

♀ ON OUR WAY

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

(617) 354-8807
TTY and VOICE



April '90

NO MORE! March to stop child sexual abusers

Come be a part of the first political march and demonstration to focus exclusively on child sexual abuse. It starts at noon on Saturday, April 28 at Boston City Hall Plaza. After some rousing speeches, demonstrators will march -- accompanied by the Batacuda Belles -- to the Boston Common (corner of Beacon and Charles) where there will be musicians, more speakers and an open mike speak-out.

Our vision for the event is to bring focused attention to the issue of child sexual abuse and to put energy and commitment into a movement dedicated to abuse-free lives for all children.

The invited speakers will focus on: sanctuary for children, a children's bill of rights, mothers protecting their children, the court system and other issues. A very important part of this event is the speak-out. We welcome survivors (children, women and men) and others who support an end to child sexual abuse to take this opportunity to speak at our open mike.

The demonstration is being organized by the Political Action Committee of Incest Survivors Network. It is being co-sponsored by the Boston Women's Commission and is endorsed by the Women's Center, N.O.W., R2N2, Mobilization for Survival, the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center and many other organizations. We have received financial support from the Boston Women's Foundation, the Haymarket People's Fund, Community Works and Resist. Members of Moving Violations will serve as marshals. Organizations are welcome to bring their banners to publicly show their support for this event.

Come and give a clear message of support to survivors. Let legislators and judges know that everything possible must be done to stop child sexual abusers and to support child victims and adult survivors. WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH!

NO MORE!



LALONDE LEGAL FUND

The Virginia LaLonde Legal Fund announces that the appeal of the June 1989 custody decision giving full legal custody of 11-year-old Nicole to her father, Stephen LaLonde, will be heard later this spring. Nicole alleged that Stephen had sexually abused her. Her mother, Virginia, spent 7 months in jail rather than turn Nicole over to Stephen for unsupervised visits. Virginia is in need of legal funds. Donations can be made to VLLF- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, 99 Bishop Allen Dr., Cambridge, MA 02139. Virginia will be speaking at the "Stop Child Sexual Abuse Rally" on April 28th (see accompanying article).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 8-10pm

- Apr 16 Fat Oppression
- 23 Differences in Same Sex/
Opposite Sex Communication
- 30 Sex
- May 7 S/M
- 14 Competition
- 21 Non-Monogomy

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

Tuesdays, 7:30-10pm

- Apr 17 Obsessions
- 24 Censorship
- May 1 Erotic Writing
- 8 Religion
- 15 Role Models For Youth
- 22 Stereotyping
- 29 How Women are Portrayed
in Popular Culture

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- Apr 17 Expressing Yourself Non-Verbally
- 24 Addiction to 12-Step Programs
- May 1 Lesbian: What's in a Label
- 8 Emotional Dependency in
Relationships
- 15 Shyness
- 22 Stereotyping: Butch/Femme - Is it
Back?
- 29 AIDS and Lesbians

FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR INCEST SURVIVORS

Third Thursdays, 7:30-9:15
(wheelchair accessible)

- Apr 19 Intimate Relationships
- May 17 Boundaries
- June 21 Friendship

THE GROUP THAT WASN'T

'Soulcial' Therapy, an open support group for lesbians of color, was announced in our last newsletter as a new group at the Center. However, the woman organizing the group was unable to continue, so the group is no longer meeting. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused. If anyone out there would be interested in starting a group for women of color, please call us. We'd love to talk to you.

ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

MONDAY

- Take Back the Night Org. Comm....7:30-9pm
- Support for Battered Women.....7:30-9pm
- Women's NA 12 step.....7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Rap.....8-10pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network-Intro
(1st Mon, even #d months)...7:30-9:45pm
- All Center Meeting (biweekly).....6-8pm

TUESDAY

- Women for Sobriety.....8-9:30pm
- Bisexual Women's Rap.....7:30-10pm
- 30+ Lesbian Rap.....7-8:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest
Survivors (1st & 3rd Tues.).....7-8:30pm
- Other Mothers (2nd Tues., monthly)...7-9pm
(lesbian non-biological co-parents)

WEDNESDAY

- Lesbian Al-Anon (childcare).....6:30-8pm
- Writer's Support.....7:30-9:30pm
- Lesbian Survivors of Childhood
Sexual Abuse (1st, 3rd Weds.).....7pm
- Healing Through Art for Incest Survivors
(1st Wed., monthly, non-abusers)..7-10pm
- Battered Women's Support Group
(Weekly except 3rd Wed. of month)..7-8pm

THURSDAY

- Incest Survivors Discussion
Group (weekly).....7:30-9:30pm
(facilitated 3rd Thursday, Sept.-June)
- Women's Community Cancer Project
(1st Thurs., monthly).....7-9pm
- Cancer Support Group
(2nd & 4th Thurs,
monthly).....7-9pm
- Lesbians Choosing Children Network
(2nd Thurs, monthly).....7:30-10pm

FRIDAY

- Birthmothers (1st,3rd Fri)....7:00-9:30pm
- Incest Survivors Anonymous.....6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Writer's Support Group
(biweekly).....noon-2pm
- Open discussion on Coming Out for Women
of All Ages(monthly, 1st Sat)...11am-1pm
- Single Mothers Support Group (childcare
provided) monthly,11am-12:30pm
- Support Group for Women with Chronic
Illness (biweekly).....12-1:30pm



TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The organizing committee for TAKE BACK THE NIGHT 1990 is now meeting in the Women's Center every Monday evening at 7:30pm. All women are welcome to attend. Much help and input is needed.

There has not been a Take Back The Night march in Boston for nearly a decade, yet male violence against women and children has been escalating at an alarming rate. "TBTN" is an opportunity for women to show their unity in protesting such violence in our homes, as well as in our streets. The march will promote awareness of gender directed violent crimes and show our community's support of women who have experienced such violence. Please join us! For more information, call 787-1145.

WOMEN'S SCHOOL SPRING TERM

Our Palestinian Women Friends

-Wednesday, May 2, 7-9pm

Menopause- A Self-Help Approach

-Wednesday, May 2, 7-9pm

Lesbian Families- Discussion

-Monday, May 7, 7:30-9pm

Reading for a Change

-Wednesday, May 9, 7-9pm

Anarcha-Feminism

-Saturday, May 19, 1-4pm

Graffiti- A Slide Show

-Wednesday, May 23, 7-8:30pm

Women & Disability

-Thursday, May 31, 7:30-9pm

All classes are at the Center and are free. Donations cover the expenses of the Women's School.

IMPROMPTU WRITING GROUP

If writing alone gets lonely, join us every other Saturday, 12 noon to 2pm. This everchanging cast of characters has been meeting for over three years in a non-critical supportive environment. Our casual format usually includes two 20 minute writing exercises followed by optional reading aloud and discussion plus two annual excursions. Past topics have included: haircuts, pears, friends, summer, what to take to the end of the world, a sound word exercise and many more. Nothing too bizarre or trite for us. For more information, call Bee at 666-8118 or Clara at 666-2851.

CHRONIC ILLNESS SUPPORT

A support group for women with chronic illness related to the immune system began meeting at the Women's Center in February of this year. Members include women living with environmental illness, candida, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome as well as undiagnosed conditions. The focus of the group is feminist, environmental and holistic.

Since the group is so new, we have yet to settle on a specific format. However, we have had discussions on money, finding adequate health care, diet, anger and coping with guilt. Although the group's focus is not political activism, several of the women in the group are interested in organizing around environmental issues as they relate to their own health.

We chose to meet at the Women's Center because the building is wheelchair accessible. Furthermore, the room that we meet in is relatively free of toxic substances. Smoking and pets are not allowed in the space, and the furniture is fairly old, making the space relatively accessible to women with environmental illness. In order to ensure accessibility for a number of women, we request that women attending the meetings refrain from wearing perfumes or scented hair and body lotions. Attendees should also refrain from wearing clothing that has been exposed to these substances or to cigarette smoke or that has been recently dry cleaned or washed with scented products (fabric softeners are particularly nasty). We would also like to encourage all women going to the Women's Center to think about how their use of these substances limits access to the rest of the building and women's activities in general for women with environmental illness.

The group meets on alternate Saturdays from noon to 1:30pm. Meetings in April are on the 14th and 28th of the month. In addition to holding regular meetings, we have talked about setting up some sort of network to reach women who are physically unable to attend the meetings. For more info, call Joy at 265-4258 or Vanessa at 288-3843



PEOPLE ARE TALKING - ABOUT INCEST -

When the media want to know more about topics affecting women, they often call the Women's Center. For instance, Secret Survivors: Uncovering Incest and Its Aftereffects in Women, by E. Sue Blume (1990, John Wiley & Sons) was the topic of a recent edition of the daytime talk show "People Are Talking". The book is about the repression of memories by survivors of child sexual abuse. Ms. Blume spoke about the physical and emotional symptoms exhibited by women who are not aware of this part of their history. Sometimes, these symptoms only begin to occur much later in life, many years after the abuse occurred. When the producers were looking for other panelists for this show, they called the Women's Center. We put them in touch with a Center staffer, Cathy Imbasciati, who agreed to be on the show and to share her history and experiences with the audience. Alice Roberge, also from the Center, was asked to be in the audience and participated in the show.

During the show, the Women's Center's phone number was advertised as a resource for incest survivors. Our phone was constantly busy that day and for several days afterwards, with survivors who had seen the program calling for information, support, and referrals to groups. As one of the few places in Boston where free drop-in support groups for survivors meet, the Center is a valuable resource to these women. We were glad to be able to meet the need and to be there to help.

In June, the problem of child abuse will get more media coverage in a three-part documentary. Again, the producers contacted the Women's Center in order to find women willing to share their experiences so that others may learn about and begin to heal from childhood abuse.

CENTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday	10am - 10pm
Friday	10am - 8pm
Saturday	11am - 2pm

WELCOME ANDREA

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Andrea Devine, the Center's new bookkeeper. Andrea is working part-time for us, keeping all our financial matters in order. She is looking forward to being kept very busy processing all of your generous donations and paying all the bills to keep the Center's doors open, lights on, and phones ringing.

KEEP THE CLINICS OPEN

Although Operation Rescue has been handed some decisive defeats in recent weeks, the need for a pro-choice presence at the abortion clinics has not gone away. When Operation Rescue strikes, we need to be able to contact pro-choice supporters as quickly as possible to ask them to come to the targeted clinic and keep the clinic from being closed down by the O.R. terrorists. To put your name and phone number on a HOT LIST, so you will be called when Operation Rescue strikes again, call Boston N.O.W. at 782-1056 or Reproductive Rights National Network (R2N2) at 524-6631 (Liz).

STOP CHILD SEXUAL ABUSERS

NO MORE!

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 1990
BOSTON CITY HALL PLAZA
NOON

MARCH, RALLY & SPEAK OUT

A WELCOME CHANGE

The new Massachusetts foster care policy makes parenting experience, not marital status, the most important in determining foster placements. This means that lesbians and gay men, single or in couples, will no longer be excluded.

This change is part of an out of court settlement of a lawsuit against the state filed by the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, and the Civil Liberties Union. The lawsuit charged that the old policy discriminated against potential foster parents on the basis of their sexual orientation and marital status. This is a major step towards increasing children's options and their chances of getting a caring, supportive foster home placement.

HOW TO START A GROUP

In a recent letter to Sojourner, a woman asked why there isn't a support group at the Center for women who have had abortions. The Center's staff coordinator, Judy Norris, wrote back to explain how groups get started at the Center. We would like to repeat that information here.

Support groups (and all other types of groups) exist based on need, topic and willingness of some woman or women to initiate and take responsibility for the group. Women interested in starting a group fill out a space request form. They give information on the nature of the group, why they think it should meet at the Center, and how it will be structured. Further, we need the assurance that someone will be present at each meeting to greet newcomers and initiate discussions. Decisions about the use of space at the Women's Center are made collectively at the All Center Meetings which are held on alternate Mondays.

We especially like to have groups here that fill an important need and do not exist elsewhere. Recently, a woman contacted us who is interested in starting a group for women over 65 who are survivors of incest. We have also had interest expressed in groups for women of color, for women who have experienced sexual harassment at work, and for a non-specific women's support group. If you or someone you know is interested in any of these groups, please call us. If you want to start a group, call or come by and ask for a 'space request form'.

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CANCER PROJECT

The Women's Community Cancer Project was created to facilitate changes in the current medical, social and political approaches to cancer, particularly as they affect women. We do not accept the "fact" that thousands of us must die each year. Our intention is to involve women whose lives are touched by cancer including women who have and/or had cancer themselves, care-givers, friends, lovers and family of those with cancer, and women concerned with the political and/or emotional implications of cancer.

A General Meeting is held on the first Thursday of the month at 7pm.

The Support Group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 7pm. All meetings are at the Women's Center and are wheelchair accessible. For more info, call WCCP at 489-3806.

JOB DAY SEPTEMBER 15

Saturday, ~~June 16~~ is JOB DAY at the Women's Center. From 9am to 5pm there will be employment related workshops, presentations and discussions in every room of the Center. In some rooms, representatives from different companies will be talking about all the different kinds of jobs and job training available at their workplaces. We hope to have women representing hospitals, computer companies, temporary agencies, human service agencies, business, training and vocational schools and many more. Each session will last an hour, with a short presentation and then time for questions and comments.

In other rooms, women will be talking about their experiences on the job, so you can hear what it's like being an electrician or midwife or taxi driver or lawyer. These women will tell us how they got into their current profession, why they chose it and how they like it.

There will also be a focus on the nitty-gritties with women coaching women on filling out job applications, resume writing and interviewing skills.

Childcare will be available. Please call ahead if you can so we can estimate how many kids will be coming. Also, if you would like to come and need ASL interpreting, please let us know as soon as possible.

We're still in the planning stages of the Job Day. If you have some suggestions, want to help organize the day, talk about the kind of work you do, or think your company would like to send a representative, call Alice at 354-8807.

SINGLE MOTHERS GROUP

One Saturday a month, the Women's Center is unusually lively, thanks to the children of the mothers attending the Mother's Support Group. After a slow start, a good-sized group has materialized. The group consists of women who have come before and new women. Group members choose topics for future meetings (the topic was 'Having a Social Life' in the last two meetings). Infants, toddlers and grade school-age children have attended the childcare that is provided by Rosemary, a competent, experienced volunteer. We hope you'll check out this group if you're a single mom, or pass the word on to someone who is. Call 354-8807 for date and time of the next meeting.

THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC.
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Phone: (617) 354-8807

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STUDENT HELP

College interns and work-study students play a significant role in behind-the-scenes work at the Women's Center. Currently, three students are working on projects here. Alison Thompson is creating a notebook full of info on housing options. She designed a form to cover crucial info, has made endless calls and is organizing a housing notebook, which will be available in the sitting room at the Center. Liz Sullivan worked on a special questionnaire and sent it to therapists who see survivors of ritual abuse and women with multiple personalities. She is now updating information on support groups focusing on every imaginable issue. Susan Omarzu has written a letter to companies inviting them to participate in our upcoming 'Job Day' and has done a new Center brochure. Alison and Liz are from Smith and Susan is from Harvard.

We greatly appreciate the work of these women and other students. Contact Judy (354-8807) if you'd like to do an internship or work-study assignment here.

HATS OFF TO STAFF

When you call the Women's Center the phone is usually answered by a volunteer staffer. Staff find referral information, talk with women who are upset, and help out in lots of other ways. The Center depends on these volunteers, and they not only do what needs to be done, but often take extra time and effort to help women find the resources or support they need. If you are responsible, friendly, and would like to do volunteer staffing at the Women's Center, call Judy at 354-8807.

GRAFFITI

If you have access to TV set in Cambridge that gets CCTV, check out 'Cambridge Women in Cable' Wednesdays at 9pm on Channel 19. The April show, created by Mary Leno of the Women's School, is on graffiti. The May show will be on nursing.



WE DEPEND ON YOUR SUPPORT!! EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!! MANY THANKS!!
Yes - I want to help the Center. Here is my tax-deductible contribution.
\$5 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 other

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

We sometimes share our mailing list with other groups for special mailings of interest to women. Please check below if you do not want to receive these mailings.
_____ Please do not give out my name to other organizations.