

Generations

Celebrating incredible and influential women

Kara Ladd of *Good Housekeeping* published a list of 120 incredible women who overcame hardships, broke records, blazed trails and shattered glass ceilings.

Here are some you may not know, but they all worked hard to make the world a better place.

A perfect way to start is with Emma Gonzalez. She's a survivor of the deadly February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Since the massacre, she has been a force of resistance through her impassioned speeches and social media presence, aiming for stricter gun laws and proactive change.

Next is a young woman, Malala Yousafzai, whose name may not mean anything to you, but she is a fearless human-rights activist and proponent of female education. She was shot by a Taliban gunman at just 15 years old and lived to tell her heroic story. She received the Nobel Peace Prize by age 17, making her the youngest recipient to date.

Then there's Tarana Burke, *Time* magazine's "2017 Person of the Year" who founded the "Me Too" movement in the 1990s long before the hashtag went viral. She's also the founder of



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Just Be Inc., a non-profit organization that provides support for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

Wendy Kopp may not be well-known, but she founded "Teach for America," an organization she began to create a corps of desperately needed teachers for schools in low-income neighborhoods. So far, that organization has trained more than 24,000 teachers and reached more than 3 million students.

Winona Laduke may not be easily recognized to many, but she's a Native American activist, environmentalist and a member of the Anishinaabe nation who filed lawsuits to recover lands withheld from Native American

communities, reminding the nation of long-standing wrongdoings.

Born in 1940, Wangari Maathai was the first environmentalist and first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize ... but it didn't come easy for her. She was beaten and jailed as a leader of Kenya's democracy movement. It didn't stop her from rallying women to plant trees (more than 45 million so far, in Africa, America and elsewhere), which created jobs for the poor and continues to fight against deforestation and erosion.

In 1955, as a brave 15-year-old in Alabama, Claudette Colvin refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested, even before Rosa Parks' pivotal act of defiance. But Colvin, unmarried, became pregnant, and civil rights campaigners worried that would muddy the issue, so even though Parks became the emblem of the struggle, Colvin deserves recognition.

Labor leader and co-founder

of the United Farm Workers Dolores Huerta was a former teacher, and her philosophy was simple: "I thought I could do more by organizing farmworkers than by trying to teach their hungry children." She strove to secure a living wage for the people who harvest our nation's food.

Biophysicist Rosalind Franklin, who died in 1958 at age 37, did so in obscurity. However, years later, it was revealed that she discovered proof of the double-helix structure of DNA before the men credited with doing so — Francis Crick, James Watson and Maurice Wilkins. Their work was based in part on her data, and they won a Nobel Prize.

Thousands of cancer patients have been given a second chance because of medical researcher Gertrude Belle Elion. The Nobel Prize-winning research scientist, who died in 1999, co-developed two drugs that fought leukemia and, in 1957, she developed the first immunosuppressant agent, a

development that made it possible to transplant organs.

Dr. Alice Hamilton not only was the first female professor at Harvard, but she went on to identify poisons in the workplace and brought attention to lead poisoning as a health hazard.

There are so many more, but I can't fit them all into this column, so I'll end it with Mary Harris Jones with a "Go, Granny, Go" salute from me personally. Hailed in the 1930s as "the grandmother of all agitators" and "the miner's angel" by workers, she fought against child labor and for decent conditions, fair pay and safety in the workplace.

International Women's Day was March 8, so this is a little late, but let this be an expression of gratitude for what they gave to all of us.

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