

# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

April 2001

## THE PERSEPHONE PROJECT

Writing about domestic violence is not easy. Many of us who've been there would like it to go away so we can move on. Many who haven't feel overwhelmed by the topic. And many who are in the middle of it often aren't aware it's domestic violence, and if we are, can't imagine it will ever end.

Despite the difficulties, eight women chose to enter into "the persephone project," a group writing process that will result in a play about domestic violence. We meet once a week for 2 hours at the Women's Center. We often start with a short exercise to deal with "the critic"--a sort of internal batterer who badgers and tries to shame us when we express ourselves. Then we do timed writings, in which I set a topic and we all write for 10-15 minutes. When the time is up, we discuss what came up for us and people can read from what they wrote.

"Alright, everybody," I said at a re-

cent meeting. "Let's write about that turning point, that moment in the relationships when the red flag went up and you suspected trouble." In the weeks before we'd written about meeting somebody for the first time, somebody who later turned out to be abusive. Now we were moving into thorny territory. We discussed the topic for awhile, then people picked up their pens and bent over their papers.

It takes tremendous courage and commitment to show up for a project like this. When we pick up our pens and move into old wounds, we don't know what will happen. We might feel anger, despair, or grief. Ex-partners that rarely cross our minds might appear in our dreams or thoughts again. Why do we do it? For many of us, we do it to continue the healing process. Ending an abusive relationship doesn't end what it did to us. Those lingering effects can keep us in mistrust, isolation, and negative feelings about ourselves and our futures.

voices, we recover our selves. This is why the project is modeled after the goddess Persephone, who was abducted by the king of the underworld and imprisoned there. Through the efforts of her mother Demeter and her own tenacious determination to keep hold of her true sun-loving self, she was eventually brought back to the surface of the earth to tell her story.

Eight women have surfaced to tell their stories. Between meetings, I take their words and shape them into dialogue and scenes. We read the scenes aloud in the meetings and the group gives me feedback. This way, little by little, we are building a stage play.

We hope you will all come see the finished product on **June 15 & 16 at 8 p.m. at the Cambridge YWCA in Central Square**. These are the dates of the staged readings, when professional actors will perform what we have written. The performances are free and will be followed by a discussion with the audience. In this way the stories of a few survivors can reach others who need to hear them, and the healing process can ripple out through the community.

~Anna Baum

By bringing our experiences and feelings into the light, into a safe place with other survivors, we let them be healed. In recovering our

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And more. . .



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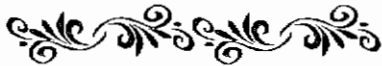
Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in *April, October, and December.*

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: [wmnscntr@mediaone.net](mailto:wmnscntr@mediaone.net)

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

Helpline: (617)354-8807 TTY/Voice

## Grief Support Group Focuses on Motherloss

Beginning in April, the Grief Support Group will focus on motherloss on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. The other Tuesdays will remain general discussions on the loss of a loved one.

The death of a woman's mother is a life altering event. It influences her friendships, relationships, life decisions, and sense of identity for the rest of her life. The grief of the loss of the mother stays deep inside of her forever.

The group will offer a place for women survivors of motherloss to talk openly about the significance of this loss. Women will have the opportunity to share, connect, and support others who share the common thread of the loss of their mother. All women are welcome to come share their experiences, voice their concerns, and talk about their feelings.

For more information, call Lizzie at (617) 776-2791 or Marje at (617) 498-0472. The group meets Tuesdays from 6:30-8pm.  
~ Lizzie Lundgren



## Support The Women's Center



by  
*Honoring  
a Friend  
or Loved  
One*

*with a Gift to the  
Women's Center*

## Sexual Harassment Know Your Rights

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work. Your workplace depends on a professional working atmosphere built on mutual respect. Know your rights so they can protect you!

If someone's behavior of a sexual nature is unwanted, unwelcome and repeated, it may well interfere with your work performance or else create an intimidating, offensive work environment for you. The laws are designed to protect you.

Local, state and federal laws have been designed to protect you as a worker from disabling discrimination while you earn your living. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 has given you certain rights and responsibilities and you need to know exactly what they are.

Come to a Sexual Harassment Support Group to learn more on Wednesday, May 2, 2001 from 7-9pm, or call the leader, Louise Bonar, at (617)254-1729.

~ Louise Bonar

# WOMEN'S CENTER CALENDAR - SPRING 2001

46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA - free & open to women - Info & helpline: (617) 354-8807 TTY/V; email: mnsctr@mediaone.net

## ONGOING GROUPS

### MONDAY

- Al-Anon for Women (weekly)..... 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 .. 7-8:45pm  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays. Info: Danielle (617) 497-0911).
- \*Lesbian Rap (weekly)..... 7:30-9pm
- Women of Color Reading Circle (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday)..... 7-8:30pm

### TUESDAY

- \*Bisexual Women's Rap (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays)..... 7:30-9pm
- Grief Support Group (weekly) ..... 6:30-8pm  
(Topic 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays: Mother Loss.  
Other Tuesdays: General grief discussion/support.  
Info: lizziewl@yahoo.com.)
- \*Support for Married Bisexual Women (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday).. 7:30-9pm
- Women's Reading Group (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday) ..... 7-9:30pm  
Info: Mary at (781) 891-5727.
- Writer's Circle (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday) ..... 7-9pm  
Info: Cassandra at (617) 494-2695.

### WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group (All Wednesdays  
except the 3<sup>rd</sup>) ..... 7-9pm
- Lesbian Al-Anon (weekly)..... 6:30-8pm
- Liquid Poets (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays)..... 7:30-9pm
- \*Liquid Writers (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays)..... 7:30-9pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (May 2)..... 7-9pm
- \*Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN)..... 2-3:30pm  
(1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays. Info: woman@braintrust.org).
- \*Women Over 40 (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays)..... 7-8:30pm
- Women's Creativity Group (May 16)..... 6-8pm

### THURSDAY

- 30+ Lesbian Rap (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays)..... 7-8:30pm
- \*Introduction to the Women's Center for Women  
Interested in Volunteering (April 19) ..... 6:30-8:30pm
- \*Red Alert: A Workshop and Discussion on Alternative  
Menstrual Products and Attitudes (April 12) ..... 7:30-9pm
- Thursday Night Gathering For Survivors of Child Sexual  
Abuse (Weekly; topic on 1<sup>st</sup> mtg. of month) ..... 7:30-9:30pm
- \*Women's Community Cancer Project, Open General  
Meeting (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday. Info: (617) 354-9888)..... 7-9pm

### FRIDAY

- CODA (weekly). Info: Cindy (617) 267-1667 ..... 6:30-8pm
- Haitian Women's Empowerment Group (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday)..... 6-8pm
- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for  
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (Last Friday of the  
Month, September-June) ..... 6-7:30pm
- \*Incest Survivors Anonymous (ISA) (weekly) ..... 6:30-8pm

### SATURDAY

- \*Coming Out Discussion for Women of all Ages (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday  
each month, except holiday weekends)..... 11am-1pm
- \*For Women Only: What Every Woman Should  
Know About Investing (April 14)..... 12:30-2pm
- Improving Body Image and Self-Esteem without Dieting  
(May 12; with Cindy Benowitz)..... 12:30-1:45pm

\*Wheelchair Accessible

Come hear actors read a play about domestic violence  
created by survivors of domestic abuse in the  
"Persephone Project."  
8pm, Friday, June 15 and Saturday, June 16  
FREE at the Cambridge YWCA in Central Square

## NEW GROUPS / ACTIVITIES

**\*FOR WOMEN ONLY! WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INVESTING.** Saturday, April 14, 12:30-2pm.  
A woman's guide to lifelong financial planning, addressing issues such as financing education and saving for retirement. Bring questions and get answers about investing. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**\*VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION.** Thursday, April 19, 6:30-8pm.  
Tour the Women's Center and learn about the Center's programs and volunteer opportunities. Info: (617) 354-8807.

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

**\*RED ALERT: A WORKSHOP AND DISCUSSION ON ALTERNATIVE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AND ATTITUDES.** Thursday, April 12, 7:30-9pm. Learn possible impacts & healthy alternatives to using popular 'hygiene products,' and share experiences & attitudes on menstruation. Info: (617) 354-8807

**COMPUTER TRAINING.** We have patient volunteers willing to work with you one-on-one to develop computer and internet skills. Flexible scheduling to meet the needs of interested women. Call Heather at (617) 354-8807 to learn more.

**IMPROVING YOUR BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM WITHOUT DIETING.** Saturday, May 12, 12:30-1:45pm; with Cindy Benowitz.

**WOMEN'S CREATIVITY GROUP.** Wednesday, May 16, 6-8pm. Join in a social and artistic activity. An opportunity to create a collage and have some fun. Bring objects and materials for the activity. We will all share. Info: mdigiovanni@yahoo.com.

## TOPICS

### 30+ LESBIAN RAP - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays, 7-8:30pm

- April 19 Lesbian Favorites: Music, Film, Books, etc.
- May 3 Lesbians, Where Are You?

### \*BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm

- April 17 Video Night
- May 1 Does your Partner's Orientation Make a Difference?

### INCEST RESOURCES FACILITATED DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

- April 27 Courage
- May 25 Boundaries
- June 29 Hope and Renewal

### \*LESBIAN RAP - Mondays, 7:30-9pm

- April 9 Coming Out
- 16 Media Stereotypes- How Far Have We Come?
- 23 Being Gay in the Workplace
- 30 Game Night

### LIQUID POETS - 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, 7:30-9pm

A women's poetry group. Includes writing exercises & readings of both personal & published work. No writing experience necessary.

- April 11 Religious Poetry 25 Nature Poetry & Mary Oliver
  - May 9 Sharon Olds 23 Children's Poetry
- Info: liquidwriters@hotmail.com, or Sarah at (617) 776-9299.

### WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE. 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 7-8:30pm.

April 9: The Book: *Blue Horses Rush In: Poems and Stories* by Luci Tapahonso. Info: Vanessa (617) 629-3106.

### \*WOMEN OVER 40 - 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm

- April 11 Sex: Are We Having Enough?
  - 25 Poetry (bring a favorite verse, yours or another's)
- Info: Suzanne, (781) 393-4854.

**WOMEN'S READING GROUP.** Tuesday, April 24, 7-9:30pm. The Book: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. Info: Mary (781) 891-5727.

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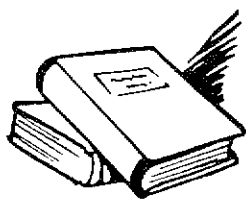
## Monday Night Battered Women's Support Group

If you attend this group, you will find a space to look inward, explore your needs and wants, get to know yourself and reclaim your life. The chaos of the battering experience by its very nature keeps us hyper-vigilant and focused outwardly on the inherent dangers in our environment. Time spent in our group may be the only opportunity you have to focus on your own internal reality. If the batterer is intimidating you and telling you who you are and what you think and feel, you may lose touch with your own truth. In the group, we talk from our direct experience and speak in "I" statements - "I think," "I feel," "I do."

You may be currently in a battering situation, or recently just out of one. Your abuse might be physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. If the abuse has been emotional/mental (being belittled, controlled, restricted, etc., for example: told "you never do anything right," "you're stupid, incompetent!"), you may even feel you don't qualify as really being battered and shouldn't ask for help.

### WISH LIST

- Card tables
- 9' x 12' rug (clean, solid color)
- 9' x 7' rug (clean, appropriate for children's)
- Office supplies
- Children's easel
- Non-toxic art supplies
- Ergonomic chairs
- 17" computer monitors
- Small end tables
- Microsoft Word for Dummies
- Windows 98 for Dummies
- 3" three ring binders



### VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Thursday, APRIL 19 6:30-8pm or  
Thursday, MAY 10 6-7:30pm  
Come learn about the Women's Center and  
all of our fabulous Volunteer opportunities.  
Call (617) 354-8807 to reserve a space.

Ask for help! Come to this group. There is "life after battering" though it may not seem that way now.

We see ourselves in each other's stories. We are contending with so many losses - from our dream of how things should be, our self-esteem, to perhaps the relationship, sense of security, our life style, and more.

Group members can feel encouraged and supported as we hear and applaud each other's steps to reclaim our lives: discovering we have strengths, power, self-respect, the ability to think clearly; learning new skills; relying on ourselves; standing up for ourselves.

The group is facilitated by Lorraine, who 13 years ago came to this very group and was helped tremendously. Regular attendance is not required. Confidentiality is respected.

If you think this might be helpful to you, come on any Monday, 7:30-9pm.

~ From an interview with Lorraine Feldmen by  
Judy Norris

## Foundations & Corporations

Many thanks to the following foundations and corporations for supporting The Women's Center with contributions equaling \$500 or more from 11/22/00 to 3/31/01.

- Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
- Anonymous
- Boston Women's Fund, Inc.
- Cambridge Community Foundation
- City of Cambridge
- Eastern Bank and Trust
- First American Title Insurance Company
- George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust
- Marion L. Decrow Memorial Foundation
- Parish of Christ Church
- Sheila Gamble Fund
- The R.O.S.E. Fund
- Tides
- Women in Crisis

Thank You



**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)

**IMPROVING YOUR BODY IMAGE AND SELF ESTEEM WITHOUT DIETING**

Diets teach us to disconnect from our bodies by denying our hunger. They reinforce body hatred by perpetuating the societal belief that we must change our bodies in order to accept ourselves.

On Saturday, May 12, from 12:30-1:45pm at the Women's Center, Cindy Benowitz, MSW, LICSW, will provide a presentation that deals with eating issues, societal pressure and body image. She will introduce a self-nurturing ap-

proach that takes us back to the "beginning" when we knew from the "inside out" when to feed ourselves, how much to eat, and what appealed to us personally. Self-Demand Feeding will help us to regain our own power, knowledge, and connection to our bodies.

Join us for this powerful workshop on building self-esteem and improving body image. For more information, call (617) 354-8807.

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

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org  
US Postage  
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Boston, MA  
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