



The Women's Center

ON OUR WAY

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

Winter 2003

The WC: Taking Stock & Moving Forward

As the year 2003 comes to a close, we take note of all that has been accomplished, as well as those things that continue to take shape. We say a fond farewell to Judy Norris, who retires after 32 years of dedicated service to the Women's Center. In honor of Judy and her enormous contribution and dedication, we name our new childcare room *The Judy Norris Childcare Room*. The childcare room has both a new name and a new look. We are in the process of renovating it: putting in a padded floor; bright overhead light; new utility sink; child safety features; and cabinets to hold the many children's art supplies needed for the Mother Child Art Project. In January 2004, the Mother Child Art classes move from the YWCA to our new childcare space and the number of classes we hold increases from 1 to 4 per week.

This month, we introduce a new volunteer, Amy Stipe, who now works on our calendar design and distribution. She is responsible for the new WC calendar format. We hope that women find the calendar a bit easier to read. Please check it out (page 4) and let us know what you think. We want your input...

As is the case each year, 2003 saw the formation of new groups and services for women at the Center. We collaborated with Cambridge City Councilor Denise Simmons to introduce the monthly peer support group, "*Grand*" Moms for women raising a second generation of children. We introduced *Healing and Art* at the Center, which quickly became quite popular among trauma survivors. Working in conjunction with the ROSE Fund, we held a series of *Cooking and Nutrition Classes* for battered and formerly battered women. Luscious aromas wafted through the building each Friday night, as chef Petal Joseph introduced new recipes to participants. The classes were so successful that we repeat the program again in January 2004.

We complete the year, celebrating the 2003 victories of Women of Action (WOA)- the Women's Center's community organizing project. We applaud WOA's MBTA campaign accomplishments and the recognition WOA received from the Boston Women's Fund through their *Take A Stand Award*. We root for WOA in 2004 as they take on housing inequities facing low-income women.

We look to the coming year with hope and excitement. Imagine a Women's Center lit up with bright lights and jumping with many activities, each and every night. Imagine

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a Women's Center with an expanded kitchen that accommodates 10 cooking class participants each session, rather than the current 6. Imagine a Women's Center with a completely renovated basement, making the Computer/Internet Access Lab and the basement meeting room two of the most comfortable rooms in the building. Imagine the sight and sounds of mothers and toddlers working on art projects together. This is what we imagine and plan to bring to the community in the coming year.

~Mary Quinn

WISH LIST

- "White Noise" machine
- Set of kitchen knives & storage block
- Easel for flip charts
- Office supplies
- Dehumidifier
- Printing / Copier paper (white and colored)
- Spanish software
- Children's educational software & games

- Desktop Computers: Pentium III or faster desktops, working motherboards and processor)
- Monitors: 17" or larger
- Working laser printers
- Hard Drive: 10 GB of capacity or larger
- CD-ROM drives & CD burners
- HP inkjet toner cartridges (#45)

- Toner for HP LaserJet 4 Plus
- Herbal Tea
- Hand soap (liquid)
- Dishwashing detergent



On Our Way

Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published 3 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 tools and resources they need to emerge from abuse, discrimination, addiction, sexism and racism, harassment, social isolation, violence, poverty, or other injustice to challenge and change attitudes and actions which subjugate women.



Volunteers

The Women's Center gratefully acknowledges the ongoing 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:

info@cambridgewomenscenter.org

Hours:

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

Volunteering at the WC

My name is **Andrea Cole** and I volunteer on the Helpline at the Women's Center. My experience as a volunteer is both enlightening and fulfilling.

I first became interested in volunteering when I found the Center's website and learned of the goals and activities of the Center. I was very interested in volunteering for a helpline, and I thought that the Women's Center would be a good fit since I could not only hone my support skills, but also learn about issues affecting women in Boston. I contacted Eunice, the volunteer coordinator, and she invited me to come to the Center for an interview and information session.

When I first arrived, I was struck by how inviting the space is and how open the Center is to women of all backgrounds. As Eunice described my role as a helpline volunteer, she encouraged me to look through the plethora of resources and reading materials the Center makes available. I was excited about the possibility of providing help to women on an emotional level as well as a practical level.

I now staff the Helpline once a week. During my first shift I was a bit nervous about the prospect of answering support calls and greeting women who enter the Center, but as I have grown more knowledgeable about the Center I have also grown more comfortable. I now look forward to my time at the Center. It is not only an opportunity to provide encouragement to women, but also a time to learn from women who have varying experiences and interests. I find that while volunteering my time and emotional energy to women who are sometimes very much in need, I am simultaneously gaining important skills and a better understanding of the lives that construct the fascinating fabric of women in the Boston area.

~Andrea Cole

From the Desk of the Fundraiser

Countless women seek assistance to heal from abuse, poverty, and discrimination - only to find they cannot afford the help they so desperately need. Unable to pay for support services, women in crisis are further isolated in painful and dire situations.

At the Women's Center, the search for support services is empowering and validating. We provide immediate assistance to women at no cost. All women, regardless of their economic status, access the Center's critical programs and services. These include: peer support; vital referral information; support groups; workshops; and computer/internet access.

Each year, the lives of thousands of women are changed as a result of the resources and support they obtain at the Women's Center! The generosity of the Women's Center community makes all of this possible. Please join us this holiday season with a tax-deductible donation to support and build our programming for women in need.

Your donation helps us to:

- Develop new support groups and workshops
- Update our computer lab
- Train Helpline Volunteers
- Renovate our new children's room
- Expand our referral network
- Increase outreach to low-income women

This season, please help us to provide opportunities for healing and rebuilding to many more women - opportunities all women deserve!

~Nicole Marcotte

Real Reality T.V.

What the hell happened to television? Every show that comes on the tube these days is some variation of how to marry a man, win lots of money and along the way, wear as little clothing as possible. Where does a girl go to find smart, entertaining television that won't drop kick her self-esteem during the first half hour? Enter **WomenSpeak** on Cambridge Community Television. WomenSpeak is reality t.v. minus the gratuitous violence and sexual objectification. At WomenSpeak we focus on the very real lives of women at the Center as well as the Cambridge community at large. Some of our guests include filmmakers, community organizers, writers, punk aerobic instructors – women from all walks of life ready to share their talents and ideas with you. Tune into WomenSpeak on channels 9, 10 and 22. If you would like to be a guest on WomenSpeak, please contact Lynn Murray at 617-354-6394. WomenSpeak airs the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 on CCTV.

~Lynn Murray

Breathing Room

Social Justice Taboo and Top Ten Ways to De-Stress are some of the items on the Women of Action Open Mic Agendas. Open Mics are the *chill out-focus in* meetings attended by WOA members. After working on campaigns for justice while juggling kids, school and life in general, it's important to have time to reflect on the struggles of the everyday and grumble a little with people who understand where you're coming from and can offer support as well as strategies to make life a little easier. *Some of our past topics:* Food: How do you feed your body and soul? Risks: What are you willing to risk and what are you not willing to risk? We also discuss self-esteem, relationships, oppression and motherhood while laughing, eating and learning more about ourselves and each other. Open Mics are the first Thursday of every month from 6:30 – 8PM.

~Lynn Murray

Road Meets at the Women's Center

ROAD: Reaching Out About Depression is a new "supportive action" group where low-income women dealing with depression can come together both to support each other and to help the larger community of women struggling with the same issues. The idea behind ROAD is that managing depression is essential to enabling women to be active in their communities, and that being active in the community will, in turn, help with depression by giving women a sense of control and accomplishment.

Right now, a small group of women is forming to begin the initial work of ROAD. We are starting by developing a series of workshops that we will use to reach out to other women facing these issues – and eventually to health-care providers and other policy-makers. Some of these workshops will focus on personal issues such as parenting with depression or even identifying depression in the first place. Others will be more community-focused and will lay out a blueprint for future ROAD activism on depression issues. Developing these workshops is taking time, commitment, and hard work, but in the meantime, we're supporting each other and having fun.

We are still looking for a few more members to join this initial group. If you are interested, please call or email me directly at: (617) 275-2938 or littwin@hcfama.org. Childcare and a meal provided at all meetings.

~ Angie Littwin



Honor Someone You Love With a Gift to the Women's Center



**It' easy to do.
Here is how:**

Send a contribution to the Women's Center with a note giving us the name and address of the person you are honoring. We send your loved one a note telling them that you've made a gift in their name

GROUPS

Monday

*6-7:30pm ~ **Al-Anon for Women**
(weekly)

7:30-9pm ~ **Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors**, Dec 15 & Jan 19

*7:30-9pm ~ **Lesbian Rap**, (weekly)
Topics: 1-*Housing Laws*, 8- *Talking about Taboos*, 15-*Lesbians & Art, Show and Tell*, 22-*Potluck & Sexual Food Stories*, 29-*Game Night, Bring a Game!*

Tuesday

7:30-9pm ~ **Bisexual Women's Rap**, Dec 2 & 16, Topics: 2-*Flirting:How do you do it?*, 16-*Holiday Open Rap* (also Jan 6 & 20)

*10:30am-12pm ~ **Parenting Support** (weekly), to join call Diane @ (617) 876-2139

*7:30-9pm ~ **Support for Married But Not Straight Women**, Dec 9 & Jan 13

7-9pm ~ **Writer's Circle**, Dec 9 & Jan 13

info: Cassandra @ (617) 494-2695

6-8pm ~ **Cooking & Nutrition Workshop Series for battered and formerly battered women** (weekly, Jan 6 - Feb 10; info: 617 354-8807)

Wednesday

7-9pm ~ **Battered Women's Support Group**, Dec 3 & 10 and Jan 7, 14, & 28

*6-8pm ~ **"Grand" Moms**, Dec 10 & Jan 14

7-9pm ~ **Liquid Poets**, Dec 10 & Jan 14
Christine:

liquidwriters@hotmail.com

*2-3:30pm ~ **Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN), for women w/disabilities**, Dec 3 & 17 and Jan 7 & 21

*wheelchair accessible groups

Thursday

6:30-8:30pm ~ **Healing & Art for Trauma Survivors**, Dec 11 & Jan 8

7-8:30 ~ **Lesbian Buddhist Book Group**, Dec 4

*6:30-8:30pm ~ **Monthly Activist**, Dec 18

7:30-9:30pm ~ **Thursday Night Gathering of Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse** (weekly), Topic: *Shame* info: lilithlive@aol.com

*6-8pm ~ **Women of Action Open Mic**, Dec 4

Friday

6-7:30pm ~ **Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**, Dec 5
Topic: *Dissociation*

Saturday

*11am-1pm ~ **Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages**, Dec 6 & 20 and Jan 3 & 17

2-4pm ~ **Decorating for Everywoman** by Nan Genger of Community Interiors, Dec 13, Topic: *Get Organized: Declutter w/ style*

*11am-1pm ~ **Women of Action**, Dec 13 and Jan 10: *Campaign Meeting*, call Lynn before attending your first meeting (617) 308-7330



(Look for more January activities in next month's calendar)

New and Featured Activities*

Decorating for Everywoman:

"Interior environment" is physical space and our emotional self in constant interaction. To change our surroundings, simplify and add beauty, can be positive in many ways. Taught by Nan Genger of Community Interiors.

"Grand" Moms: Join in conversation, laughing, resource sharing, and enjoying a meal. Let's support each other as we raise a second generation of kids. RSVP: (617) 354-8807. Call, so we have enough food and childcare.

Healing and Art: For Trauma Survivors. Tell the truth about the past, explore the present, create the future through artistic expression. No prior experience or skill needed. Info: (617) 354-8807

Nothing Too Heavy to Share

(NTHTS): For daytime meeting and evening meeting per survivors of extreme abuse One week—come to either or both. Info/Join: Esther (617) 354-8807.

Cooking & Nutrition Workshop Series:

For battered and formerly battered women, by chef Petal Joseph. Dinner and childcare provided. Must register at (617) 354-8807.



Snow Policy- The Women's Center is closed when the City of Cambridge issues a Snow Emergency

The Center is closed December 24, 25, 26, & 27 and January 1 & 19. The Center closes at 4 PM on December 31.

Please do not wear perfumes or strong scents at the Women's Center.

Cooking & Nutrition Workshop

In October, the Women's Center and the ROSE Fund started a cooking and nutrition workshop series for battered and formerly battered women. It was so popular that we decided to run it again. We interviewed a couple of women after the end of the series. We asked them about their experience, what they learned or gained from the classes. This is what Miguelina Santiago tells us:

I liked that the cooking class is run by women for women. I felt safe, in a relaxed environment. Both the chef and nutritionist were very knowledgeable and patient in explaining each step in the process. They were also very respectful.

I learned how to get the vitamins I need from different foods and vegetables.

For example, the deeper the color is on a vegetable the more vitamins it has. When you are trying to decide which vegetable to buy, go for those that have deep colors. I also learned that it is always good to eat fresh vegetables. If you cannot afford to buy fresh vegetables, the next best thing are frozen or canned vegetables. Remember to wash vegetables thoroughly and have a little brush to scrub them well. When you eat canned vegetables, drain the water and run clean water over them to wash away preservatives and other substances that aren't good for your health.

It was fun to taste different foods and learn about many different kinds of oils like grape oil, olive oil, and a very different one that comes from mushrooms and is imported from Italy. We learned about different kinds of fish. Fish that swim deep at the bottom of the ocean, take longer to cook because they eat differently from those who swim around the reefs eating seaweed.

Each class ended with a complete meal integrating the three food groups: vegetables, carbohydrates, and meat (iron). We talked about food portions. A piece of meat should not be bigger than your fist.

I took this course because, as a mother of three, I wanted to learn how to cook healthy and tasty meals at the same time. I wanted to learn about different kinds of food. I definitely recommend this course to other women. It is fun, informative, educational, and you get to meet friends. You get to cook and share what you cooked with others. You are not only learning how to cook, but also you are learning about nutrition. The course is free of charge. You don't have to spend a penny. There aren't many places that give a workshop like this one for free, so take advantage of it. You'll love it and you'll have lots of fun.



~Miguelina Santiago

Foundation and Corporate Support

A special "thank you" to the foundations and organizations who have contributed \$250 or more in 2003

A Better Place Foundation
 Athena Theater Company
 Bushrod Campbell & Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
 Cambridge Savings Bank
 Cambridge Trust Company
 Citizens Bank
 City of Cambridge
 Clipper Ship Foundation
 Cornyn Foundation
 Draper Laboratory
 Frances R. Dewing Foundation
 East Cambridge Savings Bank
 First American Title Insurance Company
 Hartley Corporation
 Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation
 Haymarket People's Fund
 Instead Feminist Cooperative at Wellesley College
 Mind's Eye Yarn
 George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust
 The R.O.S.E Fund
 TJX Foundation
 Unitarian Universalist Funding Program
 Women Empowered



Introducing the Judy Norris Childcare Room

As you round the corner of the stairwell leading to the second floor of the Women's Center, you often hear the sounds of children laughing and playing coming from our new Children's Room. While moms attend Women's Center support groups, workshops, and activist groups, their children participate in activities and projects such as story-time, song and dance, and seed planting. After meetings end, the children leave for home with their little hands clutching drawings, paintings, and other projects they created at the Center.

The new Children's Room is the cornerstone of our Children's Programming, and we are in the process of renovating the new Children's Room into a child-centered, child safe environment. *(continued on page 6)*

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

Return Service Requested

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Introducing the Judy Norris Childcare Room

(continued from Page 5) As part of our commitment to assisting and empowering mothers, we provide high quality parent-child resources and children's programs free of charge in our Children's Room. These resources are particularly important for single moms, working moms, and low-income moms who otherwise cannot afford them.

In addition to providing childcare during groups, we will hold the Mother and Child Art Classes in our new Children's Room beginning in January! We will offer 4 classes, including weekday and weekend sessions, so that working moms can take advantage of this fun, educational programming for their pre-school age children. Each class accommodates 5 children and their moms, with 20 children participating each session. The art teacher presents 3 different hands-on art activities and assists the children and moms in creative play during each class.

With the addition of the Mother-Child Art Classes at the Center, we anticipate as many as 40 children and their mothers utilizing our Children's Programming each week. This marks a significant achievement in the Center's outreach to moms in our community!

To sign up for the Mother and Child Art Classes or to reserve childcare while attending a Women's Center meeting, please contact us at (617)354-8807. If you would like to donate to the renovation project, please contact Nicole at (617)354-6394.

~ Nicole Marcotte



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

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of: ___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$500 ___other \$ ___

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank You!

Checks payable to **The Women's Center**. To: Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA 02139

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