

ON OUR WAY

FALL '98

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 354-8807 TTY and VOICE



WOMEN'S CENTER SEEKS TO HIRE NEW DIRECTOR

Many of you have heard that Judy Norris, co-founder, long-time volunteer, supporter, collective member, "Jill of all trades," and present program coordinator/group liaison for the Women's Center is making plans to retire her full-time volunteer position.

(Don't worry, Judy won't *completely* leave the Center, but she *will* take a well-earned break from her full-time-plus work load.) Judy's contributions are too numerous to list here -- although we promise to fully sing her praises in a future newsletter. One thing is sure, as many non-profits in transition can attest: the retirement of such a long-time staff member/founder signifies a major shift for the organization. In the wake of this upcoming transition, the Women's Center announces the beginning of its search for a **DIRECTOR**. As the oldest operating women's center in the country, with a rich history of service and activism, we hope to attract a vibrant, diverse, and highly-skilled pool of candidates.

The successful candidate will have a demonstrated commitment to diversity and women's empowerment, with expertise in program management, staff supervision, and board development. The Director will coordinate the Women's Center's multi-faceted program, including publicity, group management, outreach, and long-range planning. A minimum of four years relevant experience is required for this position.

Please take a moment to consider how we can reach excellent candidates. Any assistance you can provide will be appreciated. Contact personnel committee member Vera Cohen with your outreach ideas or connections: (617) 354-2304 or by email at: vsc@channell.com.



The Women's Center is a busy, rewarding, and at times, challenging work environment. We anticipate some growing pains in the months ahead. We also expect that our groups, hotline, and many other services and activities will continue to run smoothly and professionally. The staff, board, and volunteers remain steadfast in our commitment to providing the support and resources women have come to expect and have found at the Women's Center for 27 years.

We'll keep you posted on our progress, as we take the Women's Center into the new century. As always, we thank you for your support.

- Pamela Goldstein
for the All Center Meeting

ABORTION ACCESS ACTION MONTH

In October, the Abortion Access Project will be celebrating its 4th annual **Abortion Access Action Month**. Community and student groups across the state will be participating to highlight women's need for access to reproductive health services. Activities already planned include:

- **October 4:** Protest at the "Respect Life Walk" on the Boston Common. Focus is on people who have died due to anti-choice policies and violence.
- **October 10:** Boston-area clinic defense sponsored by NOW.
- **October 17:** "Access to Reproductive Health Care," sponsored by Worcester County Coalition for Choice and Clark University Women's Studies. Call (508) 752-5363 for more information.
- **October 22:** National Young Women's Day of Action.
- **October 28:** Rally in Dorchester to demand health care access, including abortion access; sponsored by the Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2), the Association of Haitian Women, and Adbar, an Ethiopian women's group.

Many more events will be added. To get involved or for more information, call (617) 661-1161, or check our website at www.reproactivist.org/aaam.htm for updates.

PROGRAM NOTES



As always, the Women's Center has been a bustling place these past few months. As we continue to provide quality support and up-to-date resources for women, we have also expanded our program as we seek to reach a more diverse population of women. Recently, groups for young girls and older women have been added to our line-up of groups. *GirlAction* seeks to empower girls aged 12-15 (see related article; page 3). *Grandmothers Raising Grandchildren* and *Single Women in Mid-Life and Beyond* provide older women a space to find community.

Three other workshops help women come to terms with being labeled by the medical industry, get over feeling victimized, and learn about socially responsible investing, respectively. Stop in and attend one of our many new groups, cruise through the resources, or check out the many exciting changes to the Women's Center building!

We have again started hosting a segment of *WomanSpeak*, the weekly BeLive show for women on Cambridge Community Television. Tune in to Channel 9 the second Wednesday each month from 5:30-6pm for interesting topics relevant to women's health and welfare.

-Montserrat Caballero



INCEST RESOURCES

Incest Resources, Inc. will resume its free, drop-in discussion group for survivors of child sexual abuse in September. The group meets at the Women's Center on the last Friday of the month (6-7:30pm) from September-June, and is facilitated by survivor therapists Patricia Hunt and Elaine Westerlund. Topics for September and October are *Making Connections* (September 25), and *Memory and Validation* (October 30.)

Feedback about the last series of the group includes: "This year in this group has been so healing and growth-producing for me. It probably saved my life (and certainly the quality of my life)," and "I am grateful for a place to come and talk where all will understand and accept me." All survivors are welcome. We hope to see you there.

LESBIAN AL-ANON

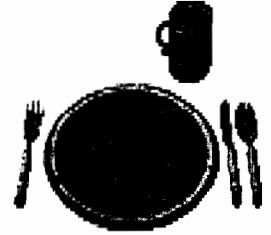
The *Expect Miracles Lesbian Al-Anon* group meets at the Women's Center every Wednesday from 6:30-8pm. Al-Anon is a group for family and friends of alcoholics. We share our experiences, strength, and hope as we seek to recover from the effects of alcohol on our lives. Newcomers are most welcome.

EATING AWARENESS AND BODY ACCEPTANCE

Eating and body acceptance are related and have been twin struggles for too many of us. Our society offers an overwhelming abundance of unhealthy foods, all the while telling us we're willful and lack self-control if we indulge.

Through the women's movement, we've increasingly gained political and economic power, only to face increasingly more severe restrictions about what is considered an acceptable adult woman's body. We are just not allowed to take up physical space, even as we expand in other areas. It is no wonder that eating disorders afflict more and more of us, at younger and younger ages.

Eating Awareness and Body Acceptance is a peer group for women to explore these issues. We seek to share our experiences, support each other, and grow toward a new peacefulness about food and our bodies. The next meetings are on Fridays September 25 and October 16 at the Women's Center, from 6:30-8pm.



WOMEN'S COUNSELING AND RESOURCE CENTER

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center (WCRC) is a volunteer collective of feminist therapists who provide individual psychotherapy for low- and no-income women.

WCRC would like to invite therapists to consider becoming a member of our collective. We require a graduate degree in social work, counseling, or psychology, plus two years of post-graduate experience. There is a 3-4 hour weekly time commitment as well as a collective monthly meeting. We often turn prospective clients away because of our limited numbers. We need you!

MEDITATION FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

This workshop will teach two different kinds of meditation. We can use them to calm ourselves and to observe life rather than just reacting to whatever is there. Practicing these skills over time can give a meditator an internal refuge from the suffering that comes from a painful childhood.

The workshop will be held Saturday, October 17 from 1-3:30pm at the Women's Center. The workshop will be led by Deirde Fay, LCSW, who has led experiential workshops for years.



GIRLACTION

As someone who has been a part of the GirlAction group for the past several weeks, I have found myself more motivated to explore deeper aspects of who I am and who I want to be.



Each week we have a different activity planned, but we're free to talk about whatever is on our mind. There are no limits around our conversation and I always feel that I've been listened to and supported.

We mainly focus on how powerful women are. Even though society might not always acknowledge that, we do ourselves. I have learned that I, as a young woman, have the potential to go anywhere, be anyone, and most importantly, to be proud of myself.

-Laura Perron

GirlAction hopes to provide adolescent girls ages 12-15 the opportunity to explore who they are and who they plan to be through activity-based groups. We believe this group will enable girls to see themselves as agents of social change. We will meet Tuesdays from 6-7:30pm at the Women's Center starting October 6. For more information, please call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 and leave a message for Amy or Wendy, coordinators of GirlAction.



INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP

Want to explore your identity(ies), cultural perspectives and differences, and those of other women? Need to meet others who question the lack of representation of minority women in the women's movement, and in other parts of society? Then, come to the Intercultural Women's Group on the first Wednesday of every month at the Women's Center from 7:00-8:30pm.

We have lively discussions about diverse topics, including our place in this society as bi- or multi-cultural women. We also explore how to make our experiences reflected in everyday living. On October 7, we will watch the movie, *Bandit Queen*, the story of a woman who stood up to oppression in India. (This film contains graphic scenes.) We hope to see you there!

-Montserrat Caballero



NATIONAL YOUNG WOMEN'S DAY OF ACTION



Use Your Voice, Claim Your Power, Create Choices — Take A Stand. This is the message of *National Young Women's Day of Action (NYWDA)*, an event that has been taking place nationwide, on college campuses and in communities, for five years. The day is a way for young women to become involved and empowered in speaking for themselves and the issues they face every day.

The day was founded on and has traditionally focused on reproductive rights. However, each year since its inception, more and more young women are embracing it as a way for them to speak out on any and all issues currently affecting them and their communities.

This, year, *NYWDA* will take place on Thursday, October 22. I am the Boston regional coordinator for the event, and I would like to plan a public event in the area to commemorate the day.

I therefore welcome interested people to work with me on planning an event, or events, and working on publicity and outreach. Please contact me by phone at: (617) 628-2404, or by e-mail at: montserratc@juno.com. Young women unite!



-Montserrat Caballero
Volunteer Coordinator

JEWISH LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN

For the past year and a half, a group of Jewish lesbian and bisexual women met monthly at the Women's Center for discussion and celebration of our shared identities. The group regularly drew 20-30 women to its meetings. Topics included *Feminism and Judaism*, *Finding a place for Jewish lesbians in Jewish traditions*, and *Family issues*. The group also planned events, such as a Yom-Kippur breakfast, attending lectures, and a day at the beach.

At the present time, the group does not have (a) coordinator(s) to handle publicity, planning and facilitating meetings, as well as coordinating with the Women's Center. These tasks are not time intensive, and may be managed by an individual or team of willing women. The group can resume only if new volunteers step forward to make it happen. If you are interested in coordinating *Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women*, please contact Judy Norris at the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807. Questions can also be directed to Idit Klein, a past coordinator, at (617) 522-6187.

TRAUMA GROUP



Since January of 1996, I have had the privilege of staffing on the Women's Center hotline. Providing support and referrals to women in the community is a wonderful experience; sometimes, however, I find myself unable to offer a caller a referral specific to her need. Usually this occurs when a woman with a history of childhood physical or emotional abuse or neglect, or a survivor of a catastrophic event, is seeking a supportive place to connect empathically with others and share resources and coping strategies.

Though seemingly disparate, the aftermath of these experiences can often be quite similar. In their wake, such traumas may leave a woman feeling isolated, unknown, depressed and hesitant to establish connections with others.

In response, the Women's Center will be offering a new monthly group. This will be a safe space where women can come together to address these concerns, be heard and share support. Any woman grappling with the effects of trauma, whether physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or a disastrous life occurrence, is welcome to attend. I will be the start-up facilitator for this group and am happy to answer questions and receive input to help make this a productive and healing resource for women.

The first meeting will be on Saturday, October 24 from 1:30-3pm. Call me at (617) 354-3721 from 11am-9pm, or call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807. Thank you.

- Amy Aisenberg
Volunteer

WOMEN'S CENTER SELLS DARDEN STOCK

A few years ago, the Women's Center received a very generous donation of stock in the Darden restaurant chain. We greatly appreciate the generosity of that donor.

It has recently come to our attention, however, that Darden restaurants have anti-gay policies, and have gone so far as to fire an employee for his sexual orientation. The restaurant is fighting legislation that makes their actions illegal.

The Women's Center has thus decided to divest our shares of Darden stock because of their anti-gay policies and because we do not want to support any company that practices hate-driven policies. We wanted to make our community aware of our decision.

-Montserrat Caballero

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER...

Thank you to each one of you who contributed to the Women's Center's Spring '98 appeal! We received over \$5,000 in individual gifts, making it a good fundraising year so far. And that's crucial to the Women's Center as we gear up for ambitious plans in the months ahead. For one thing, we will be filling the position vacated by Judy Norris, a full-time volunteer, with a paid employee (see cover article). We will thus be expanding our paid staff budget by at least one third. In addition, we are hoping to complete the majority of Capital Improvements to the Women's Center building by the end of the fall (see related article). Forget to make your donation? We are still gratefully accepting financial support! THANK YOU again for putting your money where it counts for women: at the Women's Center.

The new "**Trees of Life**" *Commemorative Tile Mural*-in-progress was unveiled at the beginning of the summer. The well-attended celebration/exhibit prompted press coverage from the *Cambridge Chronicle*, as well as the participation of several local officials. This powerful tribute mural, on permanent display at the Women's Center,



features three elegant birch trees adorned with beautiful gold-trimmed leaves. Birch trees were chosen for their characteristics of both flexibility and toughness -- like many women we all know! The mural was also featured in the August issue of *Sojourner*, with an accompanying photograph, if you haven't had a chance to see it yet.

The *Commemorative Tile Mural* provides a potent and poignant opportunity for you to honor a woman you love. Each individual tile is available for a \$300 (tax-deductible) contribution. Donors are rapidly filling the branches of the trees with words of respect and affection for women. At present, **only fifteen tiles remain** (of fifty-six total) to be dedicated. Would you like to honor or remember a woman in your life with a commemorative tile at the Women's Center? If so -- and we hope so! -- please contact me at (617) 354-6394. Many thanks to those of you who have supported the *Commemorative Tile Campaign*, in addition to the many other important projects at the Women's Center.

-Pamela Goldstein
Development Coordinator



**LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP:
NOT YOUR ORDINARY CAREER
DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP**

Thursdays, October 8, 15 & 29
(1st session open, the rest closed).

The focus will be on you!

Discover what you want to do with yourself
and make plans about how to get there.

With Barbara Harris of *Leapfrog*.

Info/to register: (508)651-0085.



GOOD GRIEF

Saturday, October 17, 2-3:30pm

Help yourself and others grieve in a way that is
comforting, and, perhaps, create a new relationship
with someone who's no longer here.

Facilitated by therapist Marcie Mitler

**ENSEMBLE: A WOMEN'S COLLABORATIVE
WRITING WORKSHOP**

Saturdays, October 17 & November 14, 11am-1pm

For writer's at all levels who want to
have fun, contribute to each other's development

Led by writer Carlotta Hayes, who has published
book reviews, essays & short stories.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

- | | | |
|-----------|----|-------------------------------------|
| September | 28 | Movie: <i>When Night Is Falling</i> |
| October | 5 | Growth & Self-esteem |
| | 12 | Relationships with our Mothers |
| | 19 | Birth Order & it's Influence |

30 + LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- | | | |
|-----------|----|-----------------------------------|
| September | 29 | Gender Identity |
| October | 6 | Chocolate (bring your favorite) |
| | 13 | Relationships (what to deal with) |
| | 20 | Friends as Family |

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm

- | | | |
|---------|----|-----------------------|
| October | 6 | Bisexuality & Fashion |
| | 20 | What Is Pride? |



**FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR
SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Last Friday/month, September-June, 6-7:30pm

- | | | |
|-----------|----|----------------------|
| September | 25 | Making Connections |
| October | 30 | Memory & Validation |
| November | 27 | Family Relationships |

**THURSDAY NIGHT GATHERING FOR
SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Thursdays, 7:30-9:30pm

A topic on the 1st Thursday of the month

October 1: *Self-Image*

INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP

1st Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm

October 7: We'll watch the film *Bandit Queen*, about
a women who fought back to avenge her rape and
other oppression in India (graphic content).

Info: Montserrat, (617)354-8807.

ONGOING GROUPS



MONDAY/LUNES

- Al-anon Grupo (*semanalente, en español*) ... 6:30-8pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (*weekly*) . 7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors
(3rd Monday; info: Daniella, 497-0911) 7-8:45pm
- Lesbian Rap (*weekly*) 7:30-9pm
- Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2)
(2nd Monday; 661-1161 for information)

TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesday) . 7:30-9pm
- 30+ Lesbian Rap (*weekly*) 7-8:30pm
- GirlAction (6-sessions, beginning Oct. 6) 6-7:30pm
- Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic
Conditions (2nd & 4th Tuesdays) 5:15-6:45pm
- Writers Circle (*biweekly*; Cassandra, 494-2695, for info.)

WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group
(*weekly, except 3rd Wednesday of month*) 7-9pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network
(2nd Wednesday, odd #'d months) 7:30-9pm
- Healing Hearts - Grandmothers Raising
Grandchildren (3rd Wednesday) 10:30-11:45am
- Intercultural Women's Group (1st Wed.) 7-8:30pm
- Lesbian Al-Anon (*weekly*) 6:30-8pm
- Separation/Divorce Support Group (*weekly*) ... 7-9pm
- Single Women in Mid-life & Beyond (2nd &
4th Weds; info Esther, (781)396-3415) 7:30-9pm
- Transitioning out of the Patient Role (*open every 6th*
week (Sept. 30); may change day/time) 5-6:30pm
- WomanSpeak (2nd Wed., Camb. Cable TV, Ch. 9) . 5:30-6pm
- Women Maximizing Abilities Now (1st & 3rd
Wednesdays; women@braintrust.org) 2-3:30pm
- Women's Reading Group (3rd Wednesday) .. 7-9:30pm

THURSDAY/JUEVES

- Healing through Art (*weekly*) 7-9pm
- Mothers without Custody (1st & 3rd Thursday) 7:30-9pm
- Renewal of Hope Support Group (*weekly*) . 3-4:30pm
- Thursday Night Gathering for Survivors of
Child Sexual Abuse (*weekly*) 7:30-9:30pm
- Women's Community Cancer Project, Open
General Meeting (1st Thursday) 7-9pm

FRIDAY

- CODA (Codependents Anonymous) (*weekly*) 6:30-8pm
- Eating Awareness & Body Acceptance (*meets*
one Friday a month - Sept. 25; Oct.16 ...) ... 6:30-8pm
- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion Group for
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (*last Fri*) 6-7:30pm
- Incest Survivors Anonymous (*weekly*) 6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages
(1st Saturday, except some holiday weekends) 11am-1pm
- Friendship Connection (2nd Saturday) ... 12:30-2:15pm
- Trauma Survivors Group (*monthly, beg. Oct. 24*) . 1-3pm
- Women Writing (*biweekly*) 12:30-2:30pm

THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER
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Cambridge, MA 02139

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ROOFERS AND PAINTERS AND CARPENTERS, OH MY!!

Summer was structurally busy at the Center. As many of you know, our 122-year old facility has been needing roughly \$70,000 worth of Capital Improvements. After seeking bids for the many different, related projects -- including roof work, painting, renovating the second floor bathroom, and much more -- work commenced. By mid-summer, workers were busy scraping, banging, wiring, pounding, and reinforcing many areas of our facility.

Roof work began in August and should be complete by the end of September. Tasks include copper-lining our beautiful old wood gutters and abutting ledge, replacing broken slate, and putting rubber roofing on the porch roof. This work paves the way for a new exterior paint job. We can hardly wait to see how beautiful our old Center (built in the 1870s) will look!

Thus far generous funding for Capital Improvements has been provided by several donors, the Clipper Ship Foundation, the Agnes M. Lindsay Trust, and a Charitable Fund requesting anonymity. We still need \$30,000 to get all the work done. We will update you on our progress in the next *On Our Way*...as we continue on our way! Please pardon our appearance while we work to make an even better Women's Center. Thank you for backing this major undertaking.

-Pamela Goldstein
Development Coordinator

WOMEN WRITING

Women writing meets every other Saturday from 12:30 to 2:30pm, and has been going on for years. It's a group that grows on you — a positive addiction. Newcomers find their way to us, and are always welcome. All that is needed is intent, a pen, and willingness to hold a space of respect and open curiosity.

One strength of our group is that it is peer-led. Our guidelines are based on Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*. We agree to give each other only positive feedback. Everyone is encouraged to share but it is never required to do so. We avoid denigrating our efforts in any way, and just write on!

We hope to meet you there soon. Call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for more information.

-Judith Poole

BATUCADA BELLES

The *Batucada Belles*, women's percussion marching band, invites all women interested in joining the band to an open house, Tuesday, October 13, at 7pm at the Graham and Parks school on Upton Street, around the corner from the Women's Center. No experience is necessary. For more information, call Beth at (617) 522-2755 or Laura at (617) 628-1038. See you there!