

Impact Statement

Hibah Shafi & Daisy Farella, Grade 11.

Speak Out, 2018.

Acrylic and pen on paper, 26 x 24 x 26 Inches.

New Technology High School, Napa, CA

Unsung Hero: Bernice Sandler

Speak Out is a multimedia sculpture about Dr. Bernice Sandler, who worked extensively for the Women's Rights Movement and the fight against gender discrimination. "Came on too strong for a woman." This demeaning statement was made towards Dr. Sandler when she interviewed at the University of Maryland for a faculty position that she was more than qualified for. These words questioning her competency to work because of her gender, kick-started her work as a leader in the Women's Rights Movement. She is classified as an unsung hero because of the lack of recognition she has received for her impactful and significant work. She pioneered the passing of Title IX, a piece of legislation which prohibits gender discrimination in public institutions (including sports teams) that are funded by the government. As two young women in our modern society, we both are very thankful for all of Dr. Sandler's work and acknowledge that our world would be very different right now if she had not gotten Title IX passed. Although we acknowledge that gender discrimination is still a problem today, there are regulations and rules behind the treatment of women now that Sandler helped put in place. Bernice Sandler has inspired generations of women to speak out about their own experiences with gender discrimination. Through decades of work, Dr. Sandler has collaborated with others as an advocate for women's rights to pass legislation against the unequal treatment that women face in education and the workforce. Despite gender discrimination still being an outstanding problem today, innovators like Dr. Sandler have made a strong lasting impact.

Speak Out creatively ties in significant aspects of Dr. Sandler's work through the years in a way that is both historically informative and aesthetically pleasing. The two-foot figurine representing Bernice Sandler was constructed out of thick wire. Her body was split into two sections that when meshed together, formed a proportional wire armature. The joining of the two sides of her body represented men and women coming together. Originally, we had planned on putting clay on her body and only making a realistic sculpture of Dr. Sandler, but we wanted to make it more impactful and really capture the essence of her work. We were able to accomplish this by sticking stories of women who were victims of gender discrimination that Dr. Sandler had documented. She amplified their voices and spread their stories seeking justice for them, hence the 3D printed megaphone she is holding in her right hand. She is positioned in a victory stance with her foot crushing the spiky ball of negativity containing negative words that have been said to women including Dr. Sandler.

The megaphone that the figurine is holding is strategically aimed towards the ear located on the right side of the board symbolizing that the stories pasted on Sandler are being amplified through the megaphone and are being heard by the ear. On the ear are names of activists, lawmakers, and people who helped Dr. Sandler and some of the positive outcomes that came out of them helping. Located on the other side of the ear, Title IX is spelled out in large block letters. The legislation states that, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be

excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” If you look closely enough, we glued this across the block letters repeatedly. It was a lengthy and time-consuming process, but it made it more meaningful. Title IX is placed after the ear because it was one of the biggest outcomes of people listening to Dr. Sandler. Each element on the board has a deeper meaning that is historically significant in relation to Dr. Sandler’s work. Even the overall color scheme for the board represents something--purple, white, and gold-- are the colors of women’s empowerment.

Due to Dr. Sandler’s vast work as an advocate for women, we decided that the best venue to showcase our art piece would be the Women’s March in Napa. Through back-and-forth correspondence with the coordinators of the march, we were able to secure a booth where we displayed our piece. We didn’t expect to receive too much traffic at our booth because we only had an art piece to show, but a numerous amount of people came up to us and the booth was almost always crowded with people in the 2-hour time period that we were there. We had a comments and feedback box at the booth and received 20 comments. All the comments we received in the box were positive comments from people, not really any constructive criticism. “I almost cried when I heard this story”, “This is a must”, and “Momentous work guys” were some of the comments we received. We received a lot of verbal feedback as well, the most helpful one being advice from a local artist who suggested that we put sound waves on the project to really make it clear that she was shouting into the ear. We had several people come up to us including three representatives from the Mariposa Club who wanted us to showcase our work at one of their meetings and a teacher who wanted us to show our project in her class. We also had the amazing opportunity to talk to a woman who was one of the first people to receive a tennis scholarship because of Title IX. At least fifty people took pictures of our project and took the time to read about Dr. Sandler and her work. In the end, we received the “Most Original Table” award at the march and overall, the whole event was a success. Right now, we are talking to the Senior Editor at the Napa Valley Register to put us in the local newspaper and are looking at other options for display.