



## **A year in review – Gray Panthers NYC 2020.**

Gray Panthers NYC has met the serious challenges of 2020 head on. We've worked around the obstacles to create new beginnings and to be contributors to the social fabric of NY, the US, and global initiatives.

For your consideration, we'd like to highlight important moments as well as to invite you to further participate in our ongoing steady growth. While we have devoted much of our attention to establishing a more secure organizational infrastructure, we've also substantively addressed ways to alleviate some of the pain associated with the plague of COVID 19 in NYC.

### **Gray Panthers NYC – Resurgent**

To assure effective advocacy on behalf of older persons, younger persons and all in between, Gray Panthers NYC must evolve in a sustainable way. Here are the steps we have taken to become a better resourced organization with local, national and global reach.

- Strategic Planning is an important component of our effort. As we move to complete a doable three year plan, we have focused on critical issues in line with Gray Panthers' history, approach, and passions.
- Using facilitated roundtables as our guide, we've gathered experts, notable Gray Panthers alumni, advocacy partners and others to help us identify where we can be most effective in the coming years.
  - The brand of Gray Panthers continues to inspire many. Focus on issues of social justice, especially those affecting older persons and affecting marginalized groups, constitutes the core of our mission. Intergenerational advocacy is just one of the unique approaches that Gray Panthers has historically used.
  - Careful planning as well as improved use of volunteer enthusiasm must be part of our plan. Securing resources – funds, human resources, improved recognition, partnerships, digital, hiring employees – is the most important goal for 2021.
  - Many sister organizations are eager to partner with Gray Panthers to create the positive social change we all seek.

- Selecting priorities is critical to our long term success. We have identified 4 key subject matter advocacy areas.
  - Confronting Ageism.
  - Improvement of long term care.
  - Preserving and expanding Social Security and Medicare.
  - Fighting pernicious discrimination, such as systemic racism, age discrimination, ableism, sexism, homophobia, income inequality.

Of these 4 priority areas, our primary focus will address ageism as well as long term care. As we obtain further staff resources, we can tackle more of these issues in depth.
- Given the staggering COVID 19 death tolls in Nursing Homes and Long Term Care residential facilities, we are on the cusp of a Nursing Home Policy Reform initiative reflecting the voice of the people.
  - We've received enthusiastic preliminary support for our leadership in setting a Day of Mourning to honor the 120,000 nursing home residents in 2020 that have been identified from COVID 19. We plan for an April or May 2021 date. To date, Americans have not had the opportunity to cry and to grieve for our horrendous loss. This effort will heighten public awareness of the essential need to reform statutes, regulations, and corporate policies of the industry. This effort can springboard to a more secure basis to effect change.
  - We're recruiting for our first ever part time employee to manage this important work.
  - Partnering with like-minded organizations and activists, we will be able to better set goals and timeframes.
- Bolstering our commitment to confronting the insidious nature of ageism, we're exploring opportunities to expand our visibility and reach by partnering with other effective advocates in the field – locally, nationally, and globally.
- We've adopted our first ever budget. Already, our efforts have secured some initial success, securing initial funding of \$50,000 from the Adler Family Foundation to begin our Nursing Home Policy Reform initiative, using the grassroots activist model (such as Act Up). In addition, an anonymous donor provided an additional \$15,000. We're grateful for this initial support, but further funds are needed to meet our funding raising goal.
  - We invite your continued support to help us secure our funding for 2021. We're just \$25,000 from our \$100,000 goal.

## **Gray Panthers NYC in the age of COVID 19**

The plague of COVID 19 occupies the minds and souls of every American. Stymied initially by the need to quickly shift our response, we were able to benefit NYC affected communities through:

- Creating a well curated and well received online resource for seniors in NYC to thrive while under stay-at-home directives. [www.SeniorStrongNYC.org](http://www.SeniorStrongNYC.org) was designed and staffed by enthusiastic and talented young professionals. We're happy to help. Without a wonderful partnership with the Florence Belsky Foundation, this important resource would not have been created. <https://florencebelskyfoundation.org> Grateful.
- Knowing that residents of the Bronx have suffered mightily, we focused our efforts to address their pain.
  - Gray Panthers sponsored delivery of flowers for every resident of the Citadel Nursing Home, in an often ignored part of the Bronx.
  - For one night in the Bronx, we had pizza delivered to every apartment in the country's only housing development exclusively for grandparents raising grandchildren.
  - Explaining the challenges of grandparents in the pandemic, we were able to create a powerful video on the experience of grandparents addressing educational challenges during this difficult time.

### **Gray Panthers NYC – In the media**

- During 2020, Gray Panthers NYC received positive media attention – New York Daily News, Riverdale Press, Truthout.org, Hawaii National Public Radio, and other outlets. These pieces focused on our COVID 19 response, effecting change in nursing homes, the administration's attempt to limit Social Security benefits, and more.
- The New York Times featured an important opinion piece emphasizing the critical role of Gray Panthers in addressing today's pressing issues. With our emphasis on Gray Panthers resurgence, we expect to live up to these critical aspirations and to create positive social change. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/08/opinion/sunday/gray-panthers-maggie-kuhn.html?searchResultPosition=6> The National Council of Gray Panthers Networks letter to the editor was published by the Times ensuring that our voices would be heard. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/29/opinion/letters/covid-black-children.html?searchResultPosition=10#link-30ebb77a>
- On a lighter note, Gray Panthers NYC was featured on the long running game show, Jeopardy. It was a surprise to us that the Jeopardy clue was: <http://www.graypanthersnyc.org/archive/videos/jeopardy-acknowledges-gray.html>

### **Gray Panthers – respected voice on global issues for change**

Since the 1980's, Gray Panthers has been an accredited NGO by the United Nations. Our participation has been robust.

- At this year's annual 2 week High Level Political Forum, Gray Panthers helped organize the "people's" response to national reports. We also analyzed reports from Member

States to assess their commitment to addressing the concerns of older persons in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, at the High Level Political Forum, Gray Panthers delivered brief remarks to the government of Barbados regarding their commitment to the SDGs.

- Gray Panthers maintains its membership and partnerships with numerous NGOs affecting older persons, including the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, the NGO Committee on Ageing, and numerous others.
- For the past 4 years, Gray Panthers has had a seat on the “Facilitation Group”/ Board of Directors of the organization – Action for Sustainable Development. A4SD is a global coalition of grassroots organizations to strongly encourage governments to prioritize full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Gray Panthers has been instrumental in the creation of an advocacy committee of the European/North American region to monitor how concerns of older persons are addressed. <https://www.wecf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Closing-session.pdf>

## What’s up for 2021

We’re eager for 2021 to be one of Gray Panthers’ most effective years. Here is what we expect to do.

- Complete and begin implementing our first 3 year strategic plan
- Secure at least \$100,000 from January 1 until December 31, 2021
- Implement our Nursing Home Policy Reform initiative, including conducting a Day of Mourning for Nursing Home deaths as well as effectively create partnerships to effect policy change.
- Improve visibility through an enhanced website, increase media attention, create a regular newsletter, use social media, develop and disseminate policy papers, speaking engagements, and more
- Increase Board membership with 5 additional quality candidates
- Hire part time employees
- Solidify partnerships with like-minded organizations and activists

Respectfully submitted,      Jack Kupferman, President      Gray Panthers NYC  
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