

SABRINA
The Genius
GONZALEZ PASTERSKI



PHYSICIST & HARVARD PH.D. CANDIDATE

Bragging Rights: The 23-year-old has been name-checked by Stephen Hawking and called “the next Einstein” by her Harvard mentors; she has a standing job offer from Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. **Early drive:** “When I was little, I wanted to design spacecraft,” says the Chicago native, who did the next best thing and took flying lessons at age 9. When she was 12, she began building a single-engine airplane from a kit in her garage; it took two years to complete. Once it was certified as airworthy, she took it for a spin, becoming the youngest person in history, at age 16, to build and fly her own plane. That same year, she was admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. **Words of advice:** “Be optimistic about what you believe you can do,” says Pastorski, who in 2013 was the first woman in two decades to graduate from MIT at the top of her physics class. (And she did it in just three years while she was still in her teens.) “When you’re little, you say a lot of things about what you’ll do or be when you’re older—I think it’s important not to lose sight of those dreams.” **Motivating motto:** “What have you done lately?” **Check her out:** physicsgirl.com.

JACKET, \$498, POLO RALPH LAUREN. Photograph by JAN WELTERS

FASHION EDITOR: ALISON EDMOND; HAIR: JENNY CHOI; MAKEUP: ANITA WITTES; MANICURE: MARIAN PASTORSKI; STYLING: JESSICA WILSON; PRODUCTION: MCGA ZUMBRICH; GAMP PRODUCTIONS

“THERE ARE GIRLS ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO ARE HUNGRY TO LEARN AND WHO TAKE EXTRAORDINARY RISKS JUST TO HAVE A CHANCE TO FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL.”

RIGHT: Michelle Obama, who founded Let Girls Learn in March 2015



FROM TOP LEFT: Obama with girls on International Women's Day in March 2016; the first lady at a Let Girls Learn presentation in Madrid; Albertha, 19, is studying business in Liberia thanks to Let Girls Learn



FROM TOP: ART STREIBER; AUGUST; PHOTOGRAPH BY FOSTER; BURKE; MARIAN PASTORSKI; GENCY/GETTY IMAGES; NIELSEN; BROWNDOLBY/SHAD

The Role Model
MICHELLE OBAMA

MARIE CLAIRE'S YOUNG WOMEN'S HONORS IS ALL ABOUT INSPIRATION. WHAT BETTER PARTNER THAN THE FIRST LADY'S LET GIRLS LEARN?

Michelle Obama knows how much work it can take for a girl to get an education. Growing up in a cramped, noisy apartment on the South Side of Chicago, she often woke up at 4 a.m. to study in peace. “I can tell you, my education has been the key to everything I’ve been able to achieve in my life,” the first lady told MC. “So for me, this issue has always been personal.” Which is why, in March 2015, she launched Let Girls Learn (LGL), a bold initiative to raise awareness about the fact that, worldwide, 98 million girls are out of school. “There are girls all over the world who are hungry to learn and who take extraordinary risks just to have a chance to fulfill their potential,” Obama says. “I knew I wanted to make it my mission to help them get the education they deserve.”

Nearly two years later, LGL has invested more than \$1 billion in new and ongoing government programming in over 50 countries; signed on 11 nations—from the U.K. to Mexico to South Korea—with some pledging an additional \$600 million; and enlisted more than 100 companies and organizations to pitch in supplies, expertise, and financial support. Such investments are already making an impact in Pakistan, where 12-year-old Sana Sufiyan, who used to work eight-hour shifts in a shoe factory, is now learning to read and write after an LGL grantee persuaded her parents to enroll her in school; and in Malawi, where Halima Robert, who was forced to drop out of school to wed at 15, had her marriage annulled and continued her studies thanks to an LGL program that discourages child marriage. “I carry the stories of the girls I’ve met with me every day,” Obama says. “Their passion, intelligence, and determination are an inspiration to me, and I plan to keep speaking out on their behalf, not just for the rest of my time as first lady, but for the rest of my life.” *Take action to help girls around the world get an education. Go to letgirlslearn.gov to find out how to get involved.* —Kayla Webley Adler



marie claire

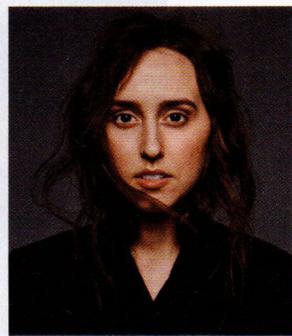


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THE UNSTOPPABLES



FROM LEFT: Liz Lutz has a high-flying job as an aerial photographer; physicist and MC's Young Women's Honors recipient Sabrina Gonzalez Pasterski; Gina Rodriguez in Emilio Pucci

EDITOR'S NOTE

Tour de FORCE

I've said it before, but, hands down, my favorite thing about this job is meeting the extraordinary women we cover at *Marie Claire*. Sure, I can't complain about the rush of chasing a great story, or the buzz of creative collaboration, or the fun of watching a brand-new collection walk the runway—but if I'm being completely honest, nothing excites me more than meeting women I admire. No matter the story, I am always amazed by how much I learn from their narratives.

From our cover star, Gina Rodriguez, I can say I've truly learned the power of dreaming big. We started working together almost a year ago on *Marie Claire's* Young Women's Honors, our first-ever televised awards show, airing December 19 on The CW network. From hearing her stories of growing up with parents who pushed her to pursue education to teaming up over the past year on our shared dream of creating an awards show honoring young women, I have been blown away by Gina's unflagging energy and positive spirit. And we're thrilled to announce that Michelle Obama's Let Girls Learn is our exclusive foundation partner for the show, ensuring that young girls around the world have access to education.

This issue is filled with women who have made outsize impacts on their respective fields, altered history, or changed the world. Check out "100 Moments Women Killed It in 2016" (p. 56). Or Eleanor Freeman, whose taste buds are insured for \$3.7 million ("In Your Dreams," p. 47). And I invite you to get inspired by our honorees (p. 94), including Madison Maxey, who founded a company that creates "smart" fabrics that will change what our clothes can do; Sabrina Gonzalez Pasterski, a physics superstar who, at 16, became the youngest person to build a plane herself and then fly it; and 25-year-old Amanda Nguyen, who wrote a bill protecting sexual-assault survivors that sailed through Congress (unanimously!) and was enacted into federal law. When my daughter asked Nguyen what she wanted to be when she "grew up," she replied that she wanted to be either an astronaut or president of the United States. Talk about inspiration.



Anne Fulenwider

Anne Fulenwider
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OK, NOW TALK TO ME!

Tell me what you love, don't love so much, or want to see more of in *Marie Claire*. I want to hear it all! Bear with me if I don't respond immediately.



Dear Sabrina,

On behalf of Golden Globe–winning actress Gina Rodriguez, cofounder and executive producer of *Marie Claire's Young Women's Honors*, and Anne Fulenwider, Editor-in-Chief of *Marie Claire*, it is our great pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to be one of our inaugural honorees. We would be thrilled for you to be part of this new global platform that celebrates the achievement, drive, and greatness of young women around the world. The mission of Young Women's Honors is to promote positivity and inclusivity and to underscore that every woman is born with unlimited potential and possibility. You are the epitome of what this show represents.

Chosen by a distinguished panel of leaders, each of our honorees is being recognized for her exceptional accomplishments that serve as an inspiration to other young women who may follow her example and blaze trails of their own. From icons to influencers, athletes to activists, our show spotlights young women making a vital difference to better their communities and the world. As Gina says, "When you see someone following their dreams, it allows you to follow your own."

We invite you to accept your award in person on Saturday, November 19, in Santa Monica, California, at the Barker Hangar, where the ceremony will be taped. We will feature your story on the CW Network broadcast or webcast on December 19. We are of course happy to cover your travel expenses.

In addition, Young Women's Honors has partnered with the preeminent women's magazine, *Marie Claire*, which will feature a portfolio of the honorees in its January 2017 issue to coincide with the broadcast. We are hopeful you will be able to join Gina for a photo shoot of our honorees, which will take place in Los Angeles on Sunday, October 9, as well as do a brief phone interview by the end of September. Should you not be available in Los Angeles on this date, we will discuss alternative options for your inclusion.

Congratulations on this recognition of your commitment to excellence. I am happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible.

With great appreciation,

Gina Rodriguez, Anne Fulenwider & The YWH Team