

UW-Madison: Celebrates International Women's Day March 3

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 28, 2018

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CONTACT: Emilie Songolo, ensongolo@gmail.com, [608-217-6497](tel:608-217-6497); Lori DiPrete Brown, dipretebrown@wisc.edu, [\(608\) 262-5742](tel:608-262-5742)

MADISON – Women from all walks of life will be celebrated at the fifth annual International Women's Day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 3, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's DeJope Residence Hall. "Press for Progress" is the theme for this year's event, being sponsored by AFRICAide and the UW-Madison 4W (Women & Wellbeing in Wisconsin & the World) Initiative.

The event has grown since it began in 2014 when a small group of 30 women gathered in the fellowship hall of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Madison. Since then, it has grown to attract between 100 and 200 attendees.

The purpose of the event is to bring together women of all backgrounds, nationalities, races, economic levels, ages, languages, religions, educational attainments, and all sexual orientations to celebrate International Women's Day, which is observed globally March 8.

"We want everyone who attends to come prepared to connect with other people, mostly women, who support women's rights, gender equality, and who want to learn about and celebrate the work women are doing to advance these causes in our local community and around the world," says Emilie Songolo, founder of AFRICAide, a grassroots non-profit organization based in Madison that strives to reduce abject poverty in Africa through rural development projects. "We hope everyone comes with the understanding that we are intentionally centering women's voices, ideas, and experiences during the event."

The event highlights and reflects on the work of those who have been engaged in improving conditions for women locally, nationally and internationally, It encourages others to think of ways for reducing gender inequality all over the world. Attendees are encouraged (though not required) to wear purple.

Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, community leader and long-time social justice advocate, and Josephine Kulea, a Kenyan women's and girls' rights campaigner who founded the Samburu Girls Foundation, are the featured speakers. The day will start with a global marketplace, cultural performances and a Women's Walk Around the World.

"I am so proud to be co-sponsoring this event and to be part of this community of women," says Lori DiPrete Brown, director of 4W. "When we consider the challenges that we are facing as a society, coming together on International Women's Day to share our stories and draw on our collective strength is important, joyful, and very necessary."

Tickets for the event are \$7.50. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-womens-day-2018--press-for-progress-tickets-41794436284>.