



# OUR BODIES OURSELVES TODAY

AT SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

## Taking Stock December 2024

### A Note from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

At the close of a formidable year, we're glad to have so much to celebrate.

I often crow about our amazing team, and it's all true. Working in solidarity with the Our Bodies Ourselves Today community is one of the joys of my life. Our Bodies Ourselves has always been a collective enterprise, and each and every one of us is a force to behold. In this newsletter we celebrate the outstanding and transformative work of our diverse network of content experts. Their depth of knowledge, experience, vision, and generosity enable OBOS Today to be what we are: a powerful, feminist guide to the complexities of health and sexuality for women and gender-expansive people. We share these accomplishments so you can crow too. It's good to know what good hands we're in-our own!



Our single proudest achievement this year was our redesigned website, with new features, clearer organization, and vastly improved accessibility. You'll find other highlights of 2024 below.

In 2025, our top priorities include plans to build out two new content areas--Breast Cancer and Chronic Illness, two critical issues that disproportionately affect women, and which are enveloped variously in silence, misinformation, and corporate profiteering--along with plans to deepen our partnerships with other feminist and reproductive justice organizations.

To these ends, we are honored to continue the work of our revolutionary sister organization, Breast Cancer Action, starting in 2025. Not only will OBOS Today archive and maintain the history and invaluable resources built by Breast Cancer Action over the past 34 years, but those resources will form the foundation of our new Breast Cancer subject area.

You'll also find news, coming events, our upcoming Growing Older podcast, "Next Chapters," a farewell to a wonderful OBOS Founder, and more about Breast Cancer Action's outsized impact (and why they're known as "the bad girls of breast cancer").

We hope you'll consider supporting this work. A generous donor will double every gift, so your donation will go twice as far. Thank you!

Onward!

Amy Agigian

## Support Our Bodies Ourselves Today!

### Highlights: Our Bodies Ourselves Today in 2024

Thanks to our fantastic and diverse team of volunteers, staff, and donors, we have enjoyed important growth this past year!

This year we:

- Launched our redesigned and much-enhanced Our Bodies Ourselves website,
- Hired a Program Associate who enables us to reach more people and continue to expand our content,
- Added 26 new content experts to our network,
- Increased community engagement through public programming like panels and author talks that bring you Our Bodies Ourselves' expertise and experience first-hand,
- Created an Executive Advisory Board which works to open doors for Our Bodies Ourselves while enhancing our fundraising and networking,
- Made Menopause/Perimenopause and Birth Control into separate, free-standing subject areas to better meet the way our users search for information,
- Continued adding new content weekly to the resources on our site.

[Explore the Our Bodies Ourselves Today website!](#)

## Celebrating Our Content Experts

The Our Bodies Ourselves Today content experts have done so much powerful work in the world this year! We hope you enjoy exploring this sampling of their accomplishments in 2024.

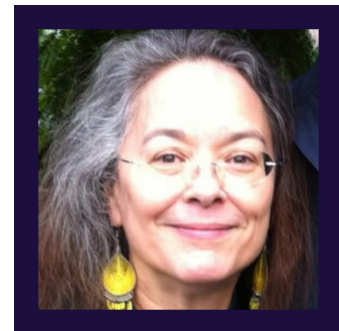
### PUBLICATIONS



Along with her new book on *Queering Reproductive Justice*, Candace Bond-Theriault



Anne Dufault (Gender-Based Violence) co-authored a [study of bystander intervention](#)



Rebecca Owl Morgan (Growing Older) blogged for the American Society on Aging, about the [intergenerational issue](#)

(Abortion and Birth Control), wrote about it in [this article for \*The Nation\*](#).



Ellen Friedrichs (Sexualities, Gender & Relationships) published "[You Just Found Out Your Teen is Having Sex. Now What?](#)" in the *Huffington Post*.

and other sexual violence prevention programs in an era of increasing male supremacist threats.



Dara Lee Lewis (Heart Health) wrote for Harvard Health Publishing about [diagnosing, treating, and living with postural orthostatic tachycardial syndrome \(POTS\)](#).

of Native elders and obesity.



Nadeeka Karunaratne (Gender-Based Violence), co-edited [Thinking Like an Abolitionist to End Sexual Violence in Higher Education](#).

## INTERVIEWS & FEATURES



Kim Hunt (Growing Older), spoke to the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy about [storytelling and LGBTQ+ communities](#).



Taura Taylor (Growing Older) was interviewed about [body image in the first episode of \*Leading Ladies\*](#) on Atlanta's PeachtreeTV, part of the CW network.



On *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, Imani Woody (Growing Older) talked about [turning the home she grew up in into a communal space for LGBTQ elders](#).



Angel Foster (Abortion), cofounder of The Massachusetts Medication Abortion Access Project, was featured in [MS Magazine](#) and the [Boston](#)



Nina Coslov, creator of "Women Living Better" with which we partner on menopause resources, appeared in [The Lancet](#) and -- with Our Bodies



Vermont Folklife interviewed Wilda White (Mental Health) about her days as the [president of the Gay Student Union](#) at University of Vermont in

*Globe* for her work to provide safe, effective, low cost abortion care.

Ourselves co-founder Judy Norsigian -- **in the Washington Post.**

the late 1970s.

## AWARDS



Jen Soriano (Mental Health), has won acclaim including the **Housatonic Nonfiction Award** and the **Memoir Prize from Memoir Magazine** for their book, *Nervous: Essays on Heritage and Healing*.



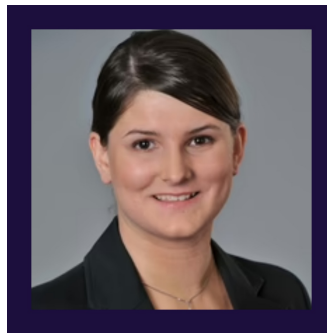
Zareen Farukhi (Heart Health) received a **First Look Award** with funding for her research project, "Association of Menopausal State, Sex, and Incident CVD events with HDL cholesterol, Particle Subfractions, and Function."



Mickey Sperlich (Pregnancy & Birth) was inducted as a **distinguished fellow in the National Academies of Practice in Social Work**. She spoke about her "Survivor Moms" project on the **"Journey to Midwifery" podcast**.



Margaret Johnson (Menstrual Cycle) received the **Roslyn B. Bell Award** from Women's Law Center of Maryland, honoring her research on the intersection of law, policy and menstruation. She was recently a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Technology Sydney, in Australia.



Inga Winkler (Menstrual Cycle) won an **ERC Consolidator Grant** for her research project, "PERIODS: Human Rights in the Menstrual Movement." In addition, her team was selected for a grant from the European Health and Digital Executive Agency for "EUmetriosis: Transforming endometriosis care in Europe."



**Tufts University's Friedman Prize** for global social entrepreneurship went to Sarah Pillone (Menstrual Cycle) and her Isuku team for their work on accessible hygiene in rural Rwanda.



**Sociologists for Women in Society** named Mindy Fried (Growing Older) the recipient of their Feminist Mentoring Award for 2024.



Dior Vargas (Mental Health) is one of the **women change-makers highlighted by Channel Kindness**. She spoke about the connections between mental health and disability on the **podcast "Disability Inclusion: Required."**



Candace Burton (Gender-Based Violence) will use a **grant from the National Institutes of Health** to develop a short course for maternal and child health researchers on incorporating intimate partner violence measures into their work.

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### **BREAST CANCER ACTION**

[www.bcaction.org](http://www.bcaction.org)

#### **Breast Cancer Action Will Live On through Our Bodies Ourselves Today**

Our Bodies Ourselves Today is honored to continue the legacy of BCA, and to use their incomparable work as the basis for materials in our upcoming Breast Cancer subject area. From the BCA letter to its community:

"Against the odds, the **lasting impact** of our small-and-mighty organization endures, and together we have changed the landscape of breast cancer movement and women's health. We did the following and so much more:

- Told the truth about the breast cancer epidemic, even when it was unpopular or uncomfortable;
- Provided one-on-one, evidence-based, unbiased information for thousands of individuals facing deeply difficult treatment decisions;
- Refused to blame and shame women for their individual lifestyle decisions and instead targeted the environmental exposures that increase everyone's risk of the disease;
- Shone a spotlight on the hypocrisy of pinkwashing and forced multimillion dollar corporations to change their behavior;
- Pushed the FDA to uphold high, patient-centered standards when approving new cancer treatments;
- Promoted a precautionary principle that follows the best available science to prevent harm before it occurs;
- And built a community of activists who have shown that together we have the power to change the world."

□ [Learn more about Breast Cancer Action here](#)



January 25, 2025  
9 AM to 3 PM

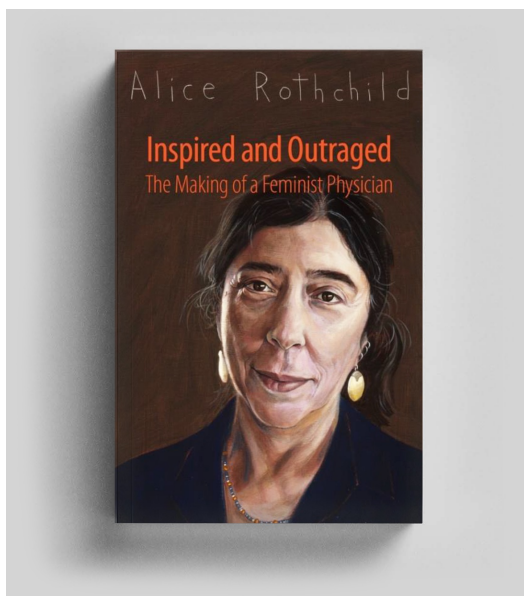
# Menstrual Equity Summit

Join us to hear from activists about the movement to end period poverty statewide and take action for menstrual equity in Massachusetts.



Our Bodies Ourselves Today is co-hosting the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Summit with Massachusetts NOW and the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Coalition. Join us on January 25 at Sargent Hall, Suffolk University, Boston, for panels and workshops throughout the day!

[RSVP for the summit](#)



**Save the Date:**  
Alice Rothchild,  
"Inspired and Outraged"  
February 19, 2025  
5pm reception, 5:30pm program

On February 19, Alice Rothchild will be speaking at Suffolk University's Poetry Center about her intimate memoir, "Inspired and Outraged" and the experiences that contributed to her passion and power as a doctor, an activist, and a woman. More details to follow soon!

## **NEXT CHAPTERS: An Our Bodies Ourselves Today Podcast about Women Growing Older**

We don't talk openly enough or often enough about what it feels like to grow older, especially as women. How our sexuality, our bodies, and our relationships change later in life. How ageism makes everyday necessities like housing, work, and health care more challenging. How growing older intersects with other forms of discrimination — and community — for BIPOC women and LGBTQIA+ women.



Sharing our experiences is essential to busting the myths that surround aging. Hosted by award-winning podcaster, sociologist, and OBOS Today content expert Chair Mindy Fried, NEXT CHAPTERS will bring us the frank conversations we need — with

diverse experts, activists, and everyday people, *and* a feminist perspective, just as Our Bodies Ourselves always has. Each episode's dynamic stories reveal the real joys and struggles of growing older, as we journey through the ever-changing social, economic, and political landscape.

□ [Learn more and support Next Chapters here](#)



## **In Memoriam: Ruth Davidson Bell Alexander**

We must sadly report that Ruth Davidson Bell Alexander, Our Bodies Ourselves co-founder, passed away on December 4th. Ruth was born in North Carolina on December 25, 1943, and grew up in Staten Island (NY) and Los Angeles (CA). She first became an activist while a student at the University of California Berkeley, where she took part in the free speech movement. She married Daniel Bell and relocated to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she completed a master's degree in Education at Harvard.

Pregnant with her first child, Ruth attended the course in "Women and Their Bodies" at MIT, and soon helped create the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. After her divorce, she returned to Los Angeles for a time. She wed her former Berkeley classmate, David Alexander, in 1980. Searching for "a stronger sense of belonging," [as the Ashland News notes in its obituary](#), Ruth and her family moved to Oregon in 1988. Ruth "immersed herself in [the] warmth" of her new community, volunteering, campaigning for local political officials, and serving on the Ashland School Board. She filled her life with deep friendships, family, rescue dogs, math education, and a continued devotion to the women's health movement.

Ruth not only contributed to many editions of "Our Bodies Ourselves" but also co-authored "Changing Bodies, Changing Lives" (1998), aimed at teenagers, and "Ourselves and Our Children," for parents.

"Dear Ruth embraced life with a joyful, common sense attitude. She always affirmed the importance of family and had a strong sense of social justice," remembers co-founder Joan Ditzion. "It was a joy working with her on OBOS."

□ [Read Ruth's biography on our website](#)

*Please share this newsletter with a friend!*

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



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