

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

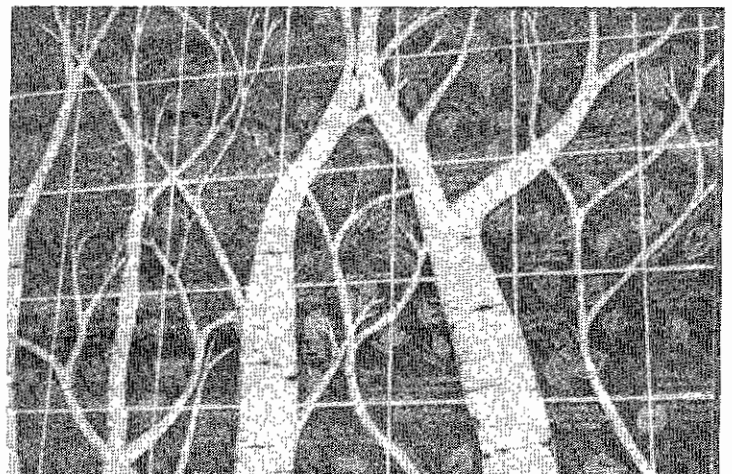
December 1999

BEAUTIFUL TILE MURAL HONORS WOMEN AND MOVES VIEWERS

On October 2nd the Women's Center unveiled "Trees of Life," a tile mural that honors and celebrates the lives of women. The mural, created by Vermont artist Bekah Parks, features three intertwining birch trees with lush golden leaves. Many women present told the stories behind the tiles, inspiring laughter and tears.

Mother and daughter Elaine and Virginia Westerlund shared their moving and inspirational story. The tile Elaine dedicated to her mother reads "For courageously choosing" and Virginia's tile to her daughter Elaine reads "Daughters Before Husbands." The story explaining the inscriptions on the tiles, as told by Elaine, is this:

"Unlike mothers in most incestuous families, my mother refused to accept my father's denial. She always believed me. She talked with me many times about my memories and she wept with me. When it became clear that my father would rather have the world perceive me as crazy than ever acknowledge his abuse, my mother told him that their 48 year marriage was over. She gave up a comfortable and financially secure lifestyle at the age of 75 - on Mother's Day! She was loyal to me, even during the difficult years when she remained with my



father hoping for a change. My relationship with my mother was one of the primary reasons I became a cofounder of the first incest survivor organization in the world. My mother was as outraged as I, and she supported me in publicly identifying myself as an incest survivor, despite the times. From the start she encouraged my activism and proudly told others about Incest Resources and the Women's Center. We are both so very grateful to have each other. I am so proud of my mother and happy to honor her with this beautiful tile."

The story told by Virginia Westerlund from her perspective, was equally moving. She encouraged all women to choose their daughters when confronted with such painful circumstances. The entire room was moved to tears as she said "It was not a difficult choice for me to make."

Each tile in the "Trees of Life" tells its own unique story, speaking to the special gifts that women give to others. The mural is a magnificent work of love and an inspiration to everyone who views it. The celebration of women and their contributions continues.

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On Our Way

is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in April, September, and December.

The Women's Center is a non-profit resource and support center for all women and their children, founded in 1971.

Our mission is twofold:

- * to provide women with the resources and support they need to emerge from conditions of abuse, poverty, discrimination, or social isolation
- * to challenge and change attitudes and actions which subjugate women



A Warm Welcome To Our New Board

Annette Brown

Linda Duby

Judy Feinberg

Lynn Murray

Sandy Nickel

Kyoko Okamura

Pam Steinkamp

Debbie Wintner

The Women's Center relies on the generosity of the community to provide our wealth of free programs. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

For further information, contact:

The Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 354-8807 TTY/Voice

Hours:
Monday-Thursday:
10am-10pm
Friday:
10am-8pm
Saturday:
11am-4pm

WE SAY GOODBYE TO PAMELA GOLDSTEIN

In October, the Women's Center said goodbye to Pamela Goldstein, the Development Coordinator. Pamela came to the Center in 1993 as our first full-time fundraiser. Her vision, skill, and commitment enhanced our fundraising capacity, allowing us to expand our staff and therefore our programming.

Pamela developed strong and caring connections with our donors and steadily persuaded more people to donate to our cause. Her passion for the Center's commitment to providing free services and her sheer tenacity ensured that, even in times of lean charitable giving and corporate mergers, the Center still received the funds critical to our work. Pamela coordinated two tile campaigns which raised much needed funds and permanently enhance the beauty of the Center. They serve as moving testaments to the lives of the women honored.

Pamela's caring attitude, sense of humor, and good nature created a welcoming environment for the hundreds of women who volunteered during her career here. She will be deeply missed. We thank you for your many contributions and wish you well in all of your endeavors and in your life Pamela!!!

HEATHER JOINS THE STAFF

I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new Volunteer & Administrative Coordinator. The Women's Center has been an integral part of my life since I walked in the door five years ago looking for housing, the lesbian community, and feminist political action in the Boston area.

Inspired by the philosophy of women empowering each other through emotional support and practical information, I immediately began volunteering on the hotline. Later I became part of the Collective and the transitional Board.

I graduated from Dartmouth College with a Women's Studies Major (one of the first two women to do so) in 1994. The weight of student loans kept me tethered to a corporate job for my first years here, so volunteering at the Center and at the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center were cherished connections to the women's community and to making a difference.

During my short time in this position, I've been amazed and inspired by the committed and talented women who volunteer here. Volunteers are truly the heart of the Center. If you are interested in volunteering please call or stop by. I'd love to meet you!

~ Heather Searles

WOMEN'S CENTER WASH 1997



TV/VCR Stands
Reams of Paper
Manila Folders
Vacuum Cleaner
Computer Workstations

Thank you for helping with your gifts!

NEW DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ELIZA HOYT

It is a privilege to introduce myself as the new Development Director of the Women's Center. On my first day at the Center I arrived to a fall bouquet of flowers on a polished desk, discovered the perfect spot in the sun to read about the history of the center and stole a moment to feel the joy of being here.

Ten years ago, I walked into the Women's Center, discovering a peaceful, welcoming and safe place. Since then, I've pursued work with non-profit organizations serving disadvantaged youth, people of color, battered women, and Asian communities.

Working in such diverse environments I've learned how necessary a women's space is for self-empowerment. In the role of fundraiser I look forward to advocating for social and economic justice for women.

I always carry a quote, "Gain the wisdom to change the things you can change." I will listen closely to the stories that underline the fabric of the Center, allow the voices of women to nurture a path towards growth and diversity. This wisdom I dedicate to you...

It will be a great pleasure to meet you!

~ Eliza Hoyt



A CALL FOR PRAYERS & CARDS

Jean Turner, facilitator of the Women's Center's *Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Conditions*, has put the group on hold indefinitely due to serious illness. She's coping with treatments, and rests on treatment-free days. Jean's flair for fashion continues with her many colored hats and turbans. You can be sure black and purple reign supreme.

We at the Women's Center wish her a full and timely recovery. A seat will be saved at the table... so that she can continue her work on women's issues and her advocacy for the disabled. Jean asks for prayers to St. Jude on her behalf. Cards and encouragement may be sent to: E-mail: wishesforjean@aol.com or Jean Turner, P.O. Box 391424, Cambridge, MA 02139.

~ Rose Dixon

1999 WHAT A YEAR!!

Change was on the agenda for the Women's Center's 28th year, but exceeded all expectations!

Our first director, Mary Quinn, came aboard March 1, and has taken a major role in defining a new position (hers) and a new structure. With the new collective meetings, a new board of trustees, and a continuing commitment to consensus, the collective process is alive and well! Mary's commitment to inclusiveness, to expanding the number and diversity of women involved in decision-making at the Women's Center, has been invaluable.

Lynn Murray, the current coordinator of *Women of Color Rap*, also initiated the new *Women of Color Reading Circle*, which finds inspiration for coping with racism in the literary works of women of color. All this and she's a member of our Collective and Board too—way to go Lynn!

Young women, in addition to participating in the collective, have brought two dynamic new groups here, *WRAG (Women's Radical Action Group)* and *ACTOUT-Revolutionary Young Sisters for Social Justice*.

Speaking of acting out, *Storytelling/Playback Theatre* began in June, and has been a cherished group from the start. The new monthly *Making of a Handywoman* workshop attendees have been enthusiastic. We have been pleased to offer Vera's *Self-Injury* group, many new healing and empowerment workshops, and, beginning December 16, the monthly: *Films for Thought, A Viewing & Discussion*.

We have two new employees, Heather Searles, *Volunteer & Administrative Coordinator*, and Eliza Hoyt, *Development Coordinator*, filling the spots vacated by Montserrat and Pamela. For the time being, I, Judy, am filling in as *Program Coordinator* while Mary works with Eliza on getting crucial funding.

13 interns have helped out with referral updating, staffing the phones, helping with everything; one, Pam Steinkamp, is now a Board and Collective member! Thank you all so much!

Amidst the change, there were the constants: volunteers talking with callers and visitors; searching for resources; facilitating groups; coordinating groups; helping with events; typing; washing the dishes; opening & closing the curtains; caring for someone's child - whatever it takes. Thank you all so much!

I am so impressed with what's happening - good changes, growth, while keeping the basic warmth and caring at the core of the Center's strength and success.

~ Judy Norris

TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE PATIENT ROLE

Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm

Group is open to new members one meeting (Dec. 14), then closed for the next 5 meetings.

Facilitated by Diane Loud, M.Ed.

Info: Diane, (781)226-7097(beeper)

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP - Not Your Ordinary Career Development Workshop REUNION/PARTY - with light refreshments

Wednesday, December 15, 6:30-9:30pm

With Barbara Harris of Leapfrog

FILMS FOR THOUGHT:

Viewing & Discussion for Women

3rd Thursdays, 7-9pm

- December 16 "The Ad & the Ego"
January 20 "Holding Ground: the Rebirth of Dudley Street"
February 17 "Global Assembly Line"

Come watch & talk with others about the films.

Enjoy light refreshments too!

Info: (617)354-8807.

JOURNAL WRITING TO EXPLORE ONE'S SPIRITUALITY

Thursdays, December 16 & 30, 7-9pm

These 1st 2 meetings of a 6-session workshop are open, the others (Jan. 13 & 27; Feb. 10 & 24) will be closed

Facilitated by Susan Teshu

THE MAKING OF A HANDYWOMAN

One Saturday/month, 2-4pm

- January 20 Plumbing & Heating Basics
February 12 Hands on Household Repair

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

- December 13 Preparing for the Holidays
20 Holiday Party
27 Game Night

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- December 14 Money Issues
21 Is Codependency a Problem?
28 Giving vs Losing Self

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

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

- December 7 Holiday Stress
21 Why is the Bi Rap Here?

WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE

2nd Mondays, 7-9pm

- December 13 So Long a Letter by Mariama Ba
Info: Lynn, (617)436-0390

INCEST RESOURCES' FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Usually last Friday/month, Sept.-June, 6-7:30pm

- December 17 Culture & Religion
January 28 Sexuality
February 25 Work and Career Issues
March 31 Mothers

ONGOING GROUPS

MONDAY

- ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters for Justice (1st & 3rd Mondays) 6-8pm
- Al-Anon for Women (1st & 3rd Mondays) .. 6-7:30pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (weekly) .. 7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors (Usually 3rd Mon.; info: Daniella, 497-0911) 7-8:45pm
- Lesbian Rap (weekly) 7:30-9pm
- Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) (Usually one mtg./month; 661-1161 for information)
- Women of Color Reading Circle (2nd Monday) .. 7-9pm

TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) .. 7:30-9pm
- Healing Ourselves through Art (weekly) 5-7pm
- Self-Injury Education & Support Group (1st & 3rd Thursdays, through December) ... 7-8:30pm
- Separation & Divorce Support Group (weekly) 7-9pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (one Tuesday/mo; Louise Bonar, 254-1729, for info, to register) .. 7-9pm
- 30+ Lesbian Rap (weekly) 7-8:30pm
- Transitioning out of the Patient Role [open every 6th week - Dec. 14; info: Diane, (781)226-7097] . 6-7:30pm
- Writers Circle [2nd Tuesday; info: Cassandra, (617)494-2695] 7-9pm

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
- Lesbian Al-Anon (weekly) 6:30-8pm
- Storytelling/Playback Theater (weekly; not meeting December 22 & 29) 6:30-8pm
- Women Maximizing Abilities Now (1st & 3rd Weds.; (617)945-1447; woman@braintrust.org) 2-3:30pm
- Women of Color Rap (1st Wednesday) 7-8:30pm
- Women's Reading Group (3rd Wednesday) .. 7-9:30pm

THURSDAY

- Films for Thought (3rd Thursdays) 7-9pm
- Journal Writing to Explore One's Spirituality (6 sessions, 1st two open: Dec. 16 & 30) 7-9pm
- Older Women Finding Our Voices (2nd & 4th Thursdays) 11am-12:30pm
- 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
- WRAG (♀'s Radical Action Group) (for younger women; not meeting in December) 6:30-9pm

FRIDAY

- Incest Resources Facilitated Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (usually last Fridays) . 6-7:30pm
- Incest Survivors Anonymous (weekly) 6:30-8pm
- South Asian Women for Action (2nd Friday) 5:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages (1st Saturday, except holiday weekends) 11am-1pm
- Making of a Handywoman (one Sat./month) 2-4pm
- Trauma Survivors Group (3rd Saturday) 1:30-3pm
- Women Writing (every other week; Jan. 8) 12:30-2:30pm

ACT OUT

Revolutionary Young Sisters for Social Justice

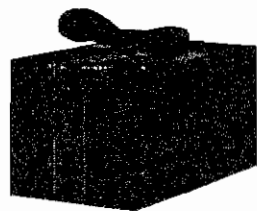
It is a long name for an organization. However, our mission is fairly simple: to activate young women to do grassroots political organizing in our communities. Since it's creation, the young women in Act Out have been working to learn the ins and outs of political organizing by working with organizations like Women of Color AIDS Council and Dorchester Women's Committee and by rotating leadership responsibilities within the group. We feel that it is crucial for young women to not only participate in social change movements but also to take the lead and create the agenda in those movements.

As we continue to work with more established organizations in the community, we have also begun working on our own projects. This fall we launched The Media Project to combat distorted or non-existent images of young women in the art and media world. It is our belief that young women have to tell their own stories and to this end we are in the process of creating a magazine as well as producing our first art show. The magazine will be a collection of news articles, personal essays, cartoons, photographs and various rants about girl culture and young women's lives. In addition, the art show will feature Act Out member Alisa Cui, whose work explores issues of race, gender, and identity through the mediums of photography, painting, and digital imaging. Both the art show and the magazine premiere in the Spring of 2000.

Act Out is excited about the work that lies ahead. We are happy to have found a home at the Women's Center and proud to be plugged in to many of the exciting projects that the center is working on at this time. We also want more young women to join us in our struggle to challenge all oppression and to celebrate young women everywhere.

ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters for Social Justice meets the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month from 6-8pm. For more information contact Lynn at 436-0390.

~ Lynn Murray



*Consider Giving A Gift
To A Friend or Loved One
By
Making a Donation to the
Women's Center
In Their Name*

WOMAN MAXIMIZING ABILITIES NOW

"*Enabling the Able in the Woman*" is our emphasis for the next millennium. We are a small group of women living with chronic illness and/or disability who share and console one another about what was and rejoice at our achievements now.

We foster hope as we share the wonder and challenges that push us onward and allow us to find our own strength to stabilize our lifestyles and nurture the "able" within. The group strategizes ways of restoring the basic life needs often impacted by illness: income, housing, food, health care, transportation, and a lively social network.

We are seeking new members to join us the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 2-3:30pm in the Living Room. For more information, contact Rose at (617) 945-1447 or e-mail woman@braintrust.org.

~ Rose Dixon

MOVING ON - A SUPPORT GROUP FOR SURVIVORS OF SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE

The group will be for women who have cut all ties with primary abusers and are in therapy. It will meet every other week for a total of six sessions. We can discuss the special challenges we face as we make lives for ourselves in the outside world, and share our victories as we overcome those challenges. For more info, call (617)354-8807.

GROUP POSSIBILITY

Depending on level of interest, we will offer one of the following closed, facilitated short-term groups, which will start in February: Trauma Survivors Group, Self-Injury Group, or Ritual Abuse Survivors Group. Please call (617)354-8807 if you are interested, leaving your name, number, and which group(s) you'd like to attend. Thanks!

WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY

Lots of timely workshops, lunch, massages, information and more - make up this great free annual event held on a Saturday in late March or April. If you'd like to help out - join the planning committee, give free massages, do childcare, help with publicity, or anything else, please call Judy at (617)354-8807. If you'd like to attend, call in March to get the specific date/workshop info. Hope to see you there!

JOIN THE COLLECTIVE!

The Women's Center Collective discusses and decides policy issues for the Women's Center. We believe that the best policies are made with women from all parts of the Center working together: group members, volunteers, staff, and any other women who use the Center.

Our decisions are made by consensus to reflect that every woman's voice is important and needs to be heard. The consensus process is rewarding and challenging. We will provide training so that all women will be comfortable with it.

Currently, we are working on two areas: determining the Center's transgender policy and creating a diversity statement with a corresponding long-term outreach strategy. Any member is welcome to suggest new policies to work on. The meetings are well-attended with brainstorming, intelligent discussion, and laughter.

The Collective meets from 6-8pm once a month. We are committed to having a large and diverse group of women participate. Our next three meetings are: Wednesday, December 1st, Thursday, January 6th, and Monday, February 7th. We look forward to seeing you there!



~ Sharon Devine

20 YEARS!

Incest Resources, Inc. is celebrating its 20th anniversary in the year 2000! The first survivor organization in the world, Incest Resources made its home at the Women's Center in 1980. Along with the founders of Voices in Action, Inc. in Chicago and Incest Survivors Anonymous in California, the founders of Incest Resources, Inc. began the survivor self-help movement in this country, which later became international in scope. The co-founder of Incest Resources, Dr. Elaine Westerlund, has received a Twentieth Century Achievement Award for her pioneering role in the survivor self-help movement and her development of original self-help programs and treatment models for survivor healing. Her biography has most recently been published in Five Hundred Leaders of Influence. Incest Resources is an all-survivor, all-volunteer nonprofit organization and contributions are tax-deductible. Anniversary donations may be sent to: Incest Resources, Inc., Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139.

FILMS FOR THOUGHT

On December 16, the Women's Center features the debut of a new film series entitled "Films for Thought." Every third Thursday from December until March, we will view a political film and then follow it with a group discussion. December's film is "Ad and the Ego." This first film in the series examines how advertising's powerful impact on our culture sells us notions of what it means to be men and women in the United States. We are exposed to over 1500 such ads each day. Media critics in the film demonstrate how this barrage of images not only attempts to sell products but cultural values as well. As we scramble during the holiday season to find the perfect gifts for friends and family, this film gives us the opportunity to step back and ask ourselves what is influencing our holiday choices.

Join us on the 16th from 7:00 to 9:00pm to sit back, relax and enjoy an interesting film and discussion.

~ Kimberlee LaBonte

WORK WITH US

The Women's Center Board has Finance, Fundraising, Community Outreach, and Political Committees that are open to community membership. If you are interested, please call 354-8807!

A LITTLE ABOUT SELF INJURY

Self-injury (SI) includes cutting, burning, hairpulling, bruising oneself and other behaviors which cause pain. As most people now agree, self-injury is not about suicide or attracting attention or getting sympathy. It is usually done without the knowledge of others, is very secret. It is a way of coping.

This way of dealing with difficult feelings was probably helpful once, but becomes frozen in time, interfering with growth, good self-care, relationships, and happiness. Changing self-injuring behavior is hard, anxiety provoking and sometimes frightening; but it is worthwhile.

The SI group at the Women's Center is about making the changes, aided by sharing and learning and support from the group. The group is facilitated by an experienced, clinical social worker and is a safe space to talk about self-injury. We talk about the many reasons for having begun SI, how it continues, and the ways people deal with it; we exchange ideas about what part it plays in life and what substitutes for it are most useful.

The group will meet on December 7th and 21st, from 7-8:30pm. If you have questions or want to speak with the facilitator, call Vera at 617-354-2304.