

Urban Resource Institute
CELEBRATION

RISE UP!

A Virtual Event

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022

urinc.org/celebration2022

A MESSAGE FROM URI CEO NATHANIEL M. FIELDS



Greetings and a warm welcome to the Urban Resource Institute annual **Celebration: Rise Up!**

Tonight we join together virtually for the third year with our supporters, partners, board members, elected officials, staff, clients, friends, and family. While we continue to adhere to an abundance of caution,

we are hopeful that next year we will meet once again in person.

In our commitment to addressing domestic violence and homelessness, URI delivers a comprehensive portfolio of innovative prevention and intervention programs, as well as safe shelter and direct services. We are proud to remain the largest provider of domestic violence residential services in the country and a leading provider of shelter and services for homeless families—with 2,200 adults and children sheltered every night and 40,000 touched by our programs each year.

This evening, we spotlight the URI **Economic Empowerment Program** (EEP), which gives domestic violence survivors and homeless families the tools and confidence to build sustainable pathways to safe, stable futures and financial freedom. This includes our rich programs for adult clients and the brand new Fab Lab, an incubator for creativity and technology for the youth in our shelters.

I want to give special thanks to our event host—Emmy Award winning news anchor, talk show host and author, **Cheryl Wills**, who discloses her own family's experience with domestic violence and has dedicated segments of her talk show, *In Focus with Cheryl Wills*, to the issue of domestic abuse.

We extend gratitude to our keynote speaker, **Tina Perry**, president of the Oprah Winfrey Network, who shares insights into the deep commitment of OWN to empowering women of color and to giving voice to their stories.

We honor Bronx Borough President **Vanessa L. Gibson** with our Visionary Award, in recognition of her steadfast advocacy for vulnerable populations and issues of equity and justice, including homelessness and domestic violence.

We celebrate our Triumph Award honoree, **Kerry**, a former URI client who has moved from surviving to thriving. During the program we will also hear from several other former clients who found the path to bright, stable futures through their experiences at URI.

We express appreciation to the **Sing Harlem! Choir** and **Knoelle Higginson** for sharing through music the themes of overcoming adversity and rising up.

And, of course, we send deep gratitude to our generous sponsors of tonight's Celebration, in particular our Presenting Sponsor, **Heights Advisors**. The support of our sponsors and donors helps URI continue to deliver innovative programs and services that break cycles of violence, poverty and homelessness.

Together we can break barriers to safety and healing, drive sustainable, systemic change, and empower individuals to build safe, stable and thriving lives and communities.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Nathaniel Fields". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nathaniel M. Fields
CEO
Urban Resource Institute



VISION

A world free of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty, and trauma, where individuals and communities are safe, stable, and thriving.

MISSION

To empower individuals, families, and communities, particularly communities of color and other disenfranchised populations, to end cycles of violence, homelessness, poverty, and trauma by increasing safety and resiliency.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Founded in 1980, Urban Resource Institute is the largest provider of **domestic violence** shelter services in the U.S., as well as a leading provider of shelter and services for **homeless** families. URI has the capacity to provide safe, dignified housing for 2,200 individuals a night, including adults, youth and children (and their pets) impacted by domestic violence and homelessness, representing approximately 1 in 35 of all unhoused individuals in New York City. Diversity and inclusion are core principles for both clients and staff, and our doors are open to everyone.

In addition to safety and shelter, URI offers a holistic, comprehensive approach to ending domestic violence and homelessness through innovative programs addressing prevention and intervention as well as direct services to empower clients to build safe, stable futures.

The programs include:

- **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM** provides resources, tools, coaching, and training to create pathways to economic safety and financial freedom for clients. 98% of domestic abuse survivors face financial abuse, and financial dependence is a leading reason why survivors remain with or return to abusers. A lack of economic stability is a key factor in intergenerational cycles of poverty and homelessness. The URI program focuses on living wage jobs and jobs of the future, including the new Fab Lab that is a high tech incubator for innovation and learning for adults and youth.
- **PEOPLE AND ANIMALS LIVING SAFELY (PALS)**, a pioneering program that offers co-living of domestic violence survivors and their pets. Less than 10% of DV shelters permit pets to live with their owners, yet 50% of victims say fear for their pets prevents them from fleeing to safety, and the human-animal bond is a vital part of healing. URI PALS remains the only shelter system in New York City to permit people and pets to live and heal together.
- **CRIME VICTIM SERVICES** utilizes a trauma-informed and client centered approach to provide comprehensive, direct services to clients including individual and group counseling, safety planning, and advocacy, working with the New York State Office of Victims Services. All victims of domestic violence are crime victims.
- **LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM (LEAP)** provides individualized on-site comprehensive legal advice, support and services to clients on a wide range of issues to help them achieve and maintain their independence and safety. LEAP also provides legal and rights-based training for clients and staff.
- **RELATIONSHIP ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM (RAPP)** and **EARLY RAPP** help prevent abuse and intergenerational cycles of violence by working with some 40,000 students a year in middle schools and high schools, teaching them about healthy relationships. The interactive curriculum is delivered by peer counselors, educators and social workers.
- **ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTION PROGRAM (APIP)** works with perpetrators to break the cycle of domestic and intimate partner violence, reduce recidivism, and prevent future abuse. APIP is anchored in the belief that individuals can change if given tools, resources, and support. The program helps abusive partners take responsibility and accountability, change their behavior, and build patterns of healthy relationships.

2022 HONOREE

Visionary Award

The Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson

Bronx Borough President



A native New Yorker, Vanessa L. Gibson began her career serving the people of the west Bronx. While a student at the University at Albany, she joined the New York State Assembly Intern Program and was assigned to then-Assemblywoman Aurelia Greene. Upon graduation, she served as Legislative Aide, and then advanced to District Manager, overseeing the Bronx office. Gibson served as the District Manager for several years until Assemblywoman Aurelia Greene's resignation; thereafter she was elected to the NYS Assembly to represent the residents and families of the 77th District in the Bronx which she served for two terms.

In November 2013, Gibson was elected to the New York City Council where she was a leader in education, affordable housing, public safety and criminal justice reform. She was also an advocate for alternatives to incarceration, tenant protections, increased training for our police officers and held the distinction of being the first African-American

woman chair of the New York City Council Public Safety Committee. In 2017, Gibson joined then-Council Member Mark Levine in passing the landmark Right to Counsel Legislation, which provides free legal representation for income-eligible tenants facing eviction in Housing Court. She has also championed legislation mandating the Mayor's Office of Food Policy create a ten-year food strategy for the City of New York that identifies food policies, access to healthier food options, using community gardens, urban agriculture and access to Health Bucks to address food deserts.

Gibson announced her run for Bronx Borough President in 2020, with a mission to move the Bronx forward with a focus on public safety, food equity, housing insecurity, health and wellness, gender equity, support for the LGBTQIA+ community and a myriad of other issues. On November 2nd, 2021, she was elected to be the 14th Bronx Borough President to serve the over 1.4 million residents and families that call the Bronx home. Gibson now proudly represents the borough of the Bronx as the first woman and African-American Bronx Borough President.

2022 HONOREE

Triumph Award

Kerry

Former Client
Economic Empowerment Program



Kerry is a single mother of two and an inspiring domestic violence survivor. Years of abuse from her partner, which started shortly after the birth of their first child, led Kerry to try to leave several times until she finally gained the courage to start a new life for herself and her two daughters. Kerry called the Domestic Violence Hotline and was soon placed in a URI domestic violence shelter, where, as she explains, she was welcomed with open arms and a sense of recognition. Kerry had some years earlier been a temporary worker at URI, never imagining that one day, she herself would need services from URI to escape from domestic abuse. But deep inside, Kerry knew this wasn't just a coincidence. It was "divine intervention and God's work," leading her from surviving to thriving.

Throughout her journey, the URI Economic Empowerment Program (EEP) set Kerry on a path to a bright new future. She noted that with the URI team there was always

someone behind her, guiding and supporting her, building up her skills, and the confidence and courage to move ahead.

The EEP staff helped Kerry continue her education and progress in her career journey. Kerry secured her GED and completed her associate's degree while advancing from front desk attendant to a case manager at Volunteers of America, a promotion she attributes to the counsel and courage provided by her work with URI EEP. She plans to continue her education, and through both her work and educational success she is setting a powerful example to her two daughters. Kerry is also fulfilling the promise made to her late mother, who lost her life to COVID, that she would complete her education.

Today, Kerry believes she is doing what she was meant to do: be a role model for her daughters and bring joy to her clients, helping them overcome what she herself had faced. She notes that while life is not easy, everyone has a path and God has a plan. And she is proud to help others find their path.

HOST

Cheryl Wills

Emmy Award winning news anchor, TV talk show host, and author



Cheryl Wills is an Emmy Award winning journalist for Spectrum News New York 1. As the first African American woman to host a prime-time nightly newscast for the cable network, Wills anchors the Emmy-nominated broadcast Live at Ten, weeknights. She has been with NY1 since its launch in 1992 and is one of the station's most recognizable journalists for breaking news and special coverage. She is also the talk show host of the weekly public affairs program, In Focus with Cheryl Wills where she interviews the most powerful newsmakers and celebrities in the country.

Wills is also the acclaimed author of a series of books about her family's transition from slavery to freedom in the United States. *Die Free: A Heroic Family Tale*, *The Emancipation of Grandpa Sandy Wills*, *Emancipated: My Family's Fight for Freedom* and

EMMA all chronicle her 3x great-grandfather's heroic service as a member of the United States Colored Troops during The Civil War.

On March 25, 2011, Cheryl Wills made history as the first journalist invited to speak at the United Nations General Assembly Hall for The International Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade which was broadcast live around the world on UNTV.

Wills has been honored numerous times during her 30+ year journalism career from groups like The New York Press Club, The Newswomen's Club of New York, The Associated Press, and she received a special medal from the United Nations Correspondents Association, personally presented to her by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. City & State Magazine hailed Cheryl as one of New York's most "remarkable women" and she is one of the women profiled in the award winning 2020 book: "She is Me: How Women Will Save the World."

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tina Perry

**President
OWN TV Network & OTT Streaming**



Named president of OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network in 2019, Tina Perry oversees all operation and creative areas of the network, reporting to OWN Chairman and CEO Oprah Winfrey. Her leadership is a driving force behind the network's ongoing evolution to become the leading destination for Black audiences. She also oversees OWN's robust digital division.

Perry was instrumental in OWN's successful launch into scripted programming of OWN's popular drama series. She oversees the continuing success of the network's lineup of unscripted hits, and has spearheaded the development of OWN's cooking programming. Perry has also shepherded the creation of special OWN Spotlight programming that

tackles important issues affecting Black women today, including Oprah's two-night town hall on racism in *America, Where Do We Go From Here?* Perry is a champion of OWN's social good initiatives including OWN's award-winning, get-out-the-vote and registration campaign OWN Your Vote, OWN Your Health, and most recently OWN Your Shine, launched along with OWN's first-ever Juneteenth activation. She is a passionate advocate for the nuanced representation of Black women in media, spearheading OWN's collaboration with the ANA's SeeHer.

Perry was recognized by the Center for Communication's Stanton Award in 2021, was named to Ebony magazine's Power 100 list, was honored at the Multichannel News Wonder Woman Awards in 2020, as one of the Cablefax 2020 Most Powerful Women "Wavemakers" in 2020 and received the Women in Cable Telecommunication's LEA Award in 2019.

PERFORMANCE BY

Sing Harlem!

Vy Higginsen, Executive Director
Knoelle Higginson, Artistic Director



Sing Harlem! the award-winning musical group was formed to be the breakout choir for Mama Foundation for the Arts' School of Gospel, Jazz, and R&B Arts. Under the direction of Ahmaya Knoelle Higginson, the choir has grown to be a highly respected and influential force in the New York gospel scene, producing not only great vocalists, but top-notch global citizens.

At its core, Sing Harlem! serves as both a social impact initiative for young people that have graduated from Mama Foundation's music training program, and as a commercial choir delivering acclaimed entertainment nationwide. All proceeds from Sing Harlem! events and performances benefit the Mama Foundation for the Arts' music training programs, which are provided to the Harlem community tuition-free.

Sing Harlem! has performed at many prestigious venues, programs, and concerts across America including The Congressional Black Caucus, The Stellar Awards, New York Fashion Week (TOMMYxZENDAYA), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lincoln Center, the US Open, Chicago's Ravinia Festival, and Brooklyn's Afropunk. Television performances include *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *Saturday Night Live*, *The View*, *Good Morning America*, *VH1 Trailblazer Honors*, and the *Grammy Awards*. Theatrical performances include *The Let Go* (Nick Cave), *The Mile-Long Opera* (David Lang, Liz Diller), and *As You Like It* (Public Theater, Public Works). In addition to headlining, Sing Harlem continues to accompany a variety of musical artists including SZA, Sting, Arianna Grande, Pharrell Williams, Alessia Cara, Lykke Li, Chance the Rapper, and Madonna.

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COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND

THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK IN

DEVELOPING THE PALS PROGRAM

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Every angle, seen
from your angle

**Thank you to Urban Resource Institute for letting us be a part of
Celebration: RiseUp!**

We look forward to joining you on this mission to transform the lives of domestic violence survivors and people battling homelessness.

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**Congratulations
to Nat and Charlie
and the entire URI team
for the great work
that they do.**

From Zvi Boymelgreen and Haysha Deitsch

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