

CHAMPIONING CHANGE

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

New York City

**FUTURE
LEADER**

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

New York City

**Annual Report
2023**

WELCOME

Dear Friends:

For more than 165 years, since its founding in 1858, YW-NYC has been an advocate and provider of opportunities and services for women in New York. One of the many qualities that has enabled us to remain steadfast over the decades in our endeavors to advance women and girls is our ability to adapt to the needs of the day and change with the times.



As the nation grew from the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Industrial Era, Women's Suffrage, the Great Depression, and World War II to Civil Rights and the Women's Liberation Movement, YW-NYC was at the forefront of championing change during these critical periods. By providing vocational and educational opportunities and independent living spaces in the 1870s, we empowered women to challenge traditional expectations and work and live on their own. By becoming the first agency to adopt an interracial charter in 1889, we set lifting up women of color and eliminating racism as founding tenets of our work. By offering our first English as a Second Language programs in 1909, we helped to welcome new arrivals to the city with the resources to become self-sufficient. And with our childcare and parenting programs beginning in the 1970s and 80s, we strengthened new mothers' resolve, enabling them to balance work and home life.

Today, we carry this vision forward by centering the cultures and priorities of the communities we serve. With their direction, we continue to identify new ways to foster leadership, self-confidence, empowerment, and independence while eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all in an ever-changing world. **This report highlights our achievements and successes in 2023 and the programs and people championing change at YW-NYC right now.**

2023 was a year of firsts for YW-NYC, as well as a time to revisit and reinvent valued traditions. Through the steer of our student ambassadors in our Girls Initiatives program and staff, we launched successful events like the Hackathon, Girls Symposium, and holiday clothing and hygiene drive. With support from our esteemed Board of Directors and our new Young Professionals Leadership Council, we raised nearly **\$400,000** at our 165th anniversary gala. We began expanding our Girls Initiatives programs and added new schools in Harlem to our Out-of-School-Time program roster. And we brought on new program and leadership staff tasked with increasing our impact and improving our services for NYC's youth.

The change we have championed in 2023 has positioned us well to more deeply engage and support the children, young women, and gender non-conforming youth we serve, most of whom are youth of color, in their journeys to become change-makers, community-builders, and legendary leaders. We invite you to become involved in our organization as a mentor, tutor, or as a member of our Young Professionals Leadership Council. If interested, please contact our Senior Director of Development and Communications, Ileana Font-Soloway at ifont-soloway@YWCANYC.org. Enjoy the photos, stories, interviews, and data in this report illuminating these and other highlights from 2023. Thank you for your continued commitment and partnership in furtherance of YW-NYC's imperative work.

With gratitude,

Tracy Richelle High
Board Chair

Alba Rodriguez
CEO



YWCA MISSION

YW-NYC's mission is to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Established in 1858, YWCA of the City of New York (YW-NYC) was the nation's first YWCA association and was instrumental in the development of a global network of nonprofits dedicated to the social and economic advancement of women and girls. By offering vocational trainings, the first employment bureau for women, educational opportunities, childcare and other resources for mothers and survivors of domestic violence, as well as women-centered professional networking forums, YW-NYC has been a pioneer for social change since its inception.

Today, YW-NYC is helping a new generation of children, young women, and gender non-conforming youth in New York City reach their full potential while navigating the intersections of race, class, and gender.

WHO WE ARE

2023 was a year of new beginnings for YW-NYC as we welcomed several additions to the executive leadership team. With the recent arrival of CEO Alba Rodriguez at the end of 2022, the onboarding of COO Grace Coy in May of 2023, and Senior Director of Programs Nayira Polanco in September, YW-NYC has already begun tapping their unique backgrounds and perspectives to re-envision our programs, organizational culture, and impact. Here's what they have to say about how they are championing change for YW-NYC.

NEW
STAFF



How do you champion change at YW-NYC?

I champion change through communication, innovation, and commitment. I help my team understand the destination they are moving toward and the reasons for undertaking change in the first place. Being transparent and helping them understand the “why” allows them to trust in our decision-making. Innovation opens the door to new possibilities, creates fresh perspectives, and encourages the development of creative solutions. Creating a culture of innovation encourages my team to think creatively and find new inventive solutions to problems—and to become more comfortable and familiar with change.

- Nayira Polanco, Senior Director of Programs

What does it mean to you to work for YW-NYC?

To **empower**, to **advocate**, and to **educate**!

- Grace Coy, Chief Operating Officer



Where do you see YW-NYC in five years?

We are lucky to start a strategic planning process in 2024 that will provide us with a roadmap for the next five years of the organization. Part of the work involved in creating that plan includes speaking with the communities we serve about how we could better support them, looking at ways that we can expand our afterschool programming in high-need areas and forming new partnerships with community-based organizations to increase our impact. In five years, in addition to program and service expansion, I see YW-NYC becoming a greater voice in the communities we serve, loudly advocating for the issues that directly address our commitment to eliminating racism, promoting social justice issues, and investing in female empowerment.

- Alba Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer

A DEEP DIVE WITH:

NAYIRA POLANCO

Born and raised in Santiago, Dominican Republic until the age of twelve, Nayira Polanco's earliest experiences with education came from her parents and aunties who taught her math, reading, and life-skills through the family's day-to-day activities in the kitchen, on the farm, and at the river. Her father, an architect, and her mother, a seamstress, stressed the importance and value of creating things of function and beauty using her hands. The confines of a classroom and the structure of formal education were not a regular part of her reality until she moved from her spacious Dominican farm to the crowded streets of Washington Heights in New York City. Frustrated with the limitations and strict rules in her schools, Nayira focused her energies on visual arts and eventually enrolled in the Fine Arts and Photography program at SUNY New Paltz in upstate New York. New Paltz was a good fit, allowing her to return to the comforts of working on a local farm. There, she had the opportunity to contribute to the arts program at a nearby Montessori school where she was inspired to see that encouraging independence and self-expression was built into the curriculum, even for the youngest students.



Starting as an art teacher in one of New York City's public elementary schools, Nayira launched a career in education that led her to roles in school administration, city government agencies, and nonprofit social service organizations. The throughline in her career has always been youth empowerment and supporting underserved communities through holistic and culturally responsive service models, which brought her to the doors of YW-NYC in September of 2023.

Nayira felt strongly that the key to her success managing afterschool and summer camp group leaders, specialists, and program directors, as well as school administration and local government relationships across multiple public primary and middle schools and school districts was to ensure alignment on the idea that students, staff, and administrators have a collective responsibility and shared power to make society better. Nowhere is this more apparent than in YW-NYC's Girls Initiatives program, operated out of YW-NYC's Family Resource Center in Hell's Kitchen. Serving high school girls and gender-nonconforming youth across the five boroughs, programs are designed to expose young women to life skills and college and career readiness concepts such as STEM, financial literacy, social justice, and leadership. But the real appeal of the program is the community it fosters, bringing a diverse array of students together from all over the city in a safe space designed with their needs in mind and open to them as soon as they get out of school. Nayira has made this her pet project, reviving and expanding programming and developing the space with a growing reputation for centering the needs and interests of its members, and nurturing the next generation of change-makers.

I want to open doors for the girls in our programs. I want them to understand the power of their voices, challenge power dynamics, and advocate for change, Nayira says. I want to create spaces where children and youth can be joyful, authentic, celebrated, and respected as equal partners in their education.



WHERE WE WORK

2023 marked significant milestones for YW-NYC. In our 165th anniversary year, we expanded our impact across New York City. With the addition of two new public schools, our Out-of-School-Time (OST) network now includes eight public schools. Additionally, we renovated our Girls Initiatives Center and grew our girls programming, allowing us to reach more young people than ever, fostering their growth and potential through vital educational opportunities.

OUR SITES

Headquarters | Lower Manhattan

Brooklyn Collaborative School | Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn

Eagle Academy for Young Men | Harlem



Family Resource Center | Hells Kitchen

New Design | Harlem

Urban Assembly Academy | Harlem



PS 90 | Coney Island, Brooklyn

PS 188 | Coney Island, Brooklyn

PS 329 | Coney Island, Brooklyn

PS 298 | Brownsville, Brooklyn



OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

YW-NYC's OST programming offers a supportive environment for 2,000 K-8 students across Brooklyn and Harlem. Our diverse team of educators and licensed teachers partner with schools, families, and community leaders to provide enriching activities. Through our after-school and summer programs, students enhance their academic and social skills, gain confidence, and develop leadership abilities, fostering a strong sense of responsibility and civic engagement.

HOMESCHOOL HELP & LITERACY

Under the guidance of our Senior Program Director and Education Specialist, YW-NYC developed an **English Language Arts** curriculum that enhances reading, vocabulary, and writing skills through a mix of visual stories, movies, books, folk tales, and spoken word. Integrated into our literacy activities is our commitment to anti-racism, ensuring lessons promote equity and inclusion.

Additionally, we provide comprehensive academic support, including homework help and targeted assistance for students facing learning challenges. In partnership with P.S 90 Edna Cohen School, from February to May 2023, we launched a **tutoring club** led by school teachers with YW-NYC staff supporting planning and classroom management. This initiative directly addresses low literacy rates and test scores, reinforcing our mission to foster academic success among all students.



COOKING, MUSIC & ART

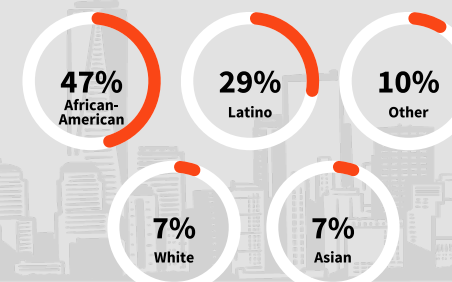
Students engaged in weekly cooking lessons, learning about food and wellness. Guided by a specialist, they explored diverse cuisines and honed cooking techniques. Alongside culinary exploits, students ventured into music, focusing on 50 years of hip-hop as the theme of last year's **Summer Rising** program. They mastered themes like tempo and composition, crafting musical solutions for real-world issues and seamlessly integrating artistic skills into their learning journey.

LEADERSHIP

Students actively engaged in initiatives aimed at improving their school, after-school, and community environments. They conducted research on **teen activists** who catalyzed change in their communities, studying the processes they employed and exploring how these strategies could be adapted and applied to their own local projects.

FAST STATS

DEMOGRAPHICS



GIRLS INITIATIVES

YW-NYC Girls Initiatives programming, located in Hells Kitchen, empowers young women through after-school programs in leadership, college and career, mental health, and STEAM fields. In 2023, they served over 500 girls across all five boroughs of NYC.



LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

YW-NYC's leadership programs develop young women's advocacy, leadership, and social justice skills. Programs include **Bystander Intervention Training** and our new girls-led **Ambassador** program focusing on community service projects. In 2023, girls in the Bystander program trained members in the community on how to be a good upstander in situations of racial and gender bias. Additionally, at the culmination of the year, our Ambassadors orchestrated a Coat & Hygiene Drive for women in need in our NYC community.

NEW PROGRAMS



COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

YW-NYC equips girls for their academic and professional futures. Our **College and Career Readiness** program workshops, networking events, and college visits, all designed to guide participants through the complexities of application processes, financial aid, scholarships, and career exploration. In the summer and fall of 2023, the girls participated in college and career workshops which provided them hands-on experience through internships with partners like **New York School of Interior Design (NYSID)** and **Sullivan & Cromwell**.

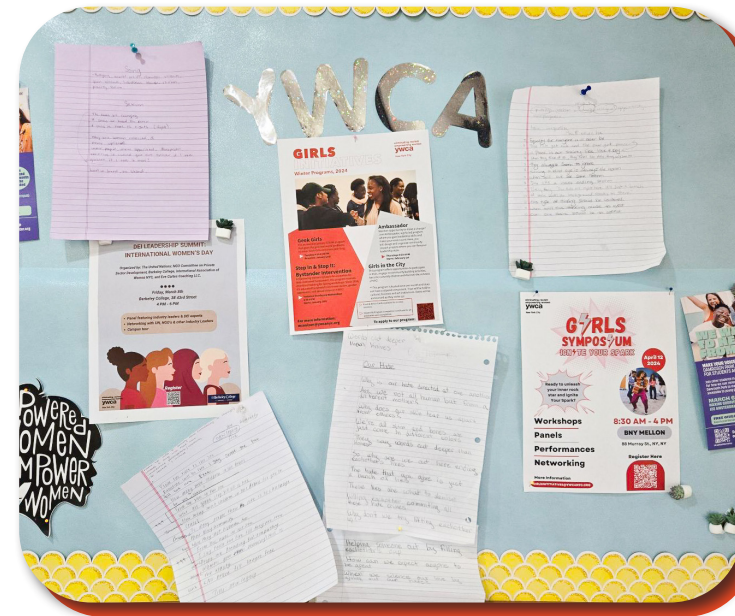
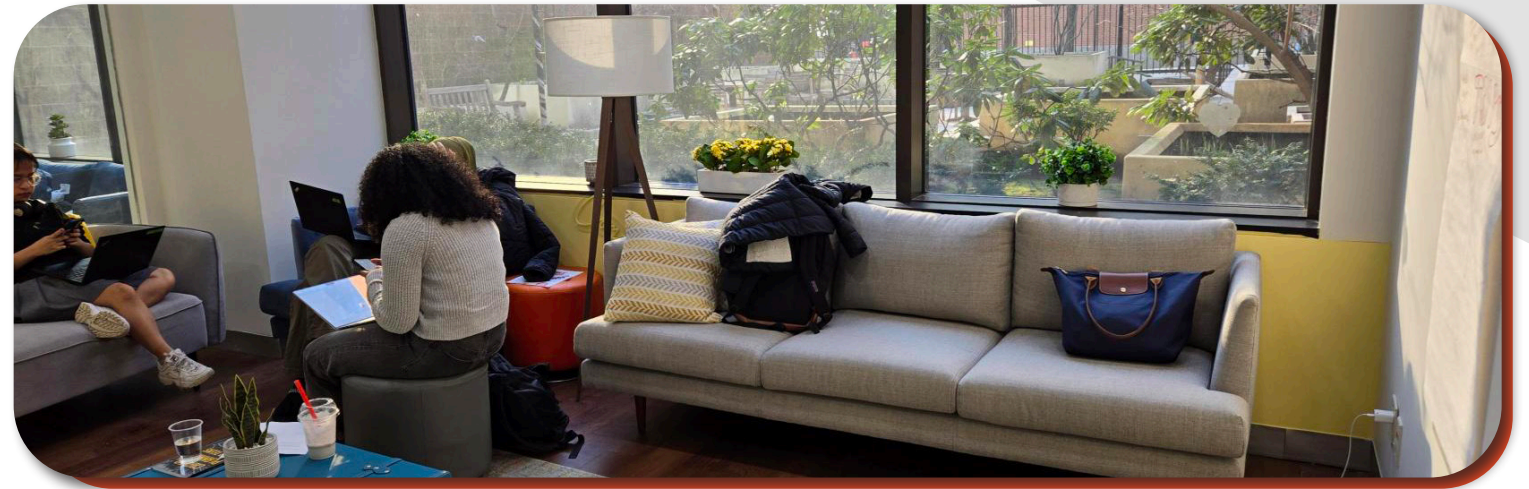


STEAM

YW-NYC's STEAM programs provided hands-on educational training, networking opportunities with women experts and leaders, and immersive experiences focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Advocacy, Arts, and Math. In 2023, YW-NYC expanded **Geek Girls** to a year-long program where girls learn intensive coding and work toward projects that address a community need. This culminated in their participation in our inaugural **Hackathon**, hosted by Betterment in NYC.

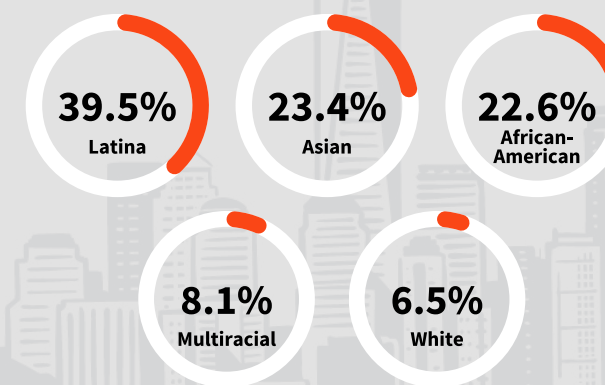
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

OUR NEWLY RENOVATED GIRLS INITIATIVES SPACE

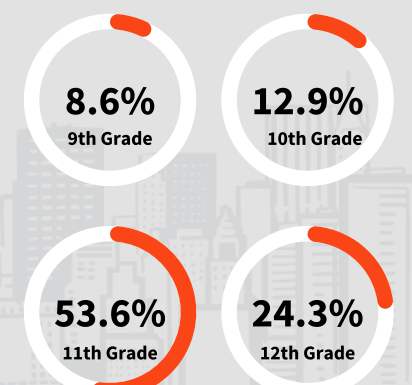


FAST STATS

DEMOGRAPHICS



Grades



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

We recently caught up with one of YW-NYC's Girls Initiatives new student Ambassadors, Yisleyry Claros. Yisleyry is a 10th grader from Midwood High School who joined YW-NYC to make a difference in her community. She shared what being part of our program means to her. Student ambassador Asiya Secerovic conducted the interview.



Hi Yis! I wanted to ask ... How did you learn about YW-NYC's Girls Initiatives program? **Asiya**

Hey Asiya!! My counselor was posting internships on her Google classroom and I came across YWCA Girls Initiatives and decided to apply. **Yisleyry**

What attracted you to the program? Why did you sign up?

I was looking for an after-school program. There are clubs in my school, but I was looking for someplace to go outside my school. My parents are always encouraging me to join new programs. I saw that this program is girls-only and I feel more comfortable and at ease around all girls.

What is your favorite part of being in the Girls Initiatives community?

Definitely the girls I have become friends with along the way. I thought it would be a good opportunity to make new friends and it has been! Everyone here is really supportive.

How has your participation in the Ambassador program changed how you see yourself and your role in your family, community, and the world?

The Student Ambassadors program has changed the way I view myself. I now realize how much potential I have; I can do anything I imagine. I can voice my ideas and my beliefs to my community and be heard. What we do here is listen to each other and then face any injustice or problem head-on altogether, so no one has to feel alone within this community.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

SALUTE GALA

In October 2023, YW-NYC gathered in-person for our annual SALUTE Gala to celebrate the our **165th anniversary** of service to New York. The event honored incredible leaders, including Changemaker Champion **Janessa Cox-Irvin**, Global Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Corporate Citizenship at AllianceBernstein, as well as YW-NYC's long-time advocate and retiring board chair, **Tracy Richelle High**, Partner at Sullivan & Cromwell. We also celebrated The Grace Hoadley Dodge Community Leadership Award, posthumously honoring **Sarah Gund**, and Emerging Leader Honoree **Donella Walker** of Con Edison, Inc. / Orange & Rockland. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our sponsors—including **AllianceBernstein, Sullivan and Cromwell LLP, ConEdison Inc., Geoffrey Gund, Mary Crawford**, and **Alison Schweizer**—and our dedicated donors, we successfully raised nearly **\$400,000**.



HACKATHON

In October 2023, we were thrilled to launch our inaugural **Hackathon** at the Betterment Headquarters in Manhattan. This event brought together participants from our **Geek Girls** program with experienced technology professionals. Drawing on the skills honed in our after-school classes, students demonstrated their coding prowess and their immense creativity. Esteemed judges from the tech industry evaluated the students' innovative apps, each aimed at tackling critical social justice issues. The winning app was called "Snatch," which aimed to bridge the gap between younger individuals and job opportunities, offering a youth-friendly alternative to LinkedIn. Runners-up included "Empowered," an app for researching political candidates' stances on various issues, and "Mons," which matches users with mental health resources or social workers based on their emotional state.



GIRLS SYMPOSIUM

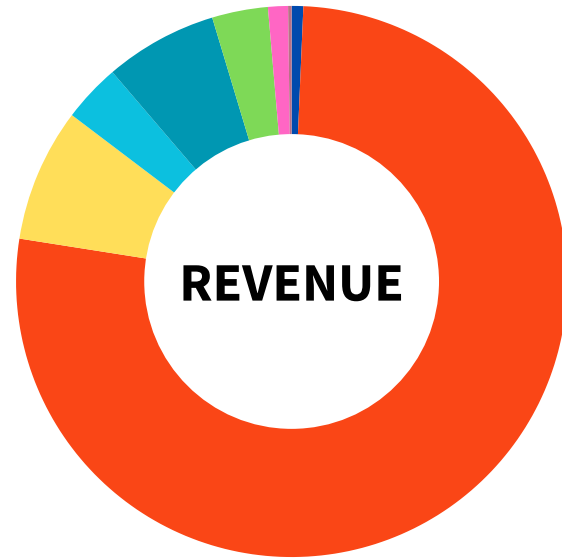
After a four year hiatus due to COVID-19, in honor of March History Month, YW-NYC relaunched its signature Girls Symposium, themed **A Force for the Future**, at BNY Mellon. The event brought together high school girls and gender non-conforming youth from across New York City to network and learn from 50 women leaders across various industries such as finance, media, law, and education. Attendees participated in enriching workshops that covered topics such as leadership, financial literacy, social justice, wellness, career development, and STEAM education. We were honored to have YW-NYC alum Delgracia Sainvil as our keynote speaker; Miss New York, Taryn Delanie Smith, as our host; and Hailee Kaleem Wright providing special performances.



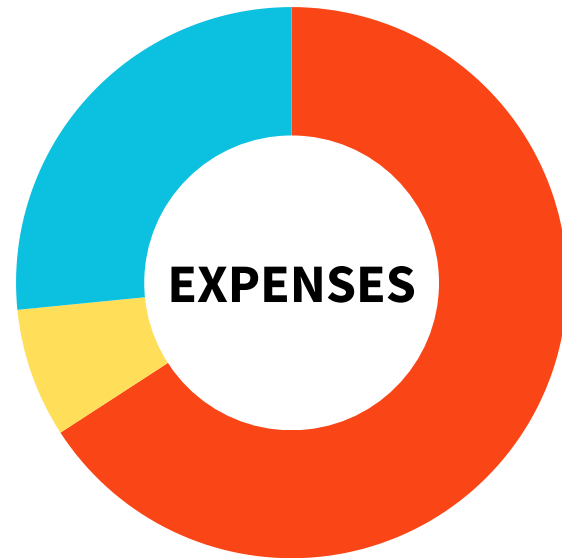
FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2023

(July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023)



Individuals	\$41,194
Government	\$4,644,102
Corporations and Foundations	\$473,349
Special Events	\$206,453
Investment Income	\$400,000
Endowment Income	\$198,290
Interest Income	\$70,781
Other Income	\$12,279
Total Revenue	\$6,046,448



Programs	\$3,711,113
Marketing and Development	\$427,586
Administration	\$1,497,841
Total Expenses	\$5,636,540

OUR SUPPORTERS

FISCAL YEAR 2023

(July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023)

\$50,000 +

Colgate-Palmolive Company
Wasily Family Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation
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BNY Mellon

\$30,000 +

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\$20,000 +

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Grace Coy | Chief Operating Officer
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Nayira Polanco | Senior Director of Programs
Andy Abell | Development and Communications Associate
Robert Dupree | Human Resources Manager
Shontai Hollingsworth | Director of OST Program
Matias Rodriguez | Administration Associate

Shawana Baker | Urban Assembly
Marcella Coulson | Girls Initiatives
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Jaden Scott | New Design
Selvin Sinclair | PS 298
Renee Smith | PS 188



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GIRLS INITIATIVES

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eliminating racism
empowering women

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New York City



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