

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

WINTER 97-98

(617) 354-8807 TTY and VOICE

THE WOMEN'S CENTER IS GROWING BIRCH "TREES OF LIFE"

Since the installation of our first vibrant and poignant *Commemorative Tile Mural* in the Women's Center kitchen, we have been continually delighted by the response of women to its powerful message.

Now we have the opportunity, with the help of Bekah Perks -- the same artist who designed the first tiles -- to create yet another mural; this time, above the beautiful marble fireplace in our living room. Conceived in the same spirit of honoring and remembering women, or ideas and quotes important to women, the individually donated living room tiles will connect to form three tall Birch Trees. We are thrilled to announce that six tiles have been dedicated thus far by "launching donors," forming the foundation "roots" for the three trees.

Each tile is available for a tax-deductible donation of \$300.00, to help raise much-needed funds for the Women's Center. For a limited time, in appreciation of your investment in the new mural, tile donors will receive a free T-shirt sporting the vibrant floral images of the kitchen tile mural.

My name is Kirsten and I'm helping with the tile project. Please contact me at (617) 596-2719 or Pamela Goldstein at the Women's Center (617) 354-8807 if you would like more information about the new *Commemorative Tile Campaign*. We have snazzy new brochures which we would be more than happy to send you. We look forward to dedicating your commemorative tile soon!

-Kirsten Schutz
Volunteer

SURVIVORS' WRITING COLLECTIVE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS!!!

"*For Crying Out Loud*," the Survivors' Newsletter Collective, is seeking new members. Thirteen years old, the newsletter is by, for, and about women survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Each member should be able to commit to two, two-hour meetings per month at the Women's Center, and is expected to assist with production tasks as well as with writing. The newsletter publishes on a quarterly basis and has subscribers from as far away as Norway and Kenya.

Come join! Have a dynamic writing experience and become a bridge to other survivors! Contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for further information.



FIESTA!!

Music, fun and food! The Women's Center, in collaboration with the *Intercultural Women's Group*, and Aleyda Sulorzano, will host a night of Latin Dancing and delightful dining on Thursday, December 18. Come at 6pm to master the merengue, taught by Aleyda Sulorzano, and bring your favorite food dish to share (after you've worked up an appetite) at 7pm. Come to watch or participate in the dancing, or for the dinner. The party will run from 6-8pm in the Living Room of the Women's Center. All women and children are welcome.



VOLUNTEER!!!

If you think you would like to volunteer by answering phones during the 63 hours that the Center is open, providing childcare, helping with mailings, or something else, please give Montserrat a call at (617)354-8807. ★

THURSDAY NIGHT INCEST SURVIVORS' OPEN DISCUSSION

The Thursday night *Open Discussion Group for Incest Survivors* has been available at the Women's Center since the mid-1980's. Over the years, there have been and are many types of groups available to survivors. It is one of the oldest groups for survivors, and has been both topic-oriented and freestyle.

Right now, the group seeks to re-form. We have only one ground rule: *mutual respect*. With that in mind, let's make this group a reflection of our mutual needs. Let's make it... whatever we want it to be!

An organizational meeting will take place on December 19 at 6:30pm. **Please come** and contribute to the re-shaping of this group.

BEYOND 12-STEP RECOVERY

Carmen Dominguez, MA, LMFT and Helen Spencer LICSW, MPH are both licensed therapists who have extensive experience with the interconnection of childhood trauma, substance abuse, and domestic violence, and the impact these issues have on relationships. Our work is centered on creating a healing atmosphere in which individuals can empower themselves by addressing and working through issues of self-defeating behavior. Both of us are bilingual in Spanish. Starting in January, and continuing on a semi-regular basis, we will present various workshops that address addiction and co-dependence recovery.

In *The Cycles of Co-addicted Relationships: Breaking the Patterns*, we define the nature of co-addicted relationships, and discuss the internal dynamics of addictive relationships, and the separate cycle of addiction for each partner. Join us on Wednesday, January 14, 1998 from 6:30-9:00 pm. If you have any questions, call us at 646-7513.

Women who have attended previous workshops have been very enthusiastic.

WELCOME MONTSERRAT!!

We are happy to welcome Montserrat Caballero to her position as Volunteer/Administrative Coordinator at the Women's Center. Montserrat moved to the Boston area about a year ago and began volunteering at the Women's Center soon after. She staffed the Women's Center's front desk, providing peer counseling and referrals to women. In addition, she and her sister Soledad coordinated the Women's Center's *International/Intercultural Women's Group*. Montserrat is still coordinating the group (newly named the *Intercultural Women's Group*). She emphasizes that all women are welcome and notes that, happily, the group is growing. Montserrat also volunteers at the *Boston Area Rape Crisis Center* as a medical advocate, works with the *Abortion Access Project* and will begin working with *Centro Presente*.

Before she moved to Boston, Montserrat wrote feature articles on feminist issues for the *Greensboro Gazette* and organized feminist events at her school as a member of the Board of the Women's Leadership Coalition in Greensboro, North Carolina

Montserrat was born in Santiago, Chile. In addition to bringing many skills, positive energy, and a strong feminist perspective, her ability to communicate in Spanish is tremendously valuable, as more and more Latinas are contacting the Women's Center. Montserrat has already written up a description in Spanish of procedures for securing and using childcare at the Women's Center.

Montserrat, we're glad you're here and extend a hearty welcome!

BIENVENIDA MONTSERRAT!!

WOMEN'S COUNSELING AND RESOURCE CENTER

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center is looking for women clients with mental health concerns. We service women who are low-income and have no mental health insurance. We offer a very low sliding-scale fee and provide long- and short-term counseling. Please call us at 492-8568 and ask for an intake.



HIGHLIGHTS OF 1997

The Women's Center continues to thrive, as many new groups and faces have joined the Center in its ongoing dedication to providing support to thousands of women. Just a few of this year's new support groups: *Un Grupo de Apoyo para Mujeres Latinas*, *Healing Through Art and Jewish Lesbians and Bisexual Women*.

Our involvement in the community remains strong, as we participated in numerous events, including the *Jane Doe Walk for Women's Safety*, and made numerous community presentations, including one at Shelter, Inc.

In October we said goodbye to Dawn Dougherty, the *Volunteer/Administrative Coordinator*. Dawn's energy and dedication to the Women's Center will not be forgotten. We miss Dawn and wish her the best of luck!!!

Where would the Women's Center be without its volunteers/interns? Due in part to their efforts, our numerous referral books are continuously updated. Just a few of these include the *Lesbian and Bisexual Resources* book, the *Free and Low-Cost Health Care* book and the *Legal Referrals* book.

At the end of December, the Women's Center will say goodbye to Board President Nancy Kackley. She has nourished the Women's Center over a span of 13 years. Her many contributions have included: bookkeeping, attending All Center Meetings, participating on the Finance Committee of the Board, and staffing the phones. Thanks Nancy - we'll miss you!!

A hearty thank you to our group facilitators and volunteers, so many of whom have been with the Women's Center for years. Their courage and dedication is what makes the Women's Center so vibrant.

As the new Volunteer/Administrative Coordinator, I am delighted to be here. It is empowering for me to be a part of a vital link to ending women's oppression. I'm honored to add my voice to the hundreds that make the Women's Center ever stronger.

1997 has been full of hope, excitement, and challenge. We look forward to many more years. As the new century approaches, we will continue to count on your support. Happy New Year!

- Montserrat Caballero

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER

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As we wind down another year of supporting and serving women at the Women's Center, I think back on these past twelve months; in that time, we saw the first out lesbian in a leading role on prime time television (hooray!), while unprecedented numbers of women were taken off the welfare rolls, sentenced to lives of government-sanctioned poverty. This year in Massachusetts also saw a near public/media circus over "the nanny case," while politicians came extremely close to making state-sponsored death the law.

At the Women's Center, we continue to be inspired by women's struggles. In 1997, we witnessed countless women as they took courageous steps toward healing and self-empowerment. Again and again, I found myself in awe of women's resiliency, as well as their determination to make not only their *own* lives better, but also those of others within our communities. We have much to be proud of... and still much work to do.

Financially-speaking, the Women's Center had a slower year in 1997 than in our superstar 25th Anniversary Year (1996). We are thankful that many of you have already donated to the Women's Center this year. But **we have quite a way to go to balance the budget by December 31st.**

To continue to offer all of the Women's Center's support services free of charge, we need more financial support! As of December 1st, the Women's Center had raised \$63,037 toward our projected annual operating expenses of \$91,135. That leaves a difference of \$28,098.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

So, please, take a moment to read the enclosed letter. If you can, please consider making a donation to the Women's Center by the year's end. Every gift, large or small, makes a difference. Whatever you can do to help the Women's Center avoid a deficit in 1997 is enormously appreciated.

Thank you all for your support! Here's to another year of women's courage and triumphs.

-Pamela Goldstein

WOMEN'S CENTER BOARD BECOMES MORE ACTIVE

Last year, the Women's Center decided to develop a more active *Board of Directors*. This transition has infused new energy and has been both challenging and educational. At present, the Board members are: Vera S. Cohen, Susan Yanow, Libby Bouvier, Peggy Hopper, Tracy Lopes Miller, Anna Tarquinio, Maria Tramontozzi, Judy Norris and Nancy Kackley. The Board takes on important tasks:

The *Personnel Committee* is involved with hiring, creating structures to support and supervise staff, and setting wages and benefits.

The *Finance Committee* works closely with the bookkeeper, fundraiser, and accountant to track expenditures, income and investments.

The *Maintenance Committee* gets estimates for capital improvements and needed repairs to the building, and organizes work days.

In addition, the Board hopes to help the Women's Center both maintain itself and grow in scope. We welcome your input. We also need new members to increase our numbers, We'd also like to add diversity in age and race.

If you are interested in joining or in having input, please contact any member at (617) 354-8807, or write to the Board, Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge, MA 02139

LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

Lesbians Choosing Children is a group of lesbian mothers with children. We meet once a month to do social activities together. We originally met at the Women's Center, but for the past year we have been meeting at various locations for outings.

Over the past few months we have twice been to the Franklin Park Zoo, picnicked at the Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, and spent a Saturday morning at the Children's Museum. Our activities are open to children of all ages, but seem to have a special appeal to those in the toddler pre-school range. We are always open to ideas for inexpensive, fun activities that appeal to our kids.

On Saturday, December 13 join us at a children's "holiday" party at First Church in Jamaica Plain from 10am-noon. Please call us at (617)461-5946 if you have ideas, suggestions or want to get together.

WOMEN WRITING

I first came to *Women Writing* one Saturday in 1992, and I've been coming ever since. When I first showed up, the group had already been in existence for several years. It seems to have a life all its own. Once, I went to a Brown Bag luncheon for *Women at Mid-Life* in Brookline. I mentioned the group, and one of the women present said that it was her writing class some years earlier that had birthed the group; the year escapes me now.

This group is very special to me. Every two weeks, I know that if I show up at 12:30pm at the Women's Center, there will be others there to write with me. I will know some of the women; others will be there for the first time. Out of the blend of our energies, words will flow from my pen like no writing I do on my own. I will hear others read, and their writing will move me, amuse me, delight me, nurture me, and help me discover more of my own humanity.

One of the strengths of the group is that it is peer led; there is no facilitator. We have a set of guidelines, based on Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*.

We agree to give each other only positive feed-back. People make a commitment to themselves, to come whenever they are able. Everyone is encouraged to share, but it is never required. All that is needed is intent, a pen, and a space of respect and open curiosity.

Women Writing meets every other Saturday from 12:30-2:30 pm. Call the Women's Center at 354-8807 for the exact schedule.

-Judith Poole

JEWISH LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN'S GROUP

The Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group has met since May 1997, and functions as both a support and social group. The group meets on the second Thursday of each month at the Women's Center from 6:30-8pm. Topics range from "mixed marriages," to dating, to finding our place as Lesbian and Bi women in the Jewish Community, and as Jews in the Queer Community. We also offer social events, such as holiday celebrations, latke parties, etc. Call Idit at 522-6187 for more information.



MY STORY

Last Christmas, I was skinny; only "skinny" wasn't the word most people used when they talked about me. "Dreadfully thin," they'd say, or "shouldn't she be in a program?" Meanwhile, I took people's stares to mean that they couldn't believe how fat I was.

I had anorexia -- and I was the only one who didn't know it. Though my hip bones jutted out, and my clothes simply hung off my frame, every second of every day was filled with just one thought: "I am too big."

It was only during my recovery this past May that I realized how fully anorexia had ravaged not only my body, but my self-confidence, as well. For almost two years, the "real me" had cowered behind a voice in my head that told me I wasn't worth anything.

This fall, I began my three-month internship at the Women's Center. On the heels of my recovery, I still had days during which I questioned my strength as an individual and my ability to feel whole again. Throughout my time here at the Center, from what I've experienced, and the relationships I've developed, my outlook has changed.

I no longer see myself solely as an individual; I now also see myself as a woman --part of a community-- and a strong, thriving community at that. By coming to and working in "A Place of Our Own," I've learned that we, as women, can and do hold each other up. Here at the Women's Center, women laugh together and cry together; lives intertwine and form indestructible connections. And such connections are what make this life so worth living.

This Christmas I am strong; we all are. Happy Holidays.

- Kim Miller

HOLIDAY T-SHIRT SALE!!

Wouldn't a beautiful Women's Center T-shirt, fashioned after the design of the kitchen tile mural, make a great gift? Act now, and you can buy two for \$20! Or, mix and match, and buy a shirt AND a cap for only \$20. What a bargain! We have all sizes of T-shirts, and caps come in black, off-white or plum. Put your holiday gift money into your community!



OLDER WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Come to a free, open group for women over 60. We discuss a wide range of topics from a feminist point of view, challenge old assumptions and share new ideas. This is not a therapy group, but a warm and supportive place to come. Please join us on Sunday, January 18th from 2-4pm. The topic will be *How we Create Community*, and on February 15th, we'll discuss *Our Grown Children*. If you have questions, please call Gail at (617) 547-4299, Rita at (617) 937-9567 or the Women's Center at (617)354-8807.

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA MUJERES LATINA

Este es un grupo donde las mujeres podrán hablar de cualquier tema que les esté preocupando. Nos reuniremos semanalmente los jueves de 10-11 de la mañana. Si necesitas mas información llama a María al 492-8306 (ingles) o al 492-2803 (espanol). Si necesitas instrucciones de como llegar al Centro de Mujeres llama al 354-8807.

-María



HOW YOU CAN HELP

THE WOMEN'S CENTER THIS SEASON

- 1) Read the enclosed appeal and send back your donation (envelope and slip enclosed).
- 2) Find out if your employer matches your contribution to non-profit organizations. We'll help with the paperwork.
- 3) Consider naming the Women's Center as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, or retirement plan (call for details).
- 4) Become a Women's Center Sustainer by making a monthly pledge (we send updates and return envelopes - call us!).
- 5) Buy a Women's Center T-shirt! A great gift no feminist (or ally) should be without!
- 6) Volunteer! Shovel snow, help women in need, and more. Call for a volunteer form.
- 7) Smile and practice random acts of kindness (including for yourself!). ☺♥♣♀♫

¡FIESTA!

Thursday, December 18, 6-8pm

6pm Learn the Merengue with Aleyda Solorzano

7pm Dinner (bring a dish to share if you can)

All women & children are welcome

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

December 22 Party! Bring a Dessert & Cheer

29 Game Night

January 5 New Year's Resolutions

12 Video Night (Ellen)

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

December 23 Stereotypes: Butch/Femme

30 Going through Divorce

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm

December 16 Families

January 6 Bis in the Workplace

20 Meeting Women

HEALING THROUGH ART

Tuesdays, 7-9pm (through January 20)

Various mediums: clay, markers, collage, etc.

Call Forest, 576-0647, before attending

WOMEN'S READING GROUP

Once a month, 7-9:30pm

Wed., December 17 *Written by Herself: Autobiographies of American Women: An Anthology*
by Jill Ker Conway. Info: Mary, 891-5727.

OLDER WOMEN'S GROUP

3rd Sunday, 2-5pm.

January 18 How We Create Community

February 15 Our Grown Children

INCEST SURVIVORS' GATHERING:

LET'S MAKE A GROUP

Friday, December 19, 6:30-8pm.

LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

Monthly activities - (617)461-5946 for more info.

FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

last Friday/month, September-June, 6-7:30pm

December 26 Compulsions/Addictions

January 30 Anxiety

February 27 Courage

March 27 Survivor Money Issues

BREAKING THE PATTERNS OF CO-ADDICTED RELATIONSHIPS

Wednesday, January 14, 6:30-9pm

On addressing self-defeating behaviors.

With therapists Carmen Dominguez & Helen

Spencer. Questions? Call us at 646-7513.

ONGOING GROUPS

SUNDAY

• Older Women's Group (3rd Sunday) 2-4pm

MONDAY/LUNES

• Al-anon Grupo (*en español*) 6-7:30pm

• Battered Women's Support Group 7:30-9pm

• Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors
(3rd Monday) 7-8:45pm

• Lesbian Rap 7:30-9pm

• Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) (*Info: 661-1161*)

TUESDAY

• Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesday) 7:30-9pm

• 30+ Lesbian Rap 7-8:30pm

• Body Acceptance & Conscious Eating Group

(*Newcomers, call Linda, (508)374-7344*) 7:30-9pm

• Sexual Harassment Support Gp (*meets one Tuesday/mo.*
Louise Bonar, 254-1729 for info, to register) .. 7-9pm

• Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Conditions
(2nd & 4th Tuesdays) 5:15-6:45pm

• Writers Circle (*Cassandra, 494-2695, for info on mtgs*)

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

• Lesbian Al-Anon 6:30-8pm

• Separation/Divorce Support Group (1st & 3rd Weds;
Info: Margaret, 354-9182) 7-9pm

• Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic Conditions
(1st & 3rd Wednesdays) 2-3:30pm

• Women's Reading Group (3rd Wed. in Dec.) 7-9:30pm

THURSDAY/JUEVES

• Al-anon Grupo (*en español*) 6-7:30pm

• Chemical Injury Information Exchange

(*1st Thursday, September-June*)... .. 5:30-7pm

• Grupo de Apoya para Mujeres Latinas ... 10-11am

• Intercultural Women's Group (3rd Thurs) .. 7-8:30pm

• Renewal of Hope Support Group (*Begins January 8;*
call Anne at (781)639-3219 for info) 3-4:30pm

• Women's Community Cancer Project, Open

General Meeting (1st Thursday) 7-9pm

FRIDAY

• CODA (Codependents Anonymous) 6:30-8pm

• Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion Group for
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (*last Fri*) 6-7:30pm

• Incest Survivors Anonymous 6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

• Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages

(*Usually 1st Saturday*) 11am-1pm

• Finding & Surviving the Workplace

(*2nd Saturday*) 11:30-12:30pm

• Friendship Connection (2nd Saturday) .. 12:30-2:15pm

• Lesbians Choosing Children (*Activities with children,*
one Saturday/month. Info: 461-5946)

• Women Writing (*biweekly*) 12:30-2:30pm