

Conversations with IGNITE Young Women in Office

At Anthropologie, we believe in women: our beauty, our wisdom, and our power to make the world better.

That's why we're so thrilled to team up this fall with IGNITE, a national, non-partisan organization that helps ambitious young women become our country's next political leaders. IGNITE shares knowledge, connections, and resources with women from coast to coast as they learn about civic engagement, get ready to run for office, and begin to reach their incredible potential. [\(That...starts in IGNITE today!\)](#)

To share our mic, so to speak, with IGNITE, we created a series of three #AnthroEvents – virtual gatherings full of information and inspiration. On September 15, IGNITE Executive Director, Sara Guillaume, hosted our first conversation: *Young Women in Office*.



Sara got her first taste of politics in a first-grade class government race. "I knew at an early age that there were not a lot of girls around the decision-making table, and even fewer girls of color," she told us. "As I kept coming and serving, it became clear that I needed to do everything I can to build inclusive environments where all people can thrive."

And that's what IGNITE works to do. "We know that when there are more women in office, the policies will then reflect 50% of the country," says Sara. The group offers K-8 and high school programs, college chapters, mentorship, workshops, and more.

For our virtual series, Sara was joined by two IGNITE success stories: Karla Garcia, Member and Secretary of the Board for the Dallas Independent School District in Texas, and Jocelyn Yoo, City Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem of Eastvale, California.

Karla became involved with IGNITE in high school, and Jocelyn, in college. Both women ran for, and won, their respective offices in their 20s.

"A lot of people didn't take me seriously," said Jocelyn. "People said, no, wait your turn. That's what I kept getting, until I met Sara." Sara and IGNITE gave her the boost she needed, she said.



Karla was surprised that her youth seemed to help her connect with voters. "People didn't immediately ask about my age as much as I thought they would," she said. "I was a newswoman, and I think that encouraged people that I could change the scene. I'm Latina, I look like their students, I look like their daughters, and ultimately I think that's how I earned their confidence."

As they campaigned, Karla and Jocelyn learned the importance of listening to every voice. "We took the time to go door-to-door," said Karla. We talked to people, we heard their stories."

"I had conversation after conversation," said Jocelyn. "What I noticed was that people just want to be heard. They want a representative who will be there for them."

Both women bring their backgrounds, challenges, and well-earned perspectives to the decision-making table. In elected representatives, Jocelyn said, voters hope to see "someone who's lived through their experience... someone who can empathize with their experience." That's the meaning, and the value, of representation – for women, young women, women of color, and so many others who often feel like politicians just don't get it.

Three months ago, Jocelyn became a mother, and began to see even more clearly why representation matters. She recalled attending a community event that had everything: a great guest list, locally made, delicious drinks... but no private space for her to breastfeed. "I had to breastfeed my baby in the bathroom," she said. "The reality is that politics is not designed for women. We cannot leave the gender gap in politics until we have spaces that are designed for women, for moms, and for families."



"There are so many barriers," she said. "Together, we need to change that." And we need to start young – you, even younger than school-age.

"The way we raise boys and girls, as a society, is so different," said Jocelyn. "As girls and then women, we were raised to be perfectionists, to be careful, to be caregivers, versus men who were raised to be courageous, to take risks. So when you're thinking about women running for office, it sometimes takes a lot of courage."

That's where IGNITE comes in – and where your unique passion comes in. In Sara's words, your "why" – what makes you angry? What keeps you up at night? What needs to change?

"Our why is the thing that's going to keep you pushing forward," said Karla.

"I would love to encourage everyone to take a minute to think about something that upsets you," she said. "Do need to look for why is traffic so bad? Why don't schools have what they need? Think about that issue and dive into it. Show up to speak at a meeting, or contact a representative. The more we hear from constituents, the more we feel pressure to take action."

All the above... "and run for office!" said Jocelyn. "We need more women in office because we can't get policies that directly impact our lives and other women's lives. Vote, run for office, make a difference."

Visit [IGNITE](#) or [32777](#) for personalized help with casting your vote this November 3, and [donate to IGNITE](#) to support national programming that helps young women like Karla and Jocelyn to run, win, and lead.

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