TAKE ROOT:
RED STATE PERSPECTIVES ON REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE
February 24-25, 2012

Hosted by
Women’s and Gender Studies Program,
University of Oklahoma

in collaboration with
Abortion Access Project
Center for Social Justice
Civil Liberties and Public Policy at Hampshire College
National Advocates for Pregnant Women
Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice
Student Organizers Collective

sponsored by
Abortion Access Project
Gender and Women’s Studies, Oklahoma State University
Ms. Foundation
National Advocates for Pregnant Women
Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice
Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma
Trust Women
TWIST Fund
Women’s and Gender Studies Program, OU
Friday, February 24, 2012

6-6:45 p.m.  Registration and check in

7-8 p.m.  Breakout session one - participants may choose one of three options
Option One: Media for Social Change
Activists, advocates and researchers share ideas and lead a discussion about using media as a tool for social change.
Panelists: Carol Mason, Amina Benalioulhaj, Zermarie Deacon, Melissa Moore
Room A4

Option Two: Change the World and Eat Too: Professional Development for Activists
Panelists will tell their stories and share tips on how to get a job as an activist or advocate in this region. This panel will also address birth justice, doula training options, and midwifery.
Panelists: Sera Bonds, Christine Cleary, Omare Ogisi
Room A5

Option Three: DIY Organizing
Activists will facilitate a discussion on how to organize around issues in communities with less access to funding and other resources. Topics include founding new community groups, establishing service hotlines, fundraising, grant writing, and press releases.
Panelists: Julie Burkhart, Judie Matthews, Kendell Nash, Linda Robinson, Atlee Parks Breland
Room A6

8-10 p.m.  Welcoming Reception
Welcome-Jill Irvine, Director of Women's and Gender Studies, OU
Student Organizers Collective and emcee Akira Céspedes Pérez
Conference Room

*Panelists listed in italics are the moderator for the session.
Saturday, February 25, 2012

8:30-9 a.m.  
Registration and check in

9-9:50 a.m.  
Coffee and Welcome  
Jill Irvine with emcee Akira Céspedes Pérez  
History of Red State Activism  
Equal Rights Amendment activist Becky Patten  
So...What IS Reproductive Justice?  
Video by Student Organizers Collective  
Conference Room

9:50-10 a.m.  
Break

10-11:25 a.m.  
Panel One - Criminalizing Bodies in Red States: How it’s Affecting you  
Current regional challenges in reproductive justice movements, activism, and access;  
including birth justice, laws, campus policies, and criminalizing reproduction. Reports on  
misinformation, practices, and ideals related to birth, labor, and delivery. Reports on birth  
control access in OK (plan B, abortion info, IUD, etc.)  
Panelists: Lynn Paltrow, Wyndi Anderson, Tamya Cox, Barbara Santee  
Conference Room

11:30-12:30  
Panel Two - Perspectives and Priorities from Communities of Colors  
Activists will discuss how different racial perspectives affect organizing priorities and the  
obstacles that people of color are faced with when working in predominately white  
spaces.  
Panelists: Roksana Alavi, Tommy Chesbro, Shanna Heap-of-Birds, Omare Ogisi  
Conference Room

12:30-1:30 p.m.  
Lunch

1:30-2:30 p.m.  
Breakout session two - participants may choose one of three options  
Option One: Religion and the Reproductive Justice Movement  
Panelists will explain how religion isn’t in opposition to the tenets of the reproductive  
justice movement.  
Panelists: Kelly Jennings, Carmen White Janak, Arielle Foldoe, Carly Palans  
Room A4

Option Two: Speaking Up, Speaking Out: Organizing Against Intimate Partner  
Violence and Sexual Assault  
A discussion of strategies and successes on raising awareness and combating intimate  
partner violence and sexual assault. This panel will include a guided discussion of how to  
create alliances with law enforcement and school administration and keeping our  
communities safe.  
Panelists: Jen Cox, Deb Stanaland, Shannon Stately, Kristy Stewart, Jordan Ward  
Room A5

Option Three: From Local to Global: A conversation about sustainability and  
environmental justice  
The need for justice-centered environmental policy, what we can change in our daily lives,  
and the many places that reproductive justice and environmental activism connect.  
Panelists: Catherine Hobbs, Kara Joy McKee, Elizabeth Rucker, Rachel Vaughn  
Room A6

2:30-2:45 p.m.  
Break

2:45-3:45 p.m.  
Panel Three - Allies, Adversaries, and Bystanders: Recognizing privilege  
White privilege, class privilege, straight privilege, regional privilege and other forms of  
privilege that shape our activism will be addressed.  
Panelists: Wyndi Anderson, Sandra Criswell, R.E. Davis, Lisa Frey, Mana Tahaie  
Conference Room
Saturday, Continued

3:45-4:45 p.m.  so....what do we do now? - Conference participants will break off into small groups by state or locality in order to discuss action ideas, and making commitments to build the reproductive justice infrastructure in the state and the region. Group discussions will be facilitated by conference moderators.
Conference Room

4:45-5:15 p.m.  Report Out - Participants will report out to the full conference about action ideas, and reflection from the conference.
Conference Room

5:30 -7:30 p.m.  Closing Reception
Closing Remarks-Sera Bonds, Abortion Access Project
Presentation of the Barbara Santee Student Activism Award
Conference Room

Acknowledgements

• Abortion Access Project
• Center for Social Justice
• Civil Liberties and Public Policy, Hampshire College
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• Ms. Foundation
• National Advocates for Pregnant Women
• Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice
• Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice
• Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma
• Student Organizers Collective
• Trust Women
• TWIST Fund
• Women's and Gender Studies Program, OU
• Sera Bonds, Abortion Access Project
• Lynn Paltrow and Allison Korn, National Advocates for Pregnant Women
• Carol Mason, University of Kentucky
• Sandra Criswell, OK4RJ
• Julie Burkhart and Molly Oakley-Rattler, Trust Women
• Martha Skeeters and JoAnna Wall, OCRJ
• Jordan Ward, Katie Knutter, Elly Roberts, and the members of Student Organizers Collective
• Student workers: Milo Rhodes and Carly Palans
• Lu Bailey, Director of Gender and Women's Studies at OSU
• Jen Macken, Coordinator of Women's and LGBT Affairs at OSU
• Stephanie Heck, former Program Coordinator of the Center for Social Justice
• Caitlin Campbell, Program Coordinator of the Center for Social Justice
• Jill Irvine, Director of Women's and Gender Studies
• Barbara Houser, Managerial Associate of Women's and Gender Studies
• Kelsey McMurray
• Barbara Santee
• Julia Ehrhardt
• Joey Rodriguez, Conference Services
• OU Catering

THANK YOU!

TAKE ROOT
The Women’s and Gender Studies Program at OU is an interdisciplinary program that seeks to enhance students’ knowledge of gender roles and gender relations across cultures and history. Women’s and Gender Studies courses investigate the intersection of gender and such diverse phenomena as politics, religion, society, economics, war, communication, music, art, family life, and popular culture. Our 68 faculty members come from numerous departments across the university. Women’s and Gender Studies students learn a variety of marketable skills including critical thinking, writing, public speaking, organization, conflict resolution, diversity training and project design. The interdisciplinary and global perspective students gain in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program will enable them to achieve their highest potential in their chosen field of study and as citizens of the global community. Women’s and Gender Studies majors and minors will be well-prepared and sought after for work in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, social help agencies, human rights advocacy, victim’s advocacy as well as graduate study in law, medicine, human relations, education, business, information science, communications, fine arts, public health or academic research.

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The Center for Social Justice is an initiative of the Women’s Studies Program to promote gender justice, equality, tolerance, and human rights through local and global engagement. As a discipline, Women and Gender Studies critically examines how institutions and social organizations that seem natural are often structured to hide and perpetuate gender, class, and racial inequality. The Center adopts this feminist perspective, recognizing that while questions of social justice concern all human beings, women and children are harmed disproportionately when it comes to the allocation of political power and economic resources.

Our programs include the Social Justice Minor, Activist-in-Residence Program, Engaged Research, Internships, Service Learning, Social Justice Awards, Social Justice Events, and Activism.

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Conference Presenters

**Emcee** A native Puerto Rican, Akira Céspedes Pérez has worked with youth and women’s empowerment organizations in New Orleans, Massachusetts, and Puerto Rico. She currently continues her endeavors advocating for social justice as a liaison for CLPP and as an educator with Teach For America in Tulsa, OK.

**Becky Patten** is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and of Chicago Law School. She has practiced law in Norman for over thirty years and has been involved in local political activities for longer than that, including work in campaigns for candidates supporting the Equal Rights Amendment and reproductive choice. She has served on the boards of the Oklahoma Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma, Juvenile Services, Inc. (now Center for Children and Families).

**Media for Social Change**

**Amina Benalioulhaj** will graduate this Spring from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor’s degree in Women’s and Gender Studies and a minor in African American Studies. She is the producer, director and editor of Women Behind Bars: The Voices of Oklahoma’s Incarcerated Women and Their Children. Amina began shooting the documentary as part of her coursework for an internship with the Women’s and Gender Studies Department at the University of Oklahoma.

**Zermarie Deacon**, PhD, researches cross-cultural interpretations of health and the encouragement of health and wellbeing in diverse communities. She is particularly interested in factors that support wellness in the face of significant adversity. She has prior experience with three Photovoice projects.

**Carol Mason**, PhD, is the author of Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro-life Politics (Cornell University Press, 2002). As former director of Gender and Women’s studies at Oklahoma State University, she planned and hosted the first regional workshop on “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Reproductive and Sexual Health,” from which Take Root has evolved. She is currently professor of Gender and Women’s Studies at University of Kentucky and serves on the board of directors of NAPW.

**Melissa Moore** currently serves as a Field Consultant with the South Carolina Access Initiative (SCAI), where she works to expand access to comprehensive reproductive health services in the state. She is also the Program Director for We Are Family, where she advances youth leadership development projects and support services for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, and Intersex (GLBTQQAI) youth. She has worked toward building a more inclusive South Carolina through her work as Executive Assistant with Alliance For Full Acceptance and Field Director with South Carolina Equality.

**Change the World and Eat Too: Professional Development for Activists**

**Sera Bonds**, MPH, is a social justice, grassroots activist. Her community organizing background ranges from reproductive rights to violence against women, to welfare and poverty issues to anti-war campaigns. She is the current Senior Director of the Least Access States Initiative, leading Abortion Access Project’s field-based efforts to increase the accessibility of safe abortion care in selected “least access” states. She also serves as a member of AAP’s management team.

**Christine Cleary** is Certified as a Childbirth Educator(ICCE), Doula(DONA), Doula trainer (DONA) and Breast-feeding educator(CBE). During those years she has had the privilege of participating in more than 400 labors and births. Having taught hospital-based classes for years, Chris felt the need to offer parents more, and decided to start her own birth education organization. Birth Matters offers classes to empower and enable families to make the best choices for themselves for the labor and delivery of their baby.

**Omare Ogisi**, MPH, works with the Oklahoma Health Equity Initiative (OKHEI) allowing her to wear several different hats including the Miscarriage Management Training Initiative and Least Access States Initiative where she works to increase accurate referrals in women’s health, while working on projects to increase adolescent access to contraceptive services.
Conference Presenters

**DIY Organizing**

**Julie Burkhart** first held the position of Chair for the Wichita Choice Alliance, where she lead the charge against the anti-choice organizations that attempted to “finish the job” of closing Dr. Tiller's Women’s Health Care Services during the 2001 Summer of Mercy Renewal. Julie then served as spokesperson for the Clinic. In 2002, Julie became CEO of ProKanDo, the largest political action committee in Kansas, founded by Dr. Tiller. Julie now carries Dr. Tiller’s vision for reproductive rights as the Founder and Executive Director of Trust Women PAC.

**Judith Matthews** is a Hotline Coordinator for the Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice Hotline, a partnership with Abortion Access Project’s Least State Access Initiative Project. She is an alumna of the University of Oklahoma.

**Kendell Nash** is the director at the Kentucky Health Justice Network, which seeks to create broad-base and inclusive participation in the health justice movement in Kentucky and to increase and improve access, quality, and scope of accurate and culturally-relevant health information and services, particularly those relating to reproductive health. Kendell previously worked as the development director of the ACLU of Kentucky. Kendell is a graduate of the Master of Public Administration program at the University of Kentucky.

**Linda Robinson** is a Family Nurse Practitioner who uses innovative techniques to help educate young people and adults about love, sex, and the power of their “baby-making machines”. She has replaced the mainstream fear-based approach with a broader conversation that addresses human sexuality in a more realistic and balanced way, using humor and concrete analogies.

**Atlee Parks Breland** founded Parents Against Personhood in 2011 to advocate against personhood amendments and legislation nationwide, and was a prominent figure in the successful campaign against Mississippi’s Initiative 26. She is a native Mississippian, a computer programmer, a mother of three, and a 1998 OU graduate.

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**Criminalizing Bodies in Red States: How it’s Affecting You**

**Wyndi Anderson** currently works as the Senior Director of Programs for the Abortion Access Project where her work focuses on increasing access to abortion in rural areas and supporting efforts to allow advanced practice clinicians offer abortion services.

**Tamya Cox** graduated from Oklahoma State University with a B.A. in Journalism with a Public Relations option. In 2006, she received her J.D. from the Oklahoma City University School of Law. After law school, she began working at the ACLU of Oklahoma as the legislative counsel. In 2012, Cox was hired as the Staff Attorney & Lobbyist for Planned Parenthood of the Heartland.

**Lynn Paltrow**, J.D., is the Founder and Executive Director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women (“NAPW”). Ms. Paltrow combines legal advocacy with grassroots and national organizing and public education to secure the human and civil rights, health and welfare of all women, focusing particularly on pregnant and parenting women, and those who are most vulnerable.

**Barbara Santee**, PhD, is a native Tulsan who founded the first Pro—Choice group in Oklahoma. In 1970, three years before Roe, she defied the law by establishing an "underground railroad" to get Oklahoma women to safe abortions. She holds a Ph.D from Columbia University and three Masters degrees, all in the area of women’s reproductive health.
Conference Presenters

**Perspectives and Priorities from Communities of Colors**

**Roksana Alavi** teaches Women's and Gender Studies and Liberal Studies at the University of OK. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Kansas in 2008. Her focus of research is oppression and race. Her most recent activism work involves bringing awareness about the issue of sex trafficking.

**Tommy Chesbro** is a Certified Sexuality Educator with the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists. He is the owner of Chesbro Consulting, LLC. Mr. Chesbro has given at least two thousand workshops or lectures on topics such as reproductive health, human sexuality, sexually transmitted infections, healthy relationships, diversity, and living with HIV.

**Shanna Ketchum-Heap of Birds** is a Navajo scholar that lectures nationally and internationally about contemporary issues in Native American art. Ketchum-Heap of Birds also teaches a class titled “Gender and Sexuality in Native North America” at the University of Oklahoma in the Native Studies Program.

**Omare Ogisi** (see Change the World and Eat Too: Professional Development for Activists)

**Religion and the Reproductive Justice Movement**

**Arielle Foldoe** is a Philosophy and Anthropology junior at the University of Central Oklahoma. A queer woman of color, she is also an organizer for Norman Queer Alliance, Student Organizing Collective, and Students for a Democratic Society.

Through **Rev. Carmen White Janak**'s involvement with local ministries and her current role as Facilitator of The Power of Connection Center for Living, Carmen's ministry has centered on empowering women to be their greatest selves. Academically, Carmen has experience lecturing in Women's Studies and Racial issues at the collegiate. She has also served on numerous local boards and coalitions such as Tulsa Interfaith Association.

**Kelly Jennings** is Co-President of the Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Pro-choice advocate since college in the ‘60’s, she became active in OKRCRC after retiring as a public librarian for 40 years in Tulsa and Kansas City, MO.

**Carly Palans** is a Women's and Gender Studies major and Judaic studies minor at OU from St. Louis, Missouri. She is a member of the Student Organizer's Collective and Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice, and is also the OU Hillel student board president.
Conference Presenters

Speaking Up, Speaking Out: Organizing Against Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault

**Jennifer Cox** is a Volunteer Coordinator for the Oklahoma Abortion Support Network and Hotline, a collaborative project with Abortion Access Project (AAP) and Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice (OK4RJ). Jen also works with the Women's Outreach Center on LGBTQ student outreach.

**Deb Stanaland** is the Chief Support Services Officer for the YWCA Oklahoma City. She is a Certified Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Professional (CDSVRP) and holds a Professional Certificate in Victim Services. Deb has worked in the field of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for sixteen years. She taught as an Adjunct Instructor in the Crime Victim/Survivor Services Program at OSU - OKC Campus for six years, teaching courses in Victimology, Rape and Sexual Assaults, Domestic and Family Violence, Crisis Intervention and Crisis Services. She is frequently called to testify as an Expert Witness in both Civil and Criminal Domestic Violence cases and currently serves as one of the three, Governor appointed, members of the Oklahoma State Crime Victims Compensation Board.

**Shannon Stately** is the Associate Director of the South Carolina Access Initiative (SCAI), and has also worked with MMTI for a year. She is now a consultant for AAP/SCAI. Shannon is a social worker who has worked extensively with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Shannon also provides consulting services to the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, among others.

**Kristy Stewart** is the Coordinator of Sexual Violence Services and Assistant Director at Women's Resource Center in Norman, OK, having served as a women's advocate since 1984. Kristy is actively involved in the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, especially in the area of legislative initiative and technology development. Kristy led her agency’s efforts in developing a model rape crisis center on the campus of Women's Resource Center that has set the standard for sexual assault services in Oklahoma.

**Jordan Ward** is a junior at the University of Oklahoma majoring in MDS focusing in Legal Ethics and Social Issues. She is president of the Student Organizers Collective, founder of the American Sign Language Student Association, and spearheaded a campaign to change the sexual assault policy at the University of Oklahoma.

From Local to Global: A Conversation about Sustainability and Environmental Justice

**Catherine Hobbs**, PhD, is professor of English rhetoric, composition, and literacy at OU. She has published on the history of rhetoric and women's writing and speaking. Group leader of Citizens Climate Lobby-OK, she is beginning a project on climate change rhetoric.

**Kara Joy McKee**'s work with groups such as the Oklahoma Food Cooperative, Groove Fest Human Rights Music Festival, the Oklahoma Sustainability Network, Norman Music Fest and Food and Shelter for Friends earned her the 2011 Norman Human Rights Award. Much of Kara Joy's current work focuses on revitalizing Oklahoma City through urban agriculture and increasing access to great local food for all Oklahomans.

**Elizabeth Rucker** has been a student organizer with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) for three years. She studies the social-ecological impacts of neoliberal capitalist development. Plus, she’s always up for discussing the racial politics of Lord of the Rings.

**Rachel Vaughn** holds a PhD in American Studies, and graduate certificate in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies from the University of Kansas. She is currently a visiting dissertation fellow in the Oklahoma State University Gender & Women's Studies Program, where she teaches courses in Transnational Women's Studies, Gender & Food.
Conference Presenters

Allies, Adversaries, and Bystanders: Recognizing Privilege

**Wyndi Anderson** (see Criminalizing Bodies in Red States: How it's Affecting You)

**Sandra Criswell** is the Executive Director of Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice, where she also serves as the Coordinator for the Oklahoma Abortion Support Network and Hotline, a collaboration between OK4RJ and The Abortion Access Project’s Least State Access Initiative Project. She is a proud OU English and Women's and Gender Studies alum and a founding member of the organization formerly known as WGSSA (now Student Organizer's Collective).

**R.E. Davis** is an adjunct instructor in the Women's and Gender Studies Program at the University of Oklahoma. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication. He currently teaches two regular classes Men and Masculinity and Queer Theory. Mr. Davis has conducted research internationally in France, Spain, and Argentina. He is the founder of the Rural Queer Research Task Force and a co-founder of the Alternative Media Global Project.

**Lisa Frey**, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and an affiliate faculty member in the Women's and Gender Studies program at the University of Oklahoma (OU). She is also the Director of the Counseling Psychology Training Clinic. Her research focuses on the topics of at-risk girls, including issues related to sexuality, sexual abuse, and gender and sexual identity and sociocultural influences on gender role and relational development. In 2010 Dr. Frey received the Social Justice Award, which is presented by OU’s Center for Social Justice (CSJ).

**Mana Tahaie**’s programs include training and consulting, racial caucus groups, community collaborations, and advocacy. Previously, Mana served as Deputy Director of Oklahomans for Equality, Tulsa's LGBT organization, and convened the Say No to Hate Coalition. She serves on the boards of TU United Campus Ministry, TU Women’s & Gender Studies, and Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training.
DIRT CHOIR is the radiant collaboration of four powerful women artists, Lauren Zuniga, Amy Everhart, Angel Nafis, and Shira Erlichman. A performance poetry canoe that braves the wild terrain of racial identity, gender expression, family dynamics, Reproductive rights and mental health. This whimsical feast unites the dreamy northwest the gritty east coast and the crisp, flat south. Nationally acclaimed for their poetry, each of these women brings multi-faceted talent to this project, stitching music, visual art and theatre to each patch of poem. A dirt choir show is like being kidnapped to be celebrated. It is pure gold. A true song. Altogether honest, strange and mighty.

Visit: http://dirtchoir.com

Lauren Zuniga is a nationally touring poet, teaching artist and emerging activist who believes in dreaming global and shouting local. In 2010, she challenged the Oklahoma legislature with an evocative video poem that received national attention and made the governor cry. Along with stunning hate mail, she was nominated for State Poet Laureate, performed at the prestigious TEDx conference and has since shared stages with top business leaders, state officials and rock stars.

Amy Everhart has been called one of “America’s most refreshing Poetic Voices”, a whirling-dervish of a performer whose voice sucker punched itself into the National Consciousness when she made history in Berkeley California by being the first Woman to ever win the Individual World Poetry Slam 2009, the most highly coveted title in United States performance poetry. Amy Everhart has been published in multiple Denver poetry anthologies and is the Author of 3 Chapbooks, (In Truth, Exchanging Guilty Pleasures For Honesty, and Great, Now Everyone has Mad Cow), as well as one CD entitled I’d Rather Be.

Shira Erlichman is a nationally acclaimed poet, musician and artist. Her poetry has been featured in NARAL’s National Pro-Choice campaign Free.Will.Power, as well as set to motion by the dancers of the Sound Dance Company. Her award-winning music has appeared in multiple independent films, NPR and national TV. She has shared stages with Ani Difranco, TuNe-YaRds and Coco Rosie. She has been independently recording and releasing her records for over 10 years. Originally from Brookline MA, she now lives in Brooklyn NY in an indoor treehouse.

Angel Nafis is an Ann Arbor, Michigan native where she resided as the VOLUME youth poetry projects Poet in Residence at the Neutral Zone Teen Center for two years. She represented Ann Arbor in the Brave New Voices festival two years in a row as a member of the Youth Slam Team which performed on the final stages at the San Francisco Opera House and the Apollo Theater in Harlem. In 2011 she represented the LouderArts poetry project at both the Women of the World Poetry Slam and the National Poetry Slam. She currently curates and hosts a poetry reading series in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. She’s never leaving Brooklyn.