

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

October 2000

THE WOMEN'S CENTER EXHIBITS ARTWORK HONORING WOMEN ARTISTS

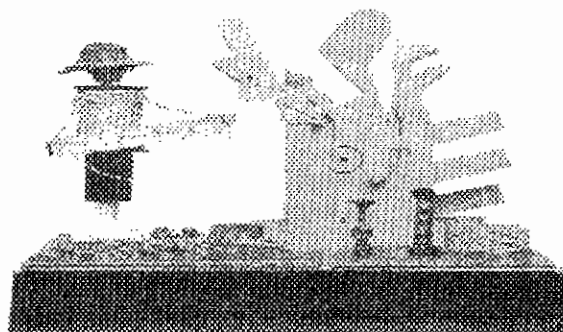
The Women's Center is a recipient of a donation from The Art Connection, Inc.

This summer the Women's Center received 11 extraordinary pieces of art from women artists in Greater Boston. These gifts came in different shapes and sizes, colors, mediums and textures. Each gift holds a story, and now these stories have found a home at the Women's Center. This generous donation was coordinated by The Art Connection, a nonprofit organization committed to "bringing art to life" by connecting artists wishing to donate their work to social service agencies.

Women's Center staff and volunteers chose pieces of art which promote a sense of celebration, strength, and healing. Of the pieces we chose, one was donated by Fay Chandler. As founder of The Art Connection, mother, wife, storyteller and artist, she is inspiring and enchanting.

"I'm so fortunate to get up in the morning and come to my studio and paint." Fay's voice is gentle as she sits in her studio called the Engine House, a brick building she renovated into studios for artists. She has just celebrated her 78th birthday and her life story is an inspiration.

At a young age, Fay felt that she could do anything she desired. But as she matured, her confidence lessened. *"Mentally you believe what you let yourself believe. It was while washing dishes and looking out the window that things suddenly seemed brighter. And I knew there was hope."*



During her fourth pregnancy, Fay discovered Paul Tillich, a philosopher, who observed people tended to use their eyes for practical reasons rather than for pleasure and excitement. It was Tillich who helped Fay realize she wasn't *using her eyes fully to look out to the world and into herself*. So, approaching the age of 40, Fay began to draw people. Then she began to paint and create objects. *"I discovered I could do things with color and shape. A certain confidence came back."*

Fay accumulated many paintings and objects which led to her idea of The Art Connection. Fay wanted her art to be seen and enjoyed by not just one but many individuals. In 1994, she brought people and artists together and The Art Connection became a reality. Six years later, The Art Connection has placed more than 420 pieces of art in social service agencies and community organizations. Looking back on her experiences she shares, *"You have to learn what you are capable of from trial and error. You have to make mistakes and know you can't do it all. You have to have faith. And a sense of humor is absolutely crucial."*

Fay donated an additional piece of her own work to the Women's Center to express her joy that we are one of the Art Connection's beneficiaries. It is an honor for the Women's Center to display the art of Fay Chandler and other women artists. We hope you will visit the exhibit of their art at the Women's Center in mid-November!

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INCREASING DIVERSITY AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

An Interview with Lynn Murray

I f you met her you'd want to meet her again.

As I prepare for our interview, I remember the first time I met Lynn at the Women's Center. She was luminous and striking in her ability to engage women in dialogue that evoked expressions of wonder and vitality. As we shook hands for the first time, I knew we would become close friends. Tonight, she sits across from me and over a dinner of steak and frites in Central Square, we talk about her past year at the Women's Center - the challenges along with the victories, and her inspirations and hopes for the Center as a place for ALL women.

What brought you to the Women's Center and why did you become so actively involved in the Center? I was looking for a women's community and doing political work that changes women's lives. I wanted to give my time towards something that's alive and moving and to be part of work for women that have the least support, like women of color.

Since volunteering at the Center as a board member and group facilitator, what has inspired you most? I'm inspired by the possibility of women becoming their best — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. There are so many conditions that hinder women such as discrimination, over-commitment to families and work, racism and low-self esteem. I refuse to live a life that doesn't chip away at that stuff. The Women's Center should be a place where women find their power or reenergize themselves. If not the Women's Center - where will that happen? I believe that the Women's Center can help women towards that end.

And what keeps you at the Center as such an active volunteer? Victories along the way keep me going, such as the Open House and the Community Organizing Project. I keep going because other women of color tell me how nice it is not to be the "only" person of color in the room. That's important.

On August 12th between noon and four over 50 women of color moved in, through and out of the Women's Center for an open house for women of color and their children titled, "Celebrate, Create and Connect".

In between those victories what challenges have you faced? The challenge of doing diversity work at the Center is realizing different groups of women could need a Women's Center for very different reasons and you want to respond to those different needs. I don't look at it like I'm doing work for the Center. I view the work I do as being for women and taking place at the Center.

Why do you do diversification work at the Women's Center? I do it because it needs to be done. The Women's Center wants to be a resource for ALL women. As a young woman of color, I represent two groups that aren't utilizing the Center in large numbers. That's a problem for me. Several of us are beginning to identify reasons why young women and women of color are not using the Center to the degree that other groups are. The Women's Center can make changes to be more accessible and welcoming to these groups of women. I want to be part of that work. It's also an accountability issue for me. The Women's Center is the only one of its kind in the New England area, so I feel that it has to serve all women.

As one of the coordinators of the Open House for women of color, what did you learn most from that day? I think women of color have learned over time how to be their own champions, which is a good survival skill but can also be isolating. I learned that the Open House was a way to break some of that isolation and connect with each other.

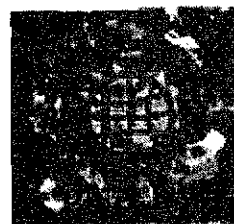
How did it feel to be with so many women of color under the Women's Center's roof? Just that it was a wonderful day. The Open House was definitely a success but we have to understand that it was one day. The

work is not over. This was just to get women of color in the door and to find out what their concerns are in terms of creating a Center that is comfortable and supportive for them. Women of color are not present in all areas of decision making at the Center and diversification is not complete. It's beginning but there's a lot of work to do.

What will this work look like? Before we can even talk about that, I believe that it has to be more than three women doing the work. While white women at the Center are involved in the diversity initiative and working to support the Women of Color Subcommittee, women of color have to be the ones who lead the efforts if this initiative is to be successful. Vanessa Washington and Gabri'el Atchison are two women of color on the subcommittee who have done a tremendous amount of work. I hope that women who came to the Open House and others will join the sub-committee in working to improve the Center's decor, programming and policies.

What were your hopes for the Open House? We wanted to have a good time. We ended up having a great time!
~ Eliza Hoyt

** To join the Diversity committee, call Mary at (617) 354-8807.



ARE YOU INTERESTED?

The Women of Color Subcommittee is looking for one or two women of color volunteers to organize a monthly social gathering at the Center. Responsibilities include, room scheduling, coordination of a monthly event and advertising. If you are interested, please call Gabri'el at (617)625-4951 or email atchison71@aol.com.

On Our Way

is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in April, October, 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



Volunteers

The Women's Center gratefully acknowledges the on-going efforts and contributions of our volunteers.

Thank you for giving so generously of your time and of yourselves.

The Women's Center relies on the generosity of the community to provide our wealth of free programming. 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

email: wmsncntr@mediaone.net

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

Helpline: (617)354-8807

THE WOMEN'S CENTER IS WIRED!

We are delighted to announce that the Women's Center has three spiffy computers with internet access available for FREE. Drop by and use them for resume writing, to search the Internet for jobs, childcare and other resources, create fliers, write poetry, or whatever your heart desires. This is all made possible by a generous donation of computers from IBM/Lotus, networking from Peer-to-Peer Consulting, and financial support from Bob and Nancy Huribut, Celia & Walter Gilbert, and other foundations and individuals. We are most grateful!

Women coming to the Center are very enthusiastic about this new resource. They have come by to search for health information, write cover letters, look for educational opportunities, do homework, create writing portfolios, and simply to



explore the net for the first time.

Volunteers have also found easy access to the internet a useful tool for assisting helpline callers. Information they used to have to dig for is now right at their fingertips. It's amazing how indispensable the computers have already become!

Over the next few months we plan to offer personalized trainings to women who have never used computers or surfed the web. We are also in the process of developing user-friendly guides and lists of fabulous websites to keep by the computers. If you have some time and interest in helping our computer program to thrive, please contact Heather at (617) 354-8807.

~ Heather Searles

COMING SOON...

The Women's Center website!

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER

The spring and summer months sizzled with new projects and creative energy. A special thanks to all those individuals who gave so generously in our spring appeal which raised \$11,017. We are grateful to you for your continuous support and for making it possible to offer free services to women. Within the past year, we have raised money toward two new programs - the *Community Organizing Project* and the *Education, Training, Career Development and Job Search Program*. These new initiatives will increase our ability to serve more women from diverse backgrounds. It has been a prosperous time for the Women's Center.

We give our thanks to the following organizations, community businesses and the City of Cambridge whose support this past spring and summer is greatly appreciated: *IBM/Lotus, Marcia Rough and Nitzche Foundation, Cornyn Foundation, New England Financial,*

Cambridge Savings Bank, Cambridge Trust Company, Urban Edge Housing, Quest Diagnostics, Agilent Technologies, Art Connection, Citizens Bank, Hartford Insurance Group, New England Financial, Incest Resources, East Cambridge Savings Bank, A Street Frames, FrameSmart, Framers' Workshop, Cambridge Framery and Photo, Food For Free, Picante, Carberry's, Harvest Co-op, Starbucks, Peer-to-Peer, and Ras Cafe.

WOMEN'S CENTER WISH LIST

Four ergonomic chairs
Copy Paper (white, colors)
TV/ VCR stands
Children's videos (ages 2-10)
Children's board games (ages 5-10)
Children's computer games



Or give a gift to a friend or loved one by making a donation to the Women's Center in their name.

WOMEN'S CENTER CALENDAR - FALL 2000

46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA - free & open to women - Info & helpline: (617) 354-8807 TTY/V

ONGOING GROUPS

MONDAY

- Al-Anon for Women (1st & 3rd Mondays) 6-7:30pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (weekly) 7:30-9pm
- Healing Circle (weekly) 8:30-9:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors
[3rd Mondays; info: Daniella, (617)497-0911] .. 7-8:45pm
- *Lesbian Rap (weekly) 7:30-9pm
- Women of Color Reading Circle (2nd Mondays) 7-8:30pm

TUESDAY

- *Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) 7:30-9pm
- Separation & Divorce Support Group (weekly) 7-9pm
- Women Concerned About Alcohol [interview required;
call Christine Flynn Saulnier, (617)353-7720] evening
- Women's Reading Group [4th Tuesdays;
info: Mary Siffelin, (781)663-4687] 7:30-9:30pm
- Writers' Circle [2nd Tuesdays;
info: Cassandra, (617)494-2695] 7-9pm

WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group (all Wednesdays
except the third) 7-9pm
- Lesbian Al-Anon (weekly) 6:30-8pm
- Movie Night For Women of Color [10/25; movies & other
activities for women of color on the 4th Wednesday
of each month; info: Gabrie'l, (617)625-4951] 7-9pm
- Transitioning out of the Patient Role [ongoing facilitated
group, open about every 6th week; for additional
information, contact Diane, (781)226-7097] 6-7:30pm
- *Women Over 40 (2nd & 4th Wednesdays) 7-8:30pm
- *Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN)
(1st & 3rd Wednesdays; woman@braintrust.org) . 2-3:30pm

THURSDAY

- 30+ Lesbian Rap (weekly) 7-8:30pm
- HerSay (2nd & 4th Thursdays) 7-8pm
- Support-4-Us (every other Thursday, for women who
suffer from Panic and Anxiety Disorders) 6-7:30pm
- Thursday Night Gathering for Survivors of Child Sexual
Abuse (weekly; topic at 1st mtg. of month) ... 7:30-9:30pm
- *Women's Community Cancer Project, Open
General Meeting [1st Thursdays; (617)354-9888] .. 7-9pm
- Women of Color Rap (October 5 & 19) 7-8:30pm

FRIDAY

- CODA (Codependents Anonymous; weekly) 6:30-8pm
- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for Survivors of
Child Sexual Abuse (last Fridays) 6-7:30pm
- *Incest Survivors Anonymous (weekly) 6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- *Beyond Living Paycheck to Paycheck (Personal finance
workshops for women of color; 3rd Saturdays) 2-4pm
- *Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages
(First Saturday of each month, except holiday
weekends; will meet October 14) 11am-1pm
- Trauma Survivors' Drop In Support Group
[3rd Saturdays; facilitated by Amy Aisenberg,
(617)354-3721, 11am-7pm please] 12:30-1:45pm
- *Undefended Love Workshop (October 28) 1-4pm
- Writing Women's Lives (weekly) 1-3pm

* Wheelchair accessible meetings

NEW GROUPS/WORKSHOPS

***BEYOND LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK: A series of Personal Finance Workshops for Women of Color,** 3rd Saturdays, 2-4pm. These workshops are designed to explore financial issues and options in a comfortable setting. Topics: Oct. 21: *Savings & Budgets*; Nov. 18: *Sources & Investment*.; Dec. 16: *More about Investments*. Info: (617)354-8807.

CODA, Fridays, 6:30-8pm. Codependents Anonymous is a 12-step meeting which can help you learn to value yourself and have healthier relationships. Info: Cindy, (617)267-1667.

HerSay, Thursdays, October 12 & 26, 7-8pm. A new group for women interested in political, social and artistic activities that focus on women's issues. Info: (617)354-8807.

MOVIE NIGHT FOR WOMEN OF COLOR, Wednesday, October 25, 7-9pm. Movies and other activities for women of color on the 4th Wednesdays. Info: Gabrie'l, (617)625-4951.

NOTHING TOO HEAVY TO SHARE (NTHTS). For survivors of severe abuse, such as battering, torture, forced isolation/confinement, child sexual exploitation, or extreme neglect. Info/to join: Esther, (617)969-9347.

***UNDEFENDED LOVE,** Saturday, October 28, 1-4pm. A one time workshop designed to explore and explain an exciting new approach to developing fulfilling, intimate relationships. Provided by authors Jett Psaris, Ph.D. and Marlena S. Lyons, Ph.D. Info: (617)354-8807.

WOMEN CONCERNED ABOUT ALCOHOL. Facilitated 14-week non-12-step closed group. Interview required prior to meeting. Tuesday evenings. Info/ to register (ASAP, and through October): Christine Flynn Saulnier, (617)353-7720.

WRITING WOMEN'S LIVES, Saturdays, 1-3pm. A weekly writing group focusing on participants' thoughts and experiences. With Bonnie Cunningham, Ph.D. Info: (617)354-8807.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

INCEST RESOURCES FACILITATED DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

October 27 Memories
November 24 Family
December 29 Self-Care

WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE

2nd Mondays, 7-8:30pm. Info: Vanessa, (617)629-3106.

October 9 *So Far From God* by Ana Castillo.

WOMEN OF COLOR RAP - 7-8:30pm

October 5 Resume Writing Skills
19 Dress For Success

*WOMEN OVER 40 - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm

October 11 Anger
25 Political Issues

Info: Suzanne, (781)393-4854.

*LESBIAN RAP - Mondays, 7:30-9pm.

October 9 Game Night
16 Meet at the Diesel Café
23 Movie Night: *When Night is Falling*
30 Coming Out at Work

*BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP - 1st & 3rd Tuesdays

7:30-9pm; activities on off weeks; Elle, (617)718-0386.

October 17 To Label or Not to Label?



Yes, I want to support the Women's Center!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of: _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$500 _____ \$other

For a donation of \$150 or more, you'll receive a Women's Center T shirt or cap!

I'd like to become a regular **monthly sustainer**, with a pledge of \$_____ per month.

____ Add me to the Women's Center mailing list.

____ I'm interested in volunteering at the Women's Center.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Thank You!

If you'd prefer to be taken off of our mailing list, please check the following box and return to the Women's

Center (Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139)

HerSay:

WOMEN PICKING THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR GRASSROOTS

HerSay, a women centered group, whose purpose is to foster the social, political, artistic lives and visibility of women, will meet the second and fourth Thursday of every month. Our goal is to provide the materials, education, and support which will enable each woman to find and use a voice with which she feels most comfortable.

If you are an artist maybe you'll be interested in helping to organize a zine, display a mural, or coordinate an art show featuring the works of women.

If you want to rekindle your activist roots come participate in various direct actions, such as sit-ins or marches; or sharpen your community organizing skills through organizing petition drives, letter writing campaigns to businesses and government, or engaging and educating the public through flyering.

HerSay recognizes that the expressive lives of women are not only found in creative and political pursuits but in social ones as well. With your help and input we will plan women centered events: dances, poetry readings and slams, house parties, or even the take over of a Boston nightspot.

What we do at and with HerSay is up to you. Come shape the vision of the group and it will reflect the entire range of women's issues and experiences. HerSay is a group for women of any age, race, political affiliation, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

HerSay is for those who have a desire to shape the future of our various interwoven communities through active participation in the ongoing dialogues and struggles within them.

~ Judy Pich

The Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

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