

# DARE TO RUN



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Prepared By.

**Rachelle Suissa  
Board President**



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# President's Message



## Rachelle Suissa

Founder of Dare to Run

Dear Supporters,

2025 has been quite a year, indeed. Dare to Run underwent some very important changes this year to our structure and governance of the organization. In July of 2025, we established a new Board of Directors to govern the board of Dare to Run and continue our operations moving forward. We added two new members to our board of Directors.

In addition, we launched the Dare to Run Women's Leadership Virtual Program for Fall of 2025. We were proud to have our candidate Nurookia Johnson receive a scholarship from the Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund to complete the Dare to Run Program for Fall of 2025. We are proud to be able to support Ms. Johnson in all her endeavors to run for public office.

In December of 2025, we hosted our Annual Holiday Party, which of course is an amazing opportunity to bring together supporters, students, teachers and friends of the Dare to Run Community for a special Holiday celebration. We hosted the party in midtown Manhattan, and were pleased to be visited by Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant Louis of the 57<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Brooklyn.

Looking ahead, we are proud to reestablish our community partnership with Net Impact Services, a consulting firm for nonprofits in NYC. Net Impact is working diligently with us to increase the number of Board members we have as well as increase potential funding streams for us so that we can expand our operations into New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West Virginia in 2026.

Onward,

Rachelle Suissa  
Founder and Board President, Dare to Run



# A New Board in 2025

Rachelle Suissa,  
Founder and President



Rachelle Suissa is a seasoned nonprofit professional with more than 20 years of experience working in the program building, fundraising, marketing and grant writing sector of the nonprofit industry. Rachelle received her Master of Science in Nonprofit Management from the Milano School for Management and Urban Policy in New York City in 2017. Prior to that, Ms. Suissa completed a Master of Arts degree in Political Science – American Government at Brooklyn College in 2010. She received her Bachelor of Arts in History and Women's and Gender Studies from Pace University in New York City in 2008. Ms. Suissa founded Dare to Run, a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to train women how to run for public office in New York City, in June of 2017. The organization has been operating for 7 years and has trained 6 cohorts of women how to run for public office and held over 115 events in the NYC Community. In addition, Ms. Suissa has raised over \$50,000 in grant funding and event donations for Dare to Run during its first 2 years of operation and established relationships with over 60 female elected officials at the local and state level of public office.

In addition to currently serving as the Board President and Founder for Dare to Run, Ms. Suissa currently works as an Account Manager for Grant Associates in downtown Brooklyn. In this role, she partners with career navigators and career service coordinators to help match clients with potential job opportunities in the NYC Area. Ms. Suissa has also worked as a college professor, teacher, program manager, and program director for various nonprofit organizations and educational institutions throughout the city since 2007. She currently lives in Bay Ridge with her husband and 4 year old son Howie.

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## Aja Gaddie, Board Member



Aja is a dynamic connector of people and experiences. Passionate about community, she leads 1000 Women Strong's organizing and outreach work, finding Black women in their respective spaces and amplifying their collective power. She has organized for the Energy Justice Network, the For our Future Fund, Emanuel Pleitez's Los Angeles mayoral campaign and President Obama's Organizing for America post-election organization. Aja was previously the finance assistant for the Gainey for Mayor campaign in Pittsburgh, director of the Nashville and Pittsburgh field offices for the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation's Innovation & Technology Program Manager.



## Josephine Bosco, Board Secretary

Josephine is a passionate health care advocate with nearly 20 years of nonprofit experience. She has worked with youth, train-the-trainer women infant and children programs, and on tobacco control/addiction work in Brooklyn, Staten Island and Manhattan. Prior to working in the nonprofit field, she utilized her marketing skills in various positions in corporate America such as The Economist and several large New York City advertising agencies.



Josephine actively participates in community service activities and is a member of several policy and leadership committees. Josephine holds a Masters degree in Human Services Leadership from St. Joseph's University. She enjoys taking on new challenges and learning sports, including bocce, and currently resides in Brooklyn with her family.

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## LaMichelle Hecht, Board Treasurer

LaMichelle Hecht is a powerhouse in the world of accounting and financial strategy. She's a seasoned business leader and Certified Public Accountant with licenses in Virginia, Illinois, and New Jersey, and over a decade of experience helping government agencies, nonprofits, and businesses get their financial houses in order.

In 2021, she launched Overhead Solutions Group, a SWaM-certified accounting firm that's all about simplifying complex financials, ensuring compliance, and helping organizations operate with clarity and confidence. Her team supports clients across sectors with everything from audits and tax returns to setting up sustainable systems for long-term growth.



A dynamic speaker and bilingual professional (English/Spanish), LaMichelle's passion lies in empowering mission-driven leaders to make smarter financial decisions, and she brings a unique blend of technical expertise, strategic insight, and a genuine commitment to service. Whether she's mentoring young professionals or guiding clients through tough compliance challenges, she's all about making numbers make sense.





## Mission and Vision

Dare to Run is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate and empower women with the skills necessary to run for public office at the local, state and national level of government.



## Our Core Values

**Equality** - Women should have an equal say in the development of the public policy agenda at the local, state and national levels of government

**Collaboration** - Women should work together to achieve a higher quality of life for all constituents in their community

**Opportunity** - Women should have equal opportunities to run for public office; they should not be hindered because of race, religion, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation

**Diversity** - Women should hold at least 50% of the seats at all levels of government, and the demographic breakdown of the population of the United States should be reflected in the composition of governing bodies at the local, state and national levels of government.

**Respect** - Women should value the viewpoints of other women, and offer support, sorority and a moral high ground on which to effect change for the rest of the country.



# Dare to Run Virtual Women's Leadership Program: Fall 2025

## Meet the Candidate: Nurookia Johnson

Recipient of the Lathrope Voorspuy  
Memorial Scholarship Fund



Nurookia Johnson is a visionary leader, organizer, and faith-centered advocate whose work spans ministry, community engagement, and public service. Known for her ability to bring people together across diverse backgrounds, she has dedicated her career to empowering women, young adults, and underserved communities through education, advocacy, and spiritual development.

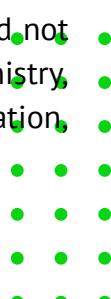
As a ministry leader, Nurookia has developed innovative faith-based programs, including multi-week Sunday school series, prayer workshops, and women's ministry curriculums designed to equip participants with both biblical knowledge and practical life skills. She has a gift for designing interactive lessons, devotionals, and conferences that engage people of all ages, encouraging them to deepen their faith and walk confidently in their purpose. Her work in prayer ministry, particularly through developing guides and workshops like Bootcamp Prayer, reflects her commitment to building spiritual resilience in others.

Beyond the church, Nurookia has demonstrated a strong commitment to civic life and advocacy. She has worked with community-based organizations and local leaders, supporting initiatives that strengthen services for families, uplift survivors of trauma, and promote justice and equity. She has experience collaborating with city leaders, nonprofit networks, and grassroots movements to host conferences, training sessions, and community outreach programs. Her ability to mobilize volunteers and foster partnerships has made her a trusted leader in spaces that demand both compassion and strategy.

Nurookia is a skilled organizer with a track record of managing large-scale events, from women's conferences and youth workshops to community resource fairs and advocacy campaigns. She excels at coordinating logistics, facilitating workshops, and ensuring that every program is accessible, impactful, and aligned with its mission. Her leadership style is collaborative and inclusive, ensuring that teams feel valued and participants leave empowered.

At the core of Nurookia's work is her dedication to mentorship. She is passionate about raising up the next generation of leaders, particularly young women, by creating spaces where they can learn, grow, and lead. Through teaching, coaching, and faith-based guidance, she inspires others to embrace both personal growth and public service.

Nurookia's vision is rooted in service, faith, and justice. She believes that true leadership is measured not by titles, but by the ability to create lasting change in the lives of others. Whether through ministry, advocacy, or community development, her work continues to reflect her deep belief in collaboration, empowerment, and the transformative power of service.



# Dare to Run Annual Holiday Party: December 2, 2025



*Dare to Run Proudly welcomed Assemblywoman Phara Scouffrant Forest for the 57 District in Brooklyn to Address our Supporters and followers about her journey to the Assembly of the State of New York.*

*Dare to Run was joined by Frequency, the A Capella Group from Pace University, who sang Christmas and Hanukkah Songs for all guests! They did an amazing job!*



*A Big Thank You to all of Our Former Instructors, Donors, Supporters and Guests for attending our Holiday Party and making it such a lively, fun celebration!*



# Community Partners: 2025

Dare to Run is proud to announce the following partnerships were created throughout 2025, and have been amazingly productive throughout the year.



Effective board management allows for nonprofits to make a bigger impact. Providing your board with key resources can increase your fundraising efforts, strategic planning, and other mission-based work – especially during a crisis. New York Nonprofit Media will host Nonprofit BoardCon bringing together Executive Leadership and Board Members from nonprofits across New York to learn how collaboration between board and staff is essential now and looking toward the future.



BoardProspects offers for-profit corporations of all sizes a cost-effective way to identify, assess, and recruit board members



Our mission is to empower Black women across the country and mobilize them for action.

We are working to create a future – and an America – that is informed by the experiences and expertise of Black women.

Through rapid response messaging, issue advocacy and electoral mobilization, we are working across the U.S. to build community and political power for the long haul.

We recruit, train and support grassroots community efforts year-round, giving them the room to sustain and grow their networks for the long haul.

We have in-state organizers in Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida and Michigan who are mobilizing voters around student debt forgiveness, midterm elections, general elections and more.





We're launching a safe, collaborative virtual space for mid- to large-sized Long Island nonprofit executives and board members to come together, speak candidly, and support one another during these challenging times. This participant-led discussion group is designed for



Net Impact is a member-centered community that mobilizes 250+ global chapters and reaches 100,000+ impact-oriented students and professionals. Net Impact Chapters are a diverse and highly engaged coalition of the responsible business movement.



Since our founding in 2010, we've positively impacted more than 1 million teenage girls and women in all 50 states from underserved communities, with an emphasis on foster youth. Our proven programs, such as Gifts + Goods, Empower Events, 1:1 Coaching, and Empowerment Academy, are dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and helping end gender and racial inequality.



Candid's Foundation Directory gives you access to the information you need to be smart and strategic with your funding requests. The tools available on Foundation Directory allow you to tap funding opportunities beyond open Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that make up less than 1% of total foundation funding. Digging deeper is critical to your fundraising success.



The Churchill is New York's finest English tavern, serving the best of British, and local craft beer. We offer a varied menu, combining traditional English fare with sophisticated culinary skills.

The Churchill is a beautifully decorated, unique two-story space that provides an atmosphere that is exceptional in NYC.



# Dare to Run's Donors in 2025

**Joseph Agovino**  
**Josephine Bosco**  
**Marcia Deignan**  
**Filomena Di Luise**  
**Cristina Fontanelli**  
**Aja Gaddie**  
**La Michelle Hecht**  
**Laura Limuli**  
**Gavin Perri**  
**Tania Sterl**  
**Rachelle Suissa**  
**Mary Tedeschi**  
**Joshua Tomel**

*A Special Thank You to the Lathrope Voorspuy  
Memorial Scholarship Fund.*

# Financial Highlights for 2025

## 2025

- Revenues** For FY 2025, 67% of revenues came from individual donations; the other 33% came from program related tuition expenses.
- Donations** For FY 2025, 78% of individual donations made to Dare to Run were made by board members.
- Expenses** For FY 2025, over 90% of expenses were administrative, communications and program related expenses.
- In-Kind Donations** For FY 2025, Dare to Run Received an in-kind donation of Make Up Products from Project Glimmer totaling \$3,200 in Retail Value.
- Grants** For FY 2025, Dare to Run Applied for over 50 grants from private foundations across the United States.
- Partners** For FY 2025, Dare to Run revived partnerships with over 10 companies, nonprofits and agencies in the tri-state area.



# Looking Ahead to 2026

1. Recruit New Instructors to be able to facilitate programming in all New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.
2. Partner with an external agency to assist with conducting marketing and PR outreach in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Delaware.
3. Hire a videographers to conduct the filming processes for the Virtual Women's Leadership Program as well as in person instructors for the Live Cohort.
4. Recruit at least 25 women in each of four states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West Virginia) to complete the Dare to Run Women's Leadership Program either virtually or in person.
5. Host a Leadership Retreat in for Members of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 of the Dare to Run Virtual Women's Leadership Program.



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For more information and to support the work we do, reach out to us.





# Contact Us



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# Thank You

