

# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

(617) 354-8807 TTY and VOICE



Winter 96/97



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 1996

1996 marked an exciting and eventful year in the history (herstory) of the Women's Center. Not only did we celebrate our 25th year in existence, we continued to expand and grow, providing essential services to the thousands of women who walked through the door or called on the phone. The combined efforts of many volunteers, interns, and staff made this year like no other.

One of the biggest highlights of 1996 was the *25th Anniversary Celebration and Benefit Concert* on October 19th (see related article). You can hold onto the spirit of celebration by purchasing a beautiful commemorative hat or T-shirt. To order by mail, use the form on the back page of this newsletter.

June brought the unveiling ceremony for the *Commemorative Tile Mural*. If you haven't already done so, stop by the Center and take a look at the kitchen tile mural. It is a moving and touching tribute. Thank you to all who purchased tiles and helped make this special display happen.

We continued our community involvement this year by participating in the *Jane Doe Walk for Women's Safety*, the *Blow the Whistle Against Violence Against Women* rally in Harvard Square, the *Cambridge River Festival*, the *Dyke March*, and Boston's *Pride March*. We also offered up a host of new support groups. They included: *Writers Circle*, *Exploring our Creativity for Healing*, *Codependents Anonymous*, and time-limited, facilitated support groups such as the *Post-Traumatic Stress Women's Group*, *One:One*, *Self Esteem Support Group*, and the *Support Group for Women with Multiple Personalities*.

The Women's Center broke onto the local television scene this year by hosting a monthly Cable Access show called *WomanSpeak*. Topics ranged from a discussion of *For Crying Out Loud*, a newsletter by and for women survivors of child sexual abuse, to an interview with members of the *Women's Community Cancer Project*. The show airs on Cambridge Community Television, Channel 55, the second Wednesday of every month from 5:30-6pm. Tune in this month (or come watch at the

Women's Center) and see what happens!

It was hard to miss the Women's Center during this high-profile year, as we were featured in many news articles and programs. In addition to guest appearances on the radio, we were profiled in several newspapers including the *Boston Globe*, *Sojourner*, and the *Cambridge TAB*. All of this media attention helped us reach a wide audience for our 25th Anniversary event and other important Center activities.

This year also marked a major staff transition, as the Women's Center said goodbye to long-time staff member, Jennifer Norris. After five years of full-time work and many more as a volunteer, Jennifer left to attend law school at Boston College. We wish her well and thank her for her years of dedication and commitment to the women's community. We're sure she'll shine wherever she goes!

With Jennifer's exit, I came on board as the new Volunteer and Administrative Coordinator. My first several months at the Women's Center have been both busy and inspiring. I am amazed at the strength and courage of the women I meet here and am so glad to be part of such a vital community of women. I look forward to the coming year and hope to continue to grow and learn in my new position.

1996 was a year filled with transition and excitement, celebration and hard work. We hope you were able to be a part of it and will continue to support the Women's Center as we enter our next 25 years. Best wishes for a happy new year!

-Dawn Dougherty

## ACCOUNTANT NEEDED

The Woman's Center is looking for an accountant to do our Federal 990 form, state public charities filing, and a reviewed financial statement. We'd like to find someone who can do this job *pro-bono* or for a reduced fee, but we are open to other arrangements regarding payment. This person must be experienced with non-profit filings and able to do the job by May 15, 1997. If you are interested or know of someone who might be, please call Nancy Kackley during the day at (617) 497-4609 or in the evening at (617) 862-9964.

## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL/ INTERCULTURAL GROUP



The *Women's International/Intercultural Group* continues to thrive! We have had an exciting couple of months. In September we welcomed Battina Brown, a spiritual teacher and healer, who discussed her experiences in Bosnia teaching spiritual healing practices to women survivors of war, rape, and violence. It was a dynamic, fascinating, but sobering meeting.

In October we tackled the difficult subject of violence against women, with local and long-time activist Ruth Winsbouer. Together we explored the root causes of violence in our society, linking violence against women to global domination, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of Third World peoples.

In 1997 we have some exciting discussions ahead of us: January 25th we'll discuss our racial and ethnic identities as we share our unique personal histories. In the following months we hope to discuss international violence against women (with the Women's Rights Network); we will also discuss the work of young U.S. women working in Latin American countries (with the Global Women's Project). It promises to be an exciting new year for us!

We invite women of all cultures and nationalities to join in our discussions. They are always lively, interesting and global. Please contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for more information about our meeting times and topics.

Join us on Saturday, December 14th for our Annual Holiday Potluck Brunch from 1-3pm. Happy Holidays from the *Women's International/Intercultural Group!!*

### AN APPRECIATION FOR THE COMING OUT EXPLORATION GROUP

I am so grateful for the caring and acceptance I felt in the *Coming Out Exploration Group*. It was the first time I'd ever participated in a group focused on issues related to coming out, and the first time I'd been to the Women's Center. With the support of all the women in the group, I've learned that there is great positive power in that kind of sharing, no matter where you are in your process.

- Louise Grasmere

*The next 10-week Coming Out Exploration Group will begin on February 13, 1997. Please call Arna at 547-6240, for more information and/or to register.*

## LESBIAN PARTNERS & EX-PARTNERS OF INCEST SURVIVORS GROUP

The *Partners'* group has been in existence for over seven years. Its purpose is to provide support and validation both to women who are in intimate relationships with survivors, and those who, for one reason or another, are working on closure from such relationships. Several hundred women have come to this group over the years. Women come for support as well as for a deeper understanding of the very complex issues which may come into play in the context of these intimate relationships. This is an open group and all partners and former partners of incest survivors are encouraged to come.

Incest has a severe impact not only on adult survivors, but upon those who love them as well. Partners of survivors may experience a kind of secondary trauma. Traditionally, however, minimal support has been available to them. There are a few books which may dedicate a chapter or two to relevant relationship issues (e.g. *Secret Survivors* by E. Sue Bloom, 1990). However, the definitive book on the subject, *Allies in Healing* by Laura Davis (1991), speaks more from the vantage point of the survivor than the perspective of her partner. The book does provide insights for partners into the sometimes-mysterious behaviors of their loved ones, and how they can support and understand them. However, partners may come away not knowing how to take care of themselves in the context of the complex and often painful relationships with survivors. In addition, sometimes therapists relegate the partner's issues to a back burner.

Partners struggle in a variety of ways to protect their survivor partners. Though a partner may feel anger, they may withhold expressing it because their partner has been hurt in the past. Other partners may hesitate to come to our partner support group out of a concern about identifying their partners as survivors to others. However, confidentiality is one of the few rules which we stress in our partner support group.

For the month of December we will be meeting on Wednesday, December 18th from 7-8:45pm. Check with the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for the January meeting date or more information.

- Daniella Kiss

### A NEW THERAPIST-LED GROUP?

What group would you like therapist Vera S. Cohen to lead next? A group about the healing process, a self-injury group, a post-traumatic stress group, a group on living with loss, or something else? Call Vera at (617)354-2304 and let her know what you're most interested in!



## RESPONSE TO RAPE IN CENTRAL SQUARE

We at the Women's Center, along with our neighbors, were horrified and incensed to learn about a recent rape that occurred on Prospect Street in the parking lot on the corner of Bishop Allen Drive (also known as the Bread & Circus overflow parking lot). The violence occurred on Wednesday, October 30th at 8:20pm. Police reports were speedily circulated, describing how a woman in her 20's was walking along Prospect Street when she was accosted by two men on bicycles. Despite resistance, the two men dragged the woman into the parking lot and raped her. This year in Cambridge alone there have been 29 reported rapes (FBI estimates only 1 in 10 is reported), and 7 assaults with intent to rape.

Within days of the reports, the Women's Center and our Central Square neighbors organized a public outcry. We staged a loud, energetic, community awareness action on Sunday, November 10th at the site where the woman was assaulted. We played drums, made noise, and handed out leaflets describing the crime and available local resources, including the Women's Center, the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, and the Cambridge Area 4 Crime Task Force.

Passers-by were responsive and concerned. Many gave us the thumbs up sign when they saw our signs declaring: EVERYONE DESERVES TO WALK HOME SAFELY, A RAPE HAPPENED HERE!, STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, and NO MORE RAPE. We extend our most heartfelt sympathy to the survivor of this horrible attack, and we feel outraged as members of her community. An attack against one woman is an attack against us all! No one is safe until we all are!

For more information on the Area 4 Crime Task Force, call 349-6226; for the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, call 492-4035. Anyone with information about the incident – the two suspects are still at large – should call Sgt. Joe McSweeney 24-hours a day at 349-3370. Together, we will work for safe streets for all women.

-Pamela Goldstein



## INCEST SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS

ISA meets at the Women's Center on Fridays from 6:30 to 8pm. Together we share our experience, strength, and hope, so that we may help ourselves – and each other – recover from incest. For more information contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807.

## MEDITATION FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

Women with trauma histories may have a harder time connecting with our own stillness because of intrusive memories and/or feelings. This may make it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of our own sacred self. Yet, being in touch with our own inner well of deep peace can nurture our every moment.

This workshop will be a time for trauma survivors to slow down and come into contact with their own stillness, to be refreshed and listen to their own voices. Survivors will also learn to deal with obtrusive thoughts and images that arise while meditating. However, this is not a "process-oriented" experience. This is about becoming still, not about opening up memories.

The workshop will be held Saturday, January 25th, 11am-4pm (with a lunch break - bring your own lunch). For more information, call the facilitator Deirdre Fay, MSW at (617) 628-6842.

- Deirdre Fay

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT GROUP

We understand that the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) has received thousands of phone calls inquiring about the new bill signed into law this summer. By January 1, 1997, companies with six or more employees are required to post and circulate a Sexual Harassment Policy which spells out what behaviors will not be tolerated. Previously, such requirements applied only to larger companies.

So what do you do if your employer ignores this mandate? The Women's Center's *Sexual Harassment Support Group* has been meeting monthly for four years to help women devise strategies to protect themselves against unwanted and repeated behavior of a sexual nature at work.

Upcoming meetings will take place from 7-9pm Mondays, December 16, February 24, and March 31. For more information, call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 or me, the facilitator, at (617) 254-1729.

- Louise A. Bonar





## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### WOMEN OF COLORS RAP

- Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. December theme: How "colored" do you have to be to be "of color"?*
- December 10 *Is She or Isn't She?* - Colors that do and don't make the rainbow
- December 17 *Is it a Skin Thing?* - What does it mean to identify yourself as a person of color?

### LESBIAN RAP

- Mondays, 7:30-9pm*
- December 16 Dealing with the Holidays  
23 Potluck  
30 Talking about our Creative Sides

### 30+ LESBIAN RAP

- Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm*
- December 17 How to Flirt

### BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

- 3rd Tuesday, 7:30-9pm*
- December 17 Holiday Stress

### INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP

- Usually the last Saturday of each month, 1pm*
- December 14 Annual Holiday Potluck Lunch  
January 25 Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Biographies

### FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- last Friday/month, September-June, 6-7:30pm*
- December 27 Anger  
January 31 Memories  
February 28 Disclosure and Confrontation  
March 28 Boundaries and Limits

### INCEST SURVIVORS' THINKTANK

- 1st Wednesday, each month, 7:15-9:15pm*
- January 8 The Backlash (no meeting Jan 1)  
February 5 Distance and Intimacy

### LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

- For lesbians who are moms, co-moms, or thinking about becoming moms.*
- 3rd Thursday, 7-8:30pm  
December 19 topic: Holidays

### FRIDAY NIGHT FUN TIME

- Friday, December 13, 6pm to ?  
Draw, make a collage, create something!  
With Vera S. Cohen, 354-2304

### MEDITATION FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

- Saturday, Jan. 25, 11am-4pm (with 1 hour lunch break)  
Come learn to connect with your own stillness.  
Led by Deirdre Fay, MSW, survivor, 628-6842.

## ONGOING GROUPS

*No groups on December 24, 25, 31 or January 1, 20*

### MONDAY

- Al-anon Grupo (*en español*) ..... 6-7:30pm
- Battered Women's Support Group ..... 7:30-9pm
- Feminist Reading Group (*1st/3rd Mondays*) 7-9:30pm
- Lesbian Rap ..... 7:30-9pm
- Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2)  
*(No mtgs. in Dec.; usually 2nd & 4th Monday)* . 7-9pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (*1 Mon./mo.*) 7-9pm

### TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap (*3rd Tuesday*) ..... 7:30-9pm
- ♿ • 30+ Lesbian Rap ..... 7-8:30pm
- Body Acceptance & Conscious Eating Group  
*(Newcomers, 1st Tuesday, 7pm)* ..... 7:30-9pm
- Women of Colors Rap ..... 7-8:30pm
- ♿ • Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Illness  
*(2nd & 4th Tuesdays)* ..... 5:15-6:45pm
- Writers Circle (*every other Tuesday*) ..... 7-9pm

### WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group  
*(weekly except 3rd Wednesday of month)* ..... 7-9pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network  
*(2nd Wednesday, odd #d months)* ..... 7:30-9pm
- Incest Survivors' Thinktank (*1st Wed.*) . 7:15-9:15pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors  
*(3rd Wednesday in December)* ..... 7-8:45pm
- ♿ • Lesbian Al-anon ..... 6:30-8pm

### THURSDAY

- Chemical Injury Information Network  
*(1st Thursday)*..... 6-7:30pm
- Lesbians Choosing Children (*3rd Thurs.*) . 7-8:30pm
- Incest Survivors Open Discussion ..... 7:30-9:30pm
- ♿ • Women's Community Cancer Project, Open  
General Meeting (*1st Thursday*) ..... 7-9pm
- W.I.T.C.H. Lecture Series (*March-May*) ... 7:30-9pm

### FRIDAY

- CODA (Codependents Anonymous) ..... 6-7:30pm
- Incest Resources Drop-in Discussion Group for  
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (*last Fri*) 6-7:30pm
- ♿ • Incest Survivors Anonymous ..... 6:30-8pm

### SATURDAY

- Broken Hearts/Broken Relationships (*for lesbians from long-term relationships; 3rd Saturday*) ..... 2-4pm
- ♿ • Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages  
*(Usually 1st Sat.; usually ASL interp'd)* ... 11am-1pm
- Finding & Surviving the Workplace  
*(4th Saturday)* ..... 11:30am-1:30pm
- Friendship Connection (*2nd Saturday*) . 12:30-3:30pm
- ♿ • International/Intercultural Women's Group  
*(Usually 4th Saturday; 2nd Sat. in December)* ... 1pm
- Women Writing (*biweekly*) ..... 12:30-2:30pm

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER . . .

The Women's Center's *25th Anniversary Celebration and Benefit Concert* on October 19th was a **financial success!** The largest event we have ever coordinated, the **benefit** was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Women's Center's 25 years in style (see related article). The *25th Celebration* not only generated much good will and visibility for the Women's Center, it **raised over \$6,000** for our programs. We are grateful to the individuals, local businesses, and professionals who advertised or listed a name in our *25th Anniversary Commemorative Program Book* – you contributed heavily to the event's financial success. Of course, those ticket sales helped too! So, **THANK YOU** to all who attended or participated in any way.

As part of our 25th year, the Women's Center now has beautiful **T-Shirts and Caps**. The shirt design is replicated from the stunning floral pattern that was designed for the Women's Center's *Commemorative Tile Mural*. The perfect feminist gifts, shirts & caps are now available by mail (see back page). Order now, while supplies last!

Speaking of the *Commemorative Tile Mural* . . . it is just about **completed**, and is simply breathtaking. Last issue, when I acknowledged the Women's Center groups that purchased group tiles, I failed to mention Incest Resources. IR is the first incest survivor organization in the country, and leads the monthly *Facilitated Support Group for Child Sexual Abuse Survivors* at the Women's Center (last Friday/month, 6-7:30pm). Thank you for investing in the *Commemorative Tile Mural*, Incest Resources!

A donor recently informed me of how easy it is to make the Women's Center a **beneficiary** in a retirement plan or life insurance policy. For example, you can make the Women's Center a beneficiary in a retirement plan such as the 403(k) by simply writing one line on a form. The same holds true for life insurance – no will needed. This is a great way to leave some money behind and know that it will have a direct and positive impact on women's lives. Please contact me at the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 to learn how to make the Women's Center a beneficiary in your retirement or other plans.

Thank you for supporting the Women's Center in 1996 (and helping us to be *supportive*). Even with the success of the *25th Anniversary* event, we still have some distance to go to balance the budget this year. So please read the enclosed letter, and if you can, make a year-end contribution to the Women's Center. **Every donation makes a difference.** We truly appreciate you, our

community, for sharing in our triumphant 25th Anniversary Year, and for supporting us as we determinately move forward into our 26th year of serving women.

- Pamela Goldstein

## W.I.T.C.H. FEMINIST LECTURE SERIES

*W.I.T.C.H.* (Wild Independent-Thinking Crones and Hags) is delighted to hold its lectures at the Women's Center once again. It's a privilege to be part of 25 years of dedication to women's lives. And though we're here on the tail end, we can look back with admiration on the constancy and perseverance of the women at the Center.

Our lectures begin next year with June Campbell, who is joining us from Scotland to speak of her experience of misogyny within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition when she was a Buddhist nun. She will be introduced by Mary Daly. Join us on January 21st at 7:30pm at the Women's Center. In the meantime, we are – in the words of the Women's Center newsletter – *on our way*.

For more information contact *W.I.T.C.H.* at (617) 666-0828.

## THE FRIENDSHIP CONNECTION

There are lots of good reasons for wanting to make some new friends. Maybe you're fairly new to the Boston area, or you're shy, or all your friends are in relationships and don't have time for you . . .

Whatever your reason, come join us at the *Friendship Connection!* We usually play fun ice-breaker games, have serious discussions, do talking exercises, and write and read aloud a "friendship classified ad" (a personal ad written to introduce ourselves, not to a sweetheart, but to new friends).

We usually meet the second Saturday of each month from 12:30-3:30pm (call to confirm). Come to one meeting or a dozen!

Here's what some attendees have had to say about the *Friendship Connection*: "I'm very happy we have this group. It's a nice way to make friends," "There was a good balance between freedom to socialize and enough structure so there wasn't silence or awkwardness," "I enjoyed the opportunity of knowing that . . . nothing was mandatory," "This has been a great opportunity. I'd like to do it again."

Women of all ages, cultures, abilities, area codes and sexual orientations have attended our meetings. Attendance has ranged from a handful to twenty.

We warmly welcome you! Our next meeting is Sat., Dec 14th, 12:30-3:30pm. Please be *prompt*, to avoid disrupting the group. This is not for dating.

-Laurie Brandt





## 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND BENEFIT CONCERT A SUCCESS!

It was a magical night on October 19th when people from all over gathered at Sanders Theater to celebrate the Women's Center's 25th Anniversary. Vice Mayor of Cambridge, Kathleen Born, started off the evening by reading a City Council Resolution sponsored by Councillor Katherine Triantafillou. The proclamation recognized the enormous contribution that the Women's Center has made to countless women in the community over 25 years.

Jean Hardisty, long-time Women's Center board member and activist, followed up with a welcome speech on behalf of the Women's Center. She spoke sincerely of the importance of supporting this vital resource center for women. She then presented a beautiful plaque recognizing the invaluable contributions of Judy Norris, Women's Center co-founder and tireless volunteer for 25 years.

Margy Dowzer, our delightful MC, then introduced Toshi Reagon. Toshi was the perfect opener, as she rocked & rolled and mesmerized us with her soulful, bluesy voice. Her humor and good will toward the Women's Center were contagious, as she reminded us how valuable longevity is -- especially when it comes to women's organizations!

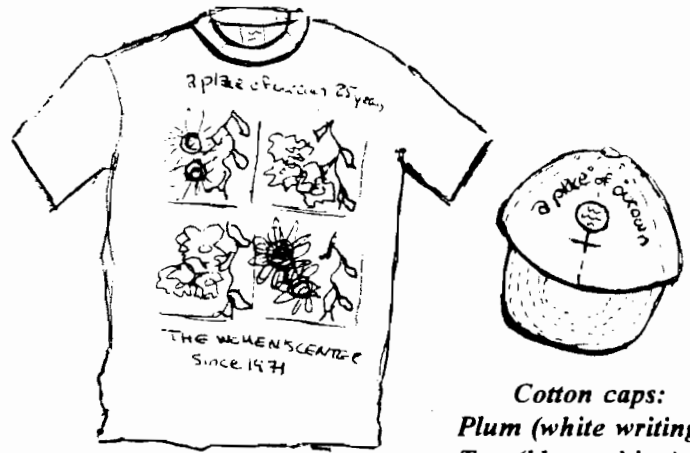
Next, Mili Bermejo, along with professional and personal partner Dan Greenspan, soothed us with their smooth-as-velvet vocals, deep resonant bass accompaniment, and cool latin rhythms.

After intermission we called upon the many women whose efforts have sustained the Women's Center over 25 years to stand and be recognized. As more and more women rose to their feet, the theater erupted in a rousing applause. It was a thrilling moment when two very special women were recognized: one the original \$5,000 donor for the down payment on the Center; the other the guarantor on the mortgage. We were especially excited since this was the first time that these women were publicly identified.

Poet Patricia Smith captivated us with the power of her words. She was riveting and passionate as she brought her poetry to life through performance. ASL interpreter Diane McKeown did a great job keeping up with Patricia's fast-paced, intense performance!

Patty Larkin, graceful, funny, and powerful (especially on guitar!), was a true crowd-pleaser. She was a wonderful closing performer for our evening of entertainment, sisterhood, reminiscence, and fun.

A special thanks goes out to the many wonderful volunteers who made this celebration possible. We know we won't soon forget the magic of October 19th, and hope you won't either!



100% cotton, white T-shirt with multi-colored design

Cotton caps:  
Plum (white writing)  
Tan (blue writing)  
Black (lavender writing)



### WOMEN'S CENTER T-SHIRTS AND CAPS

A beautiful gift for yourself, and/or for others! Buy them at the Women's Center. Or order by returning the completed form to: **T-Shirts & Caps, Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139**

Please print clearly

Your name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Phone number(s) .....

I would like to purchase

T-shirt(s) ..... Quantity: \_\_\_ x \$12 = \_\_\_  
(circle size) S M L XL XXL XXXL

Cap(s) ..... Quantity: \_\_\_ x \$10 = \_\_\_  
(circle color) black plum tan

Shipping/Handling 1st item 1 x \$4 = \$4  
Additional items \_\_\_ x \$2 = \_\_\_

Allow 10 days for delivery - \$1/item additional charge for express mail: total items: \_\_\_ x \$1 = \_\_\_

TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **the Women's Center**

Please send item(s) to: (if different from above):

Recipient's name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Enclose separate sheet with any additional instructions

