

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S MONTH:  
SPOTLIGHTING FOUNDERS



METCO

DIGITAL ZINE

MARCH 2026

## CELEBRATING OUR FOUNDING MOTHER



Ruth  
Batson

Ruth Batson was the driving force behind METCO's launch in 1966. But she was much more than that. For decades, she advocated for Black Boston's parents against the School Committee, and played leadership roles with the NAACP, the Democratic National Committee, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, Boston University, and the African American History Museum.

[READ MORE ON RUTH](#)



DR. KANDICE  
SUMNER

## A WORD FROM OUR CEO

March is Women's History Month — a sacred opportunity to honor the women who dared to imagine something different, who organized when it was unpopular, who advocated when it was uncomfortable, and who loved our children fiercely enough to demand better.

METCO exists because of women like Ruth Batson — visionary, strategist, mother, advocate — who understood that educational opportunity is a civil right and who refused to accept the limitations placed on Black children. Her leadership was bold and unapologetic, but it was also deeply relational. She believed in partnership. She believed in possibility. And she believed in us.

This month, I find myself reflecting on the women across our METCO family who continue that legacy every single day — our mothers and grandmothers, aunts and caregivers, district directors and educators, alumni and students. The quiet sacrifices. The early car rides. The advocacy emails. The late-night homework help. The courage to enter new spaces and still stand firmly in who you are. That is women's history — living and breathing all around us.

Over the past several weeks, I've had the joy of visiting Lincoln and Reading, continuing to strengthen relationships across our districts. I also had the honor of speaking at BLAC Day at Newton North High School, where I was reminded yet again that our students are leading right now — shaping culture, affirming identity, and building community with confidence and pride.



As part of our 60th anniversary year, we are also introducing a new tradition: a Senior Rites of Passage Ceremony, which will be held on May 15th. This ceremony will honor our graduating seniors as they transition into their next chapter — affirming not only their academic achievements, but their growth, resilience, leadership, and identity. Our seniors deserve to be celebrated in a way that reflects the fullness of who they are, and we are proud to create a space that does just that.

And I look forward to gathering with many of you at our **rescheduled 60th Anniversary Gala on May 1st**. This will be a joyful evening honoring our legacy while investing in our future. We are especially proud to offer tiered ticket pricing for alumni and seniors, because this celebration belongs to the entire METCO family.



**NOW CELEBRATING ON FRIDAY MAY 1, 2026**

A FUNDRAISING AND AWARDS CELEBRATION  
SUPPORTING THE LEGACY AND LONGEVITY OF METCO.

Women’s History Month reminds us that legacy is not static — it is something we carry forward through action. And every time we advocate for a child, show up for a family, or build a bridge across communities, we continue the work that our founder, Ruth Batson began.

Onward — together.

With gratitude and determination,

Kandice Sumner  
President & CEO  
#METCOMADEME

## SPOTLIGHTING COMMUNITY

METCO Spotlights is a space where we pause to recognize and celebrate the people who shape our community. This month, we're honoring women who founded, built, and established spaces and initiatives that have strengthened METCO and beyond. From alumni to staff to partners, we lift up their stories, journeys, and impact—celebrating the excellence, vision, and care that continue to move METCO forward. Simply put: we see you, and we're grateful.





## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

ELLE  
BOVAL

My name is Elle Boval and I am a senior at Wayland High School. I joined METCO in the 5th grade and I had to learn how to balance the stark contrast between my school environment and my home environment. However, being in a predominantly white school has forced me to question the systems in our country, specifically ones that perpetuate institutionalized racism. Starting my freshman year, I started doing a lot of community service and social justice work. I also started posting on YouTube about topics that I believed were affecting my community. I also have attended the Yawkey Boys & Girls Club in Roxbury since I was in the second grade. **Youth of The year** is a scholarship competition that the Boys and Girls club holds every year. I was nominated for the Youth of the Year in November, I won last month and was granted a \$20,000 scholarship! Being Youth of the Year is also a great honor that I am very proud to receive. I want to attend Spelman College in the fall and hope to continue participating in community and social justice work.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



YANIQUE  
SHAW

“I was a late bloomer and started METCO in Highschool, I went to Melrose Highschool on the Northshore and can honestly say that METCO shaped the projection of my life”.



**ABOUT BOSTON FLOWER CO.**

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



KIMBRA  
DENNIS

I started at Weston Country day at the age of 4, and the next year went to Lincoln. I got used to the bus ride early in life. I caught the bust at 5:50 am. I loved the school and teachers. Challenges didn't begin until middle and high school. When I attended Lincoln-Sudbury High School, the students had to get signatures from the teachers to get into the classes. I recognized early in the process, students of color were passed over for the best classes with the better teachers. I had a voice back then and I began to use it. I spoke up and demanded changes. We fought for what we deserved and got it. I was an advocate for what was right as a little girl. It speaks to who I am today.



My mother taught us that we had to work for everything we wanted, nothing would be handed to us. That is what I taught my children. In spite of racial inequalities, I felt that METCO was the best option for my family. I have 8-10 nieces and nephews that went to Wellesley, Concord and Lincoln-Sudbury. My oldest two children came through Wellesley, and the younger three are currently in Sharon. I worked in corporate America for 20 years and decided to change my career and become an educator. I am here to ensure our students of color are treated fairly and equitably.

I have great joy knowing that I am making a difference. Protecting the babies. I am always willing to share my knowledge to anyone who wants to learn. I speak life into any dead situation with positive affirmations and confidence.

My mother was part of Project Exodus. The beginning. It wasn't my choice to begin this journey, but it was definitely my choice how it shaped into what it is today. I was an entrepreneur at the age of six. My parents had various businesses in the community and I knew that was something that was instilled in me. I started making chocolate in 1987. The industry changed, so I had to pivot. I still make chocolate, but I also make treats, set up events and have various other businesses.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



My METCO story is about learning how to exist in two different worlds at once. Growing up in Boston and attending a predominantly white school district, I was constantly adjusting, overachieving, and figuring out how to take up space in rooms where I was often one of the only Black girls. That experience strengthened my resilience and helped me find my voice. I learned how to advocate not just for myself, but for my peers, and how to show up fully even when I didn't always feel seen. METCO didn't just shape my academics; it shaped my confidence, leadership, and the way I understand the importance of community and representation.

Transitioning from Boston to attending an HBCU in Atlanta was transformative. For the first time, I was in a space where I didn't have to explain myself to belong. That realization inspired me to co-found C.R.O.W.N Boston. I saw so many Boston students making the same journey, yet we weren't always connected.



C.R.O.W.N Boston was created to build that connection, to cultivate unity, visibility, and empowerment among Boston students at HBCUs, while also giving back to the communities we come from. There's something powerful about creating a space where being from Boston and attending an HBCU is not just acknowledged, but celebrated.

Watching this vision come to life and being part of something bigger than myself has been incredibly fulfilling. In many ways, this work is my response to my younger self and an invitation for METCO students to believe that there are spaces where they can thrive, lead, and flourish fully and unapologetically. C.R.O.W.N Boston exists to remind us all that connection, empowerment, and community are possible when we come together and lift each other up.

**CONNECT WITH C.R.O.W.N**

