

♀ ON OUR WAY

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street Cambridge Massachusetts 02139

(617) 354-8807

TTY and VOICE

NOV '88

1st Floor - Wheelchair Accessible



THE ARCHIVES

The Women's Movement Archives began in 1981 when the Women's Center received a small grant to organize the records of several contemporary Boston area women's organizations. These records had been donated to the Center over the years for safe-keeping, and it was to make these collections accessible that the Archives was created.

If your group or organization has records such as minutes of meetings, correspondence, photographs, newsletters, statements of unity, buttons, or posters - please consider donating them for safekeeping to the Archives or another repository. Nothing which relates to the women's movement should be thrown away! If you have questions about how to organize your organizational, group or personal papers, we are available to talk with you and/or your organization.

Only by preserving our history as a movement can we insure that it won't be lost! In the past, information on feminist activism has been lost or written out of history. An archives controlled by women helps to insure that this will no longer happen, and that the work we are doing will be adequately documented. Don't let our history be lost!

A new brochure about the Women's Movement Archives and the Women's Center Library is available. Women interested in volunteering/contributing to the Archives or Library can call the Center to leave a message for the Archives/Library staff.



BIRTHMOTHERS

The birthmother's support group has been meeting at the Women's Center since May, 1988. This group offers women who have surrendered a child to adoption a safe space to talk about and share this personal experience. The group is not a group focused on searching for the birthchild. Women who have searched, have reconnected with their birthchild, or are considering searching use the group for support. Some women have decided not to search, others have "open adoption" formats and may see their children; each of these experiences has a unique set of feelings and ideas, and the group offers a place to investigate and share.

Each meeting, we try to offer a specific topic of discussion along with individual focus, as needed. Some women may not be ready to talk, but coming to the group and just listening is often helpful to their healing. This group maintains confidentiality and is restricted to birthmothers.

For many women, this support group is specific to their needs, others find individual counselling or therapy a good balance to the group. We are not a therapy group, but we offer support and often referrals for someone who wants to go into individual therapy.

The group is now meeting the first and third Thursday of each month, from 7:30 to 9:30pm. The next three meetings will be on Nov. 17, Dec. 1 and Dec. 15. For the interim times when someone needs support, we offer a phone network, and are always ready to help each other one on one. For more info, call dian at 662-0417 (please leave your name & number).

TITUBA

Just a short update on our decision to try to find a new home for Tituba, the Women Center's cat. As discussed in the last two issues of On Our Way, we know that Tituba's presence makes the the Center inaccessible to women with allergies to cats. Are there any cat-loving woman able to adopt her out there? We have not received any offers of a new home or responses to our letter and questionnaire for interested women. We have received some letters from disabled women who strongly feel that a new home must be found. We have also received letters and comments from women, allergic to cats or not, who feel that Tituba should be allowed to live out the rest of her life here at the Center, since she is already 15 years old. This decision was very difficult for all of us, with lots of strong feelings on both sides. We had hoped to find a warm, loving, stable home for Tituba and, at the same time, make the Center a more welcome place for women with allergies, but so far, no luck. If you or someone you know would be interested in adopting Tituba, please call, write or visit the Center. The living room will remain off limits for Tituba, and whenever possible, meetings which allergic women want to attend will be held there.

WCRC EXPANDS

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center, a volunteer collective of feminist therapists located at the Women's Center, has just added 4 members to our group. This greatly increases our ability to provide therapy to women who do not have the financial means to go elsewhere. We are in the process of preparing a brochure which will fully describe our services, and copies will be available at the Women's Center.

RELATIVES OF THE MENTALLY ILL/RETARDED

I am looking to start a support group and/or at least talk with siblings or parents of chronically mentally ill or mentally retarded individuals, particularly those with a personal/political interest in issues pertaining to guardianship problems, practices and abuses. I am currently involved with a number of short-term projects in this area and would like very much to share experiences with other women who are in similar situations.

Janice Cohen 864-3823

WOMEN IN BLACK

Join the ongoing Women in Black vigils, protesting the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and supporting the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Picket outside of the Israeli Consulate at the Statler Office Building, Park Square, Boston.

We dress entirely in black for these demonstrations to show our solidarity with the Israeli peace group, Women in Black, which protests the Occupation every Friday in Jerusalem.

For more information, call Nancy Murray at 482-3170 during the day or Margaret at 492-7960 before 9:30 p.m.

HARVEST BRIGADE

Join the harvest brigade to Nicaragua!

Nov. 19 - Dec. 17

Dec. 17 - Jan. 14

Dec. 20 - Jan. 7 *

(special for students)

Jan. 7 - Feb. 4

For info & applications, call Carl, 868-5219 or Amy, 776-5302. Local sponsor: CASA Nicaragua Committee, 1151 Mass. Ave. Cambridge, MA 02138.



MULTIPLE EXPOSURES

A series of stylistically innovative films by international women filmmakers, Fridays at 7pm, free, wheelchair accessible. Call 253-8844 for info & location. Sponsored by the Program in Women's Studies at M.I.T.

Nov. 18 -- "WOMAN CRY" and "BEYOND TODAY" directed by Miriam Patsanza (Zimbabwe)

Dec. 2 -- "LEILA AND THE WOLVES" directed by Heiny Sroun (Lebanon)

Dec. 9 -- "ANNE DEVLIN" directed by Pat Murphy (Eire)

Dec. 16 -- "NICE COLORED GIRLS" directed by Tracy Moffat (Australia)

On Thursday, Nov. 17, 7pm, Rm. 66-110 at 25 Ames St., MIT, NELLIE MCKAY will give a lecture entitled "Toni Morrison and Her Critics"

On Thursday, Dec. 15, 4pm Rm. E38-615, 272 Main St. MIT, ANITA NESIAH will discuss "Women and the Use of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in Sri Lanka"

FUNDRAISING REVIEW

Many first time callers and visitors to the Women's Center are interested in joining a particular group and apprehensively inquire about how much it will cost. Frequently, upon hearing that there is no charge, their relief is evident. One of the tenants of the Women's Center's philosophy is that no women should be excluded from any Center activities due to an inability to pay. While groups may request donations, there is no fee. This enables all women to participate fully in any group or activity of the Women's Center.

It is through the generosity of foundations, businesses and individuals that the Women's Center has been able to continue and expand it's services over the past 17 years.

We'd like to give our readers a fundraising review of the last fiscal year, July 1, 1987 to June 30, 1988. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has funded us. During fiscal year 1987-88, the Women's Center received \$22,000 from foundations, corporations and small businesses for general operating expenses. The Center also received \$6,225 in individual donations. Twenty-two percent of our funding for operating expenses came from individual donations. We are proud to have the financial support of so many individuals. Each donation, large or small, is greatly appreciated.

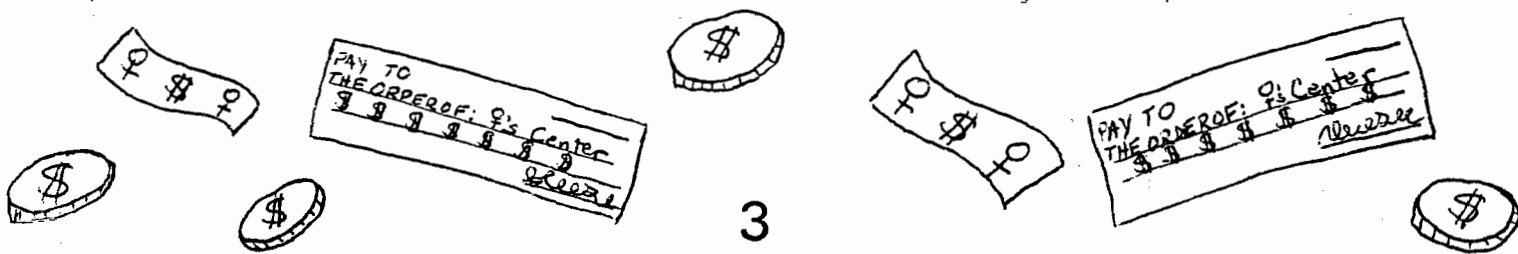
Additionally, approximately 100 women volunteered thousands of dollars worth of labor to run the Center's programs. Every aspect of the Women's Center depends upon volunteers. Without our volunteers, there would be no Women's Center.

The Women's Center faces a fundraising challenge in the years ahead. We would like to expand our paid staff in the near future as there is simply too much to be done. This will markedly increase our expenses. As many women who come to the Center know, one over-extended and truly dedicated volunteer presently coordinates other volunteers, as well as having numerous other responsibilities (Yes, you guessed it, Judy Norris!) Understandably, she would like to work less than 60 hours a week, and soon!

The Women's Center is hoping to increase the number of individual donors within the next 3-5 years and then embark on an endowment campaign. Interest from the money received would be used for operating expenses, enabling Women's Center staff to spend less time on fundraising and more time on programs. It would also provide a yearly, guaranteed source of income.

Below is a list of the foundations, corporations and businesses which have contributed to the Center during the last fiscal year. Unfortunately, we don't have the space to list each individual who has sent in a donation. Thanks to everyone!

Badger Engineers, Inc.
Bioran Medical Lab
Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc.
Cambridge Optometric Associates
Cambridge Savings Bank
Cambridge Trust Company
Cambridgeport Bank
Central War Surplus
Clipper Ship Foundation
Coolidge Bank & Trust Company
Marion L. Decrow Memorial Foundation
Digital Equipment Corporation
Duracell, Inc.
East Cambridge Savings Bank
GTE Laboratories, Inc.
The Gillette Company
Charles & Sara Goldberg Charitable Trust
Hartford Insurance Group
Harvard Cooperative Society
Harvard University
Houghton Chemical Corporation
Houghton Mifflin Company
John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance
Joyce Chen Restaurant
Legal Seafoods, Inc.
Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
Lotus Development Corporation
New Words, Inc.
Norman & Eleanor Rabb Charitable Fdn.
Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund
Raytheon
Shawmut County Bank
Travelers Companies
Union Warren Savings Bank
US Trust Middlesex
Waldenbooks
Frederick E. Weber Charities Corporation
Workingmens Cooperative Bank



ONGOING GROUPS

SUNDAY

-Deaf Women's Community Project....2-4pm
(3rd Sunday, monthly)

MONDAY

-Support for Battered Women.....7:30-9pm
*New Women's Chorus.....7-10pm
-Lesbian Rap.....8-10pm
-Boston Bisexual Women's.....7:30-9:45pm
Network-Intro (1st Mon., even #d months)
-All-Center Meeting.....6-8pm
(biweekly)
-Disabled Women Who are.....6-8pm
Survivors of Sexual Abuse

TUESDAY

-Discussion Group for Deaf...7:30-9:30pm
Incest Survivors (2nd,4th Tues, monthly)
-Women for Sobriety.....8-9:30pm
-For Crying Out Loud.....7pm
-Bisexual Rap.....7:30-10pm

WEDNESDAY

-Feminist Discussion Group.....8-10pm
-Lesbian Al-Anon (childcare)....6:30-8pm
-Writer's Support.....7:30-9:30pm
-Politics of Fat (biweekly)..7:30-9:30pm
-Lesbian Partners of Incest.....8-9:30pm
Survivors (biweekly)
-Healing Through Art for.....7-10pm
Incest Survivors (1st Wed., monthly)

THURSDAY

-Birthmothers (1st,3rd Thur).7:30-9:30pm
-Open Discussion for Incest..7:30-9:30pm
Survivors (3rd Thursday is facilitated)
-Lesbians Choosing Children....7:30-10pm
Network (2nd Thursday, monthly)
*Women's School.....7:30-10pm

SATURDAY

-Writer's Support Group.....noon-2pm
* means group is not currently open

MONTHLY FACILITATED DROP-IN INCEST
SURVIVORS DISCUSSION GROUPS: Every
third Thursday of the month 7:30-9:15 pm

November 17 Self-destructive behavior:
Self-mutilation and
substance abuse
December 15 Taking care of ourselves:
Nurturing & self-protection
January 19 Intimate relationships
February 16 Confrontation & life
after confrontation

* These groups are open only to women
incest survivors. Women without clear mem-
ories are welcome. Please arrive on time.



CENTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday 10am - 10pm
Friday 10am - 8pm
Coffeehouse 8pm - midnight
Saturday 11am - 2pm

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 8-10pm
November 14 Internalized Homophobia
21 Recovering From Rape
28 Lesbians and Friendships

FEMINIST DISCUSSION GROUP

Wednesdays, 8-10pm
November 16 Sisterhood: Lesbians and
Straight Women
23 Motherhood: Should We Do It?
30 Sonia Johnson's 'Transcending
Oppression': Who Can Do It?
December 7 Mothers and Grandmothers:
Where Are Our Paths?
14 Divorce and Separation
21 Getting Caught in Blaming
28 Holidays & Families

WOMEN'S COFFEEHOUSE

EVERY Friday, 8pm-12 midnight
November 18 Music & poetry with Helen
Kohane & Karon Friedland on
the themes of Women, Earth &
Creativity.
25 Seattle Native American
Activist and Writer Crystos
reading from her newly
published book, Not
Vanishing.
December 2 Women's Floating Loft
presents 'Multimedia Art
Show' (artists --call Ellen
at 354-6804 to arrange to
show your work). Also open
for viewing Dec 3, 10am-5pm
9 Ericka Wheeler of Northampton
sings her original folk songs
(tentative)
16 Pat Humphries (tentative)
23 Coffeehouse closed
30 Coffeehouse closed

BISEXUAL RAP

Tuesdays, 7:30-10pm
November 15 - Spirituality
November 22 - Cultural/Racial Backgrounds
November 29 - Erotica
December 6 - Relationships: Men vs. Women
December 13 - Bisexuality & Family

INCEST LEGACY

Only recently have women been able to speak out about the widespread prevalence of incest and its devastating impact. Staff at the Women's Center have seen an incredible growth in the number of incest survivors who call and come to the Center, and a marked change in their degree of openness. Only a couple of years ago, women who called for information about the Drop-in Discussion Groups for Incest Survivors asked obliquely about the "group on Thursday night." Now women call and freely inquire about the groups for incest survivors. The Women's Center gets several calls per day from survivors of child sexual abuse who call for referrals, information, or to talk. Five years ago when Incest Resources began holding drop-in discussion groups for survivors, around 10 women would attend. Today, the facilitated incest groups are held in 2 overcrowded rooms, each containing between 30-35 women. The legacy of an incest history includes persistent nightmares, fear of intimacy, substance abuse, chronic fatigue, depression, suicidal thoughts and impulses, self-destructive behavior, physical illness, problems with sexuality, terror, shame, low self-esteem, and more. In addition, survivors continue to contend with social stigma; frequently family and friends demonstrate a lack of awareness of and sensitivity to their experience.

Feminist consciousness was necessary in order for survivors of child sexual abuse to tell their stories. Feminism counteracted many of the harmful assumptions of psychoanalysis, offered an analysis and critique of patriarchal families, and argued (with much solid data and verbal eloquence) that sexual abuse was no fantasy. Feminist awareness enables incest survivors to overcome their years of actual and internalized oppression, to create an identity and a community, and to feel an individual and collective sense of pride. The Women's Center has been a vehicle for the development and expansion of feminist consciousness. It is not surprising, then, that it is here, at the Women's Center, that survivors do so much to help themselves and each other.

DISABLED SURVIVORS

Disabled Women who are survivors of child sexual abuse...a weekly support group began MONDAY, November 7...6-8pm at the Women's Center. Call 354-8907 for more information, and leave a message for Helen. Wheelchair accessible.

SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

The Women's Center receives more and more calls from incest survivors. This is due at least in part, to the fact that the Women's Center's phone number is in the resources section of the book The Courage to Heal by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. The book, written for survivors of child sexual abuse, has received acclaim by survivors, researchers and therapists in the field and is already in its 4th printing. Women from as far away as Colorado and Florida have called the Center looking for resources. We have also received a couple of calls from ritual abuse survivors. (Ritual abuse is severe physical and sexual abuse, performed at rituals by satanic cults.)

In response to the increasing number of phone calls, a staff training on incest was held by members of Incest Survivors Network. The focus of their presentation was on talking to survivors who call the Women's Center in crisis. While the ISN members noted that staff do not need to be experts on survivor issues to effectively support a survivor, they did highlight several areas which are particularly important to survivors. These included recovering memories, coping mechanisms commonly employed by survivors, and issues involved in therapy.

Below is a listing of groups, organizations and other resources for incest survivors and their families, friends & partners at the Women's Center.

- ** Drop-in Discussion Groups (unfacilitated & facilitated) for hearing & deaf incest survivors
- ** Healing Through Art
- ** Support group for survivors with disabilities
- ** Incest Survivors Network
- ** Survivors Newsletter Collective (publishes 'For Crying Out Loud')
- ** Discussion group for lesbian partners of incest survivors
- ** Notebook with referrals for survivors: Self-help & therapy groups, therapists, retreats, etc.



THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC.
46 Pleasant Street
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Phone: (617) 354-8807

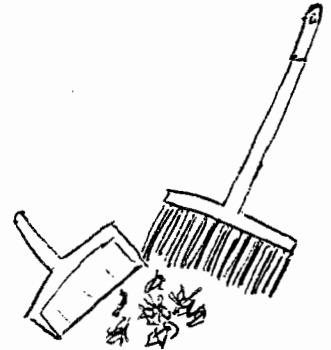
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CHORUS AUDITIONS

New Women's Chorus will be holding auditions this fall. Interested women should call Debbie Dover 244-4361.



CLEAN SWEEP

With 100 or so women coming to the Women's Center for meetings each evening, cups, plates, newspapers, and flyers are left in various parts of the house, and chairs and tables are moved to different rooms and not put back. Since there is no clean up crew here, we ask that each woman clean up after herself, so the next group using the room will find it uncluttered. The Center staff has plenty to do without cleaning up after other women. When you're at the Center, please do your part to keep it neat and clean. Thanks!

ISRAEL-PALESTINE INFO

Concerned about recent events in Israel and the Occupied Territories? Join Mobilization for Survival's Crash Course on the US and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. In four hours, you will get an introduction to the history of the conflict and some insights into the current crisis. The free course will be Saturday, December 17th, 10am-2pm at the Women's Center. For info, call 354-0008.

Your contribution helps the Women's Center to accomplish a great deal for women.
EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!! MANY THANKS

Yes - I want to help the Center. Here is my tax-deductible contribution.

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 other _____

___ Rather than contribute now I would like to pledge \$ _____ per month for _____ months.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

We sometimes gives our mailing list to other groups for special mailings of interest to women. Please check below if you do not want to receive these mailings.

___ Please do not give out my name to other organizations.

