

# FUTURE FIRST 2014 WOMEN'S CONGRESS SUMMARY AND GOING FORWARD

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## Answering a Call from Future Generations

“I dreamt that I was standing before the Tree of Life, charged with keeping it alive. One branch was already dead. I scanned the horizon for those I knew who were coming to tend it with me. I dreamed once that the scales of Justice were being held by the Tree of Life. I do this work with the Women’s Congress and Future First because I hope to look future generations in the eye and say we did everything we could to give you a sporting chance. We did everything to tend the Tree of Life on your behalf.”

– Carolyn Raffensperger

The old horse barn, now part of a beautiful conference center, has been transformed. Several shades of blue chiffon drape the ceiling. The light is low and soft, creating the sense of being under water or an open sky at dusk. At each corner of the room, an Earth Guardian stands – art structures 10 feet tall, anthropomorphic representations of Earth, fire, water, and air. Nearly 500 participants sit at circular tables, facing the front of the room. Returning their gaze is a large Earth goddess, literally alive with the flowers, mosses and other vegetation that cover her frame. The room is beautiful and tranquil—a perfect setting for the otherwise rigorous, at times jarring, work that will take place over the next three days. Ann Manning, Initiative Director of the second Women’s Congress for Future Generations welcomes participants with a simple, powerful evocation:

### *Mitakuye Oyasin (All Are Related)*

Many indigenous wisdom teachers, including Elder Sharon Day who spoke at the Opening and Closing of the 2014 Women’s Congress, reminds us it is time for our generation to take responsibility, to accept our duty, to look after all life. When the Lakota end their prayers with Mitakuye Oyasin (All Are Related) it’s a reminder of the interconnectedness of all life. We are all related– all people, the trees, the water, the fish. Everything in life is part of one family.

### *We Withdraw Our Consent...*

...And with those four words, a common cause is outlined: we converge today around withdrawing our consent to a toxic future. We *withdraw our consent* to the failed experiment that we've run for a couple of hundred years; an economic model that treats those things that are critical for human and ecological survival as unlimited resources to be consumed and discarded. We *give our consent* to the things that fulfill our responsibility to our home the Earth, and to future generations.

### **The Responsibilities of Present Generations**

The environmental issues we face today are indicators of the kind of legacy we as future ancestors are bequeathing. What are the sacred rights of future generations and the responsibilities of those present? What does reclaiming the power of women look like, and how might women organize on behalf of future generations in ways that transcend traditional strategies of action and resistance? How do we honor, embody, and translate these new forms into direct political and social action? What does it mean to create communities of meaning, tune into the spirit, evoke the sacred? What happens when the rights of the voiceless are evoked? What place do ideas like this have in spaces for science, law, and policy?

## The Rights of Future Generations

In order to galvanize the emerging movement for the rights of future generations, SEHN (and a whole host of incredible women and men – see the Addendum for more on our Backstory and Thank You’s) developed a Women’s Congress for Future Generations. At both the 2012 and 2014 gatherings, hundreds of diverse participants representing constituencies far beyond traditional environmentalism, gathered to examine how we can collectively shift from a culture based on dominance and exploitation of resources, to one focused on well-being, partnership, and relatedness to all beings. We addressed the limitations of our current legal system, and identified frameworks—such as the Precautionary Principle; the Public Trust theory of government; Free, Prior and Informed Consent; and the law of the Commons—that can move us past those limitations.

A Women’s Congress for Future Generations is what can be created when a group of individuals choose to fully face the consequences of our actions today that threaten the health and wellbeing of the planet and future generations. A Women’s Congress is what can be imagined when we ask, not “how can we make these existing tools work”, but “what new tools are necessary for our generation to step fully into our moral and ethical responsibility to help protect the planet for our children today and for future generations?” At a Women’s Congress for future generations, the pragmatic, the intellectual and the mythic are bound together because in no other way can our era be met head on.

*Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front*  
By Wendell Berry

...Ask yourself: Will this satisfy  
a woman satisfied to bear a child?  
Will this disturb the sleep  
of a woman near to giving birth?  
Go with your love to the fields.  
Lie easy in the shade. Rest your head  
in her lap. Swear allegiance  
to what is nighest your thoughts.  
As soon as the generals and the politicians  
can predict the motions of your mind,  
lose it. Leave it as a sign  
to mark the false trail, the way  
you didn’t go. Be like the fox  
who makes more tracks than necessary,  
some in the wrong direction.  
Practice resurrection.

At the Future First 2014 Women’s Congress for Future Generations speakers and participants engage in a dialogue unbounded by traditional ways of telling the environmental story. Age-old, devastating narratives about our entangled environmental and social injustices were paired with fierce resolve, imagination, and dreaming. Evoking what is mythic or intangible is necessary at this time; a direct response to the recognition that existing principles, laws, narratives are inadequate for the issues we face. We must weave a new story for humanity, one that lives in harmony with Earth and all its species.

## Women Rising in the Environmental Movement

“In our political ecology, the whole register of women's voices is missing. We are giving a chance for women's voices to be raised.” - Carolyn Raffensperger

A Women’s Congress is predicated on the recognition that future generations have inalienable rights. Future Generations have the inalienable right to an uncompromised existence, and yet these rights are rarely factored into decisions about how we plan and organize our society today. Women’s bodies are the first environments, the sanctuaries, for future generations. Women’s bodies also reflect and transmit the toxic state of our collective environment. Women have a unique responsibility, along with men, to uphold the rights of future generations.

But the environmental movement has been no different than any other social sphere: women are missing from places of leadership. Women’s voices are relatively absent in political arenas and decision-making tables for critical issues like climate change, sustainability, agriculture, and consumerism. While this age-old schism persists, women are doing unique and powerful work around the world and in this country; women are rising up, taking on responsibility and leadership to ensure a healthy and whole environment.

Ilene Evans, story teller and civil rights historian with *Voices from the Earth*, tells about the time after the Civil War when women were unable to vote or own property. They had little political power. At a time when the nation was still ambivalent about freedom, women were unequivocal. They controlled the kitchen and the dinner table. Every child at their table had the right to live, grow, and be whole people. Then as now, we can see that the very soul of the nation was being determined in every lowly domestic environ. Looking back, somehow they knew the soul of the nation was at stake after the War. They knew that a child needed to eat regardless of their color and skin tone, regardless of who their father was. Ilene said that the time has come again. The soul of the nation is at stake.

Our current cultural narrative seems to be that government’s primary responsibility is to foster the economy. We now see clearly that to solely focus on private property and the free market leads to failed theories of government. We are now challenged to imagine and create a caring economy along with new ways of thinking about the role of government. The scale and scope of the environmental issues facing our Earth challenge our concepts of time, the resilience of ecosystems, and how we think about future generations. Climate change, dirty energy development (hydraulic fracturing, mountaintop removal, tar sands strip mining) nuclear accidents, train derailments, leaky pipelines and toxic waste, and the resulting species extinction are no longer our legacy to the 7th generation, but spread across time from the current generation to reach as far as the 10,000th generation.

### *Caring Economy*

We need a new definition of the economy — one that adequately includes the contributions women make. It will set us on a path to a healthier, more robust economic future. **Riane Eisler** challenged us to see that caring for people and the planet is what truly sustains life.

*We are not bound to continue that legacy.*

And so women are moving into place, joining their voices together to claim a healthy future for their children and grandchildren. A Women's Congress for Future Generations was borne out of a deep upwelling, a need to come together, not because we were demanding equal time but because women have unique responsibilities for future generations and the world around them. As half of the world's voice, women bring a unique wisdom and the capacity to think and find new approaches to the menu of solutions available. We could map a path to a different future than the gray, overheated, polluted future that seems to lie ahead. We could claim the soul of the nation.

“We have been called to become a part of a conversation, a great feast of soul, that has been going on for as long as there have been storytellers. It has been calling us from the moment we were born. Somehow, even in the first moments of life, we sensed some part of the conversation, sensed the meanings with which it is concerned. And some deep part of us knew we must be a part of it too. Every fiber of our being, then and now, demands it.”

- Christina Donnell, author, shaman, dreamer

*A Backstory: “Everything that Rises Must Converge”\**

The inaugural Women’s Congress for Future Generations was organized by a group of women spread across the United States, working, each in her own way, from home, in media, on the frontlines and on computers, all, in some capacity, on behalf of future generations. We worked on issues of mines, nuclear legacies, persistent pollution, law, precautionary policy, chemical reform, climate justice, environmental justice, social justice, and public health, all-the-while mentoring, mothering, grand- mothering, organizing or holding down jobs. Some of us had restless ideas or captivating dreams and visions, but limited capacity to move those ideas into the world, or to translate them into action. Some had incredible capacity to act, but yearned to connect with fresh ideas. Some were already out there, converting ideas into change, and wanted to expand her influence and reach.

The vision of women launching a civil rights movements for future generations exhibited an immediate gravitational force, once Carolyn Raffensperger (IA), Executive Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network, spoke it into being at a breakfast convened by visionary, Dr. Joanna Macy (CA), in the spring of 2011. Over the six months that followed, that idea pulled in young leaders from Peaceful Uprising, including its Director, Henia Belalia (UT), Dylan Rose Schneider (UT), and Rachel Carter (UT), grandmother and dreamer, Rhiannon Chants Hanson (IA), public radio producer and community leader, Christy Williams Dunton (UT), who later took on the role of Congress producer, professor, Dr. Heidi Hutner (NY), sociologist and writer, Dr. Rebecca Gasior Altman (MA), grassroots communications strategist, Celia Alario (UT), climate change researcher, Kaitlin Butler (NY/UT), sustainability consultant, Monica Perez Nevarez (NY), from the Work that Reconnects, facilitator, Barbara Ford (OR), Katie Silberman (RI), Danielle Nierenberg (IL), Nancy Myers (MI), and Sherri Seidmon (OR), who work with the Science and Environmental Health Network, and Nicholina Womack (UT), a single mom and social justice advocate, who took on the role of volunteer coordinator. With a core intact, signatories, and dedicated volunteers were drawn in, too.

When we began, we were an assembly of strangers with an immediate affinity towards one another. We began meeting regularly by phone that autumn. We pulled in our allies. We reached out to new allies. We worked from our core and at the very edge of our capacity, driven by our vision and commitment to radical inclusion. We consulted with trusted mentors, elders, allies—men and women, alike—each time asking: what might such a gathering look like? What can we achieve? How should we go about convening? Whose voices must be heard? What does it mean to hold space for women’s voices? And thus, this Congress, and what is created at the Congress and beyond, reflects the ideas and work of as many as we could connect with, all of us working after hours and in the spaces between our regular roles and responsibilities. The remarkable radio station KZMU and the energetic and visionary group Peaceful Uprising joined with SEHN to organize the Women’s Congress. Christy Williams Dunton and Nicholina Womack staffed the Congress with the help of many volunteers.

In response to this momentum, nearly 200 women and men from 26 states and 4 countries travelled to Moab, Utah in 2012 for the first Women’s Congress for Future Generations. We gathered in a nape of Utah’s desert solitaire, surrounded by the stark tapestry of red rock spires, rivers, mountains, and canyons—the traditional lands of the Ute and the Goshute, the Navajo further south, the Southern Paiute to the southwest.

*Continued...*

### *...A Backstory, Continued*

We met there because the landscape—the Colorado River, the ancient sacred sites—are threatened with fracking, tar sands and a proposed nuclear power plant. We travelled there to honor this treasured desert place, this heritage. We celebrated the Earth. We shifted traditional roles, and thought about the kind of world we want to live in. We mapped possibilities and pathways toward achieving whole health and justice in this generation and for all generations to come. The Moab Congress aimed to create a living, dynamic *Declaration and Bill of the Rights of Future Generations* in word, art, and song, which was carried forth from Moab by equally dynamic, passionate, and diverse leaders. Gathering in Moab was emblematic of responding to a larger call from voiceless future generations unable to defend their right to an uncompromised existence. Our mission was to transform social norms, policy debates, and public dialogue about our collective future and the future we are leaving our descendants. And to join our tributary to the existing movement of women rising up.

Two months after the inaugural Women's Congress gathering in Utah, three First Nations women and one non-native ally convened Idle No More, a call on all people to honor Indigenous sovereignty and to protect the air, land, water and all creation for future generations. One year later, in September of 2013 another group of women gathered in New York for a summit convened by the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN). The premise of the summit was that women around the world would be most affected by climate change and women were key to the most important solutions.

Even before and around these events, an untold number of women in the global south and north were rising up, putting their bodies in front of bulldozers, walking hundreds of miles to confront their governments, physically withdrawing their consent to the activities threatening their environment and future generations. At the WECAN'S summit, the women also released a Declaration. Other groups have drafted similar Declarations over the years. These Declarations have a lot in common; all are staking out an intellectual territory on policy and all are committing to action.

By 2014, another group of women in the Midwest, ushered together by 2012 Congress participant Ann Manning, met and began the process of dreaming a second Women's Congress, to reclaim their responsibilities to future generations. They began each planning meeting with: "The world is in peril, and we withdraw our consent." This time, nearly 500 women and men gathered in Minneapolis, MN in November for the Future First 2014 Women's Congress, where we set our gaze on the economic issues that lie at the heart of both environmental issues and women's issues. The land of the great lakes, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and the Dakota, was our gathering ground. The Midwest offered a unique ethos, a wellspring of innovation, and a history of care for the commonwealth and common health, the marriage of the heartland with the headwaters, the birthplace of the American Indian Movement, and one of the largest interconnected fresh water systems in the world.

We hope our work can stretch our collective imagination, drawing our attention forward, inspiring us to ask: What are our responsibilities to future generations, and what do we want our legacy to be for the generations who will live centuries from now? We hope all of you who feel called to speak for future generations will join us in the broader work to uphold their rights. We invite you to gather, participate, and contribute your voices, artwork, songs, and poetry to this emerging dialogue on women's rights and responsibilities.

\*Quote by Flannery O'Connor

## Moving to Action: Honoring Our Grief, Linking Arms, Stepping into Communion

At a time when civil society is more and more excluded from vital debates, the connection between deleterious industries, politicians and law enforcement is becoming tighter and tighter. Community efforts are consistently met with apathy, coercion and disrespect from people in positions of power and decision-making. The forceful currents pushing against this work make it difficult and emotional, yet the personal toll of this work is not often discussed.

Joanna Macy, eco-philosopher and scholar of Buddhism, has said, “The spell we are under often leads us to imagine that it is we, not society, who are going insane.”<sup>1</sup> There are a lot of ways to ignore the full reality of our problems. Like toxic waste or chemical pollutants, loss can accumulate over time, as can grief. Hopelessness about the future creates anxiety and depression; these are natural responses to what we are witnessing today. When these emotions are left unchecked, they can lead to despair or numbness. The work now is figuring out how to transform this grief into a new theory of agency and a new theory of power. Through linking arms with others in our community we will find right action. These are healthy responses to the deep emotions many of us are experiencing.

### In The Green Boat

*“I make a mental health argument for activism. My basic premise is that hope is not about outcome, hope is about process. You only feel hope if you are engaged in a hopeful process.”*

– Mary Pipher, Keynote Speaker

Gathering together at the 2014 Women’s Congress was as much about learning new information as it was about accepting the reality of our current situation of loss and historical injustices. Rather than repressing those painful emotions, participants were asked to use them as guides, to reinvest that grief into moral clarity and purpose. In remembering and honoring loss as landmarks to move forward, we practiced the transformative power of grief. Through this recognition, new theories of agency and power blossomed.

The 2014 Women’s Congress brought together some of the planet’s best thought leaders, scientists, activists, artists and elders, to inspire ideas and energize action to truly shift the status quo. We sharpened our focus on the links between our economic system and environmental issues such as climate change, environmental and economic justice, and the health of our children.

One of the key goals of the 2014 Women's Congress was to see how the constellation of environmental problems are connected to our current economic structures, and to make these connections more visible to people. What new set of essential rights can be envisioned to counter today’s rights of private property and the free market, such as the rights of future generations, rights around sharing and protecting the commons, and the role of government to protect the things we all share?

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Macy. *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal*. Parallax Press, 2007: Berkeley, CA. Pg. 97.

### *Climate, Carbon and Chemicals: Finding a Way Forward*

Sandra Steingraber reminded us that the environmental crisis is not one, but two, parallel crises: the de-stabilizing of our climate with heat-trapping gases and the toxic trespass of chemical pollutants into living ecosystems, including our own bodies. Using fracking as a case study, she explored the ways in which these two trees of crisis share a common root: a ruinous dependency on fossil fuels. Steingraber argues that the road to meaningful chemical reform runs straight through our energy policy and examines the way in which women can lead the necessary transformation.

*Opening text to the Declaration of the  
Rights Held by All Waters  
By participants of the Future First 2014  
Women's Congress*

We, the women and men of the second Women's Congress, have gathered on behalf of the waters of the world. Water speaks as one voice. She weaves together and through the lands of the world, has deep seas above and below the surface, flows from the mountaintops and in the veins of every living being. She has spoken and we are opening our ears to listen. The song she sings is one of deep anguish. She is calling upon us to be her guardian.

We, the waters of the world and all who rely on us, must have our voices heard loudly and clearly. No longer is there an option to neglect or betray us – for our survival is entangled with yours.

Another focus of the Second Women's Congress was *water*. Water is traditionally talked about as a resource for consumption. The expansion of rights to future generations naturally extends to the rights of other natural entities such as the rights that are held by water. Through gathering in the name of critical bodies of water, each Caucus brought forth the voice and wisdom of the water they represented. A Declaration of the Rights of All Waters was created<sup>2</sup>—an articulation of the innate rights held by the rivers, lakes, oceans, aquifers and clouds, and the responsibilities humans hold to protect these rights.

*The Story of Water is the Story of Us  
By Rebecca Gasior Altman*

We are a way station in the great cycling of water.  
Water becomes bodies, becomes sperm.  
It becomes the blood shed by miscarriage, and the tears of a mourning woman.  
It becomes amniotic fluid, becomes cord blood becomes the body of the next generation.  
Water becomes the sweat of labor, becomes milk.  
Whatever water carries, it carries to and through us.  
Whatever is done to water is done to us.  
The violence committed through water wounds some more than others.  
But whatever is done to some of us is done to all of us.  
The story of water is the story of us.

<sup>2</sup> To read the Declaration of the Rights Held by All Waters and other documents from the 2014 Women's Congress visit: <http://sehn.org/the-2014-womens-congress-documents/>

## Going Forward: A New Tributary

*What will future generations see that we did, in the face of increasing peril to our world?*

Through these gatherings, we challenged the way science and scientific uncertainty has been misused to defend the status quo acceptance of “allowable risk.” We recognized that harm is cumulative. We challenged the way government made decisions to protect money and economics more than children, glaciers, forests, birds and rivers. And we challenged isolation by uniting people and empowering them to tell their stories, find allies and take collective responsibility for protecting the future.

Participants were called together because they saw an Earth in peril and a compromised future. Unlike traditional conferences, participants came together not because anyone had the answers, but because of an acute and shared understanding that for answers we must seek common cause, wrestle with hard questions, and find each other.

We converged around four key desires:

- To shift our worldview from isolation and separation to the interconnectedness of all things;
- To build a deeper coalition among allies aligned around this work;
- To invite women and men who are sitting alone in their fear and grief, who want to plug into an existing and growing movement to find their place; and
- To shift our consciousness about how to work with our sense of grief and loss, and move effectively into action.

Ultimately, we converged to ignite women’s voices and leadership to address the challenges before us.

The Congress is but one conversation in a continuum – one that we wish to deepen. A fractal web of partnerships is critical. Our goal is to ignite with other kindred organizations and efforts a civil rights movement for future generations, by building a network of activists into local and regional powerhouses, innovating around governance through law and policy, and co-creating platforms to stay connected and support one another in this work. Although the event is an important focalizing opportunity and call to action, it is equally important that we continue to enlarge networks and allyships, and envision concrete pathways for the work to take shape in the months ahead.

To give or withhold consent, and to collectively withdraw our consent to activities which damage and pollute the Earth, breaks open the rules of the game. Great events based on big ideas change the course of history. Think Seneca Falls, the March on Washington and the People’s Climate March. Both the 2012 and the 2014 Women’s Congress for Future Generations were such events, whose bold ideas and actions can change the course of history.

The great advances in law throughout history have been the expansion of rights, whether it is women’s right to vote, the abolition of slavery or the declaration of human rights. A Women’s Congress for Future Generations is about the expression of real democracy—the expansion of

rights and the awareness, acceptance and celebration of our deep interrelatedness with each other and 'all our relations.' Extending rights to all the things that are the basis of our lives and to future generations joins us together and makes clear that we have a communal responsibility to honor those rights.

None of this work is ours alone, but borne out of and shaped by ancient headwaters, complex histories, and an abounding work already underway. There is no single source that can provide the answer for how to find each other and connect in meaningful ways, and no single action will bring forth the change we seek. Only by facing the truth of where we are, will real solutions emerge. We won't have all the answers today, but we have begun the deep analysis necessary to open up possibilities and pathways. Our offerings are open-ended. Over time we will learn what works and what doesn't, by comparing the relative strengths and weaknesses of our collective experiences. Our hope is that we play a role in transforming public dialogue and collective action to ensure that those who come after us inherit a just and livable future.

*Vivir Bien, Living Well...*

...A concept from Bolivia's Indigenous people, was an important aspect of the Women's Congress with the presence of Sonia Davila-Poblete, a leader in the rights of water and lifting up of women's voices in Bolivia. Her colleagues from Minneapolis-based Center for Energy and Earth Democracy reminded us of the importance of building strong relationships between the women of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, another important aspect of our work together.

*This is a new moment in the movement!*

On the final morning of the Future First 2014 Women's Congress, Elder Sharon Day shared the Seven Fires Prophecy of the Anishinaabe religion, prophecies that were given before contact with Europeans. The prophecies state that when the world has been befouled and the waters turned bitter by disrespect, human beings will again have a choice to make: to turn away from materialism and greed and to turn toward a deep sense of interconnectedness, of seeing the Oneness of all life. **That time is now.**

Sharon called us to step into this time of reconciliation with all people so that we can unite as one family alive now on Turtle Island, regardless of our ancestry. We have the choice now, to unite with others, to walk together with love and a better future for our children and grandchildren to the seventh generation and beyond.

## Addendum

### Post-Congress Participant Survey Summary

The 2014 Women’s Congress for Future Generations was a profound experience for participants. Feedback at the event and in the post-Congress survey spoke to the ‘energy’ in the room and the openhearted women and men who gathered together.

This was a place to learn, be open and vulnerable, meet other people doing similar work, meet personal heroes and make new ones. The space felt safe and open, yet with a longing for more diversity – more young people, more people of color, whose ideas and stories are integral to finding our way forward. The Indigenous perspective was key in giving people a sense of hope.

The vast majority of survey respondents found the plenary presenters and panelists incredibly knowledgeable and effective. The insightful work and words of the workshop leaders, presenters, and panelists gave people new ideas and new language to express those ideas. The keynote speakers moved participants and many people noted how many knew insights and information they gained in attending, including: the interconnectedness of justice issues; the true impacts and costs of fracking; and different ways of understanding the role of the economy and the role of government.

Survey respondents were moved by the integration of arts in the space and program. The puppets, tree of life, caucus of all waters graphic, and singers all contributed to the overall appreciation of the event.

When asked to describe a key connection, learning or shift that has occurred as a result of attending the Women’s Congress, many respondents noted that the event helped them rediscover a path towards activism, a fuller perspective of women’s leadership, and the importance of continuing to elevate female voices.

The event helped participants restore a strength and clarity of purpose in communion with others. People were introduced to the concept of expanding rights to future generations and to nature; creating a Declaration of Rights Held By All Waters was a new and transformative experience for many. Out of the Congress, new coalitions and regional organizing against pipeline and fracking projects are being formed. Together we found a new sense of determination to keep moving forward.

“Connecting with other leaders by hearing the words of Sandra Steingraber, Mary Pipher, Joanna Macy, Sharon Day and Riane Eisler and processing their experiences, recommendations, and calls to action with my peers. This is essential to me because I find extra motivation and encouragement through the stories of others and having their perspectives to help me process my own capacity to support climate activism at the most potent level possible. It’s very easy to be overwhelmed and frozen with uncertainty. With ample time to process the options for different types of action and activism, I can leave an event like this feeling empowered rather than filled with despair.”

– Participant testimonial

## Thank You!

The 2012 Women's Congress for Future Generations and the Future First 2014 Women's Congress for Future Generation gatherings would be wholly impossible without those who shared their gifts, time, advice, support, wisdom and grace. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude. There are surely names missing, and every name listed is a portal to an enormous body of work.

### **Future First 2014 Women's Congress for Future Generations**

Special thanks to Minneapolis and all of Minnesota, especially the land, the waters, all living things for hosting us.

This Congress could not have happened without the dedication and support of so many individuals and groups — many of whom have been working for years to transform this idea into reality.

To our Leadership Team: Ann Manning, Initiative Director; Barbara Arney; Monica Bryand; Rebecca Cramer; KC Foley; Jan Leadholm; Emily Moore; Jan Neville; Patricia Neal; Vicki O'Day; Julie Ristau; Kathleen Seestadt; Betsy Stites; Jodi Williams.

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*And to those who showed up with their whole beautiful selves, that very special weekend:*

Thank you to our guides: Rachel Bagby, transformational vocalist, daughter diviner; Ilene Evans, performing artist; Barbara McAfee, voice coach and author; Barbara Ford, singer/songwriter.

To all the artists who contributed their pieces: Heart of the Beast, Guardians of the Elements; Susie Andler and Jessie Thompson, Co-Chairs for Koehler and Dramm's Institute of Floristry 2014 Art in Bloom installation at the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts for their "RHEA, The Ancient Titan Earth Goddess"; and Cover Art for the program and WCFFG logo, Kat Bodie, freeland illustrator ([www.katbodie.com](http://www.katbodie.com)).

Deep gratitude to those who shared their wisdom and work, our Plenary Presenters: (Thursday) Barbara Arney, teacher, consultant, spiritual guide; Sharon Day, Executive Director of Indigenous People's Task Force, artist, musician, writer; Sonia Davila-Poblete, sociologist and consultant (Bolivia); Ann Manning, Future First Initiative Director; (Friday) Julia Frost Nerbonne, Executive Director, Interfaith Power and Light; Mary Pipher, clinical psychologist and author; Carolyn Raffensperger, Founder of the Women's Congress for Future Generations and Executive Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network; Lisa Renstrom, Co-Director of Divest-Invest; Julie Ristau, Co-Director of On The Commons and Co-Chair of Homegrown, Minneapolis; Sandra Steingraber, biologist, author and cancer survivor; Kimberly Wasserman, Director of Little Village Environmental Justice Organization and 2013 Goldman Environmental Prize winner; (Saturday) Riane Eisler, attorney, author and systems scientist; Barbara Ford, singer/songwriter; Robyn Langkos; Joanna Macy, teacher and eco-philosopher; Cecilia Martinez, Director of Research Programs for the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy; Teddie Potter, Coordinator of Doctor of Nursing Practice in Health Innovation and Leadership and Director of Inclusivity and Diversity at University of Minnesota; and Becky Rom, activist.

And to the many workshop leaders, facilitators and those who made it all go so smoothly in countless actions both seen and unseen. For a full list of these contributors, visit: <http://futurefirst.us/events/2014-congress/>

## **2012 Inaugural Women's Congress for Future Generations**

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*To all the volunteers that put in countless hours to make the 2012 Congress possible.*

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