



SISTER TO SISTER INTERNATIONAL, INC.  
& COMMUNITY PARTNERS



*Black Women &  
the Girl-Child*

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE: NURTURING THE GIRL-CHILD  
THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT"



# STILL I RISE:

A SNAPSHOT REPORT ON BLACK WOMEN  
AND GIRLS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Sister to Sister International, Inc.  
Cheryl Brannan, Founder  
October 19, 2019



## ***Cheryl Brannan***

***Sister to Sister International, Inc., Founder  
Brannan Solutions Group, President***

***Greetings!***

As Sister to Sister International celebrates 25 years of linking women and girls of African descent to various resources that connect, advance and strengthen them, we are proud to unveil this baseline research report that provides a snapshot on Black women and girls in Westchester County. This report entitled, “Still I Rise” is an extension of our work that began in 2015 with the Obama White House Council on Women and Girls. We have since utilized a collective impact framework and built a cross section of over 25 stakeholders, working collaboratively to improve outcomes for Black women and girls in Westchester related to **STEM, STEAM and Health Curricula and Careers; Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal Health and Healthy Lifestyles; Suspensions, Trauma & the Juvenile Justice System and Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity and Economic Prosperity.**

This groundbreaking research is meant to bolster our efforts and assist us in managing by fact. This report is also a testament to the resilience of Black women and girls, many of whom have achieved against the odds, rising to key positions, in government, like the Hon. Andrea Stewart Cousins, NYS Senate Majority Leader. She is the first woman to hold this position in NYS, as well as other Black women who have been trailblazers in the judicial, business, academia, and the arts, to name a few.

Other greats who hail from this region include Madame CJ Walker, Toni Morrison, Ella Fitzgerald and Ruby Dee. We were also graced with the great Dr. Maya Angelou, who resided in nearby Harlem, author of the epic “Still I Rise” poem.

**While we are pleased to applaud the accomplishments of many Black women and girls who have achieved against the odds - far too many continue to be left behind.**

As we reflect on 400 years of oppression in this country, racism, sexism, classism, after having been brought here as enslaved Africans, we continue to endure racist systems in our schools, leading to “adultification” bias, inordinate suspension rates and other exclusionary discipline for Black girls, unequal pay and a lack of job and entrepreneurial capacity-building prospects, lack of opportunities to take advance math and science courses that lead to higher paying careers and major health disparities including dire maternal morbidity rates. Our history in the United States is one that has not always been acknowledged, but despite the odds, we have had a resilience that has been nothing short of astounding.

**Since racism is a basis for many of the structural inequities and systems that hold the problems in place, a strong emphasis must be placed on undoing racism protocols, promoting cultural competency and making data collection a priority by race, ethnicity, gender and age.**

In some instances, data was not aggregated and or available by race and gender for this report, which is troubling. How can one make informed decisions if they don’t have the data on key variables that are not even showing up on their radar? We must first, expect to have the data and then “inspect what we expect,” if we are serious about tackling the aforementioned issues.

We are grateful for the support of County Executive George Latimer, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, County Legislator Chris Johnson, the entire county legislative team, led by Chairman Ben Boykin, along with Dr. DaMia Harris, Madden, Executive Director of the Westchester County Youth Bureau, and Robi Schlaff, Executive Director, Westchester County Office for Women.

Special thanks to STSI’s visionary board of directors, community partners, members and consultants who support our collective impact efforts and have worked tirelessly to bring this status report to life.

**We are #WOKE, optimistic and look forward to continuing our collective efforts to make Westchester a better place for all with equal opportunity to live and thrive.**

**Still I (We) Rise,**  
*Cheryl Brannan, STSI Founder & Initiative Convener*

# ABOUT CHERYL BRANNAN & BSG

## CHERYL BRANNAN, MS

A Seasoned Professional, Leader and Trailblazer  
in Political, Civic, Corporate and International Arenas

### President, Brannan Solutions Group (BSG):

A multi-faceted Consulting Company with expertise in:

- Healthy Lifestyle initiatives, Strategies to eliminate health disparities, Affordable Care Act implementation
- Leadership Development, Career Development & Mentoring
- STEM Education & Pipeline Strategies
- Training & Development, Management & Marketing
- Diversity & Inclusion Strategies
- Women's Local & Global Empowerment Strategies, Women-owned businesses

### Founder & CEO, Sister to Sister International, Inc.

An organization that links women of African descent globally to the resources that connect, advance and strengthen them. They do this through advocacy, education and the promotion of African culture with an emphasis on Health & Wellness, Education, Global Affairs.

### Experience at a Glance

- 20+ years of Corporate experience at Xerox Corporation including, various senior management positions in sales, marketing and human resources; 20+ years of nonprofit management experience
- Former Adjunct Instructor, Mercy College School of Business; Taught various courses; on-site & online
- UN Non-Government Organizational (NGO) Delegate - Economic and Social Council & Department of Public Information
- Former Consultant to the historic Westchester County Executive's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Health Disparities in the Black community
- Former Westchester County Black Women's Political Caucus, County wide Chair - youngest to serve Founding President, Yonkers, Chapter
- First Black to be appointed to the Yonkers Planning Board
- Chair, Westchester Women of Color for Hillary
- Former National Advisor, Black Career Women; Served on various Boards & Commissions
- Founder & Former President, Xerox Black Women's Caucus Group, NY
- An award winning Toastmaster and Keynote Speaker for conferences in Africa and the Caribbean
- Traveled extensively: Africa, Caribbean, Europe and Asia
- SUNY at Cortland, Bachelor of Science in Education - Studied Abroad in England; Mercy College, Masters of Science in Organizational Leadership - Graduated with Distinction; Doctoral Candidate, Leadership and Learning, Aspen University



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# COLLECTIVE IMPACT OVERVIEW

**Collective Impact (CI)** is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, nonprofit organizations and civil society to achieve significant and lasting social change.

**Sister to Sister International, Inc. (STSI)** has served as the backbone for the Black Women Girl-Child and STILL I Rise initiatives, since 2015. These areas of focus stem from the President Obama White House Council on Women & Girls, “Advancing Equity for Women & Girls of Color,” report (2015). STSI was pleased to begin this phase of our 25-year journey, by attending White House conferences and collaborating on programs and initiatives. STSI also holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations and has been an advocate, partnering with many NGO’s on these issues locally and globally.

## **Our Collective Impact (CI) Common Agenda / Mission**

"To improve outcomes for Black girls and women in Westchester County related to rates of exclusionary school discipline, entry into the juvenile justice system, decreasing maternal mortality and teen pregnancy rates, along with enhancing healthy lifestyles, increasing STEAM & Health education opportunities and expanding entrepreneurship, pay equity and economic prosperity."

\*To ensure we were managing by fact, STSI spent four years implementing programs, forums and focus groups, relationship building with potential partners and stakeholders, providing training opportunities and conducting qualitative and quantitative research on the plight of Black women and girls in Westchester County. Equity and inclusion, shared measurement of impact, and quality principles are key components of our implementation process.

## **OUR WORK GROUPS & PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS**

### **I. STEM, STEAM, Health (SSH) Curricula & Careers (Dr. Angela Campbell & Crystal Bonds)**

- Determine the current state of inclusion of Black girls in advanced math and science courses in the region
- Determine barriers to representation of Black girls in (SSH) recommend remedies and share best practices
- Create a directory of STEM, STEAM & Health enrichment programs in the region that embrace Black girls, then share with students, parents, educators and other partners

### **II. Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal Health and Healthy Lifestyles (Millissa Bess & Donna Bell, Co-chairs)**

- Develop strategies to decrease the rates of pregnancy among teens, maternal mortality among Black women and overall health disparities
- Develop and share customized obesity and chronic disease prevention strategies
- Promote positive mental health and healthy lifestyles

**III. Suspensions, Trauma & the Juvenile Justice System  
(Dr. Darlene Russell & Vera Cheek, Co-chairs)**

- Education, training and best practice sharing on the root causals of the school to prison pipeline
- Prevention, recovery strategies and community wrap-around services for youth and families
- Research and advocacy for policies, systems and environmental change across the spectrum

**IV. Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity & Economic Prosperity  
(Charmaine Golding & Subomi Macaculay, Co-chairs)**

- Facilitate entrepreneurial education, training and certification opportunities
- Promote pay equity, equitable financing and capacity building opportunities
- Promote financial management, wealth building and economic prosperity

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

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Cheryl Brannan, Convener

*\*partial listing*

# Avis Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, is the Co-Author of **Still I Rise: A Snapshot Report on Black Women & Girls in Westchester County**, a project she completed on Special Assignment to Sister to Sister International after serving as the organization's first Keynote Speaker around their work on Black girls when Sister to Sister International started on this path in 2015.

An **Award-Winning Author International Speaker, Political Commentator, and Race & Gender Empowerment Expert**, Dr. Avis is the Founder of *Incite Unlimited*, *The Exceptional Leadership Institute for Women*, and the *World Changers Media Mentorship*. Dr. Avis' organizations offer diversity & inclusion training and consulting, entrepreneurship training, and media training along with communications strategy development for political candidates and elected officials. Her clients include major corporations, non-profit organizations, political campaigns and governmental entities based both domestically and abroad.

Dr. Avis is also the Co-Founder of the *Black America Digital Network* (launching January 2020). *The BAD Network* is a new digital streaming platform that provides news and information programming that specifically centers the Black experience.

As a prolific writer, Dr. Avis is the author or co-author of numerous publications, including her award-winning book, *How Exceptional Black Women Lead* along with *The State of Black Women in the U.S. 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019*; *Beyond Broke: Why Closing the Racial Wealth Gap is a Priority for National Economic Security*; and *You Mad? Black Women, Work, and the Normalcy of Disrespect*, among many others.

Her distinct perspectives have been shared through a variety of media platforms, including **CNN, Fox News, PBS, C-Span, TV One, BET, BBC, NPR, Sirius XM Radio, the Washington Post, USA Today, The Atlantic, The Huffington Post, Essence Magazine, Ebony Magazine, Glamour Magazine, Black Enterprise, NBC BLK** and many more.

Dr. Avis currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the **Voter Participation Center, Women's Voices, Women's Vote**, and the **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation**. In addition, she's the Sr. Public Policy Advisor to the **Black Women's Roundtable**, an Affiliated Scholar to the **Institute for Women's Policy Research**, and a member of the **Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative**.

But in her most important role, she serves as mother to two magnificent young men, who will one day, undoubtedly, change the world.



# **STILL I RISE: STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN & GIRLS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY REPORT**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Special thanks to Westchester County government officials, including the Board of Legislators for their support of the “Status of Black Women and Girls in Westchester County Report.”

Special thanks to both of our researchers: Dr. Avis Jones DeWeever and Dr. Sheila Klatzky for their support as co-authors. This report would not have been possible without their background and skillful investigation. We were pleased to blend their local and national experience together to produce a very compelling report.

### **RESEARCH SUPPORTERS & CONTRIBUTORS**

Diane Atkins, Amanda Gunning, Cheryl Hunter-Grant, Anne Janiak, Martha Lopez, Meghan Marrero, Dr. Pauline Mosley, Johnny Nelson, Corazon Pineda and Dr. Alexandra Connally

### **OBAMA WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Valerie Jarrett, Special Advisor to President Barack Obama and Kalisha Dessources-Figures, Policy Advisor to the White House Council on Women and Girls

### **SKILLED EDITORS**

Dr. Darlene Russell and Colleen Brathwaite

### **COVER DESIGN**

Sayidana Brannan Douglas, STSI STEAM Sistah, Graduate Student & Entrepreneur. Thanks for capturing our vision perfectly on the cover along with the event flyer design.

### **REPORT DESIGN AND GRAPHICS**

Clarissa Sinceno, Graphic Designer & Talented Songstress. Thanks for your creativity and hours of dedication to this assignment.



### **PHOTOGRAPHER**

Penny Graves Photography, Our Photographer Extraordinaire – Thanks for the captivating photos.

Expert Collage Design: Stefanie Blue Consulting ~ Otis Spears, Graphic Designer





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## *Black Women & the Girl-Child*

**"IT TAKES A VILLAGE: NURTURING THE GIRL-CHILD  
THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT"**

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*This Report is Dedicated to Black Women  
Freedom & Justice Warriors in the Lower Hudson Valley Region*

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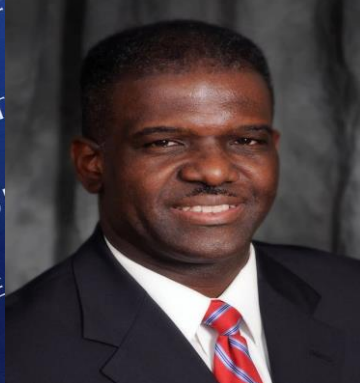
*\*Partial listing*





**STSI** Sister to Sister International, Inc.









A woman without her  
Sister  
is like a bird  
without  
Wings.





# Still I Rise - Poem by Dr. Maya Angelou



You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may tread me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.  
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

**I rise. I rise. I rise.**







# SISTER TO SISTER INTERNATIONAL, INC. & COMMUNITY PARTNERS



## *Black Women & the Girl-Child*

**"IT TAKES A VILLAGE: NURTURING THE GIRL-CHILD THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT"**

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# Executive Summary

**Still I Rise: A Snapshot Report on Black Women & Girls of Westchester County**, represents the first in a new series of reports by Sister to Sister International. This report provides a ground-breaking look inside the condition of Black women and girls in Westchester County and contextualize those conditions by way of comparison to those experienced by Black women and girls throughout the state of New York as well as the nation as a whole. The areas of focus of this report echo the four priority areas that guide the critical work of Sister to Sister International. Below are a few of the key findings from this inaugural report.

## *Black Women and Girls in STEM, STEAM and Health Curricula & Careers*

- ✓ Black students experience a lack of access to STEM curricula in Westchester County public schools. Of the top-ten ranked public high schools for STEM curriculum, none are among the most racially/ethnically diverse public high schools in the county.
- ✓ Increased emphasis on developing STEM pipelines for Black students is required. Black students fall behind in math proficiency early in the educational process. More emphasis needs to be placed on improving math proficiency among Black students as early as elementary school to ensure more Black students are STEM-ready.
- ✓ A few key organizations exist to help underserved populations engage in STEM readiness, including programs by Sister to Sister International, Mercy College, Pace University, the STEM Alliance of Larchmont-Mamaroneck.

## *Suspensions, Trauma, & The Juvenile Justice System*

- ✓ Nationally, Black students are suspended or expelled at a rate three times that of White students. Black girls specifically are especially vulnerable to out-of-school suspension. So much so that they are fully twice as likely to be suspended from school than white girls in every state in the nation.
  - ✓ New York's out of school suspension rates are lower than the nation as a whole for Black male students (**9% NY vs. 16% for the nation**) and Black female students (**5% for the NY vs. 12% for the nation**).
  - ✓ In Westchester County, Black students have substantially higher rates of out-of-school suspensions than do their White peers in every school district examined, with the lone exception of Scarsdale School District, which has a primarily White population.
  - ✓ Black juveniles are highly over-represented in the juvenile detention system. Black juveniles represent **16%** of the state juvenile population but are **58%** of those who inhabit juvenile detention facilities.
-

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- ✓ Black juveniles in Westchester County are even more disproportionately represented in detention than in New York state as a whole. Black youth make up **14%** of the county's juvenile population, but fully **62%** of those juveniles admitted to detention in 2017. This represents a slight decline from the percentage of Black juveniles in detention facilities in 2014.

### *Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal Health & Healthy Lifestyles*

- ✓ Across the nation, teen birth rates have undergone a sharp decline with Black teens experiencing the largest drop in teen births.
- ✓ Teen birth rates in New York are well below the national average of (**12.5 vs. 18.8** per 1000 females). However, for Black girls in the state and in Westchester County, teen pregnancy rates are at or above the national standard.
- ✓ The teen pregnancy rate in New York is **15.1** per 1000 females, for Black girls in the state, the pregnancy rate is **28.2** compared to **5.9** for White girls.
- ✓ In Westchester County, the teen pregnancy rate is **8.5** per 1000 females. For Black girls, the rate is **18.5** while the rate for White girls is **1.2**. The rate for Black girls is trending positive with a decrease in year over year numbers.
- ✓ Mt. Vernon's 10550 zip code has the highest Black teen pregnancy rate in Westchester County (**53.5**).
- ✓ Nationally, Black women are over three times more likely than White women to experience maternal mortality. In New York City the differential rises to **12** times more likely.
- ✓ Late-stage breast cancer rates of incidence and mortality are higher for Black women than White women in both NY state and Westchester County. In NY State, for the period 2013-2015, the rate of incidence of late stage breast cancer per 100,000 female population was **43.4**. For White women, it was **44.6** and for Black women it was **51.1**.
- ✓ The rate of female breast cancer mortality in New York per 100,000 female population was **19.2**. For White women, the mortality rate was **19.5** and for Black women, the rate was **25.3**.
- ✓ In Westchester County, the female late stage breast cancer rate for the total population is **40.8**, for White women the rate is **41.6**, and for Black women, the rate is **47.3**. In terms of female breast cancer, the mortality rate is **16.8** for the total population, **17.8** for White women, and **19.3** for Black women.
- ✓ Diabetes is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the nation, and the disease has a huge disproportionate effect on the Black population nationally, in the state of New York and in Westchester County.

- 
- ✓ For White people, the diabetes mortality rate per 100,000 population in New York was **13.9**. For Black people, that rate more than doubled to **32.7**. For the State overall, it was **17.0**. In Westchester County, the rates of diabetes mortality are lower than for the State as a whole. For White people, the diabetes mortality rate per 100,000 population was **8.6**. For Black people, that rate nearly tripled to **23.8**. For the County overall, the rate was **10.5**.

### *Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity and Economic Prosperity*

- ✓ Between 2007 and 2018, the number of women-owned businesses in America grew by **58%**. Over the same time period, the number of Black women-owned businesses, grew by **164%**.
- ✓ According to the Westchester County Office of Economic Development, **509** MWBE registered businesses are wholly or partly black-owned. However, because data is not collected which examines the intersection of both race and gender, the number of Black women-owned businesses specifically, is unknown.
- ✓ In terms of issues of pay equity, in New York State, Black women earn **80.7%** of the median income earned by White women. For Westchester County, that percentage is **58%**.
- ✓ For New York as a whole, the poverty rate is **15%**. For White New Yorkers, the poverty rate is **11%** and for Black New Yorkers, the poverty rate is **22.5%**. In Westchester County, the poverty rate is **9.4%**. For Whites the poverty rate is **6.7%**, which is less than half the poverty rate experienced by Black Westchester County residents at **16.2%**.

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## Introduction

Too often the specific needs and condition of Black women and girls are rendered invisible. Situated at the intersection of both race and gender, most examinations of real quality of life issues typically frame said issues through the lens of a singular identity. As such, a deep understanding of the specific circumstances faced by Black women and girls are few and far between. And to the degree that such examinations exist, they tend to be national in scope, providing little insight on experiences beyond an aerial view. While overarching analysis is useful, broad generalizations provide little insight as to what's really happening on the ground from a more localized perspective.

This ground-breaking report by Sister to Sister International interrupts this broad and myopic examination of Black women and girls. By utilizing a range of originally sourced national, state, and local data—when available—it uncovers for the first time, the specific condition of Black Women and Girls in Westchester County, New York. It's important to note right at the start that when undergoing intersectional analysis, far too often, originally sourced data itself falls short. It remains the exception rather than the rule to find sources that makes available both race *and* gender-specific data points. Therefore, such analysis is not possible in all circumstances, even in this report. Likewise, data is not available that filters down to the local level in all circumstances. Nevertheless, whenever possible, this report provides the most refined level of detail available to uncover the condition of Black women in girls in Westchester County across the following Priority Areas of Focus:

- **STEM, STEAM and Health Curricula & Careers**
- **Suspensions, Trauma & the Juvenile Justice System**
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal Health & Healthy Lifestyles**
- **Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity & Economic Prosperity**

**Still I Rise: A Snapshot Report on Black Women & Girls in Westchester County** will be the first in a series of reports by Sister to Sister International to specifically examine the challenges, triumphs and overall well-being of Black women and girls in this New York enclave.



**HON. ANDREA STEWART COUSINS**  
**Temporary President and Majority Leader NYS Senate**

I congratulate Sister to Sister International and all your community partners on this groundbreaking report on Black women and girls in Westchester County. During our previous legislative session in Albany we passed monumental legislation, on pay equity, criminal justice reform, and non-discrimination based on hair, to name a few. I am pleased to support your work and look forward to a continued partnership.



**HON. KATHIE DAVIDSON**  
**Supervising Judge of the Family Courts**  
**Ninth Judicial District.**

We must begin to provide opportunities and improve outcomes for girls of color at risk or involved in the Juvenile Justice System by bringing together leaders in the juvenile justice system and the community.



**HON. ALFREDA WILLIAMS**  
**Vice Chair**  
**Westchester County Board of Legislators**

As elected leaders I believe that it is important that every effort is made to provide resources that support all women and girls to meet their full potential. I applaud Sister to Sister International and their community partners for gathering data on the current state of Black Women and girls in Westchester County. I am confident that it will provide greater insight for future planning purposes. Great work!



**HON. TERRY CLEMENTS**  
**Westchester County Legislator, District 11**

As an educator for over 25 years, I know first-hand the importance of ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity for academic success. I am also very concerned about the maternal health statistics in Westchester County, especially the disproportional mortality rates of Black women. These statistics are dire and offer a major opportunity to close the gaps. I look forward to working with this collective impact initiative to ensure all women in Westchester County have an equal opportunity for successful birth outcomes and in support of academic achievement for girls.



**HON. PEARL C. QUARLES**  
**Former President, New Rochelle Board of Education**  
**Former, Westchester County Legislator**

In order to provide equal educational opportunities for all students in Westchester we must ensure that administrators and leaders are culturally competent and aim to provide the kind of support and resource allocation needed to help each child reach their full potential.



**DR. BELINDA MILES, President**  
**Westchester Community College**

Congratulations to Sister to Sister International on publishing this historic report on Black women and girls in Westchester County. Westchester Community College is an institution that values providing academic opportunities to all populations. We have created institutional systems that support women in STEM careers and look forward to partnering with STSI and members of the collaborative.



**DR. TAHIRA A. DUPREE CHASE**  
**Superintendent of Schools Greenburgh Central School District**

We cannot ignore the startling statistics and growing body of research that support the overrepresentation of girls—more specifically, African American girls—subjected to more punitive school discipline than their Caucasian counterparts. The consequences of long term or repeated out-of-school discipline can severely impact a girl’s life, thus create a stronger possibility of cyclic negative behavior at school and within their communities. Now, more than ever, schools must identify effective responses to negative behaviors demonstrated by African American girls that reflect cultural competence and gender responsiveness as its core. Moreover, it is imperative that school leaders, staff and faculty are appropriately and consistently trained on implicit bias and cultural responsiveness in order to effectively address the needs of girls of color.



**MECCA SANTANA, ESQ.**  
**Senior Vice President, Diversity, Inclusion**  
**& Community Engagement at Westchester Medical Center**

Building a culture of diversity, inclusion and community engagement is vital to the success of healthcare organizations. They should promote health equity, reduce health disparities, increase access and opportunities, and foster a welcoming environment in order to be responsive to the needs of a diverse community.



**DR. DAMIA HARRIS-MADDEN, Executive Director  
Westchester County Youth Bureau**

We applaud Sister to Sister international for recognizing the existing socioeconomic, educational and health determinants that undermine positive outcomes for all children, especially girls of color. By collecting and analyzing relevant and accurate data, this collective effort will increase the likelihood of reversing the trajectory of racial and ethnic disproportionality across various systems. Black and Brown girls are entering the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, which hamper their development, dim their personal light and create generations of women who struggle to feel empowered. I'm excited to be a partner, and we look forward to the on-going development of this initiative.



**SHAWYN PATTERSON - HOWARD, President & CEO  
Yonkers YMCA**

I am pleased to be an inaugural partner and steering committee member of this exciting initiative to empower Black women and girls in Westchester County. There are many stark disparities and we must look for opportunities to bridge the gaps so that all girls in Westchester can thrive, meet their full potential and make contributions to enhance the greatness of our county. For me, this is a personal duty and responsibility. I look forward to the continued growth and progress of this great initiative.



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## I. STEM, STEAM and Health Curricula & Careers

The American economy is changing. We are currently experiencing a sharp growth in automated capabilities which are meant to fulfill functions that have historically been completed by employed individuals. As this trend continues, at an ever-increasing rate, the jobs that are today, fundamental to supporting families and serve as the economic underpinning of entire communities, will soon be fulfilled by technology instead. This new automated economy, it is projected, will lead to significant workforce disruptions. Especially impacted, will be the African American community as African Americans are over-represented in occupations that are most likely to see job declines due to the rise of automation.<sup>1</sup> Because of this fundamental shift, it is more critical now than ever, that African Americans become equipped with the skills and training necessary to be well-situated not just for the jobs of today, but even more importantly, for the jobs of tomorrow.

**It is because of this imperative that Sister-to-Sister International’s focus on STEM, STEAM, and Health curricula and careers is especially vital.** Sister to Sister International has been in the fore-front and has sponsored a cutting edge, multi-faceted STEAM summer camp and academy for Black and girls of color, over the past ten years. This program has created a pipeline of students beginning in middle, to high school, college and on to careers. Local partners have included Consumer Reports, NEWS12, Kawasaki, Regeneron, IBM, Siemens Health care, to name a few.

Sister to Sister International’s STEAM programming includes year-round academic enrichment tutoring with certified teachers, college preparation, field trips, Girl Power Forums, leadership and civic activities, voter education & registration, developing healthy lifestyles, public speaking, and various activities with collective impact partners.

STSI STEAM Sistahs have visited the Obama White House and viewed a special screening of “Hidden Figures” with the cast and former First Lady Michelle Obama, as well as attended various workshops and STEAM activities sponsored by the Obama White House Council on Women and Girls.

STSI holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations. STEAM Sistahs attend United Nations events, are exposed to global issues and network with girls and women from all over the world. During 2019 we hosted a special summer Coding Camp in partnership with AT&T.

According to the Department of Labor, “the number of STEM occupations in the U.S. is projected to grow by 8.9 percent by 2024. And by 2022, 1.2 million new computing-related jobs is projected be created.<sup>2</sup> But according to “the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT, 2010), only about 3 percent of the available pool of minority high school graduates will earn computing degrees from American colleges and universities, thus lacking the qualifications to fill these jobs.”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-in-black-america>

<sup>2</sup> <https://westfaironline.com/105661/pauline-mosley-why-arent-more-students-pursuing-careers-in-stem/>



**JANELLE WALLACE**  
**Assistant Director, Greenburgh Access Television (GATV)**  
**STSI STEAM Sistah**

With the increase of smart devices, virtual reality, and social media there are many career opportunities in technology. Although the market still reflects white males at the top, with the increase of the minority population and women earning more advanced degrees, we are entering the workforce just as equipped as our white male counterparts. Exploring a career in technology will not only ensure job security due to its increase in demand, but as tech companies expand many are looking to explore different cultures, ethnicities and genders to become more inclusive and progressive to connect to everyday people. Technology is a great career to connect people. So, no matter how you wish to communicate with others, technology, in its many forms, offers the ability to do so in a lucrative and valuable way.



**MAYA SMITH**  
**STSI STEAM Sistah**  
**College grad – Baldwin Wallace University (2018), English & Entrepreneurship double major, recent ~ NYS Licensed Cosmetologist, Head Barber & only woman Barber Academy, Mt. Vernon**

**Sister to Sister International:** is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that links women, girls and families of African descent globally, to the resources that connect, advance and strengthen them, offers a summer STEAM (science technology engineering arts and math) camp. The STEAM camp provides advanced math and science instruction, STEAM lectures, exposure to STEAM role models and field trips, along with leadership, public speaking, networking and self-esteem building skills. The STEAM camp has evolved into a year-round STEAM Academy. See video: [STSI STEAM Coding Camp 2019](#)

While growth in this sector is undeniable, there is disagreement as to why more students, and especially students of color, girls, and Black girls are not specifically aren't attracted to pursuing careers in STEM. Some researchers, such as Dr. Pauline Mosley, believe that this challenge requires more than simply making STEM and STEAM curricula available to students of color. Instead, from her perspective, "The issue is lack of self-efficacy and confidence." "You can expose them, bring robotics, drones, etc. But, if the kid does not have self-confidence, if they do not have 'grit' or 'stamina' or a 'mental warrior attitude' within the STEM pipelines, then they drop out. They have to believe in themselves."<sup>3</sup> She also cites the problem of transportation as representing a significant obstacle for children of limited means to attend STEM and STEAM camps and programs.

Others see the primary barriers as less internally focused, but instead, a reflection of broader, more systemic environmental inequities that reduce the likelihood to succeed. Research has shown that the gap between Black women and White men and women in the STEM fields can be directly correlated to the paucity of mentors and Black women role-models in those fields that are available to Black women and girls. In fact, studies show that the presence in college of Black female peers, faculty members and teaching assistants increases Black women's retention and perseverance in STEM majors.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Private conversation with Dr. Pauline Mosley.

<sup>4</sup> Hurtado, Sylvia and Tanya Figueroa, "Women of Color in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM): Experiences in Academia," 2013 American Education Resource Association, <https://www.heri.ucla.edu/nih/downloads/AERA-2013-WOC-STEM.pdf>  
Pamela Holland; Tickles, Virginia Cook; et.al. "Advancement of Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Disciplines", 2007. Faculty Resource Network at New York University. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/BWR.Final Black Women in the US 2014Report.pdf](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/BWR.Final%20Black%20Women%20in%20the%20US%202014Report.pdf)



**ADEZE WILFORD**  
Curatorial Assistant  
The Shed (NY)  
STSI STEAM Sistah



**STSI STEAM Sistahs (l to r)**

**NIA BAPTISTE**, Howard University Freshman, Architecture major

**DIALE TAKONA**, Virginia Tech, Senior, Architecture major



**STSI & Academic Pathways STEAM Sistahs in Health (L to R)**

**Khadyja Sarr** - Graduate Student, Health Management, Boston University

**Dr. Tamara Gordon, DDS** - Dentist

**Dr. Rosemarie Barker, MD**

**Jenna Cherasard**, Rising Junior, Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education

**Denee' Hall, 2019 Graduate**, Aspiring Physician's Assistant



**Sayidana Brannan-Douglas**

**STEAM Sistah**

**Graduate Student 2019**

**Former Intern – Consumer Reports & News 12**



Vinnie Bagwell Art Studio

At the Obama White House

This lack of role models and mentors hinders the attraction of Black women and girls to STEM in two ways. As reported in the State of Black Women in America, 2014, “As Black girls start to consider college majors and careers, the choice of STEM fields is not introduced or reinforced by respected role models. Second, Black women who pursue college majors in STEM cite the absence of mentors (i.e. faculty members and teaching assistants) as a significant reason why some Black women leave the STEM fields.”<sup>5</sup>

The lack of role models, however, is not the only barrier Black women face when it comes to pursuing careers in STEM. Instead, gender and racial stereotyping are said to also contribute to the dearth of Black women specifically, in this space. According to the Higher Education Research Institute, “40% of minority women in scientific disciplines reported subtle forms of discrimination—which is far more than that of their white and male counterparts.”<sup>6</sup> This discrimination shows up in practice in acts like being excluded from study groups with other

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/BWR.Final Black Women in the US 2014Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

students, experiencing difficulty finding students willing to be study partners, and being assigned fewer tasks than other members in group projects based on assumptions of incompetence.<sup>7</sup> The compounding of these discriminatory acts, leads to a feeling of isolation, marginalization and the experiencing of an overall toxic learning environment. Ultimately, it is this experience that stands at the heart of why some Black women choose to leave STEM fields altogether.<sup>8</sup>



### Access to STEM in Westchester County

The lack of access to STEM curricula for students of color is reflected in Westchester County public schools. Of the top ten-ranked public high schools for STEM curricula, none of them are among the more ethnic/racially diverse public high schools.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

As is illustrated in the Tables below, none of the county’s top-ranked high schools when it comes to diversity are included in the county’s top-ranked STEM-focused high schools. As a result, the primary challenge students of color face seem to not be one of grit, self-determination, or confidence, but a lack of basic access to educational institutions that emphasize STEM as an academic option.

**Table 1. Top Ranked Westchester County Public High Schools for Diversity and STEM**

| Top Schools for Diversity  |                                      | Top Schools for STEM |                               |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| High School                | School District                      | High School          | School District               |
| Yonkers                    | Yonkers                              | Horace Greely        | Chappaqua                     |
| New Rochelle               | New Rochelle City                    | Byram Hills          | Byram Hills                   |
| White Plains               | White Plains City                    | Scarsdale            | Scarsdale Union Free          |
| Ossining                   | Ossining Union Free                  | Bronxville           | Bronxville Union Free         |
| Alexander Hamilton         | Elmsford                             | Briarcliff           | Briarcliff Manor Union Free   |
| Woodlands                  | Greenburgh Central                   | Rye                  | Rye City                      |
| Yonkers Montessori Academy | Yonkers City                         | Edgemont             | Edgemont Union Free           |
| Clark Academy              | Greenburgh-North Castle Union Free   | John Jay             | Katonah-Lewisboro Union Free  |
| Greenburgh Academy         | Greenburgh-North Castle Union Free   | Mamaroneck           | Mamaroneck Union Free         |
| Blythedale School          | Mount Pleasant-Blythedale Union Free | Hastings             | Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free |

Source: <https://www.niche.com/k12/search/most-diverse-public-high-schools/c/westchester-county-ny/>  
<https://www.niche.com/k12/search/best-public-high-schools-for-stem/c/westchester-county-ny/>

The STEM pipeline to high school is formed much earlier. However, students in elementary and middle school who are not proficient in math will be unlikely to pursue STEM curricula in high school. If we compare selected school districts by their math proficiency in grades 3-8, we see that Black students are far less likely to be proficient in mathematics than their White peers, and they show lower percentages than for the school districts. See Table below.

**Table 2. Grade 3-8 Math Assessment Data-Selected  
Westchester County School Districts**

| School District     | Yonkers | White Plains | Greenburgh | Peekskill | Mt. Vernon | New Rochelle | Scarsdale | Westchester County | NY State |
|---------------------|---------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>2019</b>         |         |              |            |           |            |              |           |                    |          |
| <b>% Proficient</b> |         |              |            |           |            |              |           |                    |          |
| <b>Black</b>        | 24%     | 31%          | 30%        | 19%       | 28%        | 37%          | N/A       | 30%                | 32%      |
| <b>White</b>        | 54%     | 70%          | 56%        | 53%       | 35%        | 70%          | 85%       | 72%                | 56%      |
| <b>Total</b>        | 35%     | 44%          | 39%        | 28%       | 31%        | 50%          | 88%       | 59%                | 47%      |
| <b>2018</b>         |         |              |            |           |            |              |           |                    |          |
| <b>% Proficient</b> |         |              |            |           |            |              |           |                    |          |
| <b>Black</b>        | 19%     | 30%          | 25%        | 21%       | 25%        | 34%          | N/A       |                    |          |
| <b>White</b>        | 49%     | 68%          | 48%        | 41%       | 40%        | 68%          | 86%       |                    |          |
| <b>Total</b>        | 29%     | 41%          | 35%        | 24%       | 28%        | 48%          | 88%       |                    |          |

Source: Table created by Shelia Klatzky from data compiled from the following source: <https://data.nysed.gov/lists.php?start=78&type=district>



**DR. ANGELA CAMPBELL**  
**Academic Pathways, Founder & Executive Director**  
**STEM, STEAM & Health Work Group Co-chair**  
**STSI Board Member**

“When girls take advanced placement (AP) math and science classes, they will be provided with more merit-based scholarships. AP classes show potential colleges that they are holistic students with strong academic skills.”

**Overview of STEM and STEAM Curricula in Westchester County**

The following organizations and institutions are some of those which offer STEM and STEAM Curricula in Westchester County, with reference to underserved populations.



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## **Mercy College**

<https://www.mercy.edu/education/stem-education>. The mission of the Center for STEM Education (CSE) is to create opportunities for groups typically underrepresented in STEM to engage in enrichment activities for learning, career readiness, enjoyment, and personal and community growth, which may not be available through school districts.

Mercy also offers a Saturday STEM Academy Fun STEM skills classes for K-12 students, taught by distinguished STEM educators, FLORES (Family Learning and Outreach for Research and Education in STEM) - *Science Discovery Nights for Parents and Elementary students* and M3C Young Scholars Program Mathematical modeling summer program for academically gifted and minority high-school students. According to demographic information provided by Mercy College, the ethnic composition of participants in the Saturday STEM Academy is: White 21%, Black 19%, Asian 13% and Hispanic/Latino 47%.

## **Mercy College STEP Program**

Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) at Mercy College provides services to both undergraduate and graduate minority and/ or economically disadvantaged students for careers in science, math, technology, health professions and other licensed professional careers. Exposing CSTEP students to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines will help reshape the culture of these professions as students reach their desired career goals. The CSTEP Program is housed within the College Opportunity Program (COP) at Mercy College.

## **Mount Vernon STEAM Academy**

The STEAM Academy will be an educational adventure that will be the highlight of educational progress in Mount Vernon. While fulfilling the New York State Graduation requirements, we have a theme of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics and will incorporate project-based learning. For more information call (914) 665-5000

## **Westchester Community College**

At Westchester Community College we have created institutional systems that support women in STEM careers, and we partner with area high schools to create pathways into STEM majors that transfer to many four-year colleges and universities. Our Mercy College STEM Scholars Program is one such example. Email [ADMISSIONS@SUNYwcc.edu](mailto:ADMISSIONS@SUNYwcc.edu) to explore exciting careers at the School of Science, Engineering and Math.

## **National Council of Negro Women**

The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. is a coalition comprised of 200 community-based sections in 32 states. Although there are efforts to promote technological competence, there remains a significant digital divide that disproportionately affects blacks and women. The National Council of Negro Women sponsors STEM focused events to promote STEM awareness.

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## **White Plains Youth Bureau**

The White Plains Youth Bureau received a 5-year grant that provides 490 elementary age youth with hands on STEM learning experiencing. The curriculum for this program was specially developed by Dr. Pauline Mosely, Professor at PACE University and is aligned with the State learning standards. Additionally, all other after-school programs, including the Saturday Boys and Girls Academies place a heavy emphasis on exposing youth to variety aspects of STEM curricula and careers. The Youth Bureau also runs the 6-week Middle School STEM camp and the 6th grade Math Camp during the summer months. Finally, the White Plains Youth Bureau launched its Aviation Academy that utilizes a real flight simulator to spark the imagination and interest of youth in pursuing careers in the field of aviation, which is experiencing a growing shortage of qualified personnel.

For more information, please visit the White Plains Youth Bureau's website at:  
[www.whiteplainsyouthbureau.org](http://www.whiteplainsyouthbureau.org)

## **Academic Pathways & Iona Prep**

Academic Pathways is a supplemental education program that offers academic enrichment to students. As of October 2019, Academic Pathways relocated to the Iona College campus in New Rochelle. In addition to providing the supplemental education program, Academic Pathways will be joining IONA STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering Program), to develop the next level of support within the STEP program. Academic Pathways will be the pipeline program for STEP entitled “Get Ready”. We will provide a pipeline of students, grades kindergarten through 6th for the program, by providing the necessary academic proficiencies to be successful in the STEP program.

## **Mentoring in Medicine**

Mentoring in Medicine (MiM) is a nonprofit organization established in 2006 to increase diversity in the healthcare profession. The organization works in partnership with health institutions from the academia to hospitals, including community health facilities, to provide academic enrichment, leadership development, civic engagement, psycho-social support and mentoring for students (from elementary school to college graduates), parents and educators.

Students of color are amongst the key targets for MiM programs because they are underrepresented in the health profession and to date, over 50,000 students, parents and educators have participated and /or benefitted from these programs. Learn more about MiM by visiting <https://www.mimscience.org/>

**Pace University:** Pace offers a summer [GenCyber Camp for High School Students](#) called Camp CrypoBot through its SEIDENBERG SCHOOL OF CSIS. Its goals are to raise awareness of STEM and cybersecurity careers, encourage underserved population to explore these fields and motivate these students to take math and science courses even if they don't go into cybersecurity and/or computer science careers.

Pace also offers its STEM Women Achieve Greatness or SWAG program for young women interested in science, technology, engineering and math. A 5-week program, which runs throughout fall and spring, allows girls from high schools in Westchester and Fairfield counties to work with faculty from Pace's Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information

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Systems. Its goal is to promote awareness of computer science and to engage in robotics and other activities to inspire, equip and empower them.

Dr. Pauline Mosley, who directs the programs above, also directs a STEAM program for the White Plains elementary schools. The STEAM curriculum for at-risk children in grades 1-5 includes over 500 children, mostly of African American and Hispanic descent, whose families are below the poverty line.

**The STEM Alliance of Larchmont-Mamaroneck:** [www.lmstemalliance.org](http://www.lmstemalliance.org), a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing K-12 STEM education and enrichment initiatives to benefit students, parents and educators in their schools and community, offers a summer program for low income children, Co-Op Summer Enrichment. They also run an all-girls robotics program each summer and offer a variety of other STEM enrichment activities.

**YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester TechGYRLS** – Central to the YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester’s mission is the economic empowerment of women and girls, especially women and girls of color. Not only does the YWCA focus our efforts on the financial stability of women, but we also seek to truly empower the economic futures of young women and girls to provide them with increased options and therefore earning potential in their future careers. Our YWCA offers Tech GYRLS currently through our Girls Empowered through Meaningful Support (GEMS) program which raises interest, confidence and abilities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) among girls aged 6 -18. Our curriculum includes activities like 3d printing, coding, drones, robotics and aqua robotics. For more information, access this link: <https://ywcaawpcw.org/what-we-do/empowerment-and-economic-advancement/gems>

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## II. Suspensions, Trauma & the Juvenile Justice System



**DR. DARLENE RUSSELL**  
**Professor and Fulbright Scholar**  
**Suspensions, Trauma and Juvenile Justice,**  
**Work Group Co-chair**  
**STSI Board Member**

“From 1619 to the Tignon Laws to Henrietta Lacks (HeLa) to present day, Black women and girls have been and continue to be racially objectified, preyed upon, mistreated, and criminalized. This heritage, steeped in racial injustice, is pantheonized in schools across the nation and unearthed in excessive and harsh disciplinary actions toward Black and Brown girls. Race drives the constant surveillance of our girls. Race is the chief architect of the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP). The STPP is not just an education issue. It is an insidious assault on Black and Brown students’ health, psychological and spiritual countenance, and wealth-gaining potential. Part of the STPP being interrupted is through a pedagogy of cultural competence, which beckons teachers and administrators to critically consider their own positionality, socialization around race, socio-cultural consciousness, and relationships with “minoritized” communities - even if they are from these communities. Cultural competency builds a capacity for school policy-practice awareness and transformation while confronting racism. The entire racist ecosystem of how Black students are perceived, interacted with, and even physically looked upon by school personnel must be destroyed. Given the national data on suspensions rates and the ongoing discourse on race across the U.S., schools are obligated to examine their own paradigms of structural racial oppression and rapidly make changes to truly serve students and communities of color. If not, then schools are merely dens of oppression championing the heritage of white supremacist ideals.”



**DR. ALEXANDRIA CONNALLY**  
**Director of Equity, Inclusion & Innovation**  
**Nyack School District**

“Sixteen years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), consistent data collection on the racial discipline gap (disparities in suspensions rates) began (Skiba & Losen, 2016; Whitford & Emerson, 2018). Since the 1970s, suspension rates have more than doubled for all subgroups. However, suspension rates have more than tripled for Pan African students (Skiba, 2013). According to Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, undeterred by these findings, the distribution of exclusionary practices disproportionately impacts Pan African students and continues to increase (Connally, 2018).”

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## School Suspensions

Black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times that of their white counterparts. “On average, **5%** of white students are suspended, compared to **16%** of Black students. Even among children in preschool, Black children bear the brunt of suspensions. Black children are **18%** of preschool enrollment, but **48%** of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension. In comparison, White students represent **43%** of preschool enrollment but **26%** of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension.”<sup>9</sup>

And although boys receive more than two out of three suspensions, Black girls are especially vulnerable to this form of punishment as well. In fact, Black girls are fully twice as likely to be suspended from school than White girls in every state in the nation—and it’s not because of more frequent or serious misbehavior. According to a report by the National Women’s Law Center, Black girls face higher suspension rates due to implicit and explicit bias. “Stereotypes of Black girls and women as ‘angry’ or ‘aggressive’ and ‘promiscuous’ or ‘hypersexualized’ can shape school officials’ views of Black girls in critically harmful ways.”<sup>10</sup>

During their research phase over the past four years, Sister to Sister International has taken the opportunity to confer with leading researchers and noted authorities on the perception of Black girls, trauma, and disproportionate suspension rates, among other issues. Some of these key leaders include Dr. Jamilia Blake (*Adultification* 2017, 2019), Dr. Monique Morris (*Pushout*, 2015), Nadine Burke Harris, MD (*Adverse Childhood Experiences*), Joanne Smith (*Girls for Gender Equity*, NYC), Jeanette Pai-Espinosa (*National Crittenton Foundation*), Kalisha Dessources (*Figures* (Collaboration of Young Women’s Initiatives)), along with philanthropic champions at the following foundations: Annie E. Casey, New York Women’s, the Novo and Ms. Foundation for Women, to name a few.



(L to C) Rebecca Epstein  
& Dr. Jamilia Blake  
“*Adultification*” Research



Nadine Burke Harris, MD  
*Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)*



(Far left) Joanne Smith,  
Kalisha Dessources  
(3<sup>rd</sup> from left)



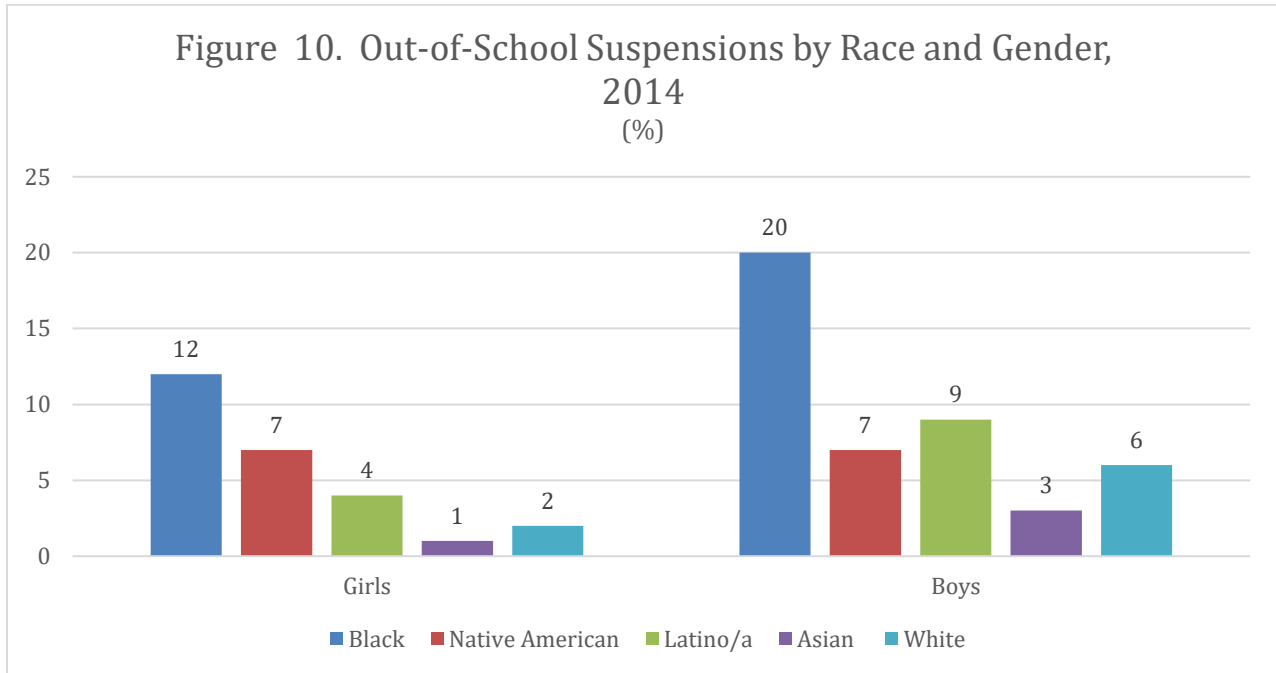
Foundation Friends

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<sup>9</sup> <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>. Data from 2011-2012.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2017-05-09/black-girls-are-twice-as-likely-to-be-suspended-in-every-state>

As the Figure below displays, Black girls are not only much more likely than all other girls to experience out-of-school suspension, they are also more likely to receive this punishment than all other boys in America, with the only exception being Black boys who are also disproportionately impacted.<sup>11</sup>



Source: US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>

**NY State:**

NY reported lower out-of-school suspension rates than the nation for both black male students (9% for NY vs. 16% for the nation) and Black female students (5% for NY vs. 12% for the nation). (See below.)

Table 12. Out of School Suspensions by Race and Ethnicity, NY State, 2011-2012

|              | Male | Female |
|--------------|------|--------|
| <b>Black</b> | 9%   | 5%     |
| <b>White</b> | 5%   | 2%     |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.

<sup>11</sup> <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>

**Westchester School Districts:**

The following table shows out-of-school suspensions for students without disabilities by race (2015) in selected Westchester school districts:

Table 13. One or More Out-of-School Suspensions by Race in Westchester County School Districts, 2015

|                                                | Yonkers |     | White Plains |     | Greenburgh |     | Peekskill |     | Mount Vernon |     | New Rochelle |     | Scarsdale |   |
|------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|-----------|---|
|                                                | #       | %   | #            | %   | #          | %   | #         | %   | #            | %   | #            | %   | #         | % |
| <b>Total Population</b>                        |         |     |              |     |            |     |           |     |              |     |              |     |           |   |
| <b>Black</b>                                   | 5200    |     | 979          |     | 774        |     | 822       |     | 5578         |     | 2326         |     | 53        |   |
| <b>White</b>                                   | 4597    |     | 1711         |     | 246        |     | 297       |     | 339          |     | 3001         |     | 3268      |   |
|                                                |         |     |              |     |            |     |           |     |              |     |              |     |           |   |
| <b>Suspensions</b>                             |         |     |              |     |            |     |           |     |              |     |              |     |           |   |
| <b>Black</b>                                   | 361     | 6.9 | 64           | 6.5 | 42         | 5.4 | 77        | 9.3 | 367          | 6.6 | 104          | 4.5 | 0         | 0 |
| <b>White</b>                                   | 76      | 1.6 | 18           | 1   | 4          | 1.6 | 18        | 6   | 10           | 2.9 | 42           | 1.4 | 5         | 0 |
|                                                |         |     |              |     |            |     |           |     |              |     |              |     |           |   |
| <b>Suspension Rankings High (1) to Low (7)</b> |         |     |              |     |            |     |           |     |              |     |              |     |           |   |
| <b>Black</b>                                   | 2       |     | 4            |     | 5          |     | 1         |     | 3            |     | 6            |     | 7         |   |
| <b>White</b>                                   | 3       |     | 6            |     | 4          |     | 1         |     | 2            |     | 5            |     | 7         |   |

Source: <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/flex/Reports.aspx?type=district>

The above table displays that Black students have substantially higher rates of out-of-school suspensions than White students in each of the school districts examined, except for Scarsdale S.D. Peekskill’s suspension rates are highest for both Black and White students, followed by Yonkers for Black students.

These data are consistent with data reported for NY State by the NY Equity Coalition which, using previously unpublished data for 2016-2017, reports that “New York State’s education system suspends Black students at more than **four** times the rate of White students outside of New York City.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <https://newyork.edtrust.org/resource/new-york-schools-disproportionately-impose-out-of-school-suspensions-on-black-students/>

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The NY Equity Coalition report also states that “Schools imposed the most disproportionate discipline on Black female students. Outside of NYC, schools were 6.1 times more likely to suspend Black female students than their White peers...” (ibid.)

Data from the report cited above show that Black female high school students outside of NYC have an out-of-school suspension rate of 13.6%, as compared to **2.5%** for White female students, and **4.0%** for all female students. (ibid.)

The report calls on state leaders to address the following three policy priorities:

- Hold schools accountable for reducing suspensions and other exclusionary discipline, including through New York’s ESSA regulations.
- Strengthen laws and regulations to stop suspension abuse.
- Invest in supportive learning environments for all students.” (ibid.)

### **Detention Admissions**

It is a well-known finding that “Black kids are over-represented behind bars in the United States.”<sup>13</sup> NY State and Westchester County are no exceptions to this fact.



**HON. NICHELLE A. JOHNSON**  
**City Court Judge, Mount Vernon**

“It’s so important for the legal/judicial system to continue to improve. I’ve seen great improvements and they should continue. Innovation in the legal system tells the public that we are forward thinking people and understand our place in the world. I am delighted to be in the legal system because I recognize that I am a helper in building a better society where innovation combined with passion for fairness will make our world a better place for everyone.”

### **NY State**

Black juveniles are highly over-represented in the detention system. In 2017, Black youth only represented **16%** of the state juvenile population, yet they represented **58%** of admissions to detention. The detentions have been declining over time. However, in 2014 Black juveniles represented **62%** of the detention admissions. See Figure below.

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/youth-incarceration-in-the-united-states-by-the-numbers>



| <b>Juvenile Population and Detention Admissions by Race 2014-2017-NY State</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|------|-----|--|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2014      |     | 2015      |     | 2016      |     | 2017      |     | 2018 |     |  |
| <b>Juvenile Population (age 7-15)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |
| <b>Race-Ethnicity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |
| White (Non-Hispanic)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1,088,497 | 52% | 1,071,452 | 51% | 1,049,872 | 51% | 1,033,762 | 51% | NA   | NA  |  |
| Black (non-Hispanic)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 352,505   | 17% | 348,606   | 17% | 341,832   | 17% | 336,745   | 16% | NA   | NA  |  |
| <b>Detention Admissions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |
| <b>Race-Ethnicity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |
| White (Non-Hispanic)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 574       | 11% | 551       | 11% | 517       | 12% | 488       | 13% | 382  | 13% |  |
| Black (Non-Hispanic)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 3164      | 62% | 3017      | 62% | 2540      | 60% | 2131      | 58% | 1752 | 52% |  |
| Source: Table created by Sheila Klatzky from data obtained from the following source: <a href="https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/jj-reports/newyorkstate.pdf">https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/jj-reports/newyorkstate.pdf</a> |           |     |           |     |           |     |           |     |      |     |  |

## Westchester County

Patterns of juvenile detention for Westchester County are like NY State. This percentage has been declining over time. In 2017, Black juveniles represented **14%** of the juvenile population and **62%** of juvenile admissions to detention. Again, there has been a slight (although not steady) decline in the percentage of Black juvenile detention admissions from **64%** in 2014 to **62%** in 2017. See Table below.



**ALLISON LAKE**  
**Executive Director**  
**Westchester Children's Association (WCA)**  
**Black Women Girl-Child Steering Committee Member**

“Students of color are more likely to be suspended for subjective infractions like insubordination and minor offense such as tardiness and dress code violations. Girls of color are more likely to be pushed out of school into the legal system by these violations- in fact they are referred to the legal system 2.7 times their white counterparts.

The *Solutions Not Suspensions* bill is an opportunity to reduce the racial inequities of school discipline in New York. Westchester Children's Association is working with others advocates around the state for passage of this bill so all kids can thrive regardless of race or zip code.”

| <b>Juvenile Population and Detention Admissions by Race 2014-2017-Westchester County</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|----|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2014  |     | 2015  |     | 2016  |     | 2017  |     | 2018 |    |
| <b>Juvenile Population (age 7-15)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |
| <b>Race-Ethnicity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |
| <b>White (Non-Hispanic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 59923 | 52% | 58561 | 51% | 56545 | 50% | 54940 | 49% | NA   | NA |
| <b>Black (Non-Hispanic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 15759 | 14% | 15633 | 14% | 15324 | 14% | 15113 | 14% | NA   | NA |
| <b>Detention Admissions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |
| <b>Race-Ethnicity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |
| <b>White (Non-Hispanic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 9     | 4%  | NA    | NA  | 4     | 3%  | 4     | 3%  | NA   | NA |
| <b>Black (Non-Hispanic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 134   | 64% | NA    | NA  | 80    | 59% | 82    | 62% | NA   | NA |
| Source; Table created by Shela Klatzky from data obtained from the following source: <a href="https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/jj-reports/westchester.pdf">https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/jj-reports/westchester.pdf</a> |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |      |    |



**REV. MARCIA WHITE SMITH**  
**School Psychologist, NYC School System**  
**STSI Board Member**

The trauma that is being inflicted on our African American girls in the education system, is due in part to a lack of cultural competence among educators. The disproportionate ratio of suspensions and involvement with the juvenile system for minor infractions often results in low self-esteem, and stifled potential. Long term implications for African Americans include a negative impact on financial stability, social class and the overall success of future generations.

**Children in Foster Care**

In 2017, 23% of the 442,995 children in U.S. foster care were Black or African American.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport25.pdf>

For the United States as a whole, the number of children in foster care declined from 2008 to 2012, then increased again from 2013 to 2017. For NY State, the numbers have declined steadily over the same time period (NY figures for 2017 are under review.) (ibid.)

**Table 16. Children in Foster Care in the US and in the State of New York, 2008-2017**

|          | 2008    | 2009    | 2010    | 2011    | 2012    | 2013    | 2014    | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| US       | 459,828 | 423,773 | 408,425 | 397,885 | 397,091 | 402,172 | 415,129 | 427,901 | 437,465 | 442,995 |
| NY State | 29,493  | 27,992  | 26,783  | 24,962  | 23,924  | 22,975  | 22,422  | 20,921  | 19,702  | n/a     |

Source: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6243-children-in-foster-care#detailed/2/2-53/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/any/12987>



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### III. Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal Health & Healthy Lifestyles

Issues dealing with reproductive health specifically related to Black women and girls provide quite divergent outcomes. For example, teen pregnancy rates have been declining for years in the US overall, as well as among Black girls specifically. However, maternal mortality is outrageously high for Black women in the US and have actually increased in recent years. Additionally, across a variety of health indicators, Black women and girls lag behind significantly, compared to their female counterparts across the racial divide.

#### National Teen Birth Rate Trends

The overall teen birth rate has declined steadily since 2009. However, “the teen birth rate in the U.S. remains higher than that in many other developed countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom.”<sup>15</sup>

The teen birth rate (age 15-19) for the U.S. in 2017 was 18.8 per 1000 females, a decline from 59.9 in 1990.

Teen birth rates also vary substantially by age, race, ethnicity and region of the country. As the following figure shows, the birth rate for Black girls in 2017 was **27.6** per 1000 females, a decline from 116.2 in 1990. For White girls, the comparable figures are **13.4** and 42.5. Notable here is the fact that across all racial categories, Black teens experienced the largest decline in teen birth rates, experiencing a decline in birthrates of 88.6 between 1990 and 2017, that compares to a 71.4 decline by Hispanic teenaged girls, a 29.1 decline among white teens.<sup>16</sup>



**CHERYL HUNTER-GRANT, LM-SW**  
**Vice President, Children’s Health Research Foundation**  
**Executive Director, Lower Hudson Perinatal Network**  
**Black Women Girl-Child Steering Committee Member**

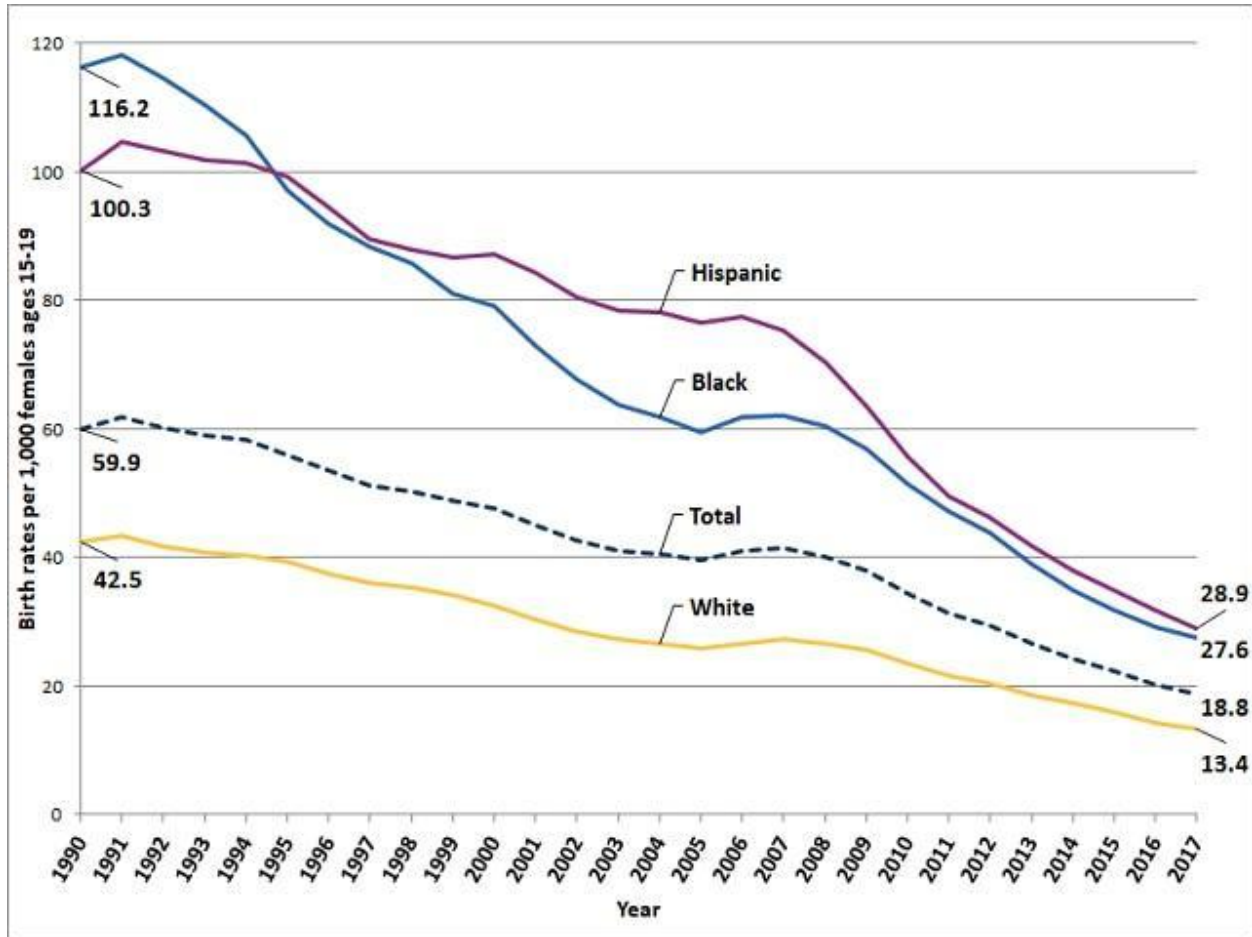
“The rates of infant and Black maternal mortality (woman’s pregnancy-related death) cannot be ignored. We need to align efforts to strengthen our communities and ensure women and girls are healthy and well and that babies have the best chance to be born healthy and live to their full potential.”

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/reproductive-health-and-teen-pregnancy/teen-pregnancy-and-childbearing/trends/index.html>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 1: Birth rates per 1,000 females ages 15-19, by race and Hispanic origin of mother, 1990-2017, United States.**



### State and Local Teen Birth & Pregnancy Rates

In New York State, the teen birth rate in 2017 was **12.5** per 1000 females, well below the national average of 18.8.<sup>17</sup>

For Westchester County, the most recent data for teen pregnancies, can be examined across the intersectionality of race and gender.<sup>18</sup> The overall rate of teen pregnancies in Westchester County is **8.5** per 1000 females (ages 15-17). For Black girls the rate is **18.5**, and for White girls it is **1.2**. For NY State, the comparable figures are **15.1** total rate for teen pregnancies, **28.2** for Black girls and **5.9** for White girls.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Data are for the period of 2014-2016. These data are not directly comparable to the teen birth data because the NY State Health Department used the age group 15-17 for reporting these data. See <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/westchester.htm>

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## Teen Pregnancy Rate Trends in Westchester Localities

Teen pregnancy rates are also available by zip code, again for 2014-2016. When we cross-reference the rates with the percentage of the population who identifies as Black in each zip code, a clear relationship can be found between the racial make-up of each zip code and teen pregnancy rates experienced in that locality<sup>19</sup>

**Table 3: Yonkers Teen Pregnancy Rates, 2014-2016  
by Zip Code and Race**

| <b>Yonkers<br/>Zip Code</b> | <b>Teen Pregnancy Rate per 1000</b> | <b>Black Population<br/>(%)</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>10701</b>                | 48                                  | 26.4                            |
| <b>10703</b>                | 33.5                                | 16.9                            |
| <b>10704</b>                | 13.9                                | 11.9                            |
| <b>10705</b>                | 35.1                                | 19.4                            |
| <b>10706</b>                | 2.8                                 | 3.7                             |
| <b>10707</b>                | 2.1                                 | 5.8                             |
| <b>10708</b>                | 4.3                                 | 5.7                             |
| <b>10709</b>                | 3                                   | 1.1                             |
| <b>10710</b>                | 9.9                                 | 12.1                            |

Sister to Sister International (STSI) has been a long-time advocate for the elimination of health disparities in the Black Community initiating campaigns like “Sister Beating the Odds & Claiming Wellness” that encourage women to “Know their Stats!” For more than a decade, STSI has sponsored highly acclaimed Health Symposia and a Healthy Weekend Extravaganza. They were also an official Ambassador for the Affordable Care Act working with the NYS Health Department, working in communities of color, in Westchester.

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<sup>19</sup> Tables created by Sheila Klatzky and Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever from data obtained from <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/perinatal/county/2014-2016/westchester.htm>. Data are for ages 15-19. Rates are computed using the 3-year average number of teen births and the population for the middle year of the three-year time period and cross-referenced with Census racial composition reported by those who identify as Black-only in each zip code.

**Table 4: Multi-Locality Teen Pregnancy Rates, 2014-2016  
by Zip Code and Race**

| <b>Locality</b>                   | <b>Zip Code</b> | <b>Teen Pregnancy Rate per 1000</b> | <b>Black Population (%)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Westchester County Overall</b> | n/a             | 15.3                                | 14.6                        |
| <b>Peekskill</b>                  | 10566           | 39.2                                | 21.4                        |
| <b>Mt. Vernon</b>                 | 10550           | 53.5                                | 73.8                        |
| <b>Mt. Vernon</b>                 | 10552           | 19.1                                | 42.5                        |
| <b>Mt. Vernon</b>                 | 10553           | 30.9                                | 90.5                        |
| <b>New Rochelle</b>               | 10801           | 27.9                                | 25.9                        |
| <b>New Rochelle</b>               | 10804           | 2                                   | 7.9                         |
| <b>New Rochelle</b>               | 10805           | 15.2                                | 20.1                        |
| <b>Scarsdale</b>                  | 10530           | 3.6                                 | 8.7                         |
| <b>Scarsdale</b>                  | 10583           | 1.5                                 | 1.6                         |

In examining the teen-pregnancy rates overall, while the general pattern emerges that those counties with the least Black population tend to also have the lowest teen pregnancy rates, it's also true that teen pregnancy rates do not increase in proportion to the representation of Black residents. For example, Mt. Vernon's 10553 area code is just over 90% Black and has a teen pregnancy rate of 30.9. While that rate is generally higher than the proportion in the other counties it is significantly lower than some counties that have a much lower Black population.

For example, Yonkers 10703 and 10705 have teen pregnancy rates of 33.5 and 35.1 respectively, even though those localities have Black populations of just 16.9 and 19.4 each. Likewise, Peekskill's pregnancy rate of 39.2 and 53.5 teen pregnancy rate for Mt. Vernon's 10550 zip code, each occurred in localities with Black populations of 21.4% and 73.8% respectively. In each case, these pregnancy rates are much higher than those found within the locality with the highest reported Black population. It would be interesting to determine in future research, exactly what accounts for these widely different pregnancy rate outcomes.

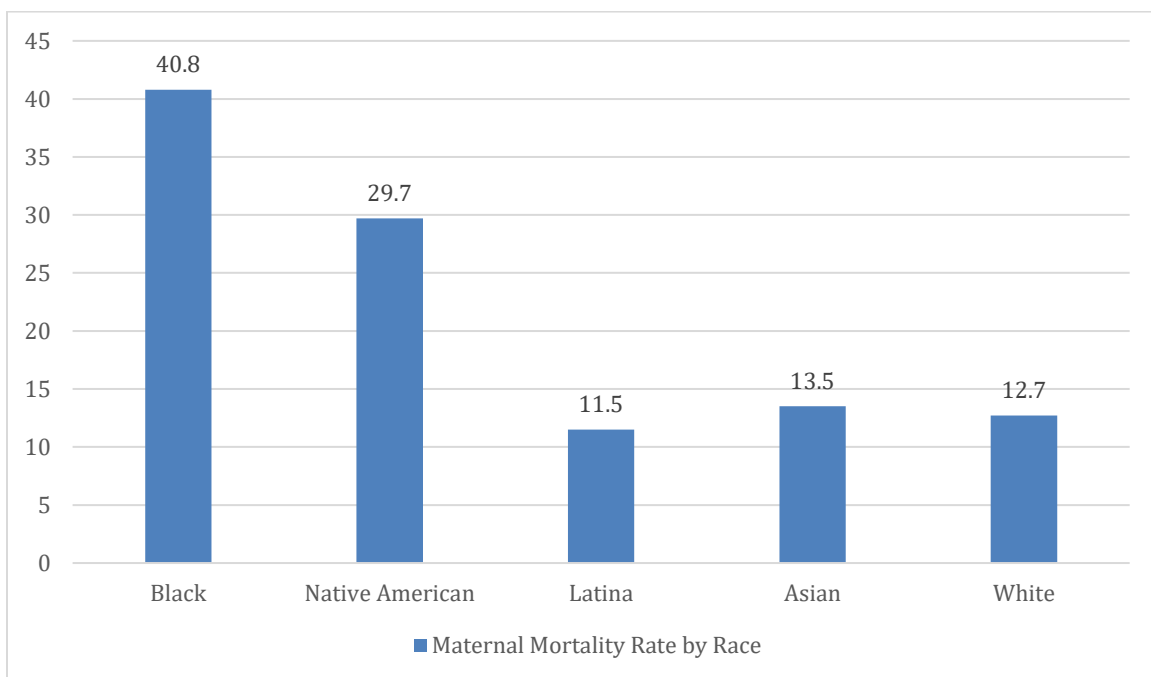
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## Maternal Health

Despite age at pregnancy or any other indicator of socio-economic status, Black women remain uniquely at risk of death in America merely for the natural and beautiful act of attempting to bring a child into the world.

In this country, Black maternal mortality rates are over three times higher than that of white women. But in New York City specifically, these differentials are much worse, where it is estimated to be fully 12 times higher than white maternal mortality rates.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 2. Maternal Mortality Rate by Race, United States 2011-2013**



Source: CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>)

\*\*Pregnancy-related mortality ratio is defined as the number of pregnancy related deaths per 100,000 live births. A pregnancy-related death is defined as the death of a woman during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.

Shockingly today, a woman in Lebanon has a much higher chance of surviving pregnancy and childbirth than does a Black woman in America.<sup>21</sup> Overall, the United States is the only developed nation in the world where the maternal mortality rate has increased over the past two

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ncbcp.org/assets/2019BWRReportBlackWomenintheU.S.2019FINAL3.22.19.pdf>

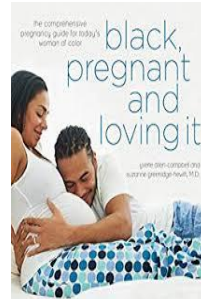
<sup>21</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/r/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2014/03/27/National-Politics/Stories/2FinalBlackWomenintheUS2014.pdf>



decades. And overall all, on average, Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related conditions such as cardiovascular conditions, hemorrhage, and other chronic medical illnesses than their white counterparts.<sup>22</sup>



**Suzanne Greenidge, MD Obstetrics & Gynecology**  
**Woman to Woman, Owner**  
**1020 North Broadway ~ Yonkers, NY**  
**Black, Pregnant & Loving It, Co-Author**  
**Black Women Girl-Child Steering Committee Member**



The decline in birth rates among the 15-19 age group is wonderful, but there is still much more we can do. I continue to see many black and brown teen age pregnancies in my practice at Woman to Woman Obstetrics & Gynecology. Regarding, maternal mortality some remedies for both hospitals and providers for prevention of maternal mortalities involve establishing protocols. These protocols would identify women who are at risk for bleeding problems, elevated blood pressure, and treating those at risk for pulmonary embolism.

### Adult Pregnancy Rates

While maternal mortality continues to be a shockingly entrenched challenge for Black women in America, overall fertility rates in general continue their over 60-year decline in the nation. The figure below, which measures the number of births per 1000 women of child-bearing age, illustrates the dramatic birth rate decline experienced in America since the Baby Boom years of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>23</sup>



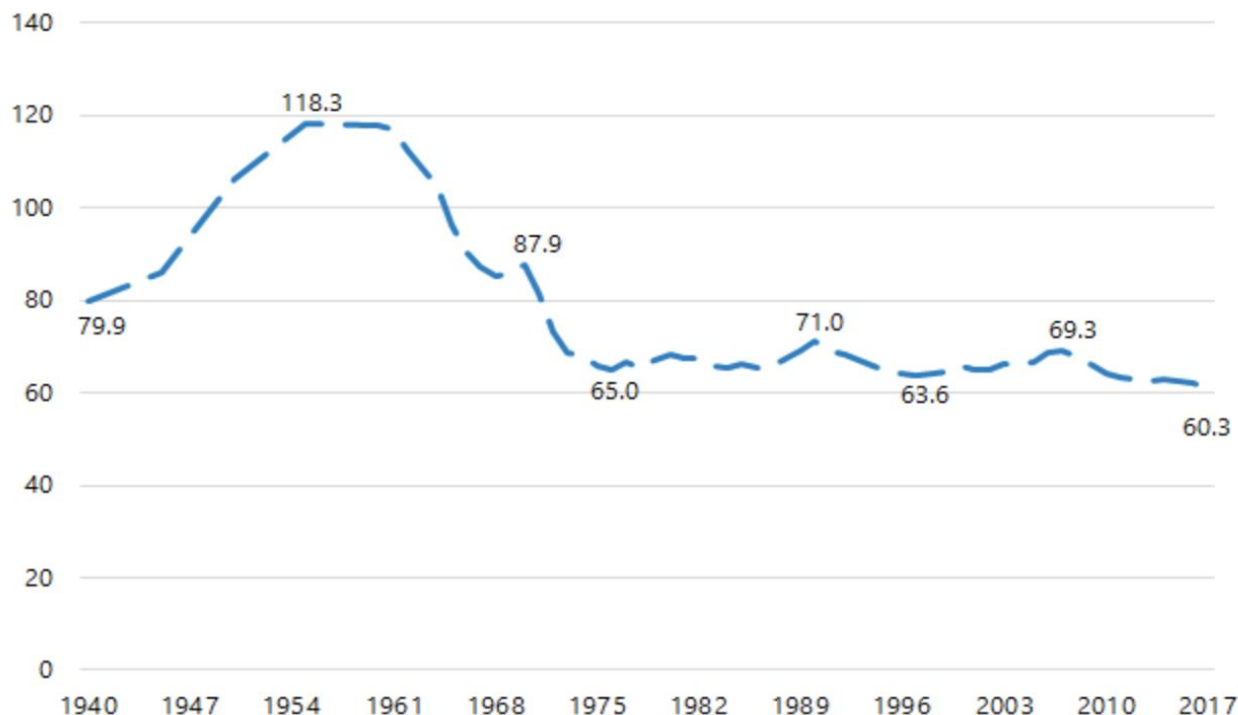
**SUPPORT**  
**Black Moms**  
*Take Action*  
**for Safe**  
**Maternity**  
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[www.actionforsafematernitycare.com](http://www.actionforsafematernitycare.com)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ncbcp.org/assets/2019BWRReportBlackWomenintheU.S.2019FINAL3.22.19.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/fertility-and-birth-rates>

## Trends in the U.S. Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-44): Selected Years, 1940-2017



Sources: Data for 1940-1965: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (1967). *Vital statistics of the United States, 1965* [Table I-6]. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsus/nat65\\_1.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsus/nat65_1.pdf). Data for 1970-1990: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. (2002). *Health, United States, 2002, with chartbook on trends in the health of Americans* [Table 3]. Hyattsville, MD: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hsus/hsus02.pdf>. Data for 1990-2016: Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Driscoll, A. K., & Drake, P. (2018). *Births: Final data for 2016* [Tables 1, 5, I-26]. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 67(1). Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr67/nvsr67\\_01.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr67/nvsr67_01.pdf). Data for 2016-2017 race/Hispanic origin estimates: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *CDC WONDER* [Data tool]. Retrieved from <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D66>. Data for 2017: Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Driscoll, A. K., & Drake, P. (2018). *Births: Final data for 2017* [Tables 1, 2]. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 67(8). Retrieved from

childtrends.org

**United States:** In 2017, the fertility rate in the U.S. for non-Hispanic Black women was **63.1** per 1000. For non-Hispanic white women, the rate was **57.2** per 1000. (ibid.)

**NY State and Westchester County:** In NY State, the fertility rate for a 3-year average (2014-2016) was **54.8** per 1000 for white women and **52.4**--slightly lower-- for black women.<sup>24</sup> In Westchester County for the same period, however, the fertility rate for black women was higher--**49.6** per 1000--than the comparable rate for white women--**42.7**.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/newyorkstate.htm>

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## Births to Unmarried Women by Race and Age

While it is true that overall, higher percentages of births occur to unmarried black women than to unmarried white women, and the tendency increases as age at birth increases, it's important to note that Black women are significantly less likely to marry than other women in America. And when Black women do marry, they tend to marry much later in life.

As a result, a far lower proportion of black women have married at least once by age 40. By that stage in life, nearly 9 out of 10 White and Asian/Pacific Islander women have been married, as have more than 8 in 10 Hispanic women and more than three-quarters of American Indian/Native Alaskan women. Yet fewer than two-thirds of black women reported having married at least once by that same age.<sup>25</sup> As a result, Black women who desire children may need to forego waiting for marriage in order to have the ability to experience pregnancy and child-birth during their child-bearing years.

## Black Women and Chronic Disease Rates

### *Obesity*

Obesity is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes, including diabetes, hypertension and cancer. “Over the past two decades, obesity has increased worldwide and remains the highest in the U.S.”<sup>26</sup> For the U.S. as a whole, the obesity rate for adults aged 20 and over is approximately 36%. See figure below for rates by sex and age. (ibid.)

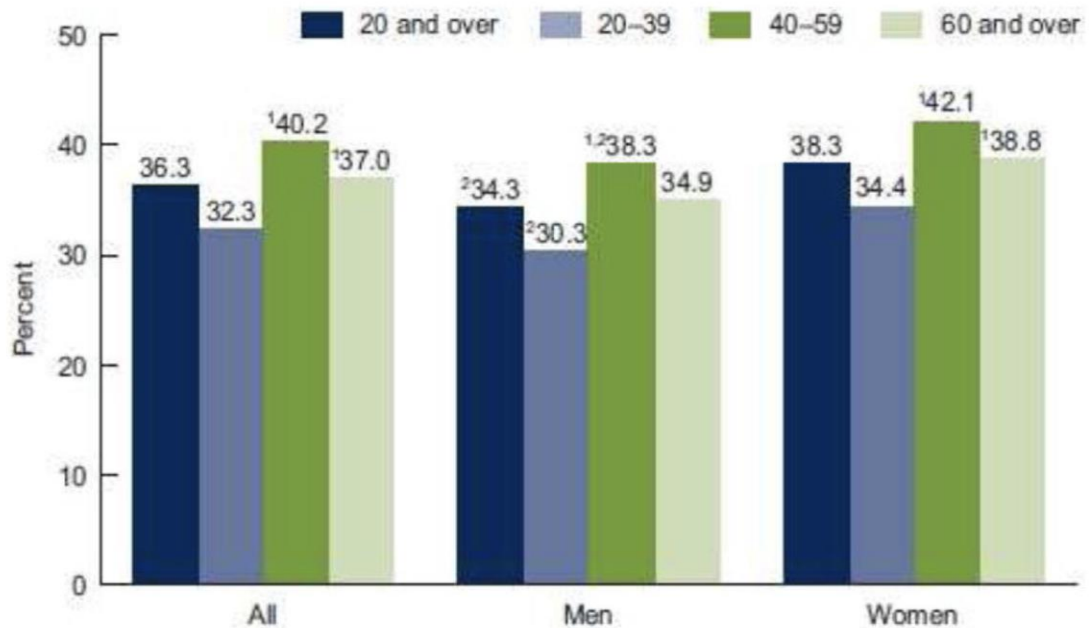
**Figure 3: National Obesity Rates by Gender and Age**



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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4850739/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5599163/>



Obesity prevalence among adults aged 20 and over, by sex and age: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2011–2014

**NY State:** NY State is among the least obese states in the nation, ranking 45<sup>th</sup> among the states, with an adult obesity rate of just 25.7%. However, like all the states, it is trending upward.<sup>27</sup>

**Westchester County:** Westchester County’s adult obesity rate is lower than that for the state as a whole at 17.8% in 2015.<sup>28</sup>

### *Obesity by Race and Gender*

Nationally, more than half of Black women (54.8%) were obese, compared with 38% of White women. However, Black men and White men had similar obesity rates: 36.9% and 37.9%, respectively.<sup>29</sup>

**Westchester County:** Using self-reported data, in Westchester County, the rate of obesity for non-Hispanic Whites in 2013-2014 was 17.8%. For non-Hispanic Blacks, the rate was 39.7%.<sup>30</sup> Black people were also more likely to report drinking one or more sugary drinks daily (32.5% vs. 11.5% for White people) and more likely to report physician-diagnosed high blood pressure (45.5% vs. 25.7%). (ibid.)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.stateofobesity.org/adult-obesity/>

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.opendatanetwork.com/entity/05000000US36119-05000000US34003/Westchester\\_County\\_NY-Bergen\\_County\\_NJ/health.health\\_behaviors.adult\\_obesity\\_value?year=2015](https://www.opendatanetwork.com/entity/05000000US36119-05000000US34003/Westchester_County_NY-Bergen_County_NJ/health.health_behaviors.adult_obesity_value?year=2015)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.stateofobesity.org/obesity-rates-trends-overview/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/Data-Stats/CHA-SelfReportedHealthStatus.pdf>

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## *Overweight and Obesity*

For NY State in 2017, the combined overweight and obesity rate for White people was **60.7%**. For Black people, it was **70.9%**.<sup>31</sup>

For overweight and obesity rates combined, the trend for both Black and White people over the 5-year period of 2013-2017 has remained relatively stable.

## **Childhood Obesity**

**United States:** In the United States (2015-2016), “For children and adolescents aged 2-19 years: The prevalence of obesity was **18.5%** and affected about 13.7 million children and adolescents. Obesity prevalence was 13.9% among 2- to 5-year-olds, 18.4% among 6- to 11-year-olds, and 20.6% among 12- to 19-year-olds.”<sup>32</sup> “Non-Hispanic Blacks had higher obesity prevalence (**22.0%**) than non-Hispanic Whites (**14.1%**).” (ibid.)

“There was no significant difference in the prevalence of obesity between boys and girls or by age group.” (ibid.)

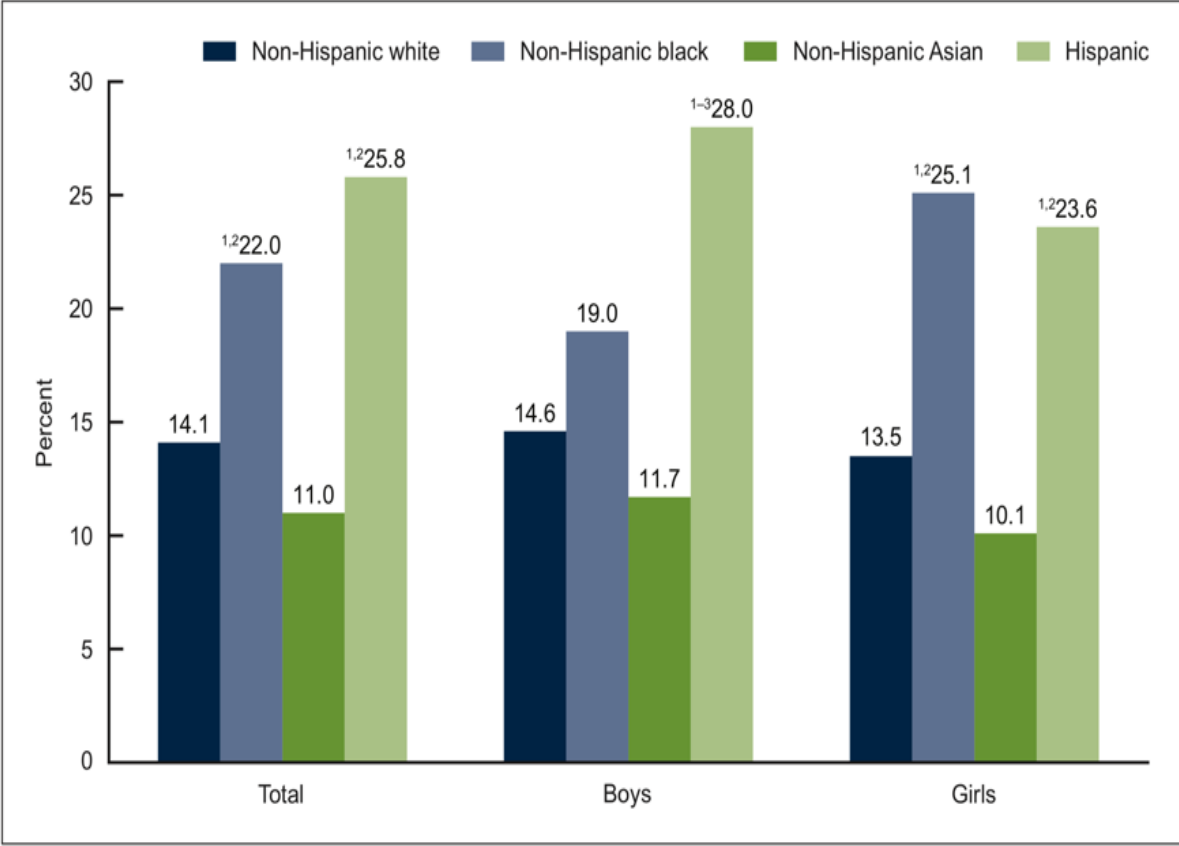
Among girls, the prevalence of obesity was **25.1%** in non-Hispanic Black girls, and **13.5%** in non-Hispanic white girls.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/adult-overweightobesity-rate-by-re/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=white--black&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22new-york%22:%7B%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

Figure 4. Prevalence of obesity among youth aged 2–19 years, by sex and race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2015–2016

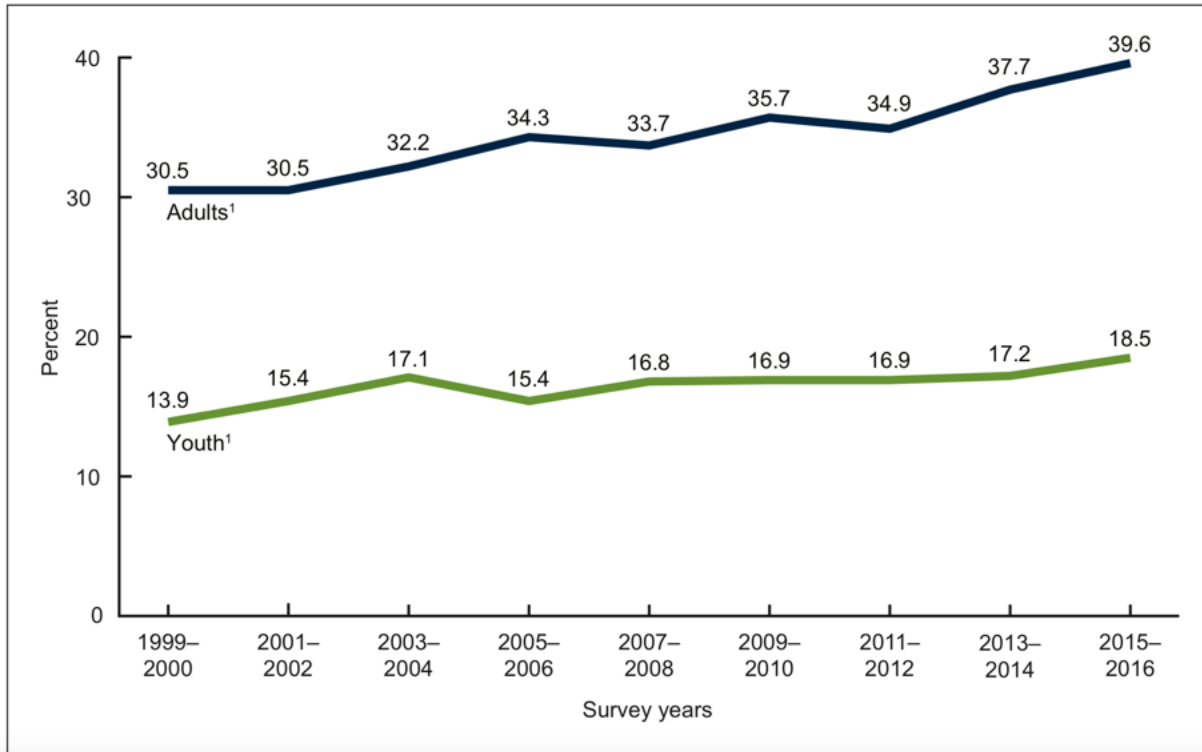


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## Trends in Childhood Obesity

“From 1999–2000 through 2015–2016, a significantly increasing trend in obesity was observed in both adults and youth.” (See Figure 5 below.) (ibid.)

Figure 5. Trends in obesity prevalence among adults aged 20 and over (age adjusted) and youth aged 2–19 years: United States, 1999–2000 through 2015–2016



## Childhood Obesity by Race and Sex

**NY State:** Based on data for NY State high school students (2017), Black female high school students had obesity rates of **13.6%**, compared to 18.6% for Black males. White female high school students had obesity rates of **9.6%**, compared to 11.1% for White males.<sup>33</sup>

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<https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?TT=C&SID=HS&QID=QNOBESE&LID=NY&LID2=SL&YID=2017&YID2=SY&SYID=&EYID=&HT=QQ&LCT=LL&COL=S&ROW1=N&ROW2=N&TST=false&C1=&C2=&SC=DEFAULT&SO=ASC&VA=CI&CS=Y&DP=1&QP=G&FG=G1&FA=A1&FR=R1&FS=S1&FSC=P1&FSI=I1>. These data should be interpreted with caution, since the confidence intervals are wide.

**Table 5: Student Obesity by School District, Westchester and NY State<sup>34</sup>**  
 %Obese

|                                    | Yonkers | White Plains | Greenburgh | Peekskill | Mount Vernon | New Rochelle | Scarsdale | NY State |
|------------------------------------|---------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Elementary School Students</b>  | 7.8     | 16.8         | 13.2       | 22.9      | 11.6         | 20.2         | 2.8       | 16       |
| <b>Middle/High School Students</b> | 14.3    | 17.6         | 23.9       | 26.9      | 17           | 21.4         | 6.6       | 18.8     |
| <b>District Total</b>              | 9.7     | 17           | 16.3       | 24.2      | 13.7         | 20.6         | 4.8       | 17.2     |

**Source:** <https://nyshc.health.ny.gov/web/nyapd/student-weight-data-explorer>

Among elementary school students and for all students combined, both Peekskill and New Rochelle have higher obesity rates than the state average. For middle/high school students, Greenburgh, Peekskill and New Rochelle have higher obesity rates than the state average. For Westchester County as a whole, the student obesity rate was 12.3%, lower than that for the state as a whole (17.2%).

<sup>34</sup> Chart created by Sheila Klatzky from data compiled from the following source: <https://nyshc.health.ny.gov/web/nyapd/student-weight-data-explorer>. Data from 2016-2018.



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## Breast Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society, “Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women.”<sup>35</sup> Overall, Black women and white women get breast cancer at about the same rate, but Black women experience breast cancer at much earlier ages and are especially likely to experience triple-negative breast cancer, the most aggressive form of the disease.<sup>36</sup>

For the U.S. as a whole, mortality rates from breast cancer have declined steadily over the last several decades, due to improvements in treatment and early detection.<sup>37</sup> See Figure below for national trends. (ibid.) However, “not all women have benefited equally,” as the American Cancer Society points out (ibid.) In particular, they note “the striking divergence in mortality trends between black and white women beginning in the early 1980s (Figure 6b). This disparity likely reflects a combination of factors, including differences in stage at diagnosis, obesity and comorbidities, and tumor characteristics, as well as access, adherence, and response to treatment.”<sup>38</sup> While in the past, Black women were less likely than White women to experience mammograms, however in recent years, they are actually more likely than White women to receive mammography screening.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> American Cancer Society. How Common Is Breast Cancer? <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/how-common-is-breast-cancer.html>. Accessed January 12, 2018. Cited in <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/metric/42>

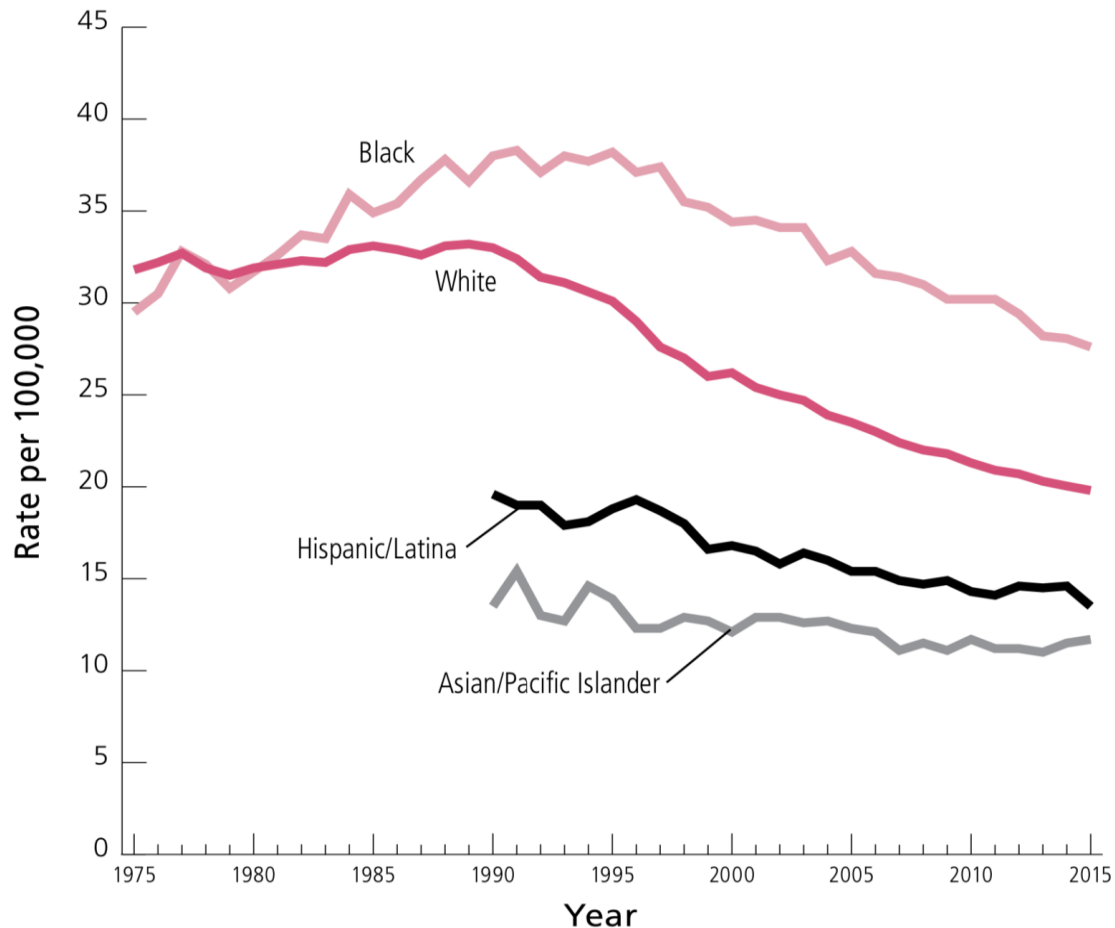
<sup>36</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/research/articles/breast\\_cancer\\_rates\\_women.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/research/articles/breast_cancer_rates_women.htm)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/breast-cancer-facts-and-figures/breast-cancer-facts-and-figures-2017-2018.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/metric/42>

<sup>39</sup> <https://ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/RacialEthnicIssuesinScreening.html>

**Figure 6b. Trends in Female Breast Cancer Death Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 1975-2015, US**



**NY State:** Late stage breast cancer rates of incidence and breast cancer mortality are higher for Black women than for White women, in both NY State and Westchester County. In NY State, for the period 2013-2015, the rate of incidence of female late stage breast cancer per 100,000 female population was **43.4** for the total population. For White women, it was 44.6 and for Black women it was **51.1**. The rate of female breast cancer mortality per 100,000 female population was **19.2** for the total population, 19.5 for White women and **25.3** for Black women.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/newyorkstate.htm>



**MILLISSA BESS, RN BSN MS OCN**  
**Teen Age Pregnancy Prevention, Maternal**  
**Health and Healthy Lifestyles**  
**Work Group Co-Chair**  
**STSI Board Member**

“As an oncology nurse I see breast cancer take a disproportionate toll on Black women, primarily due to late detection. While it is important to have annual mammograms and focus on our breast in October during Breast Cancer Awareness month, it's not enough. We must be vigilant and encourage all of the girls and women we know to become educated on breast health, self-exams and the importance of early detection. We can change the norm of Black women dying more often from breast cancer because of late stage detection. Our work group will endeavor to promote education and other innovative strategies to improve outcomes related to breast cancer and other chronic diseases that contribute to the mortality rate of Black women in Westchester.”

**Westchester County and Cities:** For Westchester County, the comparable figures are **40.8** for female late stage breast cancer for the total population, **41.6** for White women, **47.3** for Black women. The rates for female breast cancer mortality were **16.8** for the total population, **17.8** for White women, and **19.3** for Black women.<sup>41</sup>

In 2017, the rates of breast cancer mortality per 100,000 female population for larger Westchester cities was **20.2** for Yonkers, 21.8 for New Rochelle and **23.4** for Mount Vernon. These rates compare favorably with the national average for the 500 largest cities, which was **24.4**.<sup>42</sup>

## **Heart Disease**

According to data compiled by White Plains Hospital, the leading cause of death among Westchester County residents is due to coronary heart disease.<sup>43</sup> This is true for the nation as a whole as well. Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. “Health conditions—like obesity, high blood pressure, high stress, and diabetes—and lifestyle choices

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/westchester.htm>

<sup>42</sup> These comparisons are only available for the 500 largest cities. See <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/ny/mount%20vernon/metric-detail?metric=42>

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.wphospital.org/WPHRedesign/media/Emerge\\_WPHRedesign/Documents/CHA-DOH.pdf](https://www.wphospital.org/WPHRedesign/media/Emerge_WPHRedesign/Documents/CHA-DOH.pdf)

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such as smoking, physical inactivity, and poor diet, are all associated with cardiovascular disease.”<sup>44</sup> Black individuals are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease.<sup>45</sup>

**NY State:** Diseases of the heart hospitalizations per 10,000 for NY State (2012-2014) are **89.4** per 10,000 for the total population. For White individuals, the rate was **76.2**, and for Black individuals the rate was **107.3**.

The rate of mortality from diseases of the heart was **178.1** per 100,000 for total population, **180.4** for White people and **207.7** for Black people.<sup>46</sup>



**LYNNE PERRY-BOTTINGER MD FACC**  
**President & CEO, Clinical/Interventional Cardiology PLLC**  
**New Rochelle, NY**

“Heart disease remains the number one killer of men and women in the US. One of two African American women will die of cardiovascular disease. A heart attack occurs here every 34 seconds. 80% of heart disease can be prevented with a regimen of diet, sleep, exercise, and medications like aspirin.” [www.savehearts.com](http://www.savehearts.com)

**Westchester County and Cities:** Diseases of the heart hospitalizations per 10,000 for Westchester County (2012-2014) were **78.6**, lower than those for the State as a whole. For White people, the rate was **59.2** and for Black people the rate was 95.5. The rate of mortality from diseases of the heart was **143.4** for the total population, **145.7** for White people and **179.5** for Black people.<sup>47</sup>

In 2017, Yonkers had a cardiovascular death rate of 175.9, New Rochelle’s rate was 186.2, and the rate for Mount Vernon was 201.4. All of these are lower than that for the 500 largest cities in the U.S. (210.4) but higher than that for the County and NY State (see above).

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<sup>44</sup> Writing Group M, Mozaffarian D, Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics-2016 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2016;133(4):e38-360. Cited in <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/metric/41>

<sup>45</sup> As are Hispanic individuals, people with low incomes and people living in the southeastern part of the U.S. <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/metric/41>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/newyorkstate.htm>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/westchester.htm>

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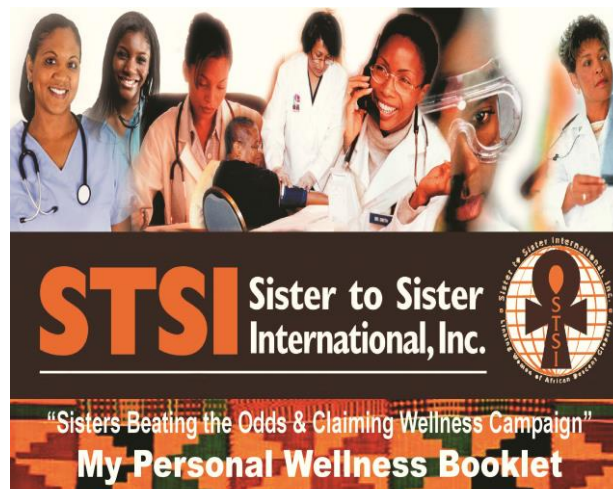
## Heart Disease by Gender

The Westchester County Health Department (based on data from 2012) points out that the idea that heart disease is a “man’s disease” is a myth. “Women accounted for 54 out of every 100 deaths from heart disease.”<sup>48</sup> They do not, however, show rates for the intersection of race and gender.

## HIV/AIDS

At the national level, “Blacks/African Americans account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses and people living with HIV, compared to other races/ethnicities. In 2017, blacks/African Americans accounted for **13%** of the US population but **43%** (16,694) of the 38,739 new HIV diagnoses in the United States and dependent areas.”<sup>49</sup>

Likewise, Black women specifically are more likely than all other women in America to be afflicted with HIV/AIDS. Although HIV infections among Black women have declined 21% between 2010-2016, they still account for 6 in 10 new infections among women. Additionally, Black women suffer HIV diagnosis rates fully 15 times as higher than that of White women, and almost five times that of Latino women. Further, HIV/AIDS-related illness is among the leading causes of death for young black women, ages 25-34.<sup>50</sup>



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<sup>48</sup> <https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/Data-Stats/CHA-HeartDisease2016.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/africanamericans/index.html>

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6818a3.htm?s\\_cid=mm6818a3\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6818a3.htm?s_cid=mm6818a3_w)

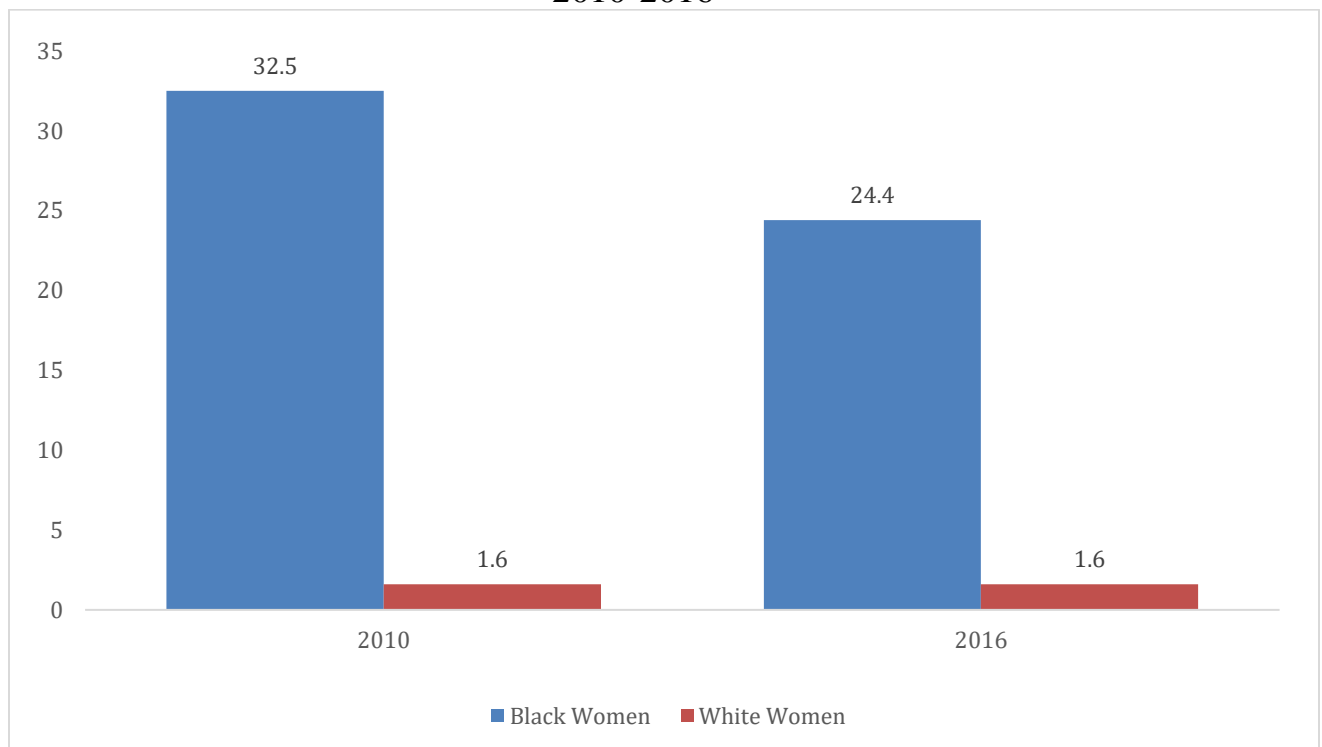


**YEDIDAH T. YEHUDAH**  
**Former Administrator, HIV/AIDS, Chronic Disease & STD Prevention**  
**Westchester County Board of Health**  
**STSI International Advisory Board Member**

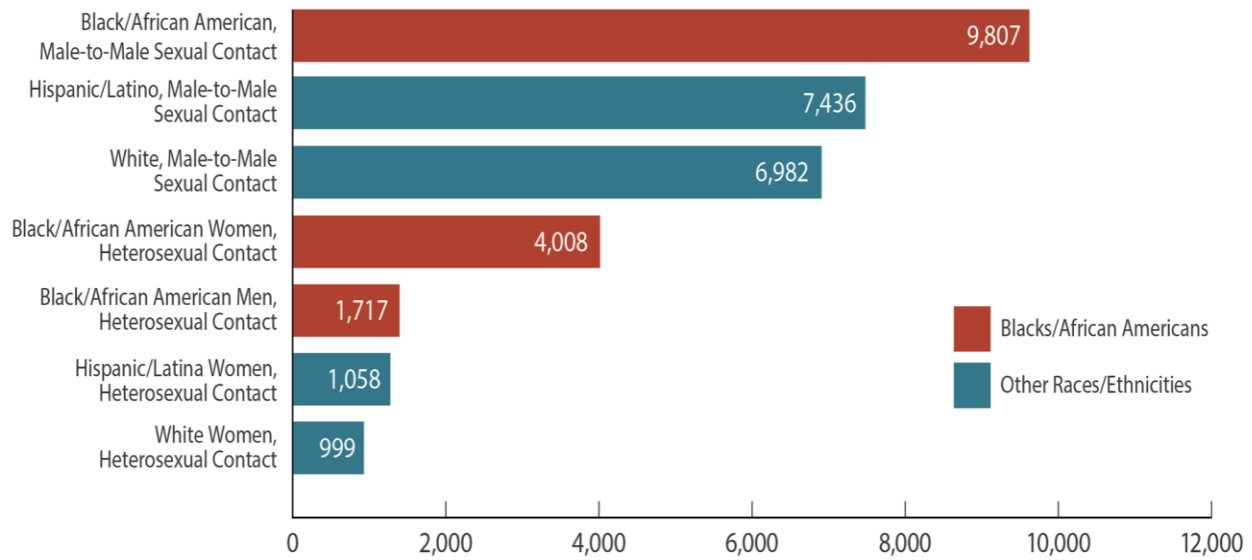
“As women we cannot let our guards down, no matter what the ‘stats say. We have the power to make choices and love ourselves enough, that we will not embrace anything that would be a detriment to our well-being. In this regard, we must also ensure that we get tested, for HIV/AIDS and other STDs and tell others to do the same.”

Figure 7. HIV-Infection Rates for Women by Race,

2010-2016



New HIV Diagnoses in the US and Dependent Areas  
for the Most-Affected Subpopulations, 2017



Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.

Subpopulations representing 2% or less of HIV diagnoses are not reflected in this chart.

Source: CDC. [Diagnoses of HIV infection in the United States and dependent areas, 2017](#). *HIV Surveillance Report* 2018;29.

**NY State:** If we use the prevalence of people living with diagnosed HIV,<sup>51</sup> we can compare the rates for different subpopulations. As of June 2018, the prevalence for non-Hispanic Whites was **100.1**. For non-Hispanic Blacks, it was **611.5**. (ibid.)

For new diagnoses of HIV, the case rate for non-Hispanic Whites was **4.4**. For non-Hispanic Blacks, it was **34.9**. (ibid.) For new diagnoses of AIDS, the case rate for non-Hispanic Whites was **1.8**. For non-Hispanic Blacks, it was **19.4**. (ibid.)

**Westchester County:** For Westchester County, the prevalence of people living with diagnosed HIV was 127.6; with AIDS it was 166.6 and with HIV and AIDS it was 294.2. (ibid.)

<sup>51</sup> Prevalence: the number of people living with HIV per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the U.S. 2010 Census. See [https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/statistics/annual/2017/2017\\_annual\\_surveillance\\_report.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/statistics/annual/2017/2017_annual_surveillance_report.pdf)

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For new diagnoses of HIV, the case rate was 12.5, and for AIDS it was 5.5.

**Lower Hudson Valley:** The data include breakdowns by race and gender for the lower Hudson Valley, including Putnam, Rockland and Westchester Counties. For this region, the prevalence of non-Hispanic Whites living with diagnosed HIV was **43.8**. For non-Hispanic Blacks, it was **281.7**; with AIDS it was **39.6** for non-Hispanic Whites and **381.6** for non-Hispanic Blacks. For new diagnoses of HIV, the case rate for non-Hispanic Whites was **1.9**. For non-Hispanic Blacks, it was **31.6**.

## Diabetes

Diabetes is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the U.S. and especially disproportionately impacts the Black community.<sup>52</sup> “It is highly linked to high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, stroke, and vision and nerve damage. However, it can be treated with medication and healthy lifestyle changes—highlighting the need for access to primary health services.” (ibid.)

**NY State:** For White people, the diabetes mortality rate per 100,000 population (2012-2014) was **13.9**. For Black people, that rate more than doubled to **32.7**. For the State overall, it was **17.0**.<sup>53</sup> For diabetes (primary diagnosis) hospitalizations per 10,000 population, the rate for White people was **10.5**. For Black people, that rate more than tripled to **36.9**. For the State overall, it was **17.1**.

**Westchester County and Cities:** In Westchester County, the rates of diabetes mortality and hospitalizations are lower than for the State as a whole. For White people, the diabetes mortality rate per 100,000 population was **8.6**. For Black people, that rate nearly tripled to **23.8**. For the County overall, the rate was **10.5**. For diabetes (primary diagnosis) hospitalizations per 10,000 population, the rate for White people was **7.2**. For Black people, that rate more than quadrupled to **33.3**. For the County as a whole, it was **12.7**.

Model-based estimates for diagnosed diabetes in adults of age 18 years and over in 2016 show 10.8% for Yonkers, 9.8% for New Rochelle and 12.9% for Mount Vernon.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/metric/37>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/newyorkstate.htm>

<sup>54</sup>

[https://nccd.cdc.gov/500\\_Cities/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DPH\\_500\\_Cities.InteractiveMap&islStates=59&islCategories=HLTHOUT&islMeasures=DIABETES](https://nccd.cdc.gov/500_Cities/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DPH_500_Cities.InteractiveMap&islStates=59&islCategories=HLTHOUT&islMeasures=DIABETES)



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## IV. Entrepreneurship, Pay Equity & Economic Prosperity Black Women Entrepreneurship

Black women are the fastest growing demographic group in the nation to take the plunge into entrepreneurship. Between 2007 and 2018, the number of women-owned businesses in America grew by 58%. Over the same time period, the number of Black women-owned businesses, grew by a whopping 164%.<sup>55</sup>



**CHARMAINE GOLDING**  
**Golden Krust, Franchise owner**  
**Work group Co-Chair & STSI Board Member**

“The biggest challenge and the most important thing to get right in owning and managing a franchise is hiring great employees and allowing time for work-life balance.”

**Table 6. New Women-Owned Businesses Per Day by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2018**

| Race/Ethnicity                   | Number of Firms |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| All women-owned firms            | 1,821           |
| All “minority” owned             | 1,162           |
| African American/Black           | 541             |
| Asian American                   | 191             |
| Latina                           | 401             |
| Native American/Alaska Native    | 22              |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 7               |
| White                            | 659             |

Source: 2018 State of Women-Owned Business Report by American Express

Overall, there are some 2.4 million Black women who own businesses in America and represent the largest segment of women-owned businesses among women of color.<sup>56</sup> Notable too, is the

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<sup>55</sup> [https://about.americanexpress.com/files/doc\\_library/file/2018-state-of-women-owned-businesses-report.pdf](https://about.americanexpress.com/files/doc_library/file/2018-state-of-women-owned-businesses-report.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

fact is that Black women are the only racial or ethnic group who has a higher business ownership rate than her male counterpart.<sup>57</sup>

While Black women are leading business owners, when it comes to revenue generation, they fall significantly behind. Black women entrepreneurs earn on average, an annual revenue of just \$24,700 compared to \$143,100 earned by all women and \$212,300 earned by white women. However, if the revenue generation of Black women were at parity, these businesses alone would add over \$510 Billion to the U.S. economy.



**SAYIDANA BRANNAN-DOUGLAS**  
**STSI STEAM Sistah**  
**Graduate Student, Stony Brook University & Owner, SBD**  
**Digital Productions**

“It’s beneficial to be a young entrepreneur because it gives you the opportunity to gain early experience with how to use your skills, knowledge and interests to make money and be self-sufficient. Being young is a great, low-risk time to start a business because you typically have less time constraints and financial responsibilities, giving you the flexibility to explore bringing to life a product or service that you are interested in. It helps to shift your mindset from looking at the world as a consumer, to that of a producer and creator of what others consume. Additionally, building a business teaches you transferrable skills like discipline, effective communication with others, time management, and financial literacy.”

**Table 7. Net New Women-Owned Businesses Per Day  
 by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2018**

| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>            | <b>Average Annual Revenue (\$)</b> | <b>Additional Revenue if at Parity (\$)</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| All women-owned firms            | 143,100                            |                                             |
| All “minority” owned             | 66,400                             | 1,236,155,026,836                           |
| African American/Black           | 24,700                             | 510,039,309,296                             |
| Asian American                   | 189,200                            | 227,514,800,306                             |
| Latina                           | 51,400                             | 454,825,278,194                             |
| Native American/Alaska Native    | 68,600                             | 35,968,180,416                              |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 70,600                             | 7,807,458,624                               |
| White                            | 212,300                            |                                             |

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2018/09/09/black-women-entrepreneurs-the-good-and-not-so-good-news/#5b67d3c96ffe>

Source: 2018 State of Women-Owned Business Report by American Express

**Westchester County and NY State:** Unfortunately, state and local level data that could tease out the specific conditions of Black women entrepreneurs was not available. However, of the 114,575 businesses in Westchester County (2012), 39,870 or 34.8% are owned by women. 33,391 or 29.1% are owned by minorities. (See figure below.)<sup>58</sup>

According to data provided by the Westchester County Office of Economic Development, 509 MWBE registered businesses are wholly or partly black owned.<sup>59</sup>

**Table 8: Minority and Women-Owned Businesses in Westchester County, 2012**

|                                                                                                                                                                         | Minority and Women Owned Businesses 2012 |        |          | Minority & Women-Owned Businesses 2012-% |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------|----------|------------------------------------------|----------|
|                                                                                                                                                                         | All Firms                                | Women  | Minority | Women                                    | Minority |
| Yonkers                                                                                                                                                                 | 18586                                    | 6803   | 9379     | 36.6                                     | 50.5     |
| Peekskill                                                                                                                                                               | 2172                                     | 961    | 921      | 44.2                                     | 42.4     |
| Mount Vernon                                                                                                                                                            | 7133                                     | 2899   | 4503     | 40.6                                     | 63.1     |
| New Rochelle                                                                                                                                                            | 8783                                     | 2868   | 3245     | 32.6                                     | 36.9     |
| Scarsdale                                                                                                                                                               | F                                        | F      | F        |                                          |          |
| White Plains                                                                                                                                                            | 8367                                     | 2607   | 2371     | 31.1                                     | 28.3     |
| Westchester County                                                                                                                                                      | 114575                                   | 39870  | 33391    | 34.8                                     | 29.1     |
| NY State                                                                                                                                                                | 2008988                                  | 725709 | 709021   | 36.1                                     | 35.3     |
| <a href="https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/yonkerscitynewyork,US/PST045218">https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/yonkerscitynewyork,US/PST045218</a> |                                          |        |          |                                          |          |
| <a href="https://www.census.gov/quickfacts">https://www.census.gov/quickfacts</a>                                                                                       |                                          |        |          |                                          |          |
| F= fewer than 25 firms                                                                                                                                                  |                                          |        |          |                                          |          |

<sup>58</sup> Figure created by Sheila Klatzky from data compiled from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>. F = fewer than 25 firms.

<sup>59</sup> Thank you to Corazón Pineda, Business Attraction & Retention Specialist, Economic Development

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## Wages

On average, Black women earn just 62 cents per dollar earned by White men. The median annual wage earned by Black women in the US is \$38,036.<sup>60</sup> In fact, Black women must earn a Ph.D. to earn wages that are on par with what White men earn with a GED.<sup>61</sup>



**NALO RUSSELL**  
**Pre-med, Freshman Drexel University**  
**Former STEAM Camp Co-President**

*\*Below quoted from her 2019 STEAM Camp graduation remarks*

“Pay equity is crucial, because it is a method of eliminating gender and race discrimination when establishing and maintaining wages. In the U.S. wage gaps remain stubborn despite the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, and a variety of other legislation prohibiting employment discrimination. In comparison to a white, non-Hispanic man’s dollar, African American women earn only 64 cents and Latinas just 55 cents. According to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research Black women would need to wait until 2119 to earn equal pay. I’m not sure about all of you, but I refuse to tarry that long for change!”



**VALERIE MASON CUNNINGHAM**  
**Former Vice President, Xerox Corporation**  
**Black Women Girl-Child Consultant & Advisor**

“There is a shift happening in the global economy. The labor force is changing, and girls are becoming a larger component. Making smart business choices now - including investing in the development and education of girls will have a profound impact. This is a must-do. Uplifting and investing in girls in the business community is the right choice. The alarm is sounding off-it’s your wake-up call, no time to hit snooze because you’ll lose.”

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/quantifying-americas-gender-wage-gap.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.ncbcp.org/news/releases/BWRRReport.BlackWomeninU.S.2015.3.26.15FINAL.pdf>

**NY State:** Not unlike the rest of the nation, “in 2017 the highest paid race/ethnicity of New York workers was White.”<sup>62</sup> The chart below shows the race-based “wage disparities in the 5 most common occupations in NY State by number of full-time employees.”<sup>63</sup>

**Table. 9 New York State Salaries in Select Occupations by Race**

| <b>Occupation</b>                        | <b>White</b> | <b>Black</b> |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Miscellaneous managers                   | \$113,273    | \$66,369     |
| Elementary & middle school teachers      | 66,866       | 63,119       |
| Secretaries & administrative assistants  | 40,073       | 41,552       |
| Retail salespersons                      | 36,757       | 23,542       |
| Nursing, psychiatric & home health aides | 27,067       | 27,281       |

Black wages slightly exceed those of Whites for secretaries & administrative assistants and nursing, psychiatric & home health aides.<sup>64</sup> In the other occupations shown, Black wages are significantly lower than White wages in all other categories, particularly in managerial positions

### **State & Local Income Levels**

**Westchester County and NY State:** The median annual income in US dollars (2012-2016) for White households in Westchester County was **\$107,484**. For Black households, it was **\$55,400**.<sup>65</sup> The comparable figures for NY State are **\$70,083** and **\$42,483**.

A comparison of median incomes for individuals by race in 2017 show similar disparities between Black and White full-time workers. See Table below:

<sup>62</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/westchester-county-ny/#economy>. Data provided by the Census Bureau ACS PUMS 1-Year Estimate. This data set is not available at the County level.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> In other studies that have found wages of African Americans exceeding that of their white counterparts have found those outcomes related to increased hours worked by African Americans. No such analysis here was determined to see if this, or other factors (such as seniority) might be related to this outcome.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/westchester.htm>

**Table 10. Median Earnings for Full Time Workers in New York State,  
Westchester & Yonkers by Race and Gender  
2017**

|                                | NY State | Westchester | Yonkers |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| <b>Full-Time Workers</b>       |          |             |         |
| Male                           | 55,636   | 74,404      | 52,232  |
| Female                         | 48,901   | 60,049      | 51,575  |
|                                |          |             |         |
| <b>Black/African Americans</b> |          |             |         |
| Male                           | 44,901   | 47,948      | 42,466  |
| Female                         | 41,846   | 41,287      | 36,926  |
|                                |          |             |         |
| <b>White</b>                   |          |             |         |
| Male                           | 62,146   | 96,145      | 60,260  |
| Female                         | 51,843   | 71,177      | 60,228  |

Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

For NY State, Black women earn **80.7%** of the median income earned by White women. For Westchester County, the percentage is **58.0%**. And for Yonkers, it is 61.5%.

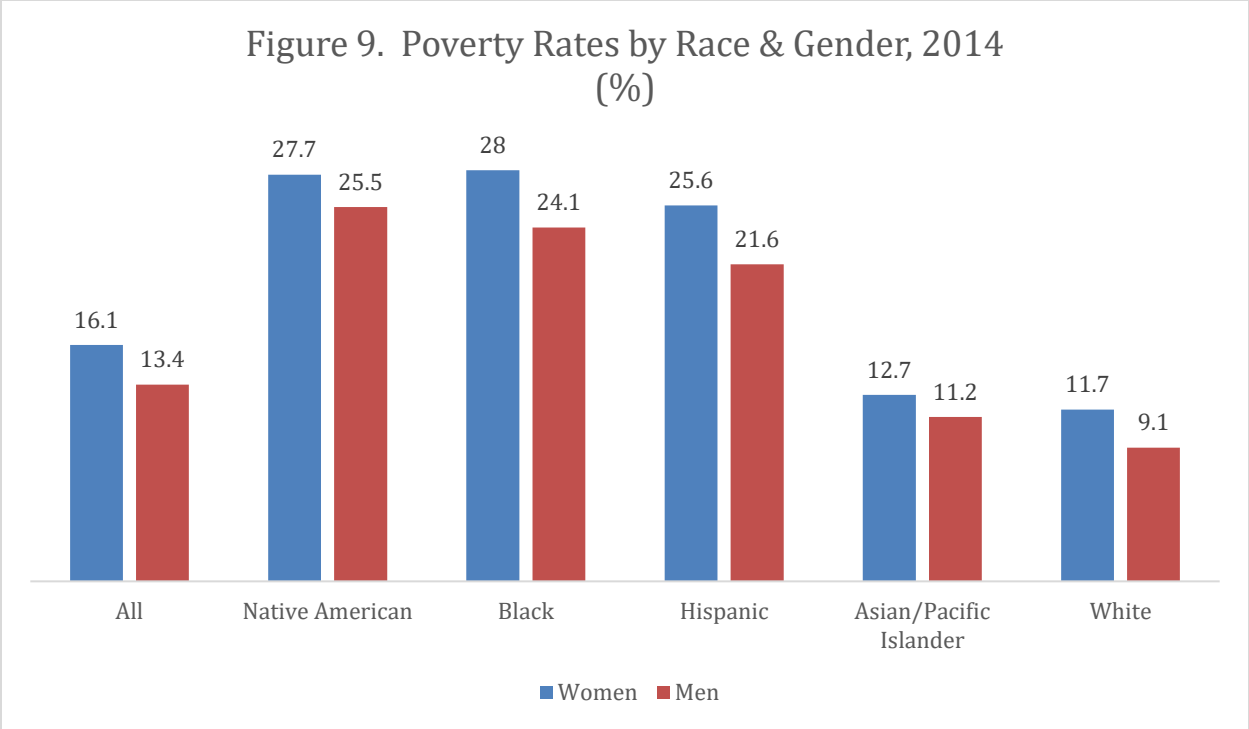
These disparities may reflect a combination of different wages earned for similar occupations and different occupational distributions by members of different races.



**STEAM Sistahs visit multiple McDonalds Franchise Owner, Ms. Cortesia Norman and learn lessons about entrepreneurship**

### **Poverty Rates**

Across this nation and throughout the world, women are more likely to be poor than men and whites are less likely to be poor than people of color. As it relates to Black women in the United States of America specifically, more than 1 in 4 live in poverty (28%), a proportion that exceeds all other demographic groups in the nation.



Source: Institute for Women’s Policy Research: Poverty, Gender and Public Policies.  
[https://tgpdnver.org/file\\_download/inline/1075b5f2-80e8-4b46-9d11-8cbb2be07749](https://tgpdnver.org/file_download/inline/1075b5f2-80e8-4b46-9d11-8cbb2be07749)

**NY State, 2017.** For NY State as a whole, the poverty rate for individuals in 2017 was **15.1%**. For White people, it was **11%** and for Black people, **22.5%**. (See figure below.)

**Westchester County, 2017.** For Westchester County, the poverty rate for individuals in 2017 was 9.4%. For Whites, it was **6.7%** and for Blacks, **16.2%**.

**Table 11. State and Local Poverty Rates Poverty Rates, 2017**

|                        | <b>Total</b> | <b>White</b> | <b>Black</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Yonkers</b>         | 16.4         | 13.1         | 23.2         |
| <b>Peekskill</b>       | 13           | 9.5          | 12.2         |
| <b>Mount Vernon</b>    | 14.8         | 13.5         | 14.9         |
| <b>New Rochelle</b>    | 11.2         | 8.8          | 12.5         |
| <b>Scarsdale</b>       | 2.5          | 1.7          | 31.7         |
| <b>White Plains</b>    | 11.9         | 8.4          | 25           |
| <b>Westchester Co.</b> | 9.4          | 6.7          | 16.2         |
| <b>NY State</b>        | 15.1         | 11           | 22.5         |



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**Westchester Municipalities, 2017.** Of the municipalities in the figure above, Yonkers, Peekskill, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and White Plains all had higher rates of poverty than for the County as a whole. Only Yonkers had a higher rate than that for NY State.<sup>66</sup>



**LINDA HEYWARD**  
**Yonkers Community Action Program, Executive Director**  
**Black Women Girl Child Steering Committee Member**

“There are significant causes and conditions of poverty. Guided by data, we are focused on the topics which will drive impactful difference. It is only working as a community that it will be realized.”

### **Poverty Rates for Women in Westchester**

The poverty rate for Westchester County (9.4%) is lower than the national average (13.4%). Poverty rates for women in Westchester County exceed those for men. “The largest demographic living in poverty is Females 25 - 34, followed by Females 35 - 44 and then Females 45 - 54.”<sup>67</sup>



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<sup>66</sup> Table created by Sheila Klatzky from ACS data:  
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF> Note: There is a very high margin of error for these data (27.5% for Scarsdale); due to small numbers.

<sup>67</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/westchester-county-ny/#economy>. Data provided by [the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate](#).



**JUDITH BEVILLE, Greenburgh Town Clerk Founder, 400 Year Project**  
 “The 400 Year Project is an initiative created to celebrate the contributions that early African Americans have made to the greatness of Westchester County, the State of New York and beyond. Through a series of activities with various community partners the 400 Year Project has informed and touched the lives of over 500 residents. We must make every effort to make our students and community informed about this important part of our history.”



**MARIA IMPERIAL, CEO  
 YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester**  
 “The YWCA White Plains & Central Westchester applauds the groundbreaking work of Cheryl Brannan and Sister to Sister International. Looking at how gender, race and class intersect in women’s lives and create disparities is crucial to social equity work. Together we are on a mission for women and girls, especially those of color, who are often overlooked by policy makers.”



**THE REV. NOELLE DAMICO  
 Co-Chair, Westchester Women's Agenda**  
 “When it comes to undoing racism, we can't only think about it, we must re-educate ourselves and take meaningful action. We are our sister’s keeper.”



**DR. “TEA” TRACI E. ALEXANDER, Mz. MOM, LLC**  
 “Now more than ever it is important for us to reform the juvenile justice system to enable all girls in the county of Westchester to maximize their full potential and not become trapped in a web that quite often becomes a downward spiral. I applaud the innovative ideas being introduced in our judicial system and look forward to continued progress for the sake of our youth and future.”

**Black Women Girl-Child Summit, Mercy College, October 19, 2019**





***(L to R) Cheryl Brannan, Convener; Cheryl Hunter Grant, Still I Rise Award recipient; Dr. Avis Jones DeWeever, Researcher & Keynote Speaker;***



## **Conclusion**

This report has served as an initial inquiry into the well-being of Black women and girls in Westchester County, New York across a variety of indicators. In some circumstances, it has uncovered reasons to be optimistic. In others, it has identified areas that deserve much-needed attention. But in every case, it has aspired to highlight the importance of expanding opportunities for Black girls everywhere to live out the full breadth of their potential, not just for the benefit of their individual circumstance, but for all of us to have the opportunity to experience the cascading effects of their boldness, their brilliance and every single drop of their Black Girl Magic in Westchester County, throughout the nation, and no doubt, around the world.

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