

Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women

Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women
Annual Report May 2023

Current Commissioners

Lynne Barbee, Mashpee, Vice Chair
Linda Cebula, Harwich, Chair
Rachel Devine, Nantucket
Natalia Frois, Hyannis
Mary Kate Gallagher, Yarmouth, Secretary
Janell Hoffman, Sandwich
Joanna McCarthy, Martha's Vineyard
Sue Mynttinen, Nantucket, Treasurer
Amy Peters, Mashpee
Mary Waygan, Mashpee

We welcomed new commissioners Mary Kate Gallagher, Janell Hoffman and Joanna McCarthy. And we extend our thanks to retiring commissioners Katia Dacunha, Anna Dunphy, Donna Rivers and Lynda Allen and Tani on behalf of the women in Massachusetts. We especially thank our retiring Emerita Helen Bresnahan for her years of service, her good advice and her humor. We have three open positions on our regional commission.

Mission

The mission of the Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent effective voice for women across the Cape & Islands. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

Advocacy

The Commission has voted to support the following legislative priorities:

- An Act relative to healthy youth
- An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services.
- An Act relative to preserving preventative services without cost sharing.
- An Act to increase access to disposable menstrual products (I Am).
- An Act providing affordable and accessible high-quality early education & care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth (Common Start.)

Additionally, the Commission endorses the priorities of the State Commission on the Status of Women.

The Commissioners follow the progress (or lack of) on these potential acts and keep updated through reports at our monthly meetings.

Programs undertaken

Outreach- We continue to emphasize our social media presence. All commissioners are encouraged to provide material for these postings so that we could stay fresh and relevant. Our social media also promoted various local and state events. We have ordered pens and notepads for promotional use.

Listening Circle in Orleans September 2022- Co sponsored with NAMI Cape Cod and the Islands and titled **Children and Mental Wellness**, the participants heard from Jackie Lane, Executive Director of Nami Cape Cod on the resources available to residents of the Cape and Islands, and from Cindy Horgan, Executive Director of Cape Cod Children's Place about raising children to have sustainable mental wellness.

Topics covered included the negative impacts of social media and the overall lack of investment in early childhood development, including the low pay scales within the industry. Lane spoke to NAMI's youth initiatives, and the training of first responders to be able to divert a mental health crisis from the criminal system.

The full report, which was sent to all of our elected legislators, is attached to this report.

Legislative activities

Our Legislative "Brunch", a remote event, offered the opportunity to meet and interact with our state legislators. Additionally, we invited newly elected state representative Chris Flanagan to one of our meetings, giving all an opportunity to become acquainted with current issues and concerns.

On Boarding of new Commissioners- created a packet of information that includes both our regional and state documents and recent minutes.

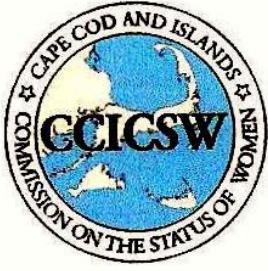
Goals for next fiscal year

The Commission is currently planning to hold a fall Listening Circle on the upper Cape. We are planning on repeating our listening circle on Children and Mental Wellness.

The Commission is fortunate to have members from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard but none from the lower Cape. We would like to expand awareness of the Commission by attending meetings of other municipal and community organizations and presenting what we are, what we do, and our focus on current issues. We feel that this will increase participation at our events and help find commissioners to represent the lower Cape.

The Commission will continue to have our elected legislators and other members of the community as guest speakers.

Submitted by Linda Cebula, Chair
May 10, 2023



**Cape Cod & Islands Commission
on the Status of Women**

From Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of
Women co-sponsored with NAMI of Cape Cod and the Islands
Re Listening Circle held at Snow Library Orleans 9/24/2022

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Horgan spoke about the need for consistent care for young children, whether at home or in a care setting. Inconsistency can create stress in young children and lead to mental health issues. She spoke to the need for fine motor skills and muscle development, and for the need to prioritize families with children. She also spoke to children being over scheduled- they need down time just like adults do.

The public participants spoke about bullying, both in person and in school settings, and the lack of attention to these issues. Stress among children through their early twenties was also a topic, with impacts yet to be seen as fallout from the recent pandemic. The lack of available in person counselors for mental health issues and hospitalization are ongoing concerns across the Cape and Islands, with no foreseeable change.

Comments and concerns from attendees

*Children and teens need a safe place to ask for help

- *Understand cultural differences on asking for help
- *Adult anxieties impact the children, especially at the early ages
- *Not only the very young with anxiety issues during the pandemic, Adults and teens as well
- * Early college students also at risk, lack of mental health on campus
- *Create/maintain after school programs for all students, not only for athletes
- *Parents do not know how or where to obtain support for children in metal health crisis
- *lack of training for coaches re bullying, overall prevention to break the cycle of bullying, reverse/stop the damage from bullying
- *Bullying is not only physical but mental and emotional
- *Teach children how to advocate for someone who is being bullying-teach how to stand up for others
- *Technology and students: parents need to set boundaries on usage, have the conversation
- *For a variety of reasons, parent are not participating in PTOS
- *Additional help needed for migrant children
- *Mental health issues and impact on incarceration
- *Pregnant women should not be incarcerated, or separated from their children
- *Lack of mental health providers on Cape and Islands- telemed visits are not helpful

CCICSW Commissioners: Terry Alves-Hunter- Falmouth, Lynne Barbee-Mashpee, Linda A Cebula-Harwich, Katia Dacunha-Hyannis, Rachel Devine-Nantucket, Anna Noble Dunphy-Falmouth, Natalia Frois-Hyannis, Sue Doucet Mynttinen-Nantucket, Kate Parache-Hyannis, Amy Peters-Mashpee, Donna Todd Rivers-Dennis, Lynda Wan-N'Tani-Harwich, Mary Waygan-Mashpee, Helen Bresnahan, Emerita-Bourne.

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