



OUR BODIES OURSELVES

Generations May 2025



Image: Norma Meras Swenson with students at Boston University, 2017. Courtesy of Sarah Vox Swenson.

A Note From Our Program Director

Dear Friends,

If I were given to corporate speak, I'd say we are in "a time of transition." Alongside escalating challenges to reproductive justice and our civil rights, the Our Bodies Ourselves community has been navigating our own more personal losses. Three OBOS co-founders have passed away within the last year: **Pamela Berger** last August, **Ruth Davidson Bell Alexander** in December, and most recently **Norma Meras Swenson**. It feels ever more poignant, at least for me, to look at the **iconic group photo of the founders in 1975**, captured in all their youthful ebullience. But they are not gone.



The word "generation" usually refers to a group born within a span of years, living through a similar timeline. The concept divides us up into the Greatest Generation, boomers, Gen Xers, millennials, zoomers, and alphas. This way of thinking sets us up to grieve the passing of a generation, like the founders' generation, the way we mourn a loved one's death.

Generation has another sense though. To generate also means to create, to bring into being. At Norma's uplifting funeral yesterday, people of all ages gathered and spoke from the heart about what she had made with them. She was a mentor, teacher, and

collaborator, who nurtured connections with elders, age-peers, and youngsters throughout her life. Like the rest of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, Norma generated books, ideas, relationships, and good trouble, in concert with others, for all her years.

This sort of generation isn't a walled-off identity; it's a continuum. It brings us together and keeps flowing.

Our May newsletter issue honors the founders' generation by highlighting the generative work of Our Bodies Ourselves, including the younger feminists who are carrying it forward. We celebrate three amazing women leading OBOS' important work on advocacy, global projects, and preserving our own history. Our student interns reflect on their experience with us. We share a sampling of our recent resources on mental health, menstrual equity, and how abortion bans harm immigrant communities. We celebrate news including the Boston Public Library's digitization of the earliest versions of OBOS. And our upcoming public programs bring you practical wisdom from past and present activists, guiding us in building a truly intersectional movement.

Thank you for being part of our generation. Let's keep it going.

In solidarity,



Laura R. Prieto (she/her/ella)
Our Bodies Ourselves Program Director

[□ Please donate here in support of Our Bodies Ourselves!](#)

Who We Are



Afua Siaw, Lily Snape, Arushi Mishr, and Kaylee Wilson (left to right)
in the Center for Women's Health and Human Rights, Suffolk University. Photograph by Michael J. Clarke.

Reflections from Our Spring Semester Interns

This past semester, Our Bodies Ourselves worked with four wonderful Community Health students from Tufts University. Their projects included researching and creating new resources on abortion and on maternal mental health for our website. We asked them what they felt they gained from the internship experience with OBOS.

Afua Siaw: This semester, learning about the mission of Our Bodies Ourselves has inspired me to continue advocating for body autonomy, especially within marginalized communities. It's reminded me of the power in providing culturally responsive care, and how essential it is to create spaces where people can make empowered decisions about their health without the stigma or systemic barriers holding them back.

Lily Snape: My time at OBOS has made me much more cognizant and analytical of resources and media I am ingesting, specifically in the health space. After working on resource nomination for our website, I see the immense value in understanding what has gone into making a resource, from funding, to author's background, or host website, and how this can affect the quality and perspective of what we are consuming.

Kaylee Wilson: This semester I was fortunate enough to learn an immense amount about OBOS and its mission to provide free educational material to women, girls, femmes, and gender expansive people. Through working within the subject areas of Pregnancy and Birth, and Abortion, I discovered a real passion for and want to continue working within the reproductive justice movement.

New Committee Chairs



Joan Ditzion, History and Legacy chair: Joan is an original founder and longtime Board member of Our Bodies Ourselves. She co-authored of all nine editions of "Our Bodies, Ourselves" as well as "Ourselves and Our Children" (1978) and



Sasha Goodfriend, Advocacy chair: Sasha is a community organizer, curating feminist & queer experiences through partnerships with government, community organizations, and creatives alike. She is



Raquel Pereira, Global Projects chair: Raquel is a Brazilian nonprofit leader and cross-cultural collaborator. She coordinated the publication of *Nossos Corpos por nós Mesmas* (2023) the Brazilian adaptation of "Our Bodies, Ourselves," with the

"Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause" (2006). Now retired after a career as a geriatric social worker, Joan currently serves as an OBOS content expert in Growing Older.

□ [More about Joan](#)

executive director of Mass NOW, chairs the menstruation to menopause expert panel for OBOS, and serves on the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth.

□ [More about Sasha](#)

Coletivo Feminista Sexualidade e Saúde and teams from Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the Universidade de Campinas (Unicamp).

□ [More about Raquel](#)

Explore Our Website

There's new content on our website every week, reviewed by our content experts and put into context by the editorial team at Our Bodies Ourselves. These resources include first-person [Stories and Conversations](#), because we are experts on our own lives. Here are some recent additions to our site:



Catherine Cho shares her personal, transnational experience with stress-induced postpartum psychosis. What can we learn from the United Kingdom's better approach to treatment of postpartum mental health?

□ [Read Cho's story](#)



How are Black and Latine youth leading the menstrual equity movement? The Bold Girls Society (BGS) and PERIOD work to ensure that students in Chicago public schools can access to period products freely and without shame.

□ [Read the full article](#)



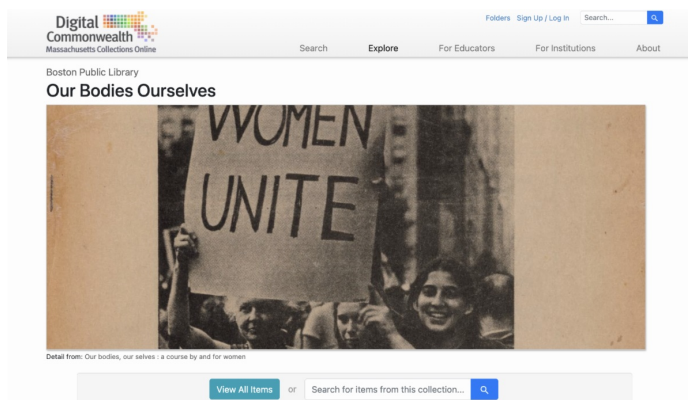
Spotlight: How Abortion Bans Harm Immigrant Communities

Immigrants need access to reproductive healthcare. Yet abortion bans criminalize immigrant communities, and the overturning of Roe have made access to care even more difficult for them. This new fact sheet, from the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice and The Center for Law and Social Policy, explains the situation and how we can work for change.

Image: Sunlight Foundation, CC 4.0 international license

[Read the fact sheet](#)

OUR BODIES OURSELVES NEWS



Our first formal collaboration with the Boston Public Library's Special Collections is complete! The project created high quality digital copies of the fragile, earliest versions of “Our Bodies, Ourselves” published by the New

England Free Press between 1970 and 1973. Maybe these are older than your copy of OBOS? We invite you to read, search, and browse these historical booklets on Digital Commonwealth, a free, open-access site.

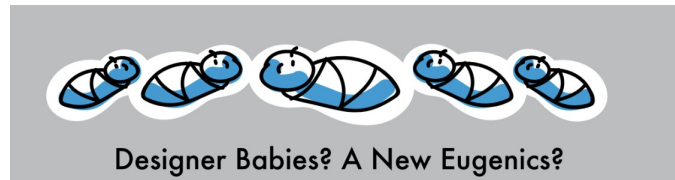
[Explore the first OBOS books](#)

Congratulations to **Aaradhana Joshi** on her graduation from Suffolk University! Aaradhana, a Criminal Justice major and Cybersecurity minor, has worked in the Our Bodies Ourselves office for the past 2 years. She will start graduate school in the fall. Aaradhana is committed to helping develop fair and effective cybersecurity policies that protect our privacy and benefit society.



□ [Read more about Aaradhana](#)

On May 21–23, Our Bodies Ourselves co-founders **Judy Norsigian** and **Sally Whelan** joined Katie Hasson from the Center for Genetics and



Society on the program of the **International Summit Global Observatory for Genome Editing** in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They presented on a reproductive justice perspective on germline modification. □ [Access the resources](#)



A moving memorial service for Our Bodies Ourselves co-founder **[Norma Meras Swenson](#)** took place at Mount Auburn Cemetery on May 23.

The same day, WBUR published Cristela Guerra's article about Norma's life and legacy, including the personal birthing experience that galvanized Norma's work to revolutionize childbirthing practices and women's reproductive health around the world. (Image courtesy of Sarah Vox Swenson.)


□ [Read the article](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 28 (7pm EST):
Activist Authors on
Repro Justice!**

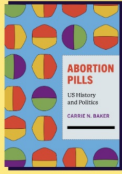


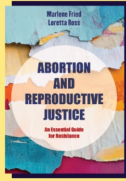
This virtual panel features Loretta Ross, Marlene Fried, Carrie Baker, and Candace Bond-Theriault in conversation about their new books on reproductive justice, activism, and abortion access. Please join us to talk about how their work is helping to build an intersectional movement.

[Find out more and register here](#)





Activist Authors on Reproductive Justice:


NEW BOOKS THAT ARE BUILDING AN INTERSECTIONAL MOVEMENT







Author Panel


LORETTA J. ROSS


MARLENE FRIED

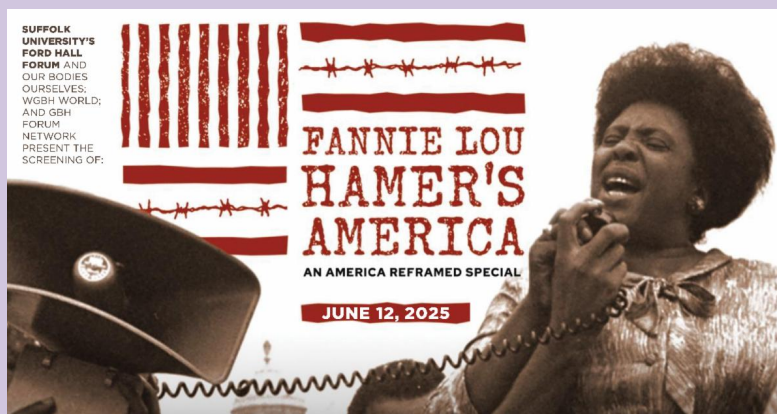

CANDACE BOND-THERIAULT


CARRIE N. BAKER

MAY 28, 2025 (Virtual webinar 7pm EST)

June 12: "Fannie Lou Hamer's America," Modern Theatre, Suffolk University, Boston MA. Join us for a free screening of this powerful documentary about the fearless Mississippi sharecropper who became an internationally known civil rights leader. The event includes a live discussion after the film, with its director Joy Davenport, its executive director Monica Land, and Hamer's biographer Kate Larsen, moderated by writer Thato R. Mwosa. Co-sponsored with the Ford Hall Forum.

[Register to attend in person](#) or [to attend via Zoom](#).



Organizing for Change

Please consider encouraging the non-profits in your life to join Our Bodies Ourselves in signing [An Open Letter Rejecting](#)

[Presidential Attacks on Nonprofit Organizations](#). The letter is an initiative of [State Democracy Defenders](#).

Please forward this newsletter to a friend!

*Your accurate and inclusive
guide to health, sexuality, and
reproductive justice*



Our Bodies Ourselves | 73 Tremont Street | Boston, MA 02108 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)