

# ♀ 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. . .



## On Our Way

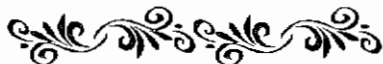
Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in *April, October, and December.*

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: [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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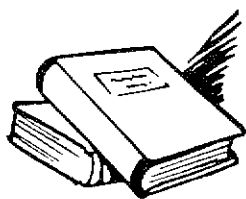
## Monday Night Battered Women's Support Group

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  
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Return Service Requested

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*Fall 2001*

## Women Can Make A Difference

"Know the issues!" "Voice your opinion!" These statements encapsulate our new Public Policy/Political Activism Project. The goals of this project are to foster political awareness and activism among the hundreds of women who visit the Women's Center. Each year, public officials consider bills and policy initiatives that have a direct impact on the lives of women. We must raise our voices and act in support of policies that increase our opportunities and oppose those that will be detrimental to our lives.

One of the exciting ways that we are putting this into action is through our Political Action Gatherings. Women come together to learn about a specific issue, discuss how the issue affects them, ask questions, and write letters to decision-makers urging them to support policies and legislation which help women. Generally, we cohost these

Political Action Gatherings with other community groups who are working on the issue. For those who can't come to the meetings, we've created a Political Activist Board in our Resource Room to provide information, places to go for further information, and suggestions for action. Please stop by and check it out!

The Women's Center is currently working on several major issues. They are 1) Paid Parental Leave; 2) Universal Healthcare; and 3) Equitable contraceptive coverage by insurance companies. As women earn on average only 73% of what men earn, it is important that women, particularly single mothers, have access to all of these benefits. Paid Parental Leave allows parents to take three months to nurture their newborn without substantial financial loss or the threat of abject poverty. Universal health coverage ensures that all women and their children will have

adequate health care. This is critical for low income women whose jobs don't provide insurance coverage. Contraceptive coverage by health insurance is a gender equity issue. Men's prescriptions for Viagra and comparable drugs are of-

ten covered at a higher rate than women's contraceptive prescriptions. The increased cost can effectively bar women from being able to choose the contraceptive option best suited to her needs.

Want to get involved? Here's what you can do: call (617) 354-8807 to find out about our next Political Action Gathering, stop by to see our Political Activist Board, or email Nicole (public policy intern) at [wc\\_pa@hotmail.com](mailto:wc_pa@hotmail.com) for other opportunities.

Women can make a difference!  
YOU can make a difference! Every single voice, every letter counts!

### INSIDE. . .

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*The devastation caused by the crashing of the hijacked planes is a tragedy beyond words. We at the Women's Center are overcome by tremendous sadness and an enormous sense of loss. Our hearts go out to those who were lost or lost a loved one. We hope no other innocent lives will be taken, by terrorists, or by those seeking vengeance.*

## On Our Way

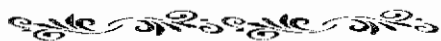
Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in *April, September, and December*.

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

**Hours:**

Monday-Thursday: 10am-10pm

Friday: 10am-8pm

Saturday: 11am-4pm

Helpline: (617)354-8807 TTY/Voice

## Greetings From The Board!

We are thrilled to be an active part of the Women's Center community. Since joining the Board in May, we have been working together to get to know the people at the Center, the Center's past, and the hopes that people have for the Center's future. We have been identifying issues and developing an agenda of what we will address in the coming year. We will focus on developing a strategic plan for the Center, addressing the Center's transgender policy and expanding the Center's outreach programs. We look forward to meeting and working with you in the months to come!

**Martina Bouey**, Treasurer, is a regular volunteer at the center and works for Hunt Alternatives, a private, nonprofit organization encouraging grassroots solutions to strengthening democracy and fostering constructive social change. *I have had the honor to witness the positive effects the Women's Center has in the lives of so many women in our community. Seeing and experiencing this made me want to take an even more active role in shaping of the future of the Women's Center.*

**Karen H. Chandler** is Executive Director of the Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet). CTCNet is a national network of more than 500 nonprofit community technology centers that provide access to computers and associated learning opportunities mostly in low-income communities. *The Women's Center inspires me with the support and nurturing environment it offers to our community. I am happy to serve as a board member, and feel rewarded*

*by doing so, and am hopeful about contributing to the growth and sustainability of the Center.*

**Jyoti Gupta** is a regular volunteer at the Center and her background is in information technology. *I see the Women's Center as one of the area's few safe and unbiased places for women to connect, to get help on life's tougher issues, and to relax. I'm interested in all aspects of social work - including fundraising and grant writing - and I can't think of a better way to gain experience in social work than by working to support and empower local women.*

**Janne Hellgren**, Clerk, is a lawyer, but would rather be an actress. *As a member of the board of the Women's Center, I hope to use all of the skills gained in my various incarnations. I know there will be new challenges. But, even more important, there will be opportunity to work with others to improve women's lives - individually and collectively. For that I am grateful.*

**Lynsey Miller**, President, is a Program Officer with Oxfam America. *Passion, respect, and power are aspects of the Women's Center that have inspired me and are the reasons I want to be more actively involved in the Center. My experiences here have shown me that the Center is a valuable resource for many women, and I look forward to working with the women here to explore the ways in which the Center can continue to support the members of this community.*

(Continued on page 3)

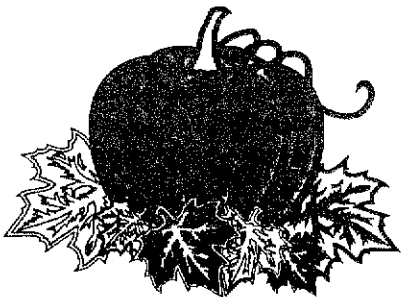


(Continued from page 2) (Board)

**Nalina Narain**, has worked for the safety of families for nearly two decades, including four years as a public policy director for Jane Doe, Inc., specializing in children's and adolescents' issues, and two years as executive director of the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, both in Boston. A tri-lingual native of New Delhi, she came to the United States in 1991 to gain a master's degree. *I bring to the Center, a passion for social justice for families and almost two decades of experience working with the women's community in international and domestic settings. As a new Board member, I am committed to increasing our Center's visibility in immigrant and international communities in Cambridge, and in addressing the particular challenges these women and their families face.*

**Vandana Radhakrishnan** has a background in business strategy and organizational development. *I have been passionate about women's issues for a number of years and I strongly believe that the Women's Center is a vital source of support and stimulation for women in the community.*

**Pam Steinkamp**, Vice-President, has been involved with the Women's Center for nearly three years as an intern, volunteer, and Board member. *This is my second term on the Board. The Women's Center has developed several new programs during the past year and I am proud to have been part of that accomplishment. I am eager to continue to be involved in the Center's growth and development.*



## No More Prince Charming: Financial Empowerment for Women

There was a time when young girls were socialized to believe that one day their prince would come and rescue them from a life of misery. But I don't think it is news to anyone reading this article that the prince just isn't coming. Part of the myth of being rescued by the prince is the belief that men know more about finances than women. The truth is that financial education is not taught to men or women in this country. Many people feel that their only problem with money is that they don't have enough of it. Although having more money allows for more choices, it does not improve one's ability to manage money. That's why it's reported that most people who win lotteries end up worse off financially than they were before they won. So, here we stand with no prince, no financial education, and no guarantee that having more money will solve all our financial problems. What's a girl to do? The good news: no matter how bad things may seem, we can rescue ourselves. Financial Empowerment is about cultivating the belief that we are capable of managing money well. Without this belief, it is difficult to make the changes necessary to get or stay on track. We get what we focus on. If we focus on failing, we will fail. However if we can entertain the idea that we can learn, handle, and deal comfortably with money, we open ourselves up to having that be our experience. Another critical component of financial empowerment is separating our feelings from our financial situations. One side of which is to not beat ourselves up over past financial decisions. Our focus should be on acting to improve our situations. Mistakes made in the past

are opportunities for learning in the present. The other side of separating our feelings from our financial situations is to feel instead of spend. Most purchases for non-essential items are attempts to replace feelings. Something bad happens, so we go out and pick up a little trinket for ourselves. If you do that enough times with larger and larger trinkets, it's easy to get into financial trouble. Increasing our clarity about what is motivating our spending allows us to make better choices over time. The last item that I'll mention is that we need to educate ourselves about financial matters. In the past learning about finance may have been difficult, but between a proliferation of financial web sites and the increased publication of basic books on every financial topic, there is an abundance of accessible information. We shouldn't take everything we read at face value, but with increased exposure, we can learn to shift through information to find items that are useful given our individual situations. Understanding and becoming comfortable with the vocabulary and concepts of finance will allow us to make informed decisions about managing our own money. Becoming financially empowered is not easy, but new worthwhile challenges rarely are. However, decreased stress, increased options, and a sense of having some control over our lives is worth the effort. Who needs a prince when we can take care of ourselves.

~Beverly McGary

Facilitator of Financial  
Empowerment Workshops



## From the Desk of the Fundraiser

Last summer, I was reading the *Cambridge Tab* and saw an article about Kat DeShayes, a former Women's Center volunteer who was about to ride her bike across the country. *Impressive...good for her*, I thought. Then I paused: *wait, there is a Women's Center in Central Square?* I looked it up in the phone book: 46 Pleasant Street. I lived just a few minutes away from the Center for two years and never heard of such a thing in my neighborhood. After phoning the Center and receiving a volunteer application, I went in for training to become a helpline staffer.

At that time, I discovered the long list of services and programming that the Center offers: support groups, the helpline, workshops, a library, a comprehensive resource and referral system, long-term counseling, a safe day-time space for women (including women who are homeless) and much, much more. I was impressed.

In time, I discovered more about Center-happenings and witnessed positive change, such as the additions of the *Computer/Internet Access and Learning Program* and the *Community Organizing Project*. After Eliza Hoyt, the previous Women's Center Development Director left (in December of 2000), I began helping with fundraising by researching potential sources of funds and reviewing proposals. The more time I spent volunteering, the more invested I became in the Women's Center.

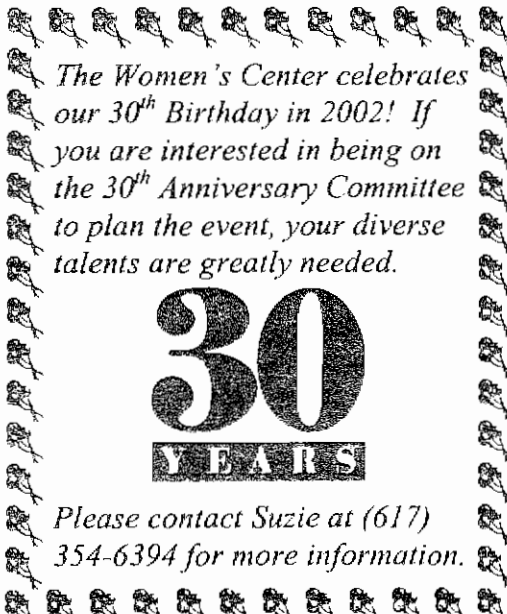
It is easy to care about this place. This is not only because of the services and programming that we provide, but because of the people who make it *happen*—the women who find resources and spend time here; people who donate money yearly and monthly, even

if it is as little as \$5; people who give equipment, such as computer monitors, fax machines, and paper supplies; people who award us with their technological, legal, or educational expertise; and, of course, our 100+ volunteer base, made up of incredible, time-generous folks.

I come to this role of Development Coordinator with a background in writing and special event coordination. More importantly, I come to this role inspired by the passionate and diverse efforts of women -- inside and outside of the Center--who continue to fight in the reclamation and celebration of having a voice. Amen. Nothing ever sounded so good.

~ Suzie Guillette  
Development Coordinator

PS. Imagine . . . If each person who reads this newsletter were to donate \$100, our budget would be met. You can make that difference. Please consider making the most generous donation possible, and support the many needs of women in our community.

The Women's Center celebrates our 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2002! If you are interested in being on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee to plan the event, your diverse talents are greatly needed.

**30**  
**YEARS**

Please contact Suzie at (617) 354-6394 for more information.

## Liquid Poets

"You do not have to be good," Susan reads from Mary Oliver's *Collected Poems*, "you do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through 'the desert, repenting. You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves."

Susan, the meeting's facilitator, has brought in an array of poems about nature, this week's theme. Participants take turns reading them aloud and commenting on them. Danielle is surprised by Oliver's sentences, their bold gentleness -- something she swears she'll try at home. Christina wants more movement, she thinks some of the phrases are too tight. Later this week, at home, we can use the poems as an inspiration for our own writing.

Liquid Poets began in October, 2000 as a group of strangers who met weekly in coffee shops in Central and Harvard Squares. I was new to the area and wanted to find a community of women writers, so I wall-papered the area with flyers advertising a women's writing group. We passed the winter in the chaotic corners of coffee shops. Soon, however, the free-for-all cafes seemed too loud and the multi-genre focus of the group became unwieldy.

Of course, I had not heard of the Women's Center until I inadvertently discovered it walking down Pleasant Street in early January. It is one of those rare treasures that a foreigner praises in a strange town. By mid-February, 2001, Liquid Poets had moved cozily onto the Women's Center's third floor.

Every week we begin with a writing exercise, which helps us leave our hectic days behind. The exercise is always related to the theme of the week, which can focus on a poet, a

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4) (Liquid Poets)

form of poetry, a genre of poetry, or a topic. Everyone is invited to share what they have written. After we have warmed up with an exercise, we have time to share pieces that we are working on at home. We usually finish with a reading of some published work. The facilitator for the week (anyone can sign up to facilitate) brings a packet of poems that relate to our theme, which we get to take home.

Our meetings vary in size, some have only a handful of women, some have closer to a dozen. There are some devoted Liquid Poets who make every meeting, some attend as often as they can. E. Kimball has this to say about Liquid Poets:

*The group has been essential in reminding me why I write and how I must write. Hearing women read their words in a voice that both reflects and contrasts with my own is inspiring and refreshing like oven-warm oatmeal bread or the scent of basil after not smelling it for a long time. I remember leaving the group feeling so much potential for my own writing, which was completely fueled by the other women showing me how far I can take it, showing me how far I long to go, how open and raw and honest.*

I can now look back at almost a year of Liquid Poets and thank the thirty-something women who have come to our meetings and the scores of women who have expressed interest. After almost a year we are still growing.

Liquid Poets meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month at 7pm. No experience is necessary, and we always welcome new members who are interested in learning about poetry. Inquiries may be directed to Sarah Cross at 617-776-9299 or [liquidwriters@hotmail.com](mailto:liquidwriters@hotmail.com).

## Be Wise, Organize!

I love my job. Really. And that's not something I've ever been able to say before. I'm the new community organizer for the Community Organizing Project at the Women's Center and I'm really glad to be here. The Women's Center has played an important role in my life for the last three years. I walked into the center a newcomer to Boston in search of a women's community. I found an organization committed to serving and supporting women, and I stayed to work towards a mission that I believed in. As I began to build community with women of color at the center through groups like Women of Color Rap and Women of Color Reading Circle, I discovered that I longed to understand how women could really make long lasting, sustainable change in their economic and social conditions. I didn't have a name for it but I knew there had to be a process by which women, especially those who've been left out in our society because of class or race, could work on problems while building power. I started a group at the Center called ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters for Social Justice and began to read and learn about community organizing and how it enables people to deal with forces that are causing them to feel powerless.

So what exactly is community organizing? That's a question I've been asked over and over again since I started. Community organizing is a strategy for creating change that invests in the power of the people who are directly affected by the issues. My job as organizer is to go out, knock on doors and ask women about the problems in their neighborhood. Then I create opportunities for women to come together to discuss their common concerns with each other, set priorities and then identify the root causes of the problems they face. To help with this, women learn

about the economy, institutional racism, sexism and classism through workshops and discussion. Whether it's a new spotlight or more affordable housing, these skills develop leadership within the community. Using direct action organizing the group confronts decision-makers to demand needed change and campaigns for justice.

So where are we now? I'm researching neighborhoods and assessing which areas have the greatest needs. I'm talking to women about their schools and jobs and housing situations. I'm learning so much as I listen to women, ask questions, and listen some more. I know this will be a continuous process of recruiting and engaging new women, keeping women motivated and involved, while deepening their participation in the organization. During the next two months I'll be away from the Center, participating in a comprehensive training provided by the Center for Third World Organizing. This organization trains organizers on how to bring organizing skills, political education, and visions for a just society to communities of color. When I return in November I'll bring these skills and insights to the community. I'm excited that the Women's Center is helping to destroy the alienation from political participation that so many women feel. I look forward to being a part of a process where women with low incomes see that they have the power to shape their lives and communities in a tangible, meaningful way.

Just imagine how women could rock the power imbalance in this country if we were organizing in every neighborhood in every city!

See you in the streets.

~ Lynn Murray

Community Organizer

# WOMEN'S CENTER CALENDAR - Fall 2001

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

## GROUPS

### MONDAY

- Al-Anon for Women (weekly).....6-7:30pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (weekly) .....7:30-9pm
- Healing Circle (weekly).....8-9:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors ...7-8:45pm  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, info: Danielle (617) 497-0911)
- \*Lesbian Rap (weekly).....7:30-9pm
- \*Volunteer Orientation (October 15).....6-7pm
- Women of Color Reading Circle (2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays).....7-8:30pm  
Info: Vanessa (617) 629-3106

### TUESDAY

- \*Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesdays ).....7:30-9pm  
Info: Denise at dpp1029@aol.com
- Facilitated Mothers' Support Group (weekly) ....10:30am-noon  
[must contact group facilitator Diane beforehand  
at (617) 876-2139 to insure group is right for you]
- \*Sisterfriend, Are You Sure You are Well (2 part workshop  
for women of color, on internalized oppression and racism;  
October 2 & 9; with Renae Scott-Gray) .....6:30-8:30pm
- \*Support for Married Bisexual Women (2nd Tuesdays)7:30-9pm
- Women's Reading Group (4th Tuesdays) .....7:30-9:30pm  
Info: Mary at (781) 891-5727
- Writer's Circle (2nd Tuesdays) .....7-9pm  
Info: Cassandra at (617) 494-2695

### WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group (All Wednesdays  
except the third) .....7-9pm
- Dissociation & Self-Injury: Support for Change  
(7-sessions; 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup> is open; for  
more info, to register: Vera, (617)354-2304).....7:30-9pm.
- Liquid Poets (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays ).....7-9pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (October 3; meetings  
are irregular, info: Louise Bonar, (617) 254-1729).....7-9pm
- \*Volunteer Orientation (November 7) .....6:00-7pm
- \*Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN).....2-3:30pm  
(1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Weds.. Info: woman@braintrust.org)
- \*Women Over 40 (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays) .....7-8:30pm  
Info: shoemake@simmons.edu

### THURSDAY

- Queer Jewish Women under 30 Gathering (weekly).....7-8pm
- Thursday Night Gathering For Survivors  
of Sexual Abuse.....7:30-9:30pm  
(weekly; topic at 1st meeting of month, Oct.4: Fear)
- \*Women's Community Cancer Project, Open General  
Meeting (1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays). Info: (617) 354-9888.....7-9pm

### FRIDAY

- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for Survivors of  
Child Sexual Abuse (last Friday; topics) .....6:30-8:00pm
- \*Incest Survivors Anonymous (ISA) (weekly) .....6:30-8pm

### SATURDAY

- \*Coming Out Discussion for Women of all Ages .....11am-1pm  
(1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month, except holiday weekends)
- \*Women of Color Financial Empowerment Workshops  
(October 6 & 20; November 3 & 17) .....2-4pm
- \*Yoga for Women of Color (one Saturday/month).....2:30-4pm  
Info/to register: (617) 354-8807

\* Wheelchair Accessible

All events are free and open to all women.

The Women's Center is open Columbus Day, October 8.

## NEW GROUPS & FEATURED ACTIVITIES

**DISSOCIATION AND SELF-INJURY: SUPPORT FOR CHANGE.** This group, facilitated by Vera S. Cohen, LICSW, is a safe place for open and full talk about the fallout from trauma and very difficult childhood/early adulthood experiences. Seven weekly 1.5 hour sessions beginning October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The first session is open; the rest will be closed. For questions or to pre-register, call Vera at (617)354-2304

**FACILITATED MOTHERS' SUPPORT GROUP** – A weekday morning group gives mothers encouragement and a place to discuss concerns they have about raising their children. To see if this group is right for you, contact Diane, (617) 876-2139.

**FREE COMPUTER TRAINING** – Patient volunteers are on hand to work one-on-one with complete beginners to develop computer and internet skills. Call (617) 354-8807 to set up an appointment.

**IMPROVING BODY IMAGE: INCREASING BODY AWARENESS, DIVERSITY & ACCEPTANCE.** Saturday, September 29, 11am-12:30pm. FREE. Cindy Benowitz, MSW, LICSW, presents a nurturing approach to gaining self-esteem by changing how you think and feel about your body. 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.

**\*SISTERFRIEND, ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE WELL.**

Two part workshop for women of color, on internalized oppression and racism. Tuesdays, October 2 & 9, 6:30-8:30pm with Renae Scott-Gray More info: (517)354-8807.

**\*VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION.** Monday, October 15, and Wednesday November 7, 6-7pm. Come learn about our history, mission, and the many spiffy ways you can volunteer at the Women's Center. It's fun and rewarding. Call (617) 354-8807 to RSVP.

**\*WOMEN OF COLOR FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOPS.** Saturdays, October 6 & 20 and November 3 & 17, 2-4pm. The last 4 is a series of six workshops designed to share information about financial options, increase women's comfort with financial planning and help women set financial goals. With Beverly McGary. Info: (617) 354-8807

**\*YOGA FOR WOMEN OF COLOR.** One Saturday per month, 2:30-4pm. With Yoga trainer Bonnie Banks. All experience levels welcome. Wear comfortable clothes. For date/info/to register, (617) 354-8807

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

**INCEST RESOURCES FACILITATED DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE - last Fridays**  
(except around holidays), 6:30-8:00pm (please be on time!)

September 28 Memory & Validation

October 26 Anxiety

November 30 Self-acceptance

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

October 2 How Lesbians See Bisexual Women

16 Show-N-Tell (bring something important to you)

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

October 1 Bed Death - Does it really exist?

8 Social at Diesel's Café (in Davis Square)

15 Restaurant Critiques

22 Resolving Everyday Conflicts

29 Dating Horror Stories

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

October 10 Poems and Music

24 Halloween

**WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE - 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays, 7-8:30pm**

October 8 Book: *Wild Seed* by Octavia Butler

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

October 10 Seasonal Changes

24 New Beginnings

## Concerned About Your Drinking?

Are you wondering about your drinking? Have you thought you might like to get some support and feedback while you think about it? WCA (short for Women Concerned about Alcohol) is starting another group. We'll meet at the Women's Center on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 7:30, starting September 26, 2001.

Lots of times women who want to change their alcohol or drug use find that the traditional help like Alcoholics Anonymous, inpatient detoxification, or therapy doesn't seem to meet their needs. Maybe they require participants to call themselves "alcoholic" or "addicts" or "chemically dependent," or they use religion, spirituality, total abstinence or some other components that work for some people but not for others.

WCA is a very different model. First of all, it's feminist. That means it's designed for women, takes women's experiences and needs into account and considers alcohol concerns in the context of women's personal and sociopolitical lives. We talk about many things that can influence women's alcohol or drug use: anxiety, loneliness, isolation, concerns about coming out, social networks, sexual harassment, trauma histories, racism, job pressures, children and family stresses, poverty, heterosexism, relationship problems, aging and many, many other pressures and experiences.


WCA, a confidential research project, has been at the Women's Center for about a year and a half. Dr. Christine Flynn Saulnier, a licensed social worker and faculty member at Boston University School of Social Work, is the researcher. The purpose of the research is to learn how to help a wide range of women with alcohol problems. The purpose of the WCA groups is to help women specify, clarify and work toward an alcohol-related goal of their choice. There are three components to WCA: 1) a 14-week, professionally facilitated support group with 7 to 10 women; 2) optional training in how to facilitate groups; 3) a self-help group for women who want to continue to meet after the support group ends.

If you participate in WCA, you will be interviewed three times: first - before the group starts, second - after the 14 weeks

are over, and third - a year later. You won't be paid for participation in the groups, but you will be paid \$25 for each in-person interview you complete.

If you are interested in WCA, please call Christine at her office to schedule an interview: 617-353-7720. You can leave a confidential message.

### WISH LIST

- ~ Ergonomic chairs
- ~ 17" computer monitors
- ~ Small CD/radio boombox 
- ~ 9' x 7' solid color rug for Children's Room
- ~ Children's educational software
- ~ Gift certificate to framing shops
- ~ Small computer stand (wood)

### VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Monday, OCTOBER 15, or  
Wednesday, NOVEMBER 7,  
at 6-7pm

Come learn about the Women's Center  
and all of our fabulous  
volunteer opportunities.  
Call (617) 354-8807 to reserve a space.

## Dissociation & Self-Injury

For many years I have facilitated groups at the Women's Center, including self-injury groups. The reasons for I am offering a group on dissociation and self-injury are many; the main one is that in both cases people have often endured an early situation which was highly stressful, very confusing and often frightening. Self-injury and dissociation are also ways of coping with a situation when there seems to be no alternative, when communicating, evaluating, sharing and learning seem to be impossible. These behaviors can greatly interfere with a person's ability to live well in the present.

The goal for this group is for each participant to have a place to share with others who are struggling with the same issues, and to receive support for making positive changes. Often people facing something difficult do better in the company of others with similar experiences, not by dwelling on a destructive past, but by feeling a part of the human family and by sharing ways of living better.

If you are interested, come to the first open meeting on Wednesday, October 3rd at 7:30pm; the six remaining sessions will be closed. For questions or to pre-register, call Vera at (617)354-2304.

## Foundations & Corporations

*A special "thank you" to the foundations and organizations that have funded the Women's Center in 2001:*

*The Cambridge Community Foundation  
The Cambridge Savings Bank  
The City of Cambridge  
The Marion L. Decrow Memorial Fund  
The Alice Willard Dorr Foundation  
The First American Title Insurance Company  
The Sheila Gamble Fund  
The Hartley Corporation  
The Parish of Christ Church  
The R.O.S.E. Fund  
The Marcia Rough and John Nietzsche Foundation  
The George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust  
The TJX Foundation  
Anonymous Donor*

*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 (be sure to give us your name and address!).

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

## Transitioning Out Of The Patient Role

Women who have been labeled 'chronic' or 'long-term' patients by the mental health system and are looking to move away from this label may find this facilitated group very helpful. The group provides a space for women to come together and talk about changes they are trying to make towards greater emotional and physical health and well-being, get feedback, support, and sug-

gestions, and share resources. The group runs in six week cycles where the first week is open to newcomers and then it is closed for the next five weeks. Women can come to as many cycles as they would like. If there is sufficient interest, I will start a new cycle of the group later this fall. Please call (781) 226-7097 (pager 10am to 8pm) for more information. ~ Diane Loud

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

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# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

December 2001

## Women's Center Members Challenge Racism

Under the auspices of its Diversity Committee, and as it entered its 30<sup>th</sup> year, the Women's Center made a commitment to challenge racism both within its own confines, and in the larger community. As part of this essential undertaking, all members of the Staff, Diversity Committee and Board of Directors who are white are participating in a series of anti-racism workshops. The series, facilitated by Martha Comfort, examines the roles and behaviors of white women both in perpetuating and in ending racism. The goal of the two-hour workshops is to explore interrupting racism by recognizing patterns, forming alliances, and strengthening participants to work for change at the Women's Center and beyond. A similar series will be available to volunteers in the near future.

The first gathering of the series was held on Wednesday, November 7,

2001 at the Women's Center. Comfort helped participants set guidelines for the group which are modeled on those of Cambridge Friends School's *Examining Our Own Racism* group.

Participants then looked at circumstances that hinder or help racial learning. An article by Nancy L.

Brown, *Conditions under which Racial Learning Occurs*, was the focal point for the discussion. Brown identifies twelve conditions which inhibit learning about racism, and the counterpart to each condition which helps such learning to occur. Included are ideas such as "look inside first," don't

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Latinas Vecinas: Cenando Con Nosotras

La Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana tiene el gusto de invitar a todas aquellas mujeres Latinas que viven en la región de Boston a compartir con nosotras una velada "LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS". La primera velada se llevará a cabo el día Jueves, 24 de Enero del 2002 en el "Centro de Mujeres" (The Women's Center) en

Cambridge. La velada contará con la participación de las mujeres de la Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana de Boston, hablaremos en español y degustaremos deliciosos platos Latinos. También será una oportunidad de conocer a más mujeres Latinas que son nuestras

vecinas y no las conocemos. Como mujeres y Latinas nos enriquece conocer y compartir ratos agradables con nuestras compatriotas que de alguna forma pueden llegar a ser de gran ayuda en nuestros quehaceres cotidianos. La tradición Latina invita a todas las mujeres y que inviten ellas a sus vecinas para conocer a otras personas que viven en el vecindario y más allá. La velada estará llena de actividades divertidas y sorpresas agradables. Si necesitan asistencia con el transporte y el cuidado de los niños le podremos ayudar. El Centro de Mujeres está localizado cerca de la estación "Central" de la Línea Roja, es un sitio agradable y abierto a todas las mujeres. Te estaremos esperando. No hay ningún costo para asistir a la velada "LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS".

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## On Our Way

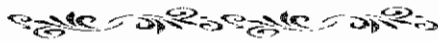
Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published 3 times per year in *April, September, and December.*

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

**Hours:**

**Monday-Thursday: 10am-10pm**

**Friday: 10am-8pm**

**Saturday: 11am-4pm**

**Helpline: (617)354-8807 TTY/Voice**

It's a great time to be a part of the Women's Center! With programming going strong, the Computer/Internet Access and Training program growing, and the Community Organizing Project underway, there are many ways to meet, support and work with inspiring women in our community.

As the strength and scope of the Center grows, the Board is focused on three priority areas where we can provide support: strategic visioning for the Women's Center, addressing the current transgender policy and supporting increased community outreach and organizing for justice.

### Envisioning the Future

Our strategic visioning process has begun! We started by taking a comprehensive look at the Women's Center - its current structure, processes and policies. We met with all staff members to solicit their feedback and suggestions for making the most out of the time, talent and resources we have. We also invite the input of volunteers and of women who use the Center. We created a survey and distributed it to group facilitators. We encourage you to take time to consider your own vision of the Center's future, and to share it with us. The next time you come by, please fill out a survey, located in the foyer or ask for one at the small office by the front door. The Board is reviewing the input from the staff and members of the Center. Then, we plan to focus on implementing the suggestions gathered from the Women's Center community.

### Considering the Transgender Policy

The Board is addressing the Women's Center's transgender policy. The current policy states that only female-born women and post-operative transsexual women can enter the Women's Center and par-

ticipate in Women's Center programming. After learning of the recent efforts to have this policy reevaluated, the Board began researching the policies of similar organizations. We plan to host an educational event around this issue during the winter. We are developing the process for establishing the future transgender policy for the Center - whether it remains as is or is revised. We look forward to your participation and will post information about the upcoming event.

### Expanding the Center's Reach

Led by the Diversity Committee, we have been looking at the current culture of the Center and are working to make changes that will enable the Center to serve as an important resource for a broader range of women in the community. Recent workshops with Board members, staff and volunteers have focused on anti-oppression training and challenging racism. We applaud the Political Action Gatherings in their efforts to focus attention on public policy issues of community concern in their informative workshops where women signed petitions, wrote letters, and were encouraged to share information with others. We also support the Community Organizing Project as it gains momentum in organizing low-income women to take power in their communities.

### Supporting the Center's Growth

As we strengthen existing programming and take on new initiatives, our budget has grown from \$170,000 to \$220,000 in the past year! We recognize both the challenge and importance of meeting this increased budget, and thank all those who continue to provide financial support to the Women's Center. We value the involvement of every woman who makes the Women's Center what it is and we look forward to moving ahead with you!

~ Lynsey Miller



## Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

“wait until others confront [you];” and “seek support for... learning primarily from whites who are also learning...” rather than “seek[ing] support... primarily from blacks, who have a different struggle regarding racism... are fighting racism directly, and for whom support of whites... is an added energy drain.”

In future discussions, workshop members will share stories of their experience as white women consciously or unconsciously participating in the system of racism in the U.S., consider actions to combat racism which can be taken as individuals and as members of the Women's Center, and support each other while actively dismantling racism.

As Comfort and her colleague, Jeanette Millard, have written, “[e]veryone, of all races and genders, shares a piece of the action when it comes to confronting racism.” White women “could be important resources for each other” in this struggle because “[a]s a group, we have moved ahead in the struggle to identify as women within patriarchy; we have examined the dynamics; we have connected with each other...” Challenging racism “enriches all of our connections across many dimensions of diversity. It opens us up to countless experiences... The world gets bigger and richer when we take a stand, and... new awareness and learning keep us energized and strong for the journey.”

The Board and Staff of the Women's Center consider this workshop series a first important step on the journey to eliminating racism.

~ Janne Hellgren



## WISH LIST

- Ergonomic Computer Chairs
- 17" monitors
- 9X7 solid color rug for Children's Room
- Small CD/Radio Boombox
- Children's Educational Software
- Gift Certificate to Framing Shops
- Wood computer workstations
- TV/VCR Stands
- LARGE Plastic Bins to hold toys
- Gift Certificates to WBMason



## Children's Computer

Page 3

We are delighted to announce that IBM has donated a Young Explorer's Computer Center especially designed for children ages 3-7. We have a number of fun computer games which teach children letters, numbers, how to tell time, and many other skills. If you would like to expose your child to computers, feel free to call (617) 354 6394 and reserve a time. Simply dropping by is fine, but we can't promise that the computer will be available. We ask that you supervise your child during use.

## Foundations and Corporations

*A special "thank you" to the foundations and organizations that have generously funded the Women's Center in 2001:*

- Anonymous Donor
- The Boston Jewish Women's Community Fund
- The City of Cambridge
- The Cambridge Community Foundation
- Cambridge Savings Bank
- Cambridge Trust Company
- The Bushrod Campbell and Adah Hall Charity Fund
- Citizen's Bank
- The Clipper Ship Foundation
- The Howard C. Connor Charitable Foundation
- The Cornyn Foundation
- The Lotta M. Crabtree Trust
- The Marion L. Decrow Memorial Fund
- The Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
- The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory
- East Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
- The First American Title Insurance Company
- The Sheila Gamble Fund
- The Charles and Sara Goldberg Charitable Trust
- The Hartley Corporation
- IBM
- Parish of Christ Church
- The R.O.S.E. Fund
- The Marcia Rough and John Nietzsche Foundation
- The George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust
- The TJX Foundation

**Thank You!**

**Thank You!**

**Thank You!**

**GROUPS**

**NEW AND FEATURED ACTIVITIES**

**MONDAY**

- Al-Anon for Women (weekly).....6-7:30pm
- Healing Circle (weekly -on break until Jan 14,2002)....8-9:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors....7-8:45pm  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, Info: Daniela (617) 497-0911)
- \*Lesbian Rap (weekly).....7:30-9pm
- \*Volunteer Orientation (January 14).....6-7pm
- Women of Color Reading Circle (last meeting 12/10)..7-8:30pm  
Info: Vanessa (617) 983-3928

**TUESDAY**

- \*Bisexual Women's Rap (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays ).....7:30-9pm  
Info: lucylizard@yahoo.com, or (617) 484-5964.
- Facilitated Mothers' Support Group (weekly)..... 10:30am-noon  
[must contact group facilitator Diane beforehand  
at (617) 876-2139 to insure group is right for you]
- \*Support for Married Bisexual Women (2nd Tuesdays)7:30-9pm
- Women's Reading Group (4th Tuesdays) .....7:30-9:30pm  
(not meeting in December)
- Writer's Circle (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays).....7-9pm  
Info: Cassandra at (617) 494-2695

**WEDNESDAY**

- Battered Women's Support Group (all Weds, except 3<sup>rd</sup>)..7-9pm
- \*Holidaze Gathering (December 19).....6:30-8pm
- Liquid Poets (2nd & 4th Weds. On break until Jan 9th )...7-9pm
- Transitioning Out of the Patient Role .....6-7:15pm  
(opens to new members on January 16)
- \*Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN).....2-3:30pm  
(1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Weds.. Info: woman@braintrust.org)
- \*Women Over 40 (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays) .....7-8:30pm

**THURSDAY**

- \*ABD to PhD: a Workshop for Women Having Trouble  
Writing their Dissertations (December 13) .....7-9pm
- Healin' and Dealin' (January 10 & 24) .....6:30-8:30pm
- \*Latinas Vecinas. Cenando con Nosotras (24 Enero) .....6-8pm
- Queer Jewish Women under 30 Gathering (weekly).....7-8pm
- Support and Strategies for Women with Language Based  
Learning Disabilities (4th Thurs., begins Jan. 24)..6-7:30pm
- Thursday Night Gathering For Survivors  
of Child Sexual Abuse (weekly) .....7:30-9:30pm  
(Topic at 1st meeting of month)
- \*Volunteer Orientation (December 6) .....6-7pm

**FRIDAY**

- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for  
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (Dec. 21) .....6-7:30pm  
(usually last Friday of month: Topic: Family Relationships)
- \*Survivors of Incest Anonymous (SIA) (weekly).....6:30-8pm

**SATURDAY**

- \*Coming Out Discussion for Women of all Ages ..... 11am-1pm  
(Dec. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month, except holiday weekends)
- \*Discover the Magic Within (January 12).....2-4pm
- \*Options for Dealing with Personal Debt (January 26) ..... 1-3pm
- \*Yoga for Women of Color (2nd Saturdays) .....2:30-4pm  
Info/to register: (617) 354-8807.

\* Wheelchair Accessible

All events are free and open to women.

The Women's Center is closed Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, and  
Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>. We close at 6pm on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>

**FREE CHILDCARE**

If given four days notice, we do our best to provide free  
childcare for women attending groups and workshops.  
Info/to request childcare: (617) 354-8807.

**COMING OUT EXPLORATION GROUP.** New weekly group begins in February on Wednesdays, 7-9pm. Anna Tarquinio facilitates this group where members discuss any issues they have around coming out. For info, call Anna at (617) 547-6240 or (617) 287-6206(w).

**DAYTIME BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP.** This new group which begins early next year will focus on support for battered women. For info, call (617) 354-8807 after mid-December.

**\*DISCOVER THE MAGIC WITHIN.** Saturday, January 12, 2-4pm. Each participant will explore talents, gifts, and dreams she may not be aware of, and use them in creating a vision for her future. Free. Facilitated by Abby Yanow, Personal and Professional Coach. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and to pre-register.

**HEALIN' AND DEALIN'.** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, 6:30-8:30pm. A new support group for women survivors of non-sexual child abuse. The first two sessions on January 10 and 24 are open; the rest will be closed. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**\*HOLIDAZE GATHERING,** Wednesday, Dec. 19, 6:30-8pm. Come celebrate (or commiserate over) the coming of winter with its many holidays. Chat, play games, and eat yummy food. Children welcome too! Please bring a dish to share if you can. Info: (617) 354-8807

**\*LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS.** Jueves, 24 de Enero del 2002, 6-8pm. La Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana tiene el gusto de invitar a todas aquellas mujeres Latinas que viven en la región de Boston a compartir con nosotras una velada. Será una oportunidad de conocer a más mujeres Latinas hablar español, y degustar deliciosos platos Latinos. Info: Dora (Español), (617) 350-6900.

**\*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.

**\*OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH PERSONAL DEBT.** Saturday, January 26, 1-3pm. During this workshop, attorney Susan Grossberg will provide information to assist women in making educated decisions about debt management, including bankruptcy. Info: (617) 357-5555.

**SUPPORT AND STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN WITH LANGUAGE BASED LEARNING DISABILITIES.** 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month beginning January 24, 6-7:30pm. Having a learning disability does not have to limit your options in education or career choice. Join with others to obtain support and learn about strategies for reaching your goals. Facilitated by Kai Long, Speech Therapist. Info: (617) 354-8807.

**TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE PATIENT ROLE.** A facilitated six-session group begins Wednesday, January 16, 6-7:15pm. For women who have been labeled "chronic patients" by the mental health system to get feedback, support, and suggestions about making changes to gain greater emotional and physical health. The first session is open to new members; the next five will be closed. Info: Diane at (781) 226-7097 [pager 10am to 8pm], or (617) 354-8807.

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- \*BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm**  
Dec 18 Current holidays and how we are feeling this week
- INCEST RESOURCES FACILITATED DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE -Last Fridays, 6-7:30pm**  
Dec 21 Family Relationships Feb 22 Trust  
Jan 25 Dissociation Mar 29 Power
- \*LESBIAN RAP - Mondays, 7:30-9pm**  
Dec 10 Best of 2001: Year in Review  
17 Seasonal Celebration. Please bring a food you enjoy.
- WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE - Final Meeting, 7:30-9pm**  
Monday, Dec10 Book: *Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor
- \*WOMEN OVER 40 - 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm**  
Dec 12 Stress - dealing with guilt  
26 Holiday Party - gifts to "give away"

## The Year In Review

The Women's Center is bustling with activity.

This year our programming expansions produced many new faces and activities at the Center. As word spread about the Computer/Internet Access and Training Program, there was so much interest that we started a computer pass system and applied for and received several new computers, providing women with more access to this valuable resource. Thanks to our numerous computer training volunteers, many women are learning to use word processing and the Internet for the first time, and lots more are waiting for their turns!

During the past year, Charlene Gilbert, co-author of *Homecoming: The Story of African American Farmers*, showed her films and led discussions about them with large groups of women. The bi-monthly *Liquid Poets* meetings generated attendance so large that women sometimes overflowed the room. We introduced *SisterFriend*, *Are You Sure You Are Well?* workshops for women of color working on issues of internalized oppression. Other new groups included: the *Queer Jewish Women Under 30 Gathering*; the *Women of Color Financial Empowerment Workshop* series; a reading by Barbara Neely, author of the *Blanche on The Lam* mystery series; the *Women's Collage and Creativity Group*; and several stress management workshops.

We were fortunate to have a surge of talented and dynamic women participating in our Board and Staff this past year. In May, the Women's Center elected a new, hard-working board. In August, Lynn Murray enthusiastically took on the brand new position of Community Organizer. (As you read this, Lynn is knocking on doors, recruiting low-income women to organize for social and economic justice.)

During the year, we also developed a public policy program, which provided *Political Action Gatherings* for women to learn about public policy and legislative issues affecting women. Women immediately put their learning into action by writing to their legislators. Keep an eye out for upcoming events!

*All of this – as well as our on-going programs, including support groups, the Resource Room, helpline, and library!*

Always looking for new ways to support women, we plan to offer much more in the coming year. Starting in January, we will provide a daytime *Support Group for Battered Women*, a *Latina Women's Night*, a *Workshop for Women Dealing with Personal Debt*, and a support group for women survivors of non-sexual child abuse entitled *Healin' & Dealin'*.

As these groups take off and the Community Organizing Project agitates, you can expect great things to continue to happen at the Women's Center.

~ Mary Quinn

The Women's Center celebrates  
our 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2002!

**30**  
YEARS

*If you are interested in being on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee to plan the event, your diverse talents are greatly needed.*

*Please contact Mary at (617) 354-6394 for more information.*

## Thanks Jim & Germaine!

Page 5

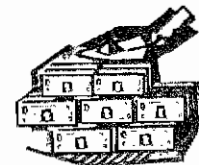
The Women's Center wants to extend a special thank you to Germaine Wong & Jim Forsythe of SBHN (Solutions: Business, Home, Network) for their invaluable assistance with our Computer Access Program. They networked our computers, repaired crashed hard drives, fixed pesky bugs in programs, and secured free replacement parts. In addition, they've donated four spiffy computers to us. THANKS GERMAINE & JIM!!! Our computer program couldn't have survived and thrived without you. If any of you want to hire these fine folks, check out their website at [www.sbhn.net](http://www.sbhn.net) or call them at (617) 969-4841.

### VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Thursday, DECEMBER 6, 6-7pm or  
Monday, JANUARY 14, 6-7pm

*Come learn about the Women's Center and all of our fabulous volunteer opportunities.*

*Call (617) 354-8807 to reserve a space.*



Support The  
Women's  
Center

By

*Honoring a Friend  
or Loved One  
with a Gift to the  
Women's Center*

ARE YOU A LOW-INCOME WOMAN  
WITHOUT INSURANCE, BUT IN NEED  
OF A THERAPIST?

OR

ARE YOU A THERAPIST LOOKING  
FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
VOLUNTEER?

**Call the Women's Counseling And  
Resource Center at (617) 492-8568**

We may have what you need.

"Ohhh, won't he be proud of me!!! He won't believe his eyes." Vinnett chuckled with delight as she clicked her mouse to send her very first email to her grandson in Atlanta. We had just spent an hour discovering how to use a mouse, the keyboard, and to create an email account.

Vinnett is one of over thirty women who have benefitted from The Women's Center's *free* Computer Buddy program since May. Computer and internet skills are increasingly essential in today's society but many women are either too terrified

to sign up for a class or simply can't afford one.

Our computer buddy program matches volunteers with women in need of training.

As a computer volunteer you would meet with a woman once or twice a week for about an hour. The goal is to provide information in a fun, friendly, and patient atmosphere. You needn't be a wiz with computers, simply comfortable



with the internet, and the basics of Microsoft Word and Windows 98. Betty Koza, a current computer volunteer, raves that, "The students are always so appreciative and I get a great sense of accomplishment for doing something that I truly enjoy."

We need you! We desperately need women available during the daytime and Saturday. We need both English and Spanish speaking volunteers. Please email Heather at [hls4@aol.com](mailto:hls4@aol.com) or call 617 354-8807 to get an application.

~ Heather Searles

## Options for Dealing with Mounting Personal Debt

Around this time of year, most of us sit down to pay our bills and cringe at the charges mounting from the holiday cheer we have spread over the past couple months. And, for some of us, comes the realization that the debt is expanding beyond our capacity to stay on top of it. With most individuals living paycheck to paycheck, an unexpected expense or temporary job loss can be enough to tip the balance. Then finance charges, high interest rates, and late fees can cause debt to spiral out of control.

There are several options for bringing debt back under control. Homeowners can fold the high interest credit card

debt into a low interest home equity line. Individuals can negotiate forgiveness of credit card debt in exchange for a lump sum payment of some percentage, sometimes as low as 50% of the outstanding balance. Alternatively, consumer credit counseling agencies can offer affordable repayment plans which include negotiating lower interest rates on your credit card accounts. Bankruptcy is also available as a helpful tool to get out from under mounting debt and secure a fresh financial start.

My law practice specializes in helping individuals, who are otherwise

unable to manage their debt, choose among bankruptcy options, navigate through the bankruptcy process, and learn how to rebuild credit and make the most of their fresh start.

Come to the workshop "Options for Dealing with Mounting Personal Debt" on Saturday, January 26, 1-3pm, at the Women's Center. I will discuss the benefits and disadvantages of various methods of dealing with debt, describe the bankruptcy process itself, and look at the effects of these on your credit. I look forward to seeing you there and answering your questions.

~Susan Grossberg, Attorney at Law



**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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)

*Thank You !*