



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

January 2020 NAAFA Newsletter

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2019 in Review and Looking Forward

by Darlene Howell



As a nonprofit civil rights organization, NAAFA's goal is to help build a society in which people of every size are accepted with dignity and equality in all aspects of life. Our aim is to pursue this goal through advocacy, public education, and support.

For 50 years NAAFA has advocated for people of size in many ways. How we do this has changed dramatically over the years as we work to remain a vital resource to our members and the public alike. At present, our tools include the NAAFA website, our social media presence, educational brochures and fact sheets, webinars, monthly online newsletters, media interviews, conferences, and more.

Video of the Month



The Funny Thing About Being Fat

Comedian Sofie Hagen uses humor and facts to get the point across. She really gets it. Fat liberation means an end to discrimination!

youtube.com/watch?v=jxlcGkugZ18

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In 2019, we were an information resource to media outlets such as the Associated Press, *New York Times*, *Wall St. Journal*, *Deseret News*, *Teen Vogue*, Yahoo News, BBC, blogs and podcasts.

Our website, www.naafa.org, had visitors from 114 different countries of the world.

Our educational brochures are made available to the public free of charge. There were 3,047 copies of brochures downloaded from our website and another 662 from the online publisher, ISSUU.com.

Other fabulous and informative resources available at no cost to the public are the webinars that NAAFA has sponsored. We held six webinars in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, we paused our webinar series to prepare for our 50th Anniversary celebration. All past webinars are available on our website (<https://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/community/events.html>). Even with no new episodes last year, 97 people from places across the globe came to our webinar page to view these timeless webinars.

NAAFA has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Future development of this presence is something that we are looking to address. Currently, we have 4,443 followers in the various forms of social media. There were 152 postings in 2019 and people shared those posts 1,171 times. With these postings we reached over 100,000 people.

The year 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of NAAFA and we held a special conference to honor our past and create our future. The three-day conference held June 14 - 16, 2019 in Las Vegas at Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall was attended by people from all over the country, with one participant from the United Kingdom! The conference featured three keynote speakers, 13 educational workshops, the NAAFA Photo Project, a vendor-centered fashion show and more. Based on our goal of including more diverse individuals who might not have otherwise been able to attend the 50th Anniversary Celebration Conference, NAAFA members generously donated to a scholarship fund for students, members of marginalized gender identities, indigenous people and persons of color.

Since the conference, we have formed the Future of NAAFA Committee to work with the Board of Directors in further development of the organization. The first meeting is scheduled for January 2020.

Plans are in the works for additional webinars in 2020. We will be announcing those as dates are finalized to allow everyone to sign up and attend. To further our goal to be more inclusive, we plan to have our webinars transcribed and post those transcriptions on our website.

During 2019 several of NAAFA's brochures were translated into Spanish by Mindful Eating Mexico, a HAES-based practice. The

[Instagram](#)

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brochures are currently being edited and are slated to be finalized for publication and introduction in February/March 2020. These new resources will strengthen our goal of public education to include a worldwide market of Spanish-speaking people.

All our projects use volunteers and any costs are paid from membership fees and donations. The generous donations of people like you are welcomed in helping us move NAAFA and Equality At Every Size forward. Should you wish to contribute to a specific project, you may earmark donations. By making ongoing monthly donations, no matter the amount, you show yourself to be one of NAAFA's most passionate and forward-thinking supporters. Your automatic monthly gift can help provide sustained resources by providing a consistent and reliable source of funding. It reduces administrative costs and by contributing monthly, even a small amount can add up over time. Please consider becoming a monthly donor by going to https://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/get_involved/join-give.html

We welcome the New Year and look forward to achieving Equality At Every Size!

Fat Fashion Focus: Lorenza James by Elle Dove



NAAFA Member Crystal Newman wore this Lorenza James by Elle Dove crowd-pleaser on the runway at the NAAFA50 fashion show last summer. Both Elle Dove and Crystal were making their NAAFA fashion debut!

When we asked *Plus Model Magazine* Blog Editor and fashion expert Marcy Cruz to be the special guest emcee of the Fashion Show at NAAFA50 last year, we knew we were getting someone special. What we didn't know was that Marcy was going to bring someone else special into the NAAFA World. Marcy introduced us to Elle Dove's Lorenza James line, which was a big hit on our summer runway. We are thrilled to spotlight Elle here so even more of our NAAFA friends and fans can get to know this up-and-coming designer.

Elle has known she wanted to be a fashion designer since she was in third grade. She describes herself as "that artsy fartsy type of kid" who loved anything that had to do with creative self-expression. When her third grade teacher taught a special art unit on Georgia O'Keefe's famous flower paintings, Elle was inspired to sketch her first dress design based on

that flower. She kept drawing dresses from then on. "Years later I looked at some old sketches and realized I was basically designing prom dresses all those years," she says. "I was really ahead of my time!"

Elle continued to take inspiration from the world around her, basing designs on shapes and even numbers. As a teen, she took every kind of art class available to her, eventually earning a fine arts seal of distinction on her high school diploma because she had taken so many art classes. Through the encouragement of a guidance counselor and with the support of her family, Elle relocated from her hometown of Atlanta to Orlando to pursue double-degrees in Fashion Design and Fashion Merchandising from the International Academy of Design and Tech. "I learned how to do every single aspect of fashion from scratch--design, fabric sourcing, tech set-up for manufacturing, everything," she explains.

But the one thing Elle didn't learn in school was how to meet the needs of plus-size fashionistas. "They still had that idea that you just make it bigger; just turn an 8 into an 18. But that's not how plus size bodies work," Elle says. Elle had grown up in a family of fashionable plus size women, many of whom are what we now call extended sizes (26 and up). Because the women in her family worked so hard to find great-looking clothes despite limited options, she didn't understand that many plus-size women in other places were finding that task impossible. Once she began her formal education, Elle could see how the industry ignored plus-size shoppers. Her assignments even left her out. "I'm thinking, 'I'm doing really beautiful stuff and I can't even wear it! I want to be one of my own clients!'" Upon graduation, she immediately began doing plus-size designs, with a special focus on larger plus sizes.

Post-graduation, Elle moved back to Atlanta, where her parents offered her a tremendous amount of support in starting her own line, Lorenza James (named for her grandparents). They purchased her first equipment and took her on road trips to find unique fabric in other parts of Georgia. Lorenza James began with an Etsy store. Eventually, Elle married, and her husband helped support her to do designing full-time for a year so she could participate in more plus size fashion events and big fashion shows.

Since then, she has made appearances at numerous shows, including the Curvy Fashionista's Style Expo and 3P Consultant's Essence of Curves event. She prioritizes using extended size models of various shapes, and she predominantly features women of color, particularly dark-skinned African-American women, because she knows there are fewer opportunities for them in the fashion world. Elle has experienced discrimination as a Black designer, but she refuses to let that stop her. "When you are Black or you use Black models, that can get your brand labeled as urban, and people try to use that to devalue you and your designs," Elle says. But she knows her worth, and she knows her customer base. She considers it an honor and a part of her legacy to showcase extended-size couture.

Elle is new to thinking about the activist side of fat community, and she's still learning to embrace the word fat. "I get it, but it's still a little cringy to me," she admits. Most of her customers refer to themselves as plus-size, but "some of them are like call me whatever you want to call me because I'll still be sexy." Elle is making them sexier and more glamorous with her high fashion looks, and also making casual wear that is contemporary with an edge. But she knows part of her role in size positivity is doing more than just making the clothes. "I don't want to be one of the designers who just does fashion and lets everybody else do all the work," she declares. Elle's future includes expanding her audience as a designer and deepening her understanding of the rich history of fat activism. We can't wait to see what Elle as a woman and Lorenza James as a brand have for us next!

Lorenza James by Elle Dove

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/LorenzaJamesbyElle>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LorenzaJamesByElleDove>

IG: @designer_elledove

Meme of the Month

January is Self-Love Month

Tip #1



Just say "NO!" to diets!



Braving Body Shame

by Peggy Howell

**Hear my story and
over 30 more!!
Register Now!!**

Braving

Body Shame

**online conference
February 2020**

www.bravingbodyshame.com

Sadly, body shaming is alive and well and flourishing in our world in 2020 when one would hope we would have become more enlightened and accepting of our differences, but that is not the case. More than 30 people have shared our stories of overcoming body shaming in our lives. Registration is now open at www.bravingbodyshame.com

There are pricing options so that everyone can hear these amazing interviews. Conference begins in February. Can you imagine a father singing "I don't want her, you can have her, she's too fat for me" to his young daughters? Register today and hear my story. #bravingbodyshame

NAAFA Chronicles No. 48

For this month's NAAFA Chronicles feature, here's NAAFA's 48th newsletter, September - October 1981:

http://www.naafaonline.com/newsletterstuff/oldnewsletterstuff/Chronicles/Sept-Oct_1981.pdf

For more, click the "Chronicles" tab in the newsletter section of the NAAFA website.

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

September 21, 2019: CurvyGirlInc.com thanks NAAFA for its 50 years of Advocacy and Activism and provides a list of the places in the United States where weight discrimination is

illegal.

<http://curvygirlinc.com/laws-for-fat-rights>

December 2019: The Riveter interviews Lindy West about activism, being a good ally, and fat liberation.

<https://theriveter.co/voice/lindy-west-on-fat-liberation>

December 15, 2019: ABC Life talks to various professionals about fat phobia and the damage it causes.

<https://www.abc.net.au/life/health-impacts-of-weight-stigma-and-fatphobia/11728522>

December 17, 2019: Stories of fat babies starved by fatphobic parents, and children and adults denied medical treatment when health problems are blamed on weight, illustrate the dangers of fatphobia.

<https://www.upworthy.com/viral-post-shows-how-fatphobia-has-life-and-death-consequences-even-for-babies-and-kids>

December 19, 2019: Your Fat Friend tells us it is time to start casting fat people to play fat roles in movies, and we agree.

<https://gen.medium.com/its-time-to-start-casting-fat-actors-in-fat-roles-c834136b19df>

December 28, 2019: As Malaysia comes under the cloud of being "Asia's fattest country", fat activist, writer and scholar Nadia Rasidi discusses how urban design is used to remove the fat person from the landscape for political and financial agendas.

<https://thecitymaker.com.my/designing-out-fatness>

January 2020: The 8th Annual Weight Stigma Conference is scheduled to take place June 22-23, 2020 in Auckland, New Zealand, and is accepting abstracts for sessions, oral presentations and posters.

<https://stigmaconference.com/abstract-submission>

January 4, 2020: Mimi Cole provides an excellent explanation why she believes the "obesity epidemic" is actually a moral issue that values some people over others based on their bodies, going into detail of why common beliefs about dieting and weight loss are simply myths.

<https://vanderbilthustler.com/29287/featured/intuitive-eating-with-mimi-why-i-dont-believe-the-obesity-epidemic-is-a-problem>

January 6, 2020: For the third year in a row, the keto diet is listed as one of the worst possible diets by U.S. News and World Report.

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/z3bv94/keto-diet-experts-rank-best

January 13, 2020: Nadia Rasidi suggests that the PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) community would benefit from having a weight neutral attitude toward weight gain, which is one of the symptoms of PCOS.

<https://wearyourvoicemag.com/sex-and-health/pcos-advocacy-fat-activism>

January 15, 2020: A study compares the hazards (hospitalization, mortality, etc.) for the two most common forms of WLS (weight loss surgery) over a 5 year period, and finds that both have relatively common problems, and have similar all-cause mortality rates (just under 1% at the 5 year point).

<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamasurg.2019.5470>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-

profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

Comments: pr@naafa.org

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