

## News from the CREW

September 2019



*Ella Baker was one of the pioneering women leaders Women Build celebrated at our August 24 build at Cully Place. Read about her and others at the end of this newsletter.*

### Swinging Hammers and Celebrating Women's Suffrage

It was an exciting day! Our August 24, Women Build welcomed 30 volunteers, future homeowners, and fabulous volunteer crew leaders to the Cully Place build site on NE Killingsworth for the third quarterly Women Build day of 2019.

We worked intensively on four different buildings at the 15-home site – from interior framing and blocking that will allow construction crews and future residents to install shelves and other fixtures in the homes, to building a new backyard shed where families can store bicycles, to finishing off a long retaining wall and laying down new grass on some homes nearly ready for sale. No one was left with

clean pants or unsweaty brows. And everyone left with a lot more knowledge about building homes and building community.

This August marked the 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, providing women the right to vote. The amendment was passed by Congress in June 1919, and then ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states in August of 1920. As part of Women Build's mission to create space for women to learn, build, and lead, we look for opportunities to know more about women who have worked to improve the world around us. We took the occasion of this build day to acknowledge the pioneers who fought for all women to fully participate in our democracy.



We spotlighted some extraordinary activists in the struggle for truly universal suffrage – not just for white women, but for Native Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans, as well. Please take a look at the end of the newsletter to learn a little bit about some of these inspiring people. While names like Abigail Adams, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton have become familiar in the long fight for “votes for women,” many others deserve attention for their work securing voting rights for women of color throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During our lunch break at the build, we were seated among bouquets of sunflowers and photos of these trailblazers. The sunflowers were a symbol of the American struggle to gain women's suffrage adopted during a campaign in Kansas in 1867. Our hardhats were adorned with purple, white, and gold - the colors of the official flag of the American suffrage movement, adopted in 1913.

**We were thrilled to welcome Multnomah County Commissioner, Susheela Jayapal, who shared her appreciation of women who step up to lead.** She recounted her own journey of coming to the U.S. as a young immigrant and college student and how it led to her becoming a lawyer, a mother, and now a civic leader. She reminded us all of the importance of giving a hand up to those in need, and of building a sense of dignity, respect, and safety to all of our community's residents. Commissioner Jayapal shared some of the array of social services provided by the County, including housing supports in our community. Learn more about Multnomah County's shelter resources available for women experiencing homelessness or domestic violence: <https://multco.us/housing-and-homelessness/looking-help>

Habitat for Humanity's homeownership program directly addresses the disparities that women—particularly women of color and single mothers—face when it comes to renting or buying an affordable home. One third of Oregon's single working mothers and their children live below the poverty line. **There are no neighborhoods in Portland where the average single mother can rent or purchase an affordable home on her own.** Women, and especially women of color, face disproportionate access to economic opportunity, deeply affecting their ability to find a decent place to live. Habitat directly addresses these disparities and provides opportunities for women to build strength, stability and independence for themselves and their families through affordable homeownership. Nearly 40% of Habitat homes in Portland/Metro East are purchased by single mothers. Your support to this work makes this possible. Thank you for being part of it!



**Special thanks to Garden Bar** for generously providing an amazing lunch for our hardworking volunteers! Even if it's hard for you to join us for a build, your financial contributions are very valuable to this work. To see more about Women Build, read past issues of News from the CREW, and learn who our other generous lunch providers for Women Build days have been, please visit our Women Build page. If you're inspired, you can even make a gift right now! <https://habitatportlandmetro.org/get-involved/volunteer/women-build/>

Our next Women Build day is November 16. Contact [Cassie@HabitatPortlandMetro.org](mailto:Cassie@HabitatPortlandMetro.org) to find out how you can help.

## Did you Know?

Most of the recent builds and all of the current and future Habitat builds in Portland/Metro East consist of groups of 7 to 30 or more homes? We're not just building homes, we are building whole communities.

When Habitat homebuyers purchase these homes, they become part of an official homeowners association, or HOA. It's a self-governance system where funds are collected and tracked, and common areas like parking lots, playgrounds, shared roofs, and exterior siding are maintained together. Management and decision-making are codified and leaders are selected from within the adult residents of the community.

Currently, there are 13 independent HOAs in Habitat communities throughout Portland, governing mini-neighborhoods encompassing 206 homes in all. Twenty-two women serve in the leadership of these organizations and five Habitat HOAs are currently chaired by women – most of whom have not have had any previous formal leadership experience. It's yet another testament to the value of Habitat for Humanity homeownership for women.



## Portland Updates

Your past gifts to Women Build this year are directed to the 12 homes under construction on North Olin Street. It is similar in many ways to another project under way on North Interstate Avenue at Kilpatrick. [Click here for](#) an overview of these two builds, representing some of the new ways Habitat is working to bring more affordable homes to Portlanders who need a hand up.

## CREW

**Thank you for your gifts to Women Build!! Each contribution, each monthly gift, is deeply appreciated and needed.** The CREW stands for "Connecting Resources to Empower Women" and we have been working for nearly a year to fuel Women Build's work in Portland. The CREW is now 11 women strong and we are working on a roster to share a few of our CREW with you! We will announce the new build site for new Women Build soon. If your personal resources allow you to make Women Build a higher priority in your charitable giving this year, and you can help connect others who may be inspired to help, please contact [Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org](mailto:Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org) or 503-287-9529 x21.

Visit the donate button at <https://habitatportlandmetro.org/get-involved/volunteer/women-build/> if you'd like to contribute again today. Thank you.



**Please stay tuned for new 2020 Women Build dates to be announced!**

In partnership,

Lauren Johnson for the CREW

[Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org](mailto:Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org), 503-287-9529 x21

**Thank you for your contributions to Women Build. It's possible because of you.**

### **12 Suffragists and Voting Rights Activists Honored at our August 24 build**

Thank you to Women Build coordinator, Cassie Punnett, for building this inspiring list!

#### **Sojourner Truth (1797 – 1883)**

Born into slavery in New York, Truth went on to become a passionate and charismatic speaker, advocating for the end of slavery and women's rights, simultaneously – an original intersectional thinker and activist, long before the term was coined. She dictated her autobiography and lived off the sales of the book throughout her life. She went on lecturing tours and attended the Women's Rights Convention in Ohio where she delivered what has become known as the "Ain't I a Woman" speech.

### **Lucy Stone (1818 – 1893)**



Stone was the first Massachusetts woman to earn a college degree and when married, declined to take her husband's last name. After graduating from Oberlin College, she began working for the American Anti-Slavery Society. She became a popular public speaker and helped lead campaigns for women's right to vote. Stone organized the first national Women's Rights Convention in Massachusetts. She was active in both abolitionism and women's suffrage, helping form the American Woman Suffrage Association, which supported the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments granting African American men the right to vote. In 1871, Stone helped organize the publication of *The Woman's Journal* and was co-editor with her husband.

### **Abigail Scott Duniway (1834 – 1915)**



Remembered as Oregon's "Mother of Equal Suffrage," Duniway devoted forty years to advocating for women's rights. She attended national suffrage conventions and helped negotiate the merger of the National Woman Suffrage Association and American Women Suffrage Association in 1890. She was a writer and author and frequently her writings addressed women's rights. Duniway wrote the Oregon Woman Suffrage Proclamation in 1912, but died before the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

### **Ida B. Wells (1862 – 1931)**



Wells was a gifted writer who used her skills to speak out against both racism and sexism. She worked as an educator while raising her siblings. In 1884, she took a railroad company to court after being ejected from the "ladies" coach section and told to sit in the African American section of the train. She investigated lynchings and produced articles speaking out against them, afterwards she was forced to move to Chicago for her safety. In Chicago, she was part of the Alpha Suffrage Club and reached out to clubs for black women at the local, state, and national levels and encouraged more women of color to become involved with politics. She continued pushing voter registration for women of color into the 1920's.

### **Harriet Redmond (1862 – 1952)**

Redmond was a leader in the struggle for suffrage in Oregon, a state which had black exclusion laws written into its constitution until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Inspired by the activism of her parents who were emancipated slaves, Redmond was the president of the Colored Women's Equal Suffrage Association during Oregon's campaign for suffrage in 1912.



### **Mary McLeod Bethune (1875 – 1955)**

Bethune's career began in education, where she opened a boarding school for African Americans that eventually became a co-ed college in 1929. Bethune-Cookman University is still operating in Daytona Beach, Florida. She went on to become the founder of many organizations, including the United Negro College Fund, and helped lead voter registration drives after the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. She was president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and later, president of the National Council of Negro Women. Bethune became the highest ranking African American woman in government as director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration under F.D.R., and was vice president of the NAACP until her death in 1955.



### **Zitkala-Ša (1876 – 1938)**



Born a member of the Yankton Dakota Sioux in South Dakota, Zitkala-Ša used her skills as a writer, editor, translator, and musician to work for improvements in education, health care, and legal recognition of Native Americans. After a conflicted experience at the Native American boarding school – the push for white assimilation vs. the wish to retain her identity as a Native American was a struggle throughout her life and the lives of many others to this day. She distinguished herself at her high school graduation in 1895 with a speech advocating for women's rights. She went on to attend Earlham College and then the Boston Conservatory of Music, where she studied violin. In 1901 she worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Standing Rock Reservation. She was a talented musician and writer, credited with writing the libretto and songs for the first Native American opera in 1913 and held a number of positions as an activist for Native American identity. From Washington, Zitkala-Ša began lecturing nationwide on behalf of the Society for American Indians to promote the cultural and tribal identity of Native Americans. During the 1920s she promoted a pan-Indian movement to unite all of America's tribes in the cause of lobbying for citizenship rights. In 1924 the Indian Citizenship Act was passed, granting US citizenship rights to most indigenous peoples who did not already have it. (About two-thirds of Native Americans were already citizens by the implementation of land allotment and other measures.) In 1926, Zitkala-Ša and her husband founded the National Council of American Indians, where she served as the president, fundraiser, and speaker. The Council advocated for Native American suffrage across the United States.

### **Alice Stokes Paul (1885 –1977)**

Alice Paul, a Quaker from New Jersey, was born to a family active in the fight for women's suffrage. She grew up to be one of the key leaders and strategists of the campaign for the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Paul initiated and strategized events such as the Woman Suffrage Procession and the Silent Sentinels, which were part of the successful campaign that resulted in the amendment's passage. As an activist in England, Paul was jailed three times, and later in the US, received a seven-month jail sentence that started on October 20, 1917. The women were given no special treatment as political prisoners and had

to live in harsh conditions with poor sanitation and infested food. In protest of the conditions at the District Jail, Paul began a hunger strike. This led to her being moved to the prison's psychiatric ward and being force-fed raw eggs through a feeding tube. When asked about the forced feeding, Paul said, "Seems almost unthinkable now, doesn't it? It was shocking that a government of men could look with such extreme contempt on a movement that was asking nothing except such a simple little thing as the right to vote."

After 1920, Paul spent a half century as leader of the National Woman's Party, which fought for the Equal Rights Amendment. She won a large degree of success with the inclusion of women as a group protected against discrimination by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### **Mabel Ping-Hua Lee (1896 – 1966)**



Born in China, Mabel immigrated to the United States when she was still a child. Engaged in activism for women's suffrage at a young age, she studied at Barnard College, where she wrote articles and gave speeches about the importance of equal opportunities for women. She was the first Chinese woman to receive a PhD in economics at Columbia University and was a leader in the Chinese Baptist community in New York City for decades. Lee became a well-known figure in the women's suffrage movement and rode horseback in the 1912 New York pro-suffrage parade. In 1917, women in New York were allowed to vote and then in 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment allowed all American women the right to vote.

However, as an immigrant, Lee was unable to vote because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Chinese immigrants were denied the right to become citizens and the right to vote until 1943.

### **Ella Baker (1903 – 1986)**

Inspired by the activism and strength she saw in her mother and grandmother, Baker joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League after graduating college. As her career in the Civil Rights Movement grew—she worked for both the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—Baker developed and advocated for a more grassroots style of activism. She pushed self-empowerment and organized students of Shaw University in North Carolina to found a new own organization—the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC grew to become one of the most influential organizing groups throughout the southern U.S., becoming well-known for the sit-ins at lunch counters throughout the south, participating in the Freedom Rides, and promoting voter registration among African Americans in the deep south.

### **Dorothy Height (1912 – 2010)**

Awarded a full scholarship, but denied access to attend Barnard College in New York because of their policy of only allowing two black students per year, Height went on to graduate from NYU in educational psychology and went on to graduate school and a career in social work. In part due to her excellent oratory and organizing skills, Height gained prominence in the civil rights movement and in 1957 was named president of the National



Council of Negro Women, a position she held until 1997. During the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, she organized "Wednesdays in Mississippi" which brought together black and white women from the North and South to create a dialogue of understanding. Height helped support voter registration in the South and helped organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. She is credited with being the first in the movement to view problems of equality for women and equality for African Americans as a whole— intersectionality as a concept started to take shape. She was awarded many honors and medals, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. President Barack Obama would refer to Height as a god mother-like figure and heroic individual to countless Americans throughout the campaign of the civil rights movements.

### **Fannie Lou Hamer (1917 – 1977)**



Hamer was born the 20<sup>th</sup> child of impoverished sharecroppers in Mississippi and was one of many black women who received forced sterilization without their consent. After seeing the efforts to deny African Americans the right to vote, she joined the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where she led volunteers in voter registration. Her activism included founding Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, being a member of the state's first integrated delegation, being barred from the ballot for the Mississippi House of Representatives, and extensive travel and speeches on behalf of civil rights. Later in life, she used economics as a strategy for greater racial equality.