

Coalition Chronicles

A newsletter of
End Domestic Abuse WI
Volume 35 Issue 2

September 2016 In This Issue

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Dear friends,

This installment of the Coalition Chronicles features “**staff picks**” that focus directly or indirectly on our work to end gender violence. This publication gives you an insight into where our hearts and heads are right now. We are thinking deeply about collective impact, poverty, housing, resilience, and action. In the nearly 40 years of End Domestic Abuse WI’s existence, there has been much evolution in our thinking and our strategies. Our hope is that you will view this collection of staff recommendations as our gender violence “little free library” and that you’ll check a few things out. And just like any good little free library, it’d be great if you’d return the favor by sending us your picks! We invite you to send your picks to colleenc@endabusewi.org, no later than October 15, 2016, with the subject line “staff picks” and we will post them on our Facebook page over the next couple of months.

All my best and in peace,

Patti



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patti'.

Staff Picks

Editor's note: For this late summer edition of the Coalition Chronicles, **we asked staff to share a favorite media selection that was directly or indirectly related to the work that we do to end gender-based violence.** The guidelines:

- Choose no more than 3 examples.
- Identify the category of media (book, movie, magazine or journal article, music, radio/podcast, public talk, youtube video, photograph, painting or image).
- Share a brief description of each selection, and tell us why you chose it.

We thought of this as a little bit like our version of the "Little Free Libraries" that started here in Wisconsin and have been popping up all over the world. You will see photos of some of these throughout this issue. We hope you enjoy our selections, and consider sharing one of your own!

– Colleen



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1

Americanah
by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Category: Book

**Adrienne Roach, Policy and
Systems Manager**

My staff pick is *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Adichie powerfully captures the dynamics and challenges that exist in America today for women of color and immigrants. A truly intersectional perspective, this book is a must read. **A story about a Nigerian woman, studying, working and living in America, Adichie provides unique observations and reflections on American culture.** Adichie also vividly portrays the differences between a life in America and a life in Nigeria, capturing the nuances of many of the different power imbalances that exist throughout the world, by gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion and culture, among others.

In summary, Adichie is an inspiration for a generation of women searching for what feminism means to them. She recently published a short essay entitled *We Should All Be Feminists*, which could easily be a final chapter to this book. I highly recommend both.

You can hear Chimamanda Adichie delivering this essay in a [TED Talk](#). (30 minutes, April 2013)

[link to TED Talk: <http://bit.ly/2c8bb6x>]

2

Grace Lee Boggs

The Next American Revolution

Rest in Power: Grace Lee Boggs Memorial Film

Category: Human, Book, Short Film

Patti Seger, Executive Director

How can one talk about a Grace Lee Boggs book without first talking about the human, Grace Lee Boggs? **She was a unique American human rights activist, philosopher, and promoter of non-violent protest who firmly believed that revolutionary transformation and justice were within our reach, if only we as a society would commit.** So, my first favorite is just acknowledging the human...Grace Lee Boggs.

Then, I recommend her last book, published when she was 99 years old: *The Next American Revolution*. This book is a book for these times. **It provides a window on what activism, social change, and social justice could look like in the 21st century, building deeply on the century before but acknowledging the constant change that we face today and offering strategies for us to collectively consider and adopt.** As I read *The Next American Revolution*, I reflected deeply on the gender-violence movement, our history, and where we need to go in order to achieve the transformation we seek. So many of her words resonated deeply, and I underlined them when I read the book for the very first time. "Can we accept anger as a challenge rather than as a threat?" was one sentence that I underlined. It made me think about the anger women, LGBTQ folks, people of color, immigrants, elders, teens and others often have at the failure of our systems to understand them, to be responsive to them and at times, the fact that systems themselves can do more harm than good. What if, instead of being defensive about the anger, those very systems saw the anger as a challenge, a call to action, to do better? And when I speak of "systems," I mean the gender violence (DV, SA, trafficking) system as well. In the spirit of Grace, can we challenge ourselves to be better? To stand by and with others as they lead the next American revolution?

Finally, Grace Lee Boggs passed on in October, 2015 at age 100 after 70 years of activism. Hers was a life that was truly lived with great meaning. How can I recommend her book if you can't see and hear her speaking so that you can know her revolutionary power? So, I also recommend an 8 minute short memorial film: [*Rest in Power*](#).

One favorite quote: **"Rebellions tend to be negative, to denounce and expose the enemy without providing a positive vision of a new future...A revolution is not just for the purpose of correcting past injustices, a revolution involves a projection of man/woman into the future...It begins with projecting the notion of a more *human* human being, i.e. a human being who is more advanced in the specific qualities which only human beings have - creativity, consciousness and self-consciousness, a sense of political and social responsibility."**



[Link to film: <http://bit.ly/2bUls8o>]

3

***The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* by Sarah Deer (Book) and *The Color of Violence Against Women*, by Angela Davis (Keynote Address Transcript)**

Danny Ho, REACH Coordinator

These days I'm thinking of Sarah Deer's new book, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. Below is a link, not to the book but to an [article about the book](http://bit.ly/2chkxOU). I also think about a piece that was a [keynote by Angela Davis](http://bit.ly/2chkxOU). The link for this is below, too.

I choose these because for me, I need something strong and sound by folks that I feel are strong and sound that ground me to the work. **These pieces help keep my gender-based violence lens community-based, as informed as possible, and re-centered on groups most oppressed and on dangerous intersections.**

[Link to keynote address: <http://bit.ly/2chkxOU>]

[Article: <http://bit.ly/2cpU92C>]

4

***The Mask You Live In* by Jennifer Siebel Newsom**

Category: Film

Elise Buchbinder, Administrative and Education Assistant

From [The Presentation Project](http://bit.ly/2cpU92C):

"The Mask You Live In follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating America's narrow definition of masculinity. Pressured by the media, their peer group, and even the adults in their lives, our protagonists confront messages encouraging them to disconnect from their emotions, devalue authentic friendships, objectify and degrade women, and resolve conflicts through violence. These gender stereotypes interconnect with race, class, and circumstance, creating a maze of identity issues boys and young men must navigate to become 'real' men.

Experts in neuroscience, psychology, sociology, sports, education, and media also weigh in, offering empirical evidence of the 'boy crisis' and tactics to combat it. ***The Mask You Live In* ultimately illustrates how we, as a society, can raise a healthier generation of boys and young men."**

My Review:

What we teach men and boys about masculinity shapes their conceptions about acceptable behaviors, thought-processes, and social interactions. While the conversation surrounding problematic expectations of femininity has gained ground in the past several decades, there is still far too little dialogue about how boys and men (and, in turn, the girls and women in their lives) are negatively impacted by expectations surrounding traditional ideas of masculinity. This film does an excellent job of approaching an all-too-often hushed topic with candid, relatable stories. Watch this with your brother, father, grandfather, male friends, and partners. We can't address gender-based issues without talking about how men and boys learn unreasonable expectations starting from a young age. To anyone who has ever heard the phrase "Boys don't cry," I highly recommend this documentary.

[Link to website information about the film: <http://bit.ly/1jI8Sho>]



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The Resilience Breakthrough: 27 Tools for Turning Adversity into Action*, by Christian Moore*Category: Book****Cody Warner, Children/Youth Prevention and Outreach Coordinator**

Description from the publisher:

Christian Moore is convinced that each of us has a power hidden within, something that can get us through any kind of adversity. That power is resilience. **In *The Resilience Breakthrough*, Moore delivers a practical primer on how you can become more resilient in a world of instability and narrowing opportunity, whether you're facing financial troubles, health setbacks, challenges on the job, or any other problem.** We can all have our own resilience breakthrough, Moore argues, and can each learn how to use adverse circumstances as potent fuel for overcoming life's hardships. As he shares engaging real-life stories and a brutally honest analysis of his own experiences, Moore equips you with twenty-seven resilience-building tools that you can start using today—in your personal life or in your organization.

Through his research he has created the *Why Try* program, a program based on the ideal that EVERYONE is resilient and that there are ways to encourage resiliency within others. You can learn more about the program at the [WHY TRY Website](http://www.whytry.org/). You can find his book there as well.

Why I like this book:

I saw Christian Moore present *Why Try AND Resilience Breakthrough* at the *Children Come First* Conference in 2014. Christian Moore comes from a diverse and challenging background. The relatable humanness he showed during his presentations are present throughout *The Resilience Breakthrough*. As I was reading the book, I found that the way he explains the information he has come to know through his research is easy to understand and apply. He suggests “resilience boosters,” which are activities to improve your resilience in certain areas. His message with these activities – that trying is more important than succeeding – stuck with me and gave me hope for building up the resilience in youth who have been exposed to violence.

[Link to website: <https://www.whytry.org/>][Return to Table of Contents](#)

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Stretching Lessons* by Sue Bender*Category: Book****Diane Wolff, Director of Advocacy**

My pick is a small and simple book - *Stretching Lessons* by Sue Bender. It is one of a trilogy of books she has written, and definitely my favorite. I love the "gentleness" of this book and it is wonderful to read when I'm in need of a few reflective moments. Anyone who knows me knows I love and share quotes that are meaningful to me whenever I am able. A very important guiding thought for me is from this book: **"What I had learned in traveling was so much more than arriving."**

I hope you enjoy this read.

[Link to a review of this book:

<http://bit.ly/2cdK3FM>]

7

***Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond**

Category: Book

Tony Gibart, Policy Director

Sociologist Matt Desmond's acclaimed book, *Evicted*, is making waves throughout the country and beyond. **The work is based on Desmond's study of low-income rental practices in Milwaukee and the people who profit and suffer from the poverty housing economy.** Desmond spent a year living in low-income rental housing in Milwaukee. He tells the real-life stories of nine renters and two landlords he got to know during that time.



Desmond's time in Milwaukee intersects with our work. Desmond collaborated with Milwaukee victim advocates to bring attention to a pattern of domestic violence victims being evicted for calling the police. The City of Milwaukee, like other jurisdictions, would routinely assess nuisance fines against property owners for repeated police calls from the same address. Desmond and other advocates lobbied the City to change its nuisance laws to prohibit nuisance fines in cases of domestic abuse calls. Simultaneously, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin successfully advocated for similar changes in state law. However, even after these improvements, battered women are still evicted in Milwaukee and beyond for calling the police. More recently, changes in the law this year make it even easier for landlords to evict residents in domestic abuse situations and will likely erode the progress we've made.

Therefore, *Evicted* is especially timely and significant for advocates and policymakers in Wisconsin. Desmond vividly illustrates that evictions of the urban poor are at once personally traumatic and viciously systematic. Desmond writes, **"If incarceration had come to define the lives of men from impoverished black neighborhoods, eviction was shaping the lives of women. Poor black men were locked up. Poor black women were locked out."**

On a personal note, having fought for state laws to prevent the types of evictions Desmond chronicles, *Evicted* causes me to question our strategy. During the period of Desmond's study, we have made some important gains, including laws that:

- prohibit nuisance fines for domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking police calls
- eviction defenses for victims of these crimes
- outlawing discrimination based on an individual's status as a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking
- requiring that all written leases contain notices of domestic abuse protections

However, also during that same time, at the behest of the Wisconsin Realtors' Association and other groups, the state legislature has passed a number of bills to tilt the balance of basic fairness toward the property owners who profit from the poverty housing industry. Since the stories that make up the book occurred, landlords in Wisconsin have even more power and the position of low-income tenants is even more perilous. Will the laws we've sought save victims in rental housing from an even more aggressive churning of cycles of instability, eviction and desperation? I don't know. Many tenants don't know their rights. And those that do are not able to exercise them because they can't afford an attorney or because just having a CCAP record will make their situations worse.

These questions leave me hoping we can be inspired by Desmond's ability to render the individual accounts of struggle in heart-wrenching detail and yet present a wide-angle view of a deeply inhumane economic structure. Similarly, we should strive to attend to the personal stories of survivors and also focus our political energy on the bigger picture these stories create.

[Amazon link: <http://amzn.to/29HjMhd>]

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To The Best of Our Knowledge:***Kicked Out in America*****Category: Radio/Podcast****Colleen Cox, Education Coordinator**

To the Best of our Knowledge (TTBOOK) is one of my favorite programs. It is a nationally-syndicated radio show based in Wisconsin, which consists primarily of interviews revolving around a different theme every week. The March 27, 2016 show [**Kicked Out in America**](#) explored how housing insecurity drives poverty in America.

Those who work with survivors of domestic abuse are well aware of the many connections between violence, housing insecurity and poverty. Many people live with violence in their homes and many people are homeless and surviving violence on the streets. While often other options do exist, the reality is that lots of adults, teens and children have no safe place to be on a daily basis. The chronic stress created by these living conditions is damaging in every way, and advocates have been dealing with the weight of this reality for years. I was moved by the interview with Victor McDonald in the segment [**Finding a Way Home**](#), who was in an abusive relationship and found help, and a home, in Madison, WI.

In Wisconsin and elsewhere, there is interest in reexamining the traditional domestic abuse shelter model that is designed for short-term use by victims who need to escape violence until they can find permanent housing. An approach called *Housing First* may offer a viable alternative for guiding people to stability and safety. To learn more, listen to the TTBOOK interview [**A Simple Solution To End Homelessness In America**](#). I was inspired by the examples of people whose lives had been transformed beginning with the night they were able to sleep in peace and safety in a place they could call their own.

[TTBOOK Links: <http://bit.ly/2bRiGVC>
<http://bit.ly/2cDX1NW>
<http://bit.ly/2bULZUj>]



9

Sit With Me* by Holly Near*Category: Song****Tess Meuer, Justice Systems****Director**

I consider this song an anthem both about those who experience abuse and reach out to advocates for assistance as well as for those of us who are advocates who also need to reach out to loved ones when things just seem too overwhelming or too unjust. **Through the three decades of my work in domestic abuse, these words sustain me when the work, the abuse, the domestic homicides and the unfairness of the legal system are more than I feel I can bear for one more day:**

*Cause I'm so tired and I'm so scared
 I need to grieve and weep and scream and moan
 And sometimes I feel I can't defend myself, my life, or my home
 But you know tomorrow, I'll be back on my feet
 It's not in me, my friend, to accept defeat
 But won't you please sit with me through the night
 And tell me it's all right to fall apart with you*

View the [lyrics](#) and Holly Near's [performance](#) of *Sit With Me* from the CD, *Crushed*

[Link to lyrics: <http://bit.ly/2cdMMPG>
 [Link to performance: <http://bit.ly/2cybRBo>]

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Code Switch

Category: Radio/Podcast

Elise Buchbinder, Administrative and Education Assistant

From NPR.org:

Remember when folks used to talk about being "post-racial"? Well, we're definitely not that. We're a **team of journalists fascinated by the overlapping themes of race, ethnicity and culture, how they play out in our lives and communities, and how all of this is shifting.**

My Review:

Amidst the dozens of podcasts I listen to while exercising, driving, and cleaning my apartment, *Code Switch* stands out as uniquely thought-provoking, emotion-wrenching, and insightful. It has me laughing and crying within the same minute, but more importantly leaves me with ideas that I find myself exploring days, weeks, and months later as I internalize anything from daily interactions and culture to major news topics. This podcast provides a space where honest conversations about the intersection of race, culture, and identity can occur, and the journalists who cover these topics do so in a way that is approachable to anyone, no matter their level of familiarity with the topics.

[Link to Code Switch podcasts: <http://n.pr/2bRkzO8>]



11

How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America by Kiese Laymon

Category: Book

Emily Hawkins, former Administrative and Operations Assistant

Editor's note: Just before Emily moved out of state this summer, she submitted the following pick.

From the [Independent](http://TheIndependent.com):

"Laymon approached *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America* as an album, with each essay a different track. The book contains odes to black American heroes, dirges and ballads to family members past and present, and the occasional skit. **At its core beats the rat-a-tat-tat that knocks at the core of modern America: the shameful, insidious racism endured by the hyphenated African-American population.** Occasionally, from the treatment of Rosa Parks to the killing of Trayvon Martin, the banging becomes so loud it drowns out all else."

My Review:

Laymon's essays fill me up. They make me think. They make my heart ache. They make inaction and complacency understandable, but unacceptable. A non-violent state, country, world, is not achievable until we attempt to disengage in self-harm and internalized oppression. I'd recommend this book to anyone and everyone interested in breaking down the racism, sexism, homophobia and other oppressions that plague this country. I'd recommend this book to anyone who doesn't think those are issues.

[Link to excerpt on Gawker: <http://bit.ly/1efkWq6>]

[Link to review from the Independent: <http://ind.pn/2c8etad>]

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Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men by Lundy Bancroft

Category: Book

Tess Meuer, Justice Systems Director

This book allows me to finally explain at discussions, trainings and classes **the dynamics of domestic abuse from the perspective of the abuser**. This quote from the book is a perfect example:

“Your abusive partner doesn’t have a problem with his anger; he has a problem with your anger.

One of the basic human rights he takes away from you is the right to be angry with him. No matter how



badly he treats you, he believes that your voice shouldn’t rise and your blood shouldn’t boil. The privilege of rage is reserved for him alone. When your anger does jump out of you—as will happen to any abused woman from time to time—he is likely to try to jam it back down your throat as quickly as he can. Then he uses your anger against you to prove what an irrational person you are. Abuse can make you feel straitjacketed. You may develop physical or emotional reactions to swallowing your anger, such as depression, nightmares, emotional numbing, or eating and sleeping problems, which your partner may use as an excuse to belittle you further or make you feel crazy.”

Daily Wisdom for Why Does He Do That? Encouragement for Women Involved with Angry and Controlling Men (also by Lundy Bancroft)

Category: Book

Support. Understanding. Clarity. A direction for the future.

Lundy Bancroft’s new book **offers women daily guidance and inspiration for meeting the challenges of living with a controlling partner**. In short, compassionate pieces that take about ten minutes to read, Lundy helps the reader navigate the confusion, emotional wounding, and intimidation that angry and controlling men cause.

The book cycles through the following topics:

- How to keep your head clear from your partner’s twisted thinking
- Forming the best possible friendship with yourself
- Keeping yourself in one piece today so you can be strong for *tomorrow*
- Developing an outlook that keeps you on track even as he tries to derail you
- Improving your relationships with all of the people you care about
- Being fully present for your children
- Healing your emotional wounds and regaining your power

You do not need to read any of Lundy’s previous books, including *Why Does He Do That?*, to understand and draw strength from this book.

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***Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone*, by Leticia Nieto & Margot Boyer**

Category: Website/Series of Articles

Colleen Cox, Education Coordinator

I selected the website for the book *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone*, by Leticia Nieto with Margot F. Boyer, Liz Goodwin, Garth R. Johnson & Laurel Collier Smith.

I confess I have never read the book. I have read the three articles that can be viewed and printed from the website several times. I also attended training this summer by Yvette and James Murrell, two of a handful of people authorized to provide training based on the model described in the book.

From the [*Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment* website](#):

“This flexible model admits the ambiguities and challenges of real life. More down to earth than academic theory, the book includes personal stories from people of diverse backgrounds, as well as exercises, visualizations, and poetry. *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment* reflects insights from its roots in developmental psychology, theater, and liberatory pedagogy.

A preview of several key concepts from *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment* can be found by reading this series of articles on *Understanding Oppression* by Leticia Nieto and Margot Boyer. These ‘Ask Leticia’ articles were first published in Colors NW Magazine.”

[Strategies in Addressing Power and Privilege \(article 1 – pdf\)](#)

[Skill Sets for Target Group Members \(article 2 – pdf\)](#)

[Skill Sets for Agent Group Members \(article 3 – pdf\)](#)

Why I selected this website:

The framework described in these articles allows for the richness and complexity of our lives, as it offers a way to develop a sustainable, liberatory practice. This framework helps us to understand systems of oppression and how those systems operate at the micro-level of interactions between individuals. It opens up a space to see what is happening, while acknowledging that most people, most of the time, are unaware of the specific ways in which the systems are playing out in their daily lives.

This framework identifies skill sets for dealing with oppression. Our movement among the levels of skill at which we are operating at any given moment goes both ways – no-one ever graduates to the highest skill set. **I find this to be extremely hopeful, because we come to understand that we can develop a sustainable practice that is not about arriving at a certain point. With practice, we can become more skilled more of the time.** We can use this framework to see more clearly and connect with others more authentically and skillfully. Whatever additional actions we might be taking as activists and advocates, this framework offers the possibility of starting where we are every day, and moving toward a more fully liberated, shared humanity.



[Link to website: <http://bit.ly/2clBPJ6>]



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