

Bio for guest participants at CUPE Ontario's 2018 Women's Conference

Suze Morrison – Survivor, activist and now Member of Provincial Parliament

Suze has overcome significant adversity to get to where she is today. Poverty, precarious housing, violence, and learning how to understand her identity as a woman with both settler and Indigenous heritage are all critical parts of how she approaches developing policy that works to improve lives and communities.

Her career has focused on amplifying people's voices and creating more equitable communities. Up until her election as the new NDP MPP for the riding of Toronto Centre, Suze worked in the Indigenous non-profit sector to improve the lives of urban Indigenous people.

In her new role as the Official Opposition Critic for Housing & Women's Issues, she hopes to continue to make her city and province safer, more inclusive places to live with a focus on affordability, health, precarious work, and equity.

Yasmin Rajabi – Advocate, facilitator and leader with the Young Women's Leadership Network

Yasmin Rajabi is a community organizer who builds the leadership capacity of young people to mobilize around civic challenges. As City of Toronto Protégée and co-founder of the Young Women's Leadership Network she worked to engage and advocate for young women and girls' involvement in politics.

While completing her degree in Public Policy and City Studies, Yasmin established a food centre at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Yasmin currently works at the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship, experimenting with innovative tools to engage citizens and communities in the development of public sector projects.

Sarah Jama – Community organizer, disability rights activist and anti-racism consultant

Sarah Jama is the co-founder of the Disability Justice Network of Ontario. She is a member of the board for the Hamilton Transit Riders Union and is working with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board to create curriculum around combating anti-black racism.

Sarah is a program coordinator with the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and she has just come off of co-managing the successful municipal campaign of the new city's new Councillor Nrinder Nann. And because she never actually rests, she has also given over a hundred lectures, presentations, and keynotes on issues surrounding leadership, diversity and justice.

Lyra Evans – Trans rights activist and newly elected Trustee with the Ottawa District School Board

Lyra is Canada's first openly transgender school trustee – elected this past October in Ottawa.

Coming out in high-school was not easy – with no visible role models in her life Lyra didn't even have the language at the time to explain who she was. At first, she struggled. Lyra became homeless, couch surfing and living on the street for several years. Finding her way to transitional housing set her on a path to volunteering and all that has come since.

At the age of 26, Lyra has already made a mark as a housing activist, community organizer and LGBTQ activist, and in her new role as School Trustee she can be counted on to be a fierce advocate for students.

Judy Rebick – Lifelong leader in Canada's feminist movement, writer, journalist, political activist, and co-founder of Rabble.ca

Judy first came to prominence in the fight to legalize abortion in the 1980, she was the president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in the 1990's and is a high-profile journalist and media commentator.

Her latest book is a riveting memoir that tells the story of the eleven personalities she developed in order to help her cope with, and survive, childhood sexual abuse. The book chronicles her struggles with depression; meeting the eleven personalities; uncovering her repressed memories of childhood sexual abuse; and her journey through therapy - all while leading high-profile national struggles against a Conservative government.

Niki Ashton – Member of Parliament and founder of Our Movement campaign school for women, femmes and non-binary progressive political candidates and organizers

Niki has been a key member of the federal NDP caucus since 2008, representing the riding of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski in northern Manitoba. She has twice run for the leadership of the party with campaigns focused on engaging more youth in the Party. She has served as NDP critic for Aboriginal Affairs, Status of Women, Post-Secondary Education and Youth, and is currently the critic for Jobs, Employment and Workforce Development.