



THE EQUALITY STANDARD

January 2012

This is the monthly publication on women's issues, local and global, published by 50/50 Leadership, A non-profit organization promoting women's equal leadership

Happy New Year!

Our Vision

That 50% of leaders are women

Our Mission

To transform the culture within which we live to one that naturally includes women on an equal basis in the selection of leaders

www.5050Leadership.org
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IN THE NEWS

President Establishes National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

On December 19th, President Obama issued an executive order to establish the United States' first-ever National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security to formalize the nation's commitment to promoting women's role in conflict prevention and resolution. The executive order states, "The goal is as simple as it is profound: to empower half of the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by war, violence, and insecurity. Achieving this goal is critical to our national and global security."

CDC Survey Reveals 1 in 4 Women Experience Domestic Violence

A [survey](#) released on December 14th by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 1 in 4 women in the United States, or 24 per minute, experienced intimate partner violence by either a husband or boyfriend. Moreover, 1 in 5 women stated that they were victims of rape and 1 in 6 of stalking.

🌀 **FOR MORE NEWS, FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @5050LEADERSHIP**

Some recent tweets:

- 🌀 Horrific: A 15 yr old Afghan girl, married at 14, tortured (chunks of skin pulled off with pliers), kept in basement for months by husband.
- 🌀 NASCAR driver Kasey Kahne wants to tell you when and where you feed your little one. An example of why we need to change our culture.
- 🌀 Egypt banning "virginity tests." Female protesters who had been arrested had been subjected to these.



4TH ANNUAL WOMEN OF THE WORLD AWARDS

Once again 50/50 Leadership is partnering with the United Nations Association of Pasadena for the 4th Annual Women of the World Awards celebration.

On Sunday, March 11th at the beautiful La Canada Flintridge Country Club we will have a sumptuous buffet brunch followed by our program that will include the celebration of Women’s History Month, International Women’s Day and World Leadership Day.

We will also honor three outstanding women who are making a difference in other countries. The many nominees made it a hard decision as there are so many outstanding women leaders who are in action to make the world a better place. The three women chosen this year are:



Sarah Culberson, Founder, The Kposowa Foundation.

Sarah is the author of “A Princess Found”, which chronicles her life as an adopted child raised in the United States with little knowledge of her ancestry, and her discovery that she was descended from African royalty. She founded the The Kposowa Foundation to support the children and community in Sierra Leone, West Africa. www.bumpefund.org



Carmel Jud founded Rising International, an organization currently working with women in 24 countries while simultaneously helping homeless women here. Rising International has agreements to market many different types of products which are sold mainly through home parties. Her volunteers find people to host a party, then connects them with a homeless woman who runs the party and who then benefits by receiving the profits from the party. www.risinginternational.org



Dove Pressnall is the Founder of Survivors' Truths, a non-profit organization which aims to challenge assumptions and change perspective on the challenges and strengths of marginalized communities. Survivors' Truth currently has projects in post-war Liberia, as well as transgendered youth in Los Angeles to shape a new understanding of these communities, bringing together all people through awareness and compassion, utilizing different types of media to bring their stories to life. Ms. Pressnall's dedication and commitment continues to expand the organization to include more projects all over the world.

www.survivorstruths.org



RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR – THE POSSIBILITIES

❧ **Queen Latifah** in the December edition of More magazine said, “The reality is, I like imperfection. You take away from the world when you’re not yourself. Whatever is unique and special about you was designed by God. And when you try to be someone else, we don’t get you. Who knows what you would have contributed to the world had you just been yourself, if you just celebrated who you are and just walked boldly?”

As 2012 begins, perhaps this is your time to shrug off the “shoulds” and “ought to’s” and step boldly into life on YOUR terms rather than someone else’s. It could be time to start a business, go (back?) to college, travel to somewhere you have always wanted to go, write a book, or to just say “no” more often and not feel guilty.

I am going to take Queen Latifah’s words to heart and invite you to also. There’s always more of ourselves to put out there and share with the world.

In that light, when I received the following article and announcement from **Alexis Powers** about her new children’s book, instead of putting this under the Bookshelf section, Alexis’ heartfelt words on her path to the writing of her children’s book was worth more of a spotlight:

❧ **It’s Never Too Late**

Dreams, wishes, hopes and bucket lists. We all have them. The child within us dreamed of many things before life got in the way. Do you believe opportunity has passed you by? But what if it is not too late? Why not rediscover a long-forgotten passion and take your best shot at making it a reality? Do you think it’s impossible? Alexis Powers will tell you anything is possible because she’s living her fantasy.

Like many people, Alexis had a dream that she carried with her through years of marriage, motherhood and working at multiple careers. That dream was pushed to the bottom of her “to-do” list, but never forgotten. Late at night, before she fell asleep, she would wonder how she could make her dream a reality. Her dream was to write a children’s book.

After her children were grown and involved in their own lives, Alexis took the first step toward pursuing her passion for writing. Inspired by a class in Writing for Publication at Pasadena City College, Alexis began writing short stories. Pleased by her progress, she courageously wrote her first novel, “Kiss My Tattoo,” followed by two novels in this detective series. Many years later, when introduced to Ellen Snortland, she joined Ellen’s writers’ workshop. While attending these motivational sessions, Alexis was inspired to write a non-fiction book entitled, “Paths to Freedom,” about twelve women who triumphed over adversity. Writing that book changed her life, and she moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

All through these years, she never forgot her wish to write a children’s book. And then, similar to Anna Mary Robertson “Grandma Moses,” Alexis decided that now in her seventh decade of life, it was time to fulfill her longing and write her children’s book. “**Madi’s Dollhouse**” was inspired by Alexis having a dollhouse as a young girl, but living a lonely childhood as a result of severe asthma. The book is the story of a lonesome little girl unable to hear or speak. When she is ten years old, her parents give her a dollhouse for Christmas. Her unspoken wish is to have people living in her dollhouse. One day she discovers a family of special little people living in the grass. Ignoring their protests, she places them in her pocket and takes them home to live in her dollhouse. Surprisingly, she can hear their voices in her head and they can hear her thoughts. It is like magic! But that is only the beginning . . .

Readers have been moved to tears by Madi’s struggle for acceptance, and her joy at discovering little people with whom she can finally communicate. Fran Padilla wrote, *Madi’s Doll House is a lovely fantasy that has roots in reality. I was extremely moved and it totally touched my heart. A great little story that both children and adults can enjoy.* The book is beautifully illustrated by Jenny Manno.

Women often put the needs of others before their own, thinking they will “follow their bliss” later on. To anyone out there wanting to fulfill a dream, Alexis Powers advises, “Go For It. It’s Never Too Late.”

To contact Alexis or order a copy of this book, please visit the author’s website at www.alexispowers.net.

✧ **Planning your vacations for 2012?** Have you ever thought about a volunteer vacation? It can be very satisfying while you visit a place that perhaps is on your “bucket” list.

Daily Worth (DailyWorth.com) had this to say recently about considering a do-good vacation:

A "volunteer vacation" could do you a world of good—while enabling you to **do some good in the world**. So-called voluntourism is a rapidly-growing segment of the travel industry, says Genevieve Brown, executive director of the [International Volunteers Program Association](#).

Even if you only have a **week or two** to spend, there’s much you can do, from [assisting at an orphanage](#) in Ghana to teaching [basic computer skills](#) to women in South Africa.

Do your research:

✧ **Explore** causes you might want to join—the options will amaze you, says Pam Grout, author of National Geographic’s [100 Best Volunteer Vacations to Enrich Your Life](#)

- ❖ **Find your style.** Are you thinking luxury, bare-bones or complete immersion, such as living with a Tibetan family?
- ❖ **Invest wisely.** There are key questions to ask yourself as well as the organization before you choose your trip. You'll cover most of your own travel costs, plus related fees. Don't hesitate **to ask how your money will be allocated**, and to speak to prior volunteers.

In some cases, you may be able to snag a **tax deduction**, but talk to a tax pro first if that's a priority.



WHAT LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

Here is the second article from the Pasadena Leadership Circle, this one an interview by Larissa "Donna" Osorio:

❖ Diana Daubenspeck, CPA is the Assistant Vice President of Internal Audit for Topa Insurance Group. Her area of expertise encompasses the design and development of internal audits that primarily focus on the internal controls over the financial reporting but includes other aspects of company policies and procedures as well.

What is your definition of leadership?

My definition of Leadership, or a leader, is someone who helps people succeed. This includes knowing how to manage the allocation of resources against tasks to the optimum of both.

What are the characteristics that you believe every great leader should possess?

Leaders should know their strengths and weaknesses and be humble enough to admit mistake to allow others to learn without humility.

As a leader, how do you measure your job performance?

With PRIDE: Personal Responsibility for Individual Daily Effort. It is important to outline objectives and create a roadmap or plan that is updated routinely to monitor how goals are or are not being achieved. Additionally, by listening to peers' feedback you can get a sense of whether your contributions are being valued.

Who had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Why and how did person impact your life?

I believe my family has had the most impact on me being a leader. My mother instilled a sense of pride in who we are and my oldest sister was a great role model for me too. She's the reason why I'm in this line of work. She made accounting really interesting and when I went to school I found myself really liking numbers.

How do you feel about being the only woman on the Executive Team? Are there any challenges? If so, how do you handle them?

I enjoy being on the Executive Team because it gives me an opportunity to see and work with other areas of expertise from a high level perspective. The challenges I face tend to be related to

strategically aligning the objectives in operations with the objectives in compliance and determining how competing resources should be allocated to the optimum.

You need to be resilient and learn not to take the first “NO”. If you have an idea or concept that you strongly believe in; sometimes it is necessary to employ tact and finesse to accomplish goals that require others to change, or which they may not support.

What are you doing to ensure that you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

I stay active with different groups for information and educational training. I belong to the AICPA and the NAPW (National Association of Professional Women) and I routinely access webcasts and attend seminars to stay current with regard to emerging issues.

As a leader, what advice can you give others women leaders?

Women leaders need to stay hungry for knowledge and take risks in order to grow. Here are some quotes that I live by:

“Always be on your “A” game, always do more & be more”

“Smile & try something new, stretch yourself!”

“Look at obstacles as a challenge, view failures as learning opportunities not devastating events that stop you in your tracks.

Donna Osorio, PHR is a Human Resources Specialist

🔗 On December 21st I read an article, excerpted here, by Aurora Snow. I invite you to read this article, noticing your biases, feelings and ideas you hold about someone who does the kind of work she does – an actress in pornographic movies.

Am I fit to be around school children? I have no criminal record, am currently enrolled in college, and I take care of my quadriplegic brother and three school-age nephews. I also happen to be an adult actress, a “pornstar,” and after 10 years of performing, yes, I have earned that title. But being an adult actress would not make me unfit to be a mother when the time comes, nor am I now unfit to take my nephews to their school basketball games. I am a kind, caring individual, and my worst crime as far as children go is smashing spiders with my nephew’s “I Can Read” book (and then secretly slipping it back into his pile of books unnoticed). I wake up with my nephews when they have nightmares, stay up all night when they have a flu, wake up to see them off to school, and help them with homework in the evenings. So, while I am an adult actress, I am having a difficult time grasping why that would matter when I am off set. I don’t bring my work home with me. There is no trace of my very adult job in my home or anywhere outside the venues appropriate to the entertainment I make. I am a fairly typical performer that way among those of us with families.

Recently, Sasha Grey threw caution to the wind by participating in a Read Across America program at Emerson Elementary School in Los Angeles. The school claims she was only listed as an actress from the HBO series *Entourage*, and they had no idea she was a former adult actress. I stress former. Sasha Grey has quit the adult business.

I don’t see how being an ex-pornstar is relevant to how she leads her life now. No crime was committed; her career was all perfectly legal adult entertainment that neither she nor anyone else ever intended for minors. There is nothing out there that makes her a threat to

children. Perhaps parents are afraid that Grey's mere presence will taint their children and encourage them to seek out similar careers (don't worry, being an adult actress isn't contagious). ...She was the first pornstar ever to grace the cover of Playboy, and her crossover into mainstream success was a result of brains, talent, and hard work. She has made history in my industry. And that is what porn is to her: a part of her past, that shouldn't count against her.

Yet in another example, Fox News recently made a crusade out of exposing Kevin Hogan, who was the head of the English department for the Mystic Valley Regional Charter School near Boston. Mr. Hogan did a few adult movies. The school suspended him. Why? We do not have poor moral character, or at least we are hardly out of the mainstream—especially if you consider how many people buy porn movies. We are a reflection of and entertainment for the average person.

I have always understood that by choosing to be an adult actress, I have kissed goodbye to any dreams I may have ever had of working with children in the future, long after this career is over. I didn't understand that in my first few years performing, but later, as more people began to recognize me, a stigma grew. Somehow being an adult actress morphed me into everything I've never been from a liar, to a thief, to a menace to society. I am judged, I think, because I go forward with a blunt honesty about what I do—a concept so foreign that the world must assume there are darker, more sinister things I am hiding.

People hold my films against me like a black mark on my character. It's not like being a pornstar is the same as being a child molester; being an adult actress is about making an adult choice to be filmed having consensual sex with another adult for other adults' viewing pleasures and then, only if they so choose. So am I fit to be around school age children? Yes, I am.

My colorful choices do not indicate any irresponsibility associated with how I handle children. One day I will have children of my own, and perhaps they will see a clearer vision of the past. What they will see is a strong-willed woman who carved out a place in the world in an unconventional way.

[Read more](#)

❧ If you are over 40 years old, do not fit the supermodel body image, and are passionate about women and girls learning to protect themselves, the media will ignore you – at best. It is with kudos and pats on the back that I include the link to the TED talk by Ellen Snortland. For those of you who do not know, TED talks are presentations given by individuals in 18 minutes or less on any number of ideas to audiences that have the power, money and position to make a difference on a fairly large scale. These talks are then shared via the internet and you can listen to them by going to TED.com. What may not come as a surprise is that only a small percentage of the presenters are women.

[Ellen's talk](#)



WOMEN AT WORK

🌀 **The Small Business Development Center in Los Angeles** is looking for an intern to help put on their “Celebrating Women in Business 4” event coming up in March.

[Read posting](#) (Click link and scroll to “Internship Available”)

🌀 Verdugo Glen Chapter of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA) is hosting their first "**Heart of Business Expo**" on Saturday, February 4 at the Glendale Elks Lodge, 120 E. Colorado, Glendale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event begins with networking and shopping with such exhibitors as Gigi Hill Handbags, Party Lite Gifts and Silpada Jewelry followed by the opening presentation by Linda LoRe, President and CEO Catalyst9 and former President and CEO of Frederick's of Hollywood.

During lunch, attendees will have a choice from three "Lunch with the Experts" seminars presented by Jenn August (marketing your business), Katy Tafoya (using social media in business) or Robbie Motter (business networking).

ABWA Verdugo Glen is hosting this event is to provide networking between area organizations and business women and to assist their members to promote their own businesses.

The luncheon/seminar cost is \$25.00 prior to January 20. For questions and reservations contact Lynn White-Shelby at lynnws@msn.com.



From the BOOKSHELF /At the MOVIES

🌀 I have been waiting excitedly to see Meryl Streep’s new movie, *Iron Lady*, a biopic of Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of England. It opened this weekend and has had a lot of publicity. I particularly enjoyed the article in *Newsweek* magazine, for which I have included a link below. Here are a few excerpts:

Even as feminism evolved along with her career, the metaphors and put-downs—“eyes like heat-seeking missiles,” “Iron Knickers,” “flirt,” “bitch,” “the Handbag” (shortened by her detractors to, simply, “the Bag”)—clung to her as they did not to other powerful women.

In 2009 it took a public outcry to force a reprint after the deputy leader of the Labour government, Harriet Harman, published an official list of the 16 women politicians who changed Britain and left Thatcher off. Her rejection “even from feminists,” says Streep, seems to “have something to do with our profound ... discomfort with women in power. Or our terror of it.”

She tried to turn her sex into an advantage: “I’ve a woman’s ability to stick with a job and get on with it when everyone else walks off and leaves it.”

Singlehandedly she forced the European Commissioners to return a billion pounds sterling, in effect just by fixing them with her steely blue eyes and banging her handbag on the table.

“She used being a woman pretty skillfully in many sorts of situations, for instance in getting her way with her political and cabinet colleagues. She knew that public-school-educated British men weren’t brought up to argue with women.” Thatcher’s bossy-boots routine could have a disconcerting effect on some of the younger M.P.s. “I once made a sort of modest intervention,” says Francis Maude, paymaster general in the current Conservative government. “Her eyes blazed, and she leaned across the table at me as if she was about to crawl over the table and wallop me with her handbag.”

Asking a little girl who had come up to her for an autograph, ‘Well, what do you want to be, dear, when you’re grown up?’ She replied, ‘I want to be like you. I want to be prime minister.’”

Will we ever have a woman President here in the U.S. so little girls can hold such a dream?

[Read more](#)



HEALTH

❧ The FDA expressed concern about defective French breast implants in 2000, a full 10 years before European regulators began to worry. The FDA sent an inspector to the implants’ manufacturer, Poly Implant Prothese, and then sent its founder a letter saying the implants were “adulterated” and listing at least 11 problems with the manufacturing process. It turns out that the company was using computer-grade silicone in the implants. Thousands of European women have received them, and the French government has recommended that its citizens have them removed due to their high rupture rate.

❧ **How desperate do you have to be to pay a man to beat you so that you will miscarry?**

In 2009, a pregnant Utah teen desperate to end her pregnancy did just that. Due to the lack of clinics, strict rules for underage girls trying to obtain abortions, and an already very advanced pregnancy, she paid a man to beat her in an attempt to induce a miscarriage. It did not work, and the 17 year old, who eventually gave birth and put the baby up for adoption, was charged with attempted murder.

The charges were dropped after defense argued that Utah had no law that allowed prosecution of a woman trying to obtain an unlawful abortion.

So the state changed that. A law was passed that made it a crime to induce a miscarriage or obtain an “illegal” abortion, with pregnant women potentially serving life in prison if convicted. Any attempt to arrange an “illegal abortion” under the new law is now considered attempted homicide

[Read more](#)



WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

☞ **Iran** - The Iranian woman whose sentence of stoning for adultery provoked an international outcry could be hanged instead. The head of the judiciary in East Azerbaijan has said the prison does not have the facilities to stone Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani. So he is investigating whether it is legally and religiously permissible to hang her. Her sentence was originally postponed last year after international protests.

☞ **Afghanistan** - Imagine that you are nine months pregnant and have to drive seven hours to reach the nearest hospital. You have never seen an obstetrician or midwife for prenatal care and emergency health services are miles out of reach. This is the situation in parts of Afghanistan, where the maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world.

As of 2008, it was estimated that 1 in 11 Afghan women die in childbirth. (In Greece, the country with the lowest maternal mortality rate, the statistic is 1 in 31,800.) With a fertility rate of 6.62 children per mother, the life expectancy for women in Afghanistan—recently ranked “the most dangerous country for women” by the Thomson Reuters Foundation—is less than 48 years.

Now, a national midwifery program is one of several initiatives to drastically improve women’s maternal safety, the program has trained more than 2,500 midwives.

For women in the country’s most remote provinces, who face the greatest challenge accessing health care in this overwhelmingly rural country, the midwives serve as a lifeline. Of the approximately 500 birth complications that occur daily in Afghanistan, 320 happen in those rural areas.

Along with saving mothers’ lives, the midwives serve as homegrown role models whose economic strength and earning power are changing their families’—and their communities’—views on women’s roles. Midwives can earn around \$350 each month, a substantial salary in one of the world’s poorest countries and where per capita GDP is less than \$500 per year. The money matters and is playing a role in shifting male attitudes toward women’s work outside the home....

“Most people have a lot of respect for midwives because they need health care,” says Fatima, [a] student in the program. “Midwives save mothers’ lives and women’s lives.”

[Read more](#)

☞ **Egypt - Women Rally Against Abuse**

Thousands of women took to the streets of downtown Cairo to protest the violence against female demonstrators by the military in recent clashes in Tahrir Square. The New York Times described the march as possibly the “biggest women’s demonstration in Egypt’s history” and

indeed “the most significant since a 1919 march led by pioneering Egyptian feminist Huda Shaarawi to protest British rule.” Many protesters held up photographs of a female protester who was beaten, dragged on the ground and stripped to her bra by soldiers, an incident that has outraged Egyptians and horrified the world.

[Read more](#)

❧ **Maternal mortality around the world** - Diane Sawyer hosted a *20/20* special recently, “Giving Life: A Risky Proposition,” focused on the challenges that women and mothers face around the world. From Sierra Leone to Bangladesh, the *20/20* team traveled the globe exploring the challenges, opportunities, and successes in addressing one of the most disturbing health facts: that **every 90 seconds, a woman dies in childbirth**.

[Read more:](#)

❧ **International Museum of Women** begins an online exhibit this month entitled **Your Voices of Motherhood**. In stories from Hungary to Nepal, Kenya to Haiti, visitors to IMOW’s newest online exhibition can learn about life for mothers around the globe, and join discussions about issues women face around the world when it comes to having children.

www.IMOW.org



50/50 LEADERSHIP NEWS

What are you taking on for 2012?

Are you ready to upgrade your leadership skills? Let us know and we will send you details about our next **Leadership Circle** [More information here](#)

Ready to give more back to the community? We have lots of opportunities for you to **Volunteer** your time, talents and experience [More information here](#)

Ready to be inspired by women who are making a difference? Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 11th to join us as we honor and hear about the work of our three **Women of the World** at our 4th Annual Women of the World Awards at the beautiful La Canada Flintridge Country Club [More information here](#)



SUBSCRIPTIONS

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P.O. Box 11202, Glendale, CA 91226

Questions? Call 818-243-2322



EVENTS

Tell us about events in YOUR area that we can post here.



Tuesday, January 17th

6:30 -9:00 pm

Author's Corner Night

Video: *The Why, What and How*

Valley Economic Development Center

5121 Van Nuys Blvd, 3rd Floor Conference Room

Van Nuys CA, 91403

** Park under the building or on the street but not in Burger King; they tow! **



Saturday, February 4th

Women's Business Expo

ABWA Presents Linda LoRe, CEO Catalyst9

Tickets: \$25 before January 20th

Lynn White-Shelby at lynnws@msn.com.



Sunday, March 11

4th Annual Women of the World Awards

Save the Date!

La Canada Flintridge Country Club



FINAL WORDS

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

Helen Keller



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