

FINAL
Sue Mullen

I'm Sue Mullen. Thank you so much to The Women's Foundation for the **distinct** honor of representing the alumnae of Women Run! NH's only nonpartisan effort designed to empower and train women on how to run for office. Looking at the photo of my **own** cohort of participants, I am reminded of the **sincerity, energy** and **aspiration** in the room that day.

As a little girl, growing up right **here** in Manchester, I could **never** have imagined standing before such an **enormous** group of **diverse** and **talented** people, all because someone **else** thought I might have something meaningful to say.

I give credit to my **parents** who used to pose a question to their four children at the dinner table every night that went something like this: **What did you do to make a difference today?**

Sometimes the answer was about a **small** act of kindness. Other times it might be about some **cause** we were adopting. But the **expectation** was always the same: **As PEOPLE, we should be constantly asking ourselves what we are doing to make the world a better place.**

For **me**, that simple question **propelled** me into a **lifetime** of public service, **first** as an educator, and **now**, in my “**recycled**” role as a State Representative. I used to refer to myself as “**retired**,” but, well, there’s a little bit of **WORK** involved in serving in the **House**...and I was **not** particularly good at being retired.

PAUSE

My decision to run for office was born of my **deepening** awareness that the **politicizing** of America was eroding some of our **essential** values. **Civility**, even in disagreement, used to be a given. As **rigidity** and **intimidation** began to replace **cooperation** and **compassion** as the norm, I felt **compelled** to do something. **ANYTHING**. So, I started to think that **maybe**, crazy as it seemed, just **maybe**, I ought to run for office, and then I said it out loud.

My cousin, Patti, was actually the first person who told me about Women Run. She had seen an ad somewhere and sent the info to me. That led me to spend a day in the company of women who believed that we can **all** make a difference!

What I possessed in **desire**, I absolutely **LACKED** in knowing how to organize a political campaign. On a sunny Saturday in September of 2017, I learned about **position statements, fundraising and canvassing and team building.**

I came home from the event with **conviction** and a plan. I felt my **confidence** rising as I set up appointments with my friends and family and asked them to participate in **very specific ways**. I designated a couple of people to each role: **campaign manager, house party organizer, sign guy, media manager, letters to the editor and volunteer coordinators, and fiscal agent.**

I won't lie; the learning curve was **steep**! But, as each role was filled by a **generous and enthusiastic soul, The Friends of Sue Mullen** began to take shape. And it was that collaborative and strategic approach, inspired by my Women Run! training that got me across the finish line.

The **Women Run! program** is only **2 years old** yet it has **already made a meaningful impact** - launching **5** of its graduates into elected offices at the City level and propelling **10 women** into the NH legislature in 2018.

I am proud to report that the number of women serving in the NH legislature increased by 20 after the 2018 election and 50% of that increase can be attributed to graduates of this program, many of whom are with us here today.

And **now it's our turn to help build the network and spread the word to find the next class of Women Run! recruits** - so that we can keep that number growing in 2020 and close the gender gap in the New Hampshire State House where women hold only 34% of the seats in the House of Representatives.

I know that there are women sitting in this audience who are wondering if they should run. I know about your **concerns, your doubts**. You can probably think of a dozen reasons why you should **NOT** run.

Run anyhow.

I know that some of you are considering the **time commitment**, whether or not you're **smart enough**, or if your **family** will suffer.

Run **despite** your fear. Run because there's never been a time when your voice is needed more. Run because it WILL make a difference. And, run because, in the end, it's the most powerful thing we can do.

Thank you, Women Run and the New Hampshire Women's Foundation for helping me to honor my parents – I made a difference today!