

REDEFINE PRIME

Combating Ageism Against Women

“Aren’t you just so cute?”

“Don’t you think you should dye your hair, you know, to get rid of the gray?”

“You’re out of touch.”

“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

“Aren’t you too old for that?”

“Do you even know how to use a computer?”

“You aren’t a good cultural fit here.”

**“You look
so good for
your age!”**

THE PROBLEM

Ageism is a serious issue and one that women disproportionately face as they get older according to recent studies.¹ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines ageism as “Age discrimination involves treating an applicant or employee less favorably because of his or her age.”² The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) only covers workers who are 40 or older, however, there are some states who also have provisions against age discrimination for younger workers.³ Katy Read, in an article in the *Star Tribune*, outlines a number of seemingly funny, or well-meaning examples of ageism at work such as black balloons for a birthday party, patronizing language like “dear”, comments about appearance and age, and algorithms promoting anti-aging products on Facebook feeds for people over a certain age.⁴ None of it is funny; it’s a serious issue we don’t talk about in American society but one that affects nearly every family and certainly every community. With the need for more skilled workers than ever before, ageism shouldn’t be an issue and yet it affects hiring consistently and women are more likely to be overlooked than men.

David Neumark, Ian Burn, and Patrick Button conducted a resume experiment where they sent out over 40,000 resumes for posted job positions using comparable data so that the only differences, essentially, were age and

gender. Their findings indicated that there was “robust evidence of age discrimination in hiring against older women, especially those near retirement age.”⁵ This study explored ageism in the workplace and approached it in a completely scientific method. No people were actually sent for interviews so the discrimination was solely indicative of age and gender. Elizabeth Wallace reported that AARP conducted a survey in 2018 which found 61% of those surveyed over the age of 45 felt they had been discriminated against in their workplace with the highest percentages among women, African-Americans and Hispanics.⁶ Despite the alarming statistics, things are starting to change. Christina Vuleta and Whitney Johnson started the Forty Over 40 list which celebrates women who are leaders in their fields and or their communities and who are over 40.⁷ Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP, stated what most people considered “over-the-hill” feel, “We don’t want to be defined by our age any more than we want to be defined by race or sex or income...We see the world through a lens shaped by the ups and downs of life and the wisdom gained from those experiences.”⁸ If we are focused as a society on ending discrimination and celebrating diversity, then ageism needs to be addressed as seriously as racism and sexism. And, in the case of ageism, it is also often combined or compounded by racism and sexism.

1 David Neumark, Ian Burn, and Patrick Button, “Is It Harder for Older Workers to Find Jobs? New and Improved Evidence from a Field Experiment,” (working paper 21669, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, 2017), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21669.pdf>.

2 “Age Discrimination,” United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/age.cfm>

3 Ibid.

4 Katy Read, “12 Examples of Everyday Ageism,” *Star Tribune*, October 17, 2017, <http://www.startribune.com/12-examples-of-everyday-ageism/451306773/?refresh=true>.

5 Neumark, Burn, and Button.

6 Elizabeth Wallace, “This is How You Reinvent Yourself If You Lose Your Job at 45,” *Life Begins At* (blog), *Refinery29*, February 19, 2019, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2019/02/221961/sallie-krawcheck-how-to-reinvent-your-career>.

7 Vivian Nunez, “About,” *Forty Over 40*, 2019. <http://fortyover40.com/about-40-40/>.

8 Jo Ann Jenkins, “Let’s Disrupt Aging and Rethink Getting Older,” *Huffington Post*, December 6, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rethink-aging_b_5926896.

THE SOLUTION

The only way to combat ageism is to educate people about what it is and to begin to challenge and change attitudes toward aging in our culture. Like other “isms,” people do not fit into stereotypes simply by assigning them to a particular age group or demographic age bracket.

Since women are the predominant target of ageism, particularly in the workplace, any solution must address the problem holistically. Workplace cultural norms regarding aging must be challenged for age discrimination to be overcome.

My solution is to address ageism against women in the workplace through a combined print, web, and social media campaign entitled “REDEFINE PRIME.” As people who are over 40 often told they are “past their prime” the REDEFINE PRIME campaign re-frames what that means and challenges people’s ideas of what women can and do contribute to society when they are over 40.

My goal is to provide a series of posters and social media posts that highlight the accomplishments of women who were over the age of 40 at the time they were acknowledged for their most famous work. For the social media campaigns, a “Learn More” button would lead people to a website that highlighted the accomplishments of the person on the poster or social media post. The posters would have a “Learn More at redefineprime.net” link. The goal is to make people aware that women over 40 are important to the cultural, social, scientific, and artistic communities and are valuable members of any organization. It would be targeted toward human resource recruiters and also women job seekers. For the human resource recruiters, the

message helps to highlight the value women over 40 have to an organization. For women job seekers, it will help change internal perceptions that block their belief in their own worth to an organization. While the posters will contain the same information, the website will have space for recruiters and also space for job seekers. It would not be intended as a job listing site, but rather the web site would provide resources for finding out more about ageism and what to do about it from both ends of the hiring spectrum. The target educational component would be geared specifically for addressing ageism against women over 40.

TERMS

Ageism – (EEOC) “Age discrimination involves treating an applicant or employee less favorably because of his or her age.”¹

Prime – (noun) “the period in your life when you are most active or successful.”² Often people over the age of 40 are perceived to be “past their prime” or they are considered not as active or as successful as a younger employee.

1 “Age Discrimination,” United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/age.cfm>

2 *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “prime (n.),” accessed June 16, 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/prime>

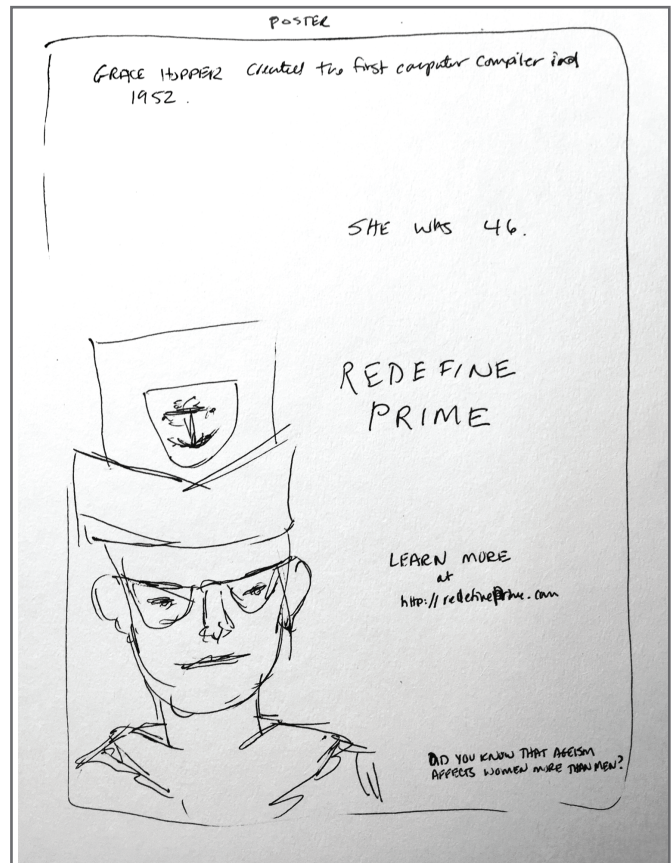
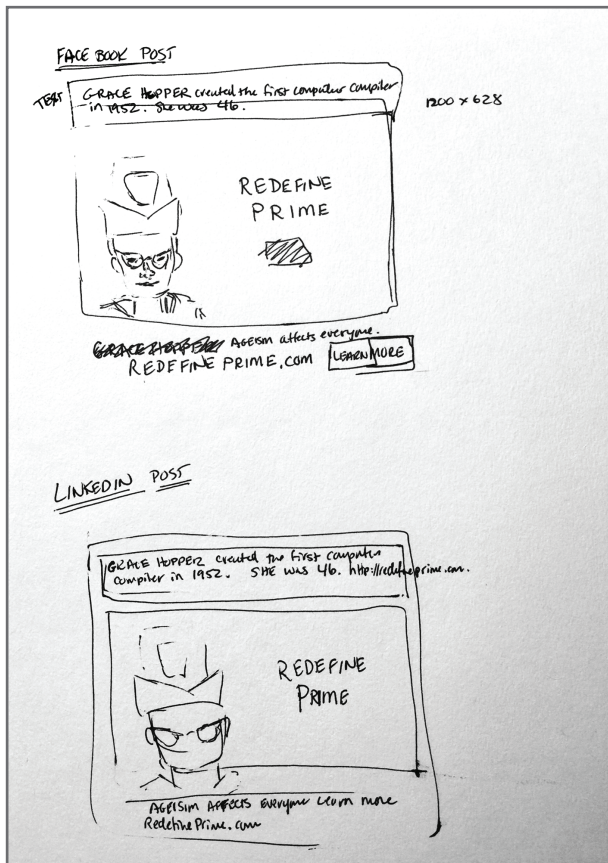
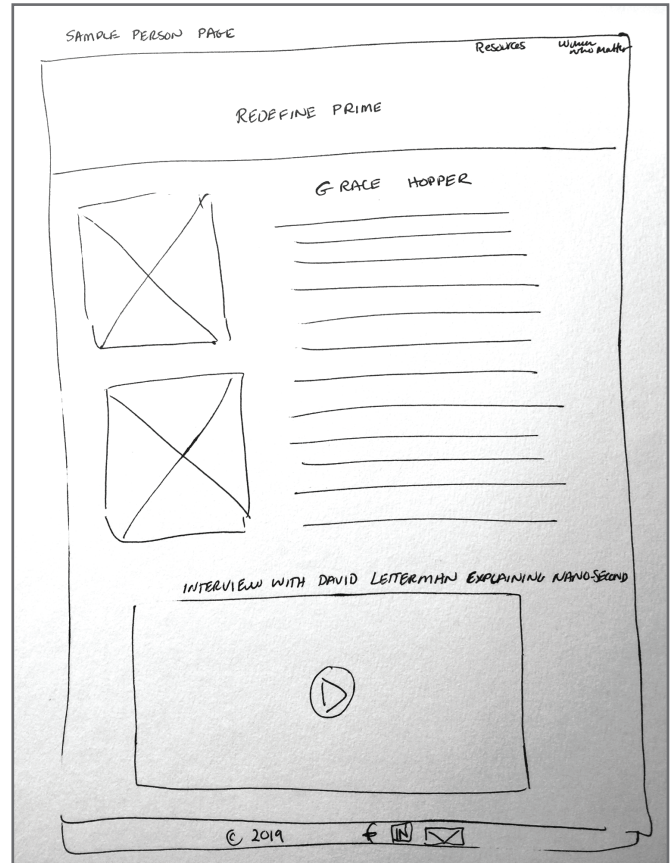
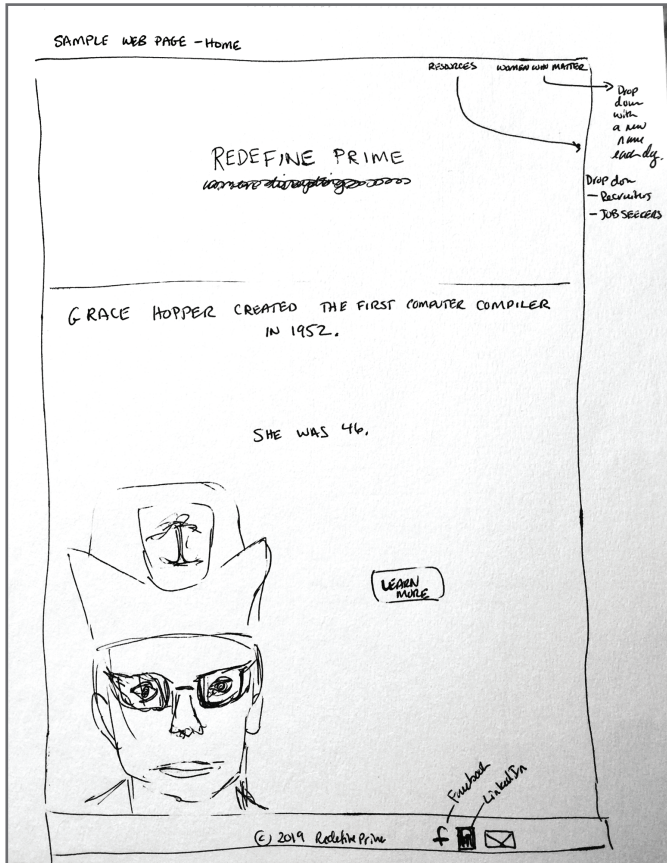
METHODOLOGY

The time-frame would be targeted for Women's History Month in March of 2020. The posters would be released each day with a new poster being available for download and a new social media post on Facebook and LinkedIn targeting that particular woman's accomplishment. The social media posts would have a "Learn More" button that would take you to a website which would have all of the recipients' information and what their accomplishments were and that would also be the "home" page for that day. In addition, the site would have, as mentioned previously, resources for hiring managers to help them recognize ageism and combat it as well as for job seekers to help them overcome internal perceptions about their self-worth while looking for worthwhile work. It wouldn't be a job-listing site, but ideally it would highlight companies that are acknowledged for their inclusivity particularly inclusivity regarding age. The logo will be placed on the social media sites so that the eyes of the subject are in alignment.

CONSIDERATIONS

Items needed would be Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator, Photoshop), permission for photos of women highlighted if still living and photos are not in the public domain, website domain name and space for hosting the site, social media accounts, advertising funds for Facebook. Limitations would be time for this particular project. Since it would mean a page for each recipient, the website would be fairly large, particularly if there were video links for TED talks or other video resources if available of any interviews with the person. The site would have 31 recipient pages, a home page, an about page, resource page for recruiters, and a resource page for job seekers at a minimum for a total of 35 pages to start. The website would be the most complicated simply due to the amount of information required. Each day would reveal a new woman's accomplishments and that page would be linked with the social media post for that person. For this project, I will attempt to create five posters, the matching Facebook and LinkedIn posts, as well as one sample page of a particular person and the home page for that day.

SKETCHES



COLOR PALETTE



#00AAAD

#2E3192

#4B0D62

#24420E

#98A6CB

#FEDA0D

Each color represents a different category. The aqua is for academic achievement. The deep blue is for technology. The wine purple is for cultural impact. The forest green is for advances in science. The light blue gray is for public service. Yellow and white are used for typography where needed as an accent color.

TYPOGRAPHY

MONTSEERRAT | 12PT MINIMUM

MONTSEERRAT THIN- The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT THIN ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT EXTRA LIGHT - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT EXTRA LIGHT ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT LIGHT - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT LIGHT ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT REGULAR - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT MEDIUM- The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT MEDIUM ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT SEMI-BOLD - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT SEMI-BOLD ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT BOLD - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT BOLD ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT EXTRA BOLD - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT EXTRA BOLD ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT BLACK - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MONTSEERRAT BLACK ITALIC - The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

WEBSITE - HOME

RESOURCES

WOMEN WHO MATTER



REDEFINE
PRIME

Grace Hopper wrote the first
computer compiler in 1952.



She was 46.

LEARN MORE



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WEBSITE - INTERIOR

RESOURCES WOMEN WHO MATTER



REDEFINE PRIME



GRACE HOPPER

Grace Brewster Murray Hopper (December 9, 1906 – January 1, 1992) was a computer pioneer and rose to the rank of Rear Admiral of the Navy. She created the first computer compiler in 1952 and also was an advocate of machine independent programming leading to the development of the COBOL programming language.

Before joining the Navy, Hopper earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale University and taught at Vassar College. Rejected initially because of her age (she was 34), she joined the Naval Reserves in 1944. In 1949, while working for Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation, she helped develop the UNIVAC machine, one of the first commercially available computers. Her computing work led her work on programming based on English which became the first computer compiler to translate English into machine code in 1952.

As early as the 1970s, she urged the Defense Department to move away from centralized computing to a more distributed model and created standards for computer testing and computer language testing. Her work became accepted as the standard by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Hopper was promoted to commodore on December 15, 1983 and then when the rank of commodore transitioned to rear admiral, she was named as one of the Navy's few female admirals. At the time of her official retirement August 14, 1986, she was the oldest active-duty commissioned officer in the Navy at 79 years. After her retirement, she went to work for Digital Equipment Corporation and continued to work until her death at age 85. ([Wikimedia Foundation: Grace Hopper](#))



60 Minutes interview with Grace Hopper, 1986

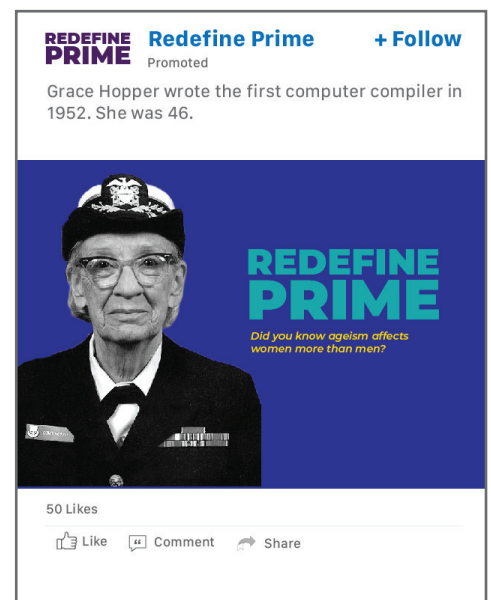


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POSTER + POSTS



Facebook

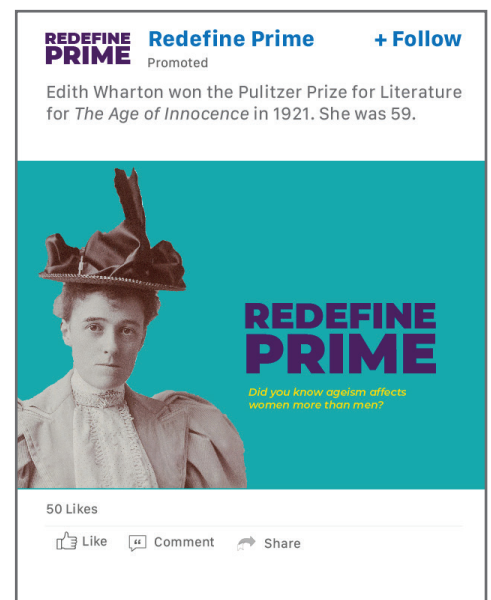


LinkedIn

POSTER + POSTS



Facebook

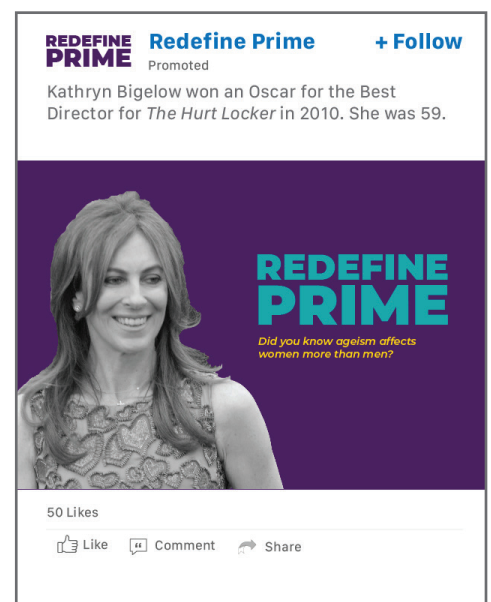


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POSTER + POSTS

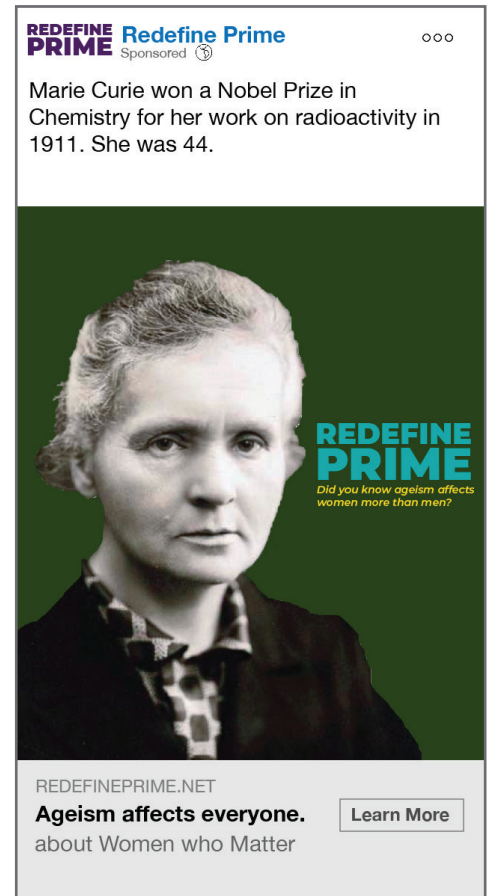
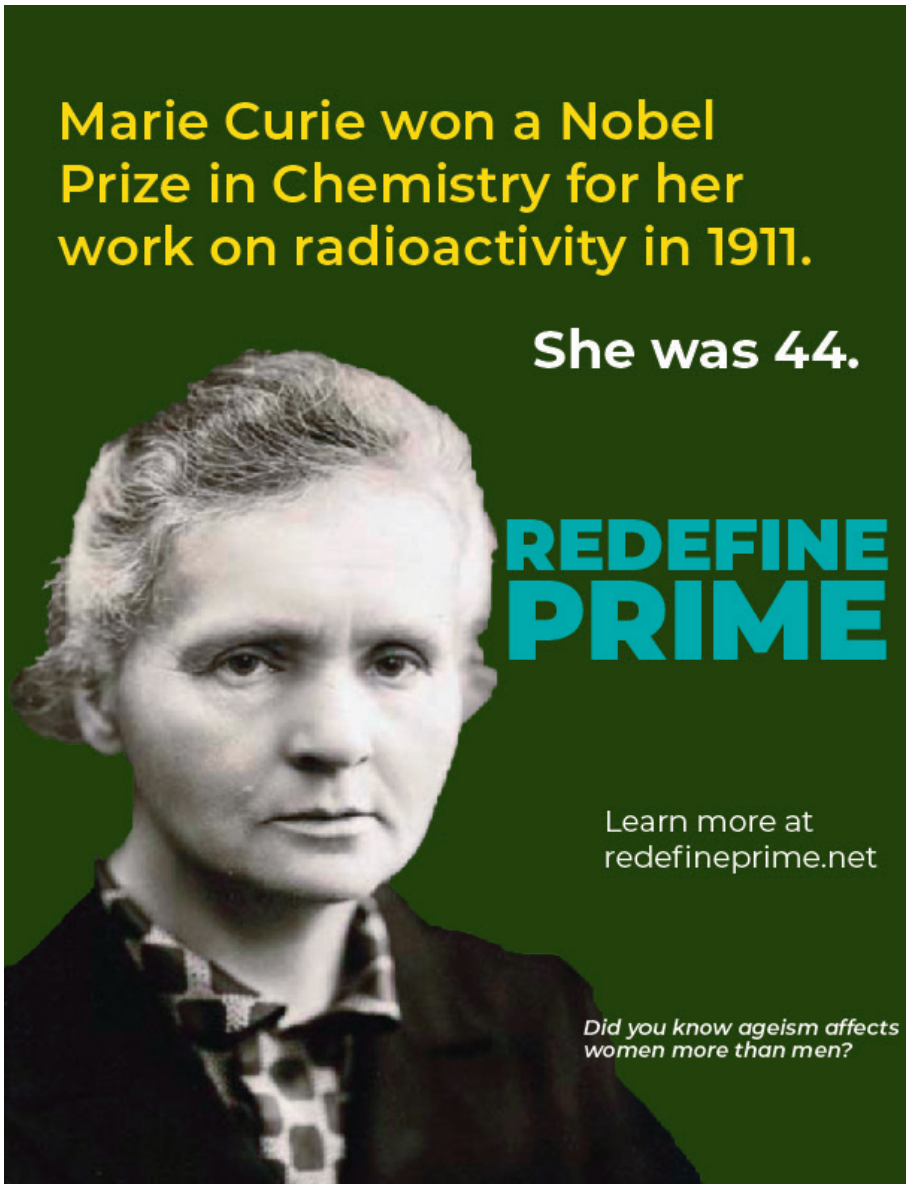


Facebook

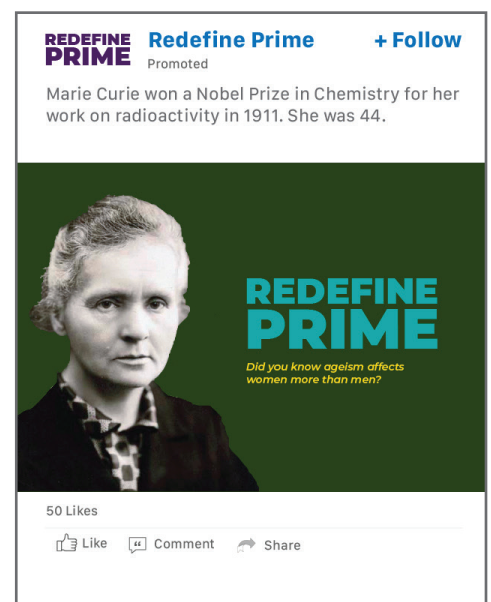


LinkedIn

POSTER + POSTS



Facebook



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Facebook



LinkedIn

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“We live in a youth-obsessed culture that is constantly trying to tell us that if we are not young, and we’re not glowing, and we’re not hot, that we don’t matter. I refuse to let a system or a culture or a distorted view of reality tell me that I don’t matter.”

Oprah Winfrey, in *O, the Oprah Magazine* 2011