City's different income groups
- Supported constitutional amendment giving Family Court jurisdiction over cases involving minors 16 - 19

1961

- Conducted study of Harlem Hospital Rebuilding
- WCC proposals for stronger mayor and City Council included in City Charter
- WCC vowed to work with other civic groups to abolish Board of Estimate and Borough Presidents, and to limit Comptroller's function to post-auditing

- Opposed Governor's proposal to give private college students funds regardless of schools' religious sponsorship
- Argued that responsibility of hiring and promoting teachers remain with Commissioner of Education
- Supported urban redevelopment plan of rehabilitation rather than bulldozing
Public Program: Compulsory Retirement at 65: Country's Most Wasteful Policy

1960

- Recommended separate work camps for juvenile delinquents 16-21 and 21-25
- Protested bill to lower education requirements for caseworkers and investigators at NYC Department of Welfare
- Urged NY's Blue Cross to add full maternity benefits and care
- Opposed bill requiring City employees to live within City limits
- Protested Mayor's proposed income tax rebates stating that money would be better used for education and other youth services
- Published Report: Strengthen or Abolish? Two-Year Study of Local NYC School Boards - proposed boards be strengthened and given greater respect by Board of Education, appointments to school boards be recommended by community and parent groups in each district
Public Programs: The Case for Fiscal Planning in New York City - in collaboration with nine other civic and service organizations

1958

- Urged Hospital Commissioner make contraceptive advice available to patients
- Published Report: Two-year study of Board of Education Facilities for Troubled Children and Children in Trouble
- Organized Series: Design for Effective Living in the New York Metropolitan Region; Zoning For a Better New York

1957

- Supported bill outlawing discrimination in private housing; stated defeat or delay of passage would be "admission that NYC, despite its moral horror at what happened in Little Rock, does not believe in the civil rights it professes to uphold"
Public Programs: NYS's Constitution: Time for a Change? Youth Shelters and Penal Practices; Forum on "Chasm" between young people and police officers

1956

- Criticized NYC slum clearance; claimed "urban renewal has burdened many members of minority groups, those with small children, the aging and the infirm"
- Urged centralized court system
- Published report: Manhattantown - Two Years Later, A Second Look at Tenant Relocation which recommended City form central relocation agency

1955

- Testified before City Council to support City multiple dwelling code "to force the city to adopt a housing program that would provide for both low- and middle-income families" - of 19 testimonies, only 5 supported bill

- Conducted study: What Are They Doing With Our Money? Performance Budget conducted with Citizens' Committee for Children

1954

- Published Pamphlet: "Futurama of New York City" supporting need for master plan including zoning of apartment houses, public buildings, schools, playgrounds, shops, highways
- Conducted study: "Tenant Relocation at West Park" - found only 10% of displaced families could afford the housing replacing theirs
- Published report: "Institutions for Delinquent Youth" - study of 23 correctional institutions for 16 - 21 year olds; recommended establishment of youth center for delinquents awaiting trial, City- or State-provided halfway houses, increased number of caseworkers, psychological or psychiatric services in all public institutions caring for delinquents

1953

- Conducted survey with 7 organizations of mayoral candidates' views for municipal management, budgeting, economy and financial programs

1952

- Endorsed principles of new zoning plan to diminish congestion in Manhattan, to "end need for children to seek play space in NYC's dangerous streets"
- Surveyed effectiveness of City and private efforts to assist "slum dwellers" forced from their homes to accommodate construction of higher priced housing
- Praised Mayor's education survey for improving communication between school administrators and parents

1951

- Sponsored 6-part series on middle-income family finances
- Supported bill requiring public employees keep complete financial records for 6 years to "aim blow at political corruption"

1950

- Studied 108 play streets in Manhattan; found only 19 clean
- Urged city hospitals to give special treatment to juvenile drug addicts
- Protested allegations by Joseph McCarthy's Senate subcommittee against WCC board member, accusing her of affiliating with Communist-front groups
- Public program: Forum on businesses considering women "old" at age 35

1949

- Published report: Courts of New York City and State
- Urged Mayor to immediately appoint impartial commission to survey City's services, resources and its financial relationship with state and local governments
- Recommended State constitutional amendment to permit City to borrow \$500 million for construction of 2nd Avenue subway
- Commended Board of Estimate for funding zoning studies by City Planning Commission; criticized Commission for not drawing up master plan for NYC

1948

- Published 64 page study: Better Housing for the Family of four City housing projects that revealed inadequate laundry facilities, insufficient storage space, and long distance to low-cost shopping, public transportation and clinics
- Urged funds from increased transit fares be released to Health Department to expand facilities and increase salaries
- Urged higher pay for probation officers

1947

- After surveying 11 academic high schools in the five boroughs, published report that recommended increase in counseling/guidance services and class size of 25
- Stated NYC Department of Welfare public assistance allowance is below normal living standards
- Declared crime movies and radio programs negatively influence children

1946

- Wrote Governor Dewey to criticize NYS minimum wage law; urged state aid to cities, appropriations for school lunches and reimbursement to NYC for its teacher training program

1945

- Beware of the Three Deadly D's: Dirt, Disease, Death
- Drafted child labor law regulating number of hours per week children under 17 can work; signed by Governor Dewey
- Sponsored mayoral candidates forum on housing and other issues

1944

- Criticized increase in employment of minors in industry
- Protested bill to abolish State Department of Labor's Women's Division and Division of Minimum Wage
- Published reports: Basic Training for Voters; Youth Shelters and Penal Practices

1943

- Mrs. Stanley Isaacs, chair of WCC American Red Cross bandage unit, reported that WCC members made 10,600 bandages in 3 weeks
- Urged establishment of children's shelter for those facing trial

1942

- Identified priority issues: supplemental medical services, racial discrimination, child care centers, coordination of war and defense efforts, juvenile delinquency
- Urged law to address juvenile delinquency as part of war effort
- Opposed legislation extending school leave for children to work in agriculture
- Opposed mandatory joint income tax returns for husbands and wives
- Published report: Non-Professional Woman as a Service Volunteer - found working women were more willing to participate in war effort
- Conducted study of custodial system in NYC Public Schools that recommended

use of public schools as community centers - cited in 1992 by press and elected officials as most definitive study on issue

•Published Report: Housing on the Lower East Side

Public Program: 10-session series: Buying Habits and Budgeting in Wartime

1941

•Eleanor Roosevelt gave keynote address at WCC 25th Anniversary celebration

•Identified priorities: extend NYS aid for kindergartens to give women time for defense activities; NYS aid for schools to teach principles of democracy; limit outdoor advertising due to restricted consumer goods during wartime; extend merit system for civil service; require NYC officials to pass civil service exam

•Created civilian defense committee as part of civic planning

Public Program: Is Alcoholism a Disease or Crime?

1940

•Identified priority issues: reorganize unsound pension systems; reform election laws; full state aid for education; low cost housing

•Published Report: Should Prostitution Receive Legal or Social Treatment?

Public Programs: After Prison -- What? What Civil Liberties Can Be Preserved in Time of War? Obligations and Rights of Aliens; Series on Maintaining Democracy in City Government

1939

•Identified priority issues: public housing; mandatory jury duty for women

•Suggested standards for employment of general houseworkers

•Urged voters to use new central registration system available in boroughs

•Sponsored symposium on civil liberties

1938

•Supported extending municipal and state credits for slum clearance and financing low-cost housing

•Urged detailed residence requirements for voters be abolished

•Reaffirmed commitment to proportional representation at NYS Constitutional Convention

•Recommended 60-hour work week for domestic workers

1937

•Urged that NYS adopt child labor amendment to federal constitution

•Published reports: The Tale of Topsy Transit: A Primer for Subway Sardines

Public programs: Women on Jury Duty; Challenges of Mental Deficiency: Cost, Care, Control

1936

•Eleven WCC members parade with signs saying "12 men in the world understand Einstein's theory - nobody understands the charter"

•Initiated "interrogation luncheons" because "women have heard enough speeches . . . they are ready to ask questions"

- Began 'militant' campaign to enlist women's support to combat venereal disease
 - Challenged Municipal Civil Service Commission to hold public hearing re proposed ruling that women could not take civil service exam to be court attendants
 - Surveyed 21 Manhattan, Brooklyn courts - criticized women's and night courts, urged courts to act with dignity, efficiency, courtesy
 - Published reports: Better Housing for Families which interviewed 3,279 families about living conditions and what is essential in their homes; Proportional Representation and Charter Revision
- Public Programs: "How Much Room is There at the Top for Women in Government?" Holds forum on need for consumer support for higher wages and shorter hours. Co-sponsored by American Federation of Hosiery Workers and Women's Trade Union League

1935

- Urged Mayor not to diminish relief or lower the standards of relief work
 - Urged WPA to give women same consideration as men in appointment of work
- Public program: Difficulties of Managing Low-Rent Housing Projects that was targeted to audience of housing experts and social workers - called for more women in actual management of projects

1934

- Eleanor Roosevelt addressed WCC: urged members to take interest in housing, food, childcare and industrial conditions as their part in helping government
- Supported election of mayor by preferential voting rather than appointed by City Council from among its members
- Published reports: Probationary Schools in New York City; Treatment of Household Employees

1933

- Eleanor Roosevelt addressed WCC: "New Sense of Duty" which criticized "patriotism which holds that a country is always right because it is one's own"
- Spoke out against overcrowding in City maternity wards; supported extending maternity care in private hospitals
- Expressed "shock" that state committee recommended no unemployment legislation in current session

1932

- Published report: Comfort Stations in New York City, Today and Tomorrow - recommendations used by Federal WPA as basis for work projects for local communities that were planning new facilities
- WCC asked by Civil Service Commission and Department of Correction to establish standards for House of Detention and Women's Court personnel - WCC recommended emphasis on services other than custodial care; WCC members provided salaries for such services, later absorbed by city budget

1931

- Supported raising the age children can leave school from 14 to 15

- Supported plan for centralizing City's sewage to increase jobs and provide better health conditions

Public program: Roundtable discussion on City traffic congestion

1930

- Published reports: Citizens Look at the Public Schools, which was praised by New York Times for being critical but recognizing progress made, clarified modern educational techniques used in public schools; Improving the Budget: Better Fiscal Methods for NYC; Overcrowded Maternity Wards

1929

- Eleanor Roosevelt addressed WCC: "Women in Politics." Urged women to enter politics, work their way up from bottom, learn the "inner workings" of politics
- Protested police raid of Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau and conviction of Mary Dennet for sending her pamphlet, "The Sex Side of Life" through mail
- Advocated for city-wide Department of Sanitation
- Published reports: Financing NYC; Child and Youthful Marriages in New York County that recommended girls under 16 receive consent of both children's court judge and parents

1928

- Eleanor Roosevelt chaired Legislative Committee
- Chair of WCC Housing Committee led delegation to Albany to support proposed new multiple dwellings bill
- Published report: The Delinquent and Neglected Negro Child in New York City, conducted in cooperation with The Urban League
- Helen Hayes honored at WCC luncheon

1927

- Published report: The School Lunch Program

1926

- Protested refusal of Board of Education to allow ACLU free speech meeting in a school building

1925

- Eleanor Roosevelt addressed 10th Anniversary celebration: described WCC as clearing house for civic ideals where women can turn for guidance in public matters, and where both sides of every political question are represented
- Condemned filth in the subways, congestion unsafe to women and girls, and subway doors that don't open
- Urged Police Commissioner to establish a women's bureau headed by a woman

1924

- Launched campaign for 48-hour work week for women as "a shorter day means better motherhood and stronger women"
- Drafted and ensured passage of first NYS child labor laws

- Urged establishment of housing corporations to undertake low-priced housing
- Conducted study: Commercial Dance Halls resulted in standards requiring adequate supervision and licensing

1923

- Eleanor Roosevelt joined WCC; elected to board of directors
 - Margaret Woodrow Wilson joined WCC
 - Supported bond issue for state hospitals and institutions to modernize buildings
- Public Program: Value of Art in the City

1922

- Fought for playground space in public schools
- Petitioned in support of constitutional amendment to give Congress the power to limit and prohibit labor of children under 16

1921

- Supported creation of national Department of Education
- Helped cover expense of a matron to serve lunches at a public school that had a large number of handicapped students

1920

- Governor Alfred E. Smith addressed 5th Anniversary celebration: “Why can’t the city use abandoned property and vacant land to induce building?”
- Opposed motion picture censorship
- Succeeded in abolishing sex discrimination in State civil service
- Published report “Tenement Home Work in New York City” which resulted in bill that prohibited factory work in tenements

1919

- Frances Perkins joined WCC; subsequently became first woman cabinet member as FDR’s Secretary of Labor; became pioneer of Social Security
- Offered civics classes for members on City government
- Instigated *No Spitting* campaign that was conducted by Board of Health
- Published Voters Manual - first document with complete list of City candidates
- Published Report: That Feminized Schools’ Bugaboo which exposed lack of scientific education for girls; too few women serving on school boards

1918

- Established and financed the first free maternity clinic in NYC
- Financed and sent volunteer ambulance unit of eight fully equipped trucks to France, twice cited by French government; women’s participation during WWI changed the opinion of President Woodrow Wilson and congressional leaders in favor of giving women the right to vote
- WCC founding member Belle Moskowitz organized the women’s vote for Alfred E. Smith’s first run for governor; subsequently became advisor to the governor and first publicity director of the Democratic State Committee
- Exposed use of unqualified “nurses” during influenza epidemic

1917

- Campaigned to allow physicians to dispense birth control information
 - Demanded that Governor put woman on commission to consider the high cost of living
 - Urged women to “go slow on joining political parties until you learn the ropes”
 - WCC member stated: “We do not want to be men politicians, but social politicians of the woman kind”
 - Began campaign to pressure Board of Education to assume responsibility for school lunches planned and prepared by trained dieticians
- Public Program: War and Motherhood

1916

- First public meeting of WCC: Sing Sing Warden discussed role of women in prison reform
- First brochure: Should Women be Admitted to Columbia Law School?
- First public exhibit: urged adequate city planning and zoning
- Urged completion of Letchworth Village to care for “feeble-minded young women and girls”
- Supported preservation of small parks

1915

- WCC was founded to “consider various political problems which are of particular interest and deserve the attention of women and to offer practical methods by which women may initiate, support or oppose municipal movements”
- Investigative journalist Ida Tarbell, and Suffragist Katharine Bement Davis, Commissioner of New York City Department of Correction, became founding members of Women’s City Club
- Helped organize rally in Union Square demanding safe working conditions for women in garment factories

*“Highlights of Achievements 1915 - 2008”
of the Women’s City Club of New York
is the 2nd Edition of “Fulfilling Our Mission” originally published in 2005.*

*Both were compiled by Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW,
WCC Executive Director using information
from the archives and publications of the Women’s City Club of New York,
and New York Times reporting on the Women’s City Club,
researched by Elisabeth Israels Perry, Ph.D.,
WCC member, historian, author and professor at St. Louis University.*

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
211 East 62nd Street
New York 21, NY

March 19, 1956

Dear Miss Bartlett:

Last week when I visited and spoke at the Women's City Club, I recalled the days in the 1920's when I was an active member, and served for several years as its legislative chairman. This was valuable experience for me and I think that the Women's City Club renders an important service in gathering together women interested in studying New York's needs and finding ways and means of meeting them. There is a wonderful collaboration between the members who are experts in their various fields - some working professionally, some with family responsibilities - and housewives who have the time to work and the curiosity and enthusiasm to learn.

Together they have made a place in New York for your Club. Your statements at public hearings are listened to with respect, your publications are taken seriously and city officials do not dare to ignore them. Indeed, they welcome opportunities, I am told, to visit the Club and address your members.

I am glad to see women fostering this kind of give and take between public officials and their constituents.

Very sincerely yours,



Eleanor Roosevelt

**WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK
BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF**

President: Ruth E. Acker

Vice Presidents: Sharon Yakata & Barbara Zucker

Co-Counsel: Eleanor Jackson Piel, Esq. & Helen D. Reavis, Esq.

Treasurer: Joan Fabio

Secretaries: Arden Down & Doris Hirsch

Honorary Directors:

Susan Alt

Goldie Dumpson

Adele B. Filene

Edythe W. First

Margaret B. Howard

Nora Lavori

Blanche E. Lawton

Elizabeth Lubetkin Lipton

Phyllis Lusskin

Ethel S. Paley

Directors:

Helen Aronstein Mary Murphree

Barbara Chocky Elaine Osterman

Annette Choolfaian Day Piercy

Jane Creel Geraldine Rhoads

Elsie Diamond Barbara Rochman

Nancy Francis Annette Rosen

Joan Freilich Mary Ellen Rudolph

Marjorie Ives Marjorie Kelleher Shea

Carol Leimas Eleanor Stier

Frances Levenson Eva-Maria Tausig

Ann Loeb Rachelle Tessier

Laura Ludwig Marilyn Wellemeyer

Anne-Sophie Martz Blaikie Worth

Bernice Zimney

Executive Director: Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW

Membership & Development Coordinator: Jorge Ruiz

Bookkeeper: Kurt Richwerger



SHAPING PUBLIC POLICY

WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK, INC.

307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1403, New York, N.Y. 10001 • Tel: 212.353.8070

Fax: 212.228.4665 • info@wccny.org • www.wccny.org