

WYCKOFF HOUSE MUSEUM

Farmhouse Family Day: Celebrating the Legacy of Shirley Chisholm for Women's History Month



Shirley Chisholm was born in Brooklyn, NY to immigrant parents in 1924. She started her career in education, first becoming a nursery school teacher then later becoming an education policy consultant. Her advocacy work began with organizations such as League of Women Voters, National Association for the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP), Urban League and Democratic Party Club in Brooklyn.

Shirley became interested in politics after she worked as a consultant on child care policy for the City of New York. She ran for the State Legislature in New York in 1964. In 1968 she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, representing New York, becoming the first black woman to serve in Congress. And in 1972 became the first woman ever to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. She managed all these historic accomplishments despite facing discrimination as being a Black woman and relied on grassroots support from the groups she advocated for: the Black community, women, young voters, and immigrants.

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ACTIVITY:

Shirley Chisholm is well known for saying "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." This quote demonstrated her drive and commitment to advocacy because she was confident of her skills and ability to succeed.

In this activity, we're going to think about what we bring to the table. Using the illustration below, use the SEAT as your strengths and what you care about and the TABLE as where the decisions are made.



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For example:

My SEAT is that I care about compost services in my community.

The TABLE where the decisions are made about compost issues happen at the local government level in NYC.

Questions to consider:

Who are the people or groups making the decisions about the issues I care about?

What personal strengths do I have that can help advocate for this issue? What words or phrases represent this cause? What colors represent the chair? How does this chair fit into my personal story?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- The "My Seat at the Table" activity has been adapted from the [A Seat at the Table Lesson Plan](#) created by the Edward M. Kennedy Institute.
- [PBS Learning Media: Shirley Chisholm- 16 for '16 The Contenders](#)
- [Brooklyn Public Library: Women's History Month for Kids](#)
- National Women's History Museum: [Shirley Chisholm](#)