

ON OUR WAY



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



REFLECTIONS ON 1998

As we enter our 28th year of providing free service to all women, we look back with pride at the numerous accomplishments of 1998. The year has been rewarding and challenging.

We are preparing ourselves for the departure of Judy Norris, co-founder, supporter, full-time volunteer and current Group Coordinator/Liaison. (See the accompanying article about the Fund we are establishing in Judy's name.)

Accomplishments this year include making needed capital improvements to our building, such as installing sturdy, long-lasting roofing, painting the exterior of the Center, creating a new cheery Children's Room, rearranging the Resource Room for better access, and making many valuable additions to our library.

We are thrilled by the new offerings at the Center this year, such groups for trauma survivors, for mothers without custody, and for mid-life and older women, to name a few. We're also excited to be offering workshops on money management and job development. Read on for information about other groups!

A few of the resource books we updated this year were: *Reproductive Health Care, Housing, Women of Color, and Women and Disabilities*. New referral books include a *Battered Women's Directory* and *Religion and Spirituality*. Come visit us to find valuable resource information.

We send our heartfelt gratitude to the women who give referrals and support on our hotline, provide free childcare, lend their expertise in editing, do computer work and data entry, offer valuable perspectives at the All Center Meeting, sit on our Board of Directors, facilitate workshops and groups, update our resources, paint, garden, work in the library, staff a table at events, and so much more. **THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!**

As we approach another historic year, we thank our community for your support.

-Montserrat Caballero

WOMEN'S CENTER INAUGURATES NEW FUND IN HONOR OF JUDY NORRIS

We are pleased and proud to announce the creation of the **Judy Norris Fund for the Future of the Women's Center**. The fund is being established to celebrate the profound contributions made by Judy Norris to the Women's Center over the past 27 years. The **Fund for the Future** will continue Judy's legacy of generosity and hard work, and sustain the Center's vision of a better world for women well into the new century.

Preliminary fundraising efforts have raised \$1,600. In its first year, the mission of the Fund is to secure \$50,000 toward increased Center resources in order to continue Judy's essential work in her absence. We are eagerly seeking two lead donors to contribute \$5,000 each in matching funds to stimulate further community gifts. Tax-deductible contributions to the **Judy Norris Fund for the Future of the Women's Center** can be made to The Women's Educational Center Inc. Send gifts to: **Fund for the Future** • The Women's Center • 46 Pleasant Street • Cambridge, MA • 02139, or send via the enclosed return envelope. Thank you for preserving the vital legacy of the Women's Center!

WRITER'S CIRCLE SEEKS A FEW GOOD WOMEN

The writing life can be tough, and the *Writer's Circle* is an ongoing open group that offers a place to share writing and ideas about writing. The group offers support and caring criticism, and it helps!




Writer's Circle meets bi-weekly from 7:00-9:00pm on Tuesdays. Join us for our winter schedule, January 5 and 19 and February 2 and 16, 7:00-9:00pm. Bring copies of your work and plan to read it aloud and discuss it. For more information, call Cassandra at (617) 494-2695.

-Cassandra Oxley

BI-WOMEN'S RAP

Are you aware that you are attracted to women, but just can't shake that *I'm into men* vibe? We might be just the group to hang out with. We gather at 7:30pm on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at the Women's Center to chat about just about anything.

Whether you want to make sense of who you are, want to share your thoughts and experiences, or just complain about past lovers, you are welcome to make your voice heard. Topics have included *A Phase or an Identity?*, *When Friends and Sex Collide*, and even *Bisexuality and Fashion* (deliberately to annoy those who insist on the need to be serious ☺). The topics for each month are chosen on the first Tuesday of the preceding month. The discussions are not facilitated, and no one is forced to speak. The only thing essential to bring is your sense of humor!



On Tuesdays of the interim weeks, we often meet informally at the Women's Center and then have an outing at a café or similar place nearby to socialize (call ahead to find out). I wish I could promise that all newcomers will gain dazzling enlightenment into their queerness, but instead, I will guarantee that you will make friends.

-Carol Gerbert

ENSEMBLE: A COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN

This facilitated creative writing workshop is for writers at all levels of development. At the beginning of each session, participants decide what they want to focus on. Sometimes this is free writing — writing without stopping for 10-15 minutes, then sharing what we've written; sometimes, it's responding to previous writing that women have brought; sometimes it's creating a new manuscript together.

This workshop emphasizes working collaboratively and non-competitively, freeing up writer's block, and working with the kind of passion and self-confidence that emerges when writers come out of isolation and begin to experience how their words can impact other people. Our next meeting is Saturday, January 9, 11am-1pm.

Facilitator Carlotta Hayes has had her book reviews, essays and short stories published in over 20 journals. Much of her writing comes from work in writing groups. Info: (888) 347-3540.

THANK YOU INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS!

The following corporations, foundations, and organizations, in chronological order, contributed **over \$1,000** each to the Women's Center as of December 4, 1998 (Drumroll please!): The TJX Foundation, the George and Beatrice Sherman Charitable Trust, New England Financial's, CSC Index, First American Title Insurance, US Trust, Cambridge Savings Bank, Draper Laboratory, Mellon Trust, the Hartley Corporation, the Women in Crisis Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of MA, the Connor Charitable Foundation, Weber Charities Corporation, Bell Atlantic and Gillette.

Contributors of **over \$5,000** include the Clipper Ship Foundation, the Campbell and Hall Charity Fund, and the Lotus Philanthropy Program (sadly, our last grant from this progressive funder, as it has merged with the Corporate Community Relations program of IBM, which has an entirely different focus ☺). We also extend our gratitude to the City of Cambridge for administering a Community Development Block Grant to the Women's Center. A hundred thank you's to our supporters!! ☺

WOMEN OF COLOR RAP

The *Women of Color Rap* (formerly the *Intercultural Women's Group*) meets the first Wednesday of each month from 7-8:30pm. We are minority women who come together to discuss the intersections of racism, sexism and classism. Our discussions are guided by our own experiences, as well as relevant readings of interest to us.

Additionally, *Women of Color Rap* works towards social justice and to make minority women more visible through political action. To this end, we are part of a Coalition planning a large, Boston-area event to commemorate *International Women's Day* in March of 1999. One mission of the Coalition is to explore the historical and present-day relevance of the celebration of International Women's Day.

If you are a woman of color who feels isolated and frustrated by the rampant racism and sexism in all parts of society, including "progressive" movements, please join us! For more information about the group and/or the Coalition, please call (617) 436-0390 or (617) 628-2404. See you on January 6 at 7pm at the Women's Center!

-Lynn Murray

THE YEAR IN REVIEW FROM THE EYE OF THE FUNDRAISER...



1998 was an inspiring year in terms of women's strength in the face of adversity -- whether surviving an eating disorder, speaking the truth about being abused, or protesting anti-choice violence. Again and again at the Women's Center, we found ourselves in awe of women's resilience and determination. One thing remains sure: the women's community has much to be proud of, and still much work to do.

On the home front, we've truly had our work cut out for us. Last year, we told you about the Center's need for a new roof over our heads, as well as other major renovations totaling around \$70,000! In 1997/98, we succeeded in raising over \$40,000 for *Capital Improvements*, thanks in part to you. Our 122-year old building now has a beautiful roof that will withstand the elements, as well as a sparkling new paint job! A special thank you to the Agnes M. Lindsay Trust and the Clipper Ship Foundation for backing this important project.

In 1999, we hope to make many more *Capital Improvements*. But we still **need roughly \$30,000** to do it.

As the year winds to a close, we turn a keen eye toward the Women's Center's income and expenses. We entered our 4th Quarter in good financial shape, but lagged in October and November. **We now have almost \$23,000 to go to balance the budget by December 31st.** This means December's income is **critical** to finishing the year "in the black."

To continue to offer all of the Women's Center's support services and resources **free** of charge AND proceed with our many ambitious plans for 1999, we **must raise more money!** We also need more *Capital Improvements*. And to fund the new staff position (see related article). Simply put: **WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.** Nor should we. Your support tells us that we're all in this together. So please, read the enclosed letter. Make a donation to the Women's Center if you can. *Every gift makes a difference!* (and is especially appreciated by year end).

On behalf of all the women who rely upon and appreciate the Women's Center, thank you. Here's to a new year of women's courage and triumphs!

- Pamela Goldstein
Development Coordinator



DIET IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

Everywhere you look, women are bombarded with insanity from the media. We are told that in order to be considered attractive, we must be at least 15-20% underweight. We are also given the message that many foods are "bad," and that if we eat them, we too, are "bad."

Despite all the hard-earned gains won by the women's movement, many of us still fall prey to the media's negative message. We do this even though we may rationally understand that these messages are false and hateful to women.

Come meet with other women in a supportive environment for peer-led open discussions on issues and concerns with body image and eating awareness. The *Eating Awareness and Body Image* group meets every other Friday from 6:30-8pm. Our spring schedule is: January 8 and 22, February 5 and 19, March 5 and 19. Please join us!

-Wendy Hinxman



UPDATE: THE SEARCH FOR A DIRECTOR

As announced in the last newsletter, the Women's Center is seeking to hire a Director. We would like to share with you how we have structured our process for finding a fabulous woman to lead the Center into the future.

We've created a Hiring Committee of ten women, comprised of three board members, the three full-time staff, and four volunteers. Through sub-committees, we have been energetically tackling all of the necessary tasks including prioritizing desired qualifications, evaluating resumés, determining interview and reference check questions, and interviewing.

We've created a two-interview structure in which the Board, full-time staff, and volunteer members all meet the candidate, first as a subcommittee, and later separately, asking questions specific to their needs and concerns. At the end of the process, the entire Committee will meet and select the wonderful woman who will face the rewarding challenge of filling Judy Norris' shoes. We want to thank all of the women who have applied for this new position! We'll keep you updated.

-Heather Searles
Hiring Committee Member

ONLY 15 COMMEMORATIVE TILES LEFT!

If you have not yet seen the Women's Center's beautiful *Commemorative Tile* mural in our kitchen or the growing *Trees of Life* mural in our living room, here is a sampling of some of the messages on tiles:

*To my Mother, for inspiring my activism
Love, Susan*

*Happy Birthday Kathryn Campbell-Kibler
She who laughs lasts.*

*If you believe in Woman, Take My Hand
Nancy Willem 1956 - 1992*

*To all the women who fight
for reproductive freedom*

*In memory of Lena Pierce, mother of
Ann, domestic violence victim*

Can you envision your message here? Only **15 tiles remain to be dedicated** (of 60 total) in this powerful, permanent mural honoring women. Filled with words of respect and affection, *Trees of Life* features three birch trees adorned with beautiful gold-trimmed leaves. Tiles are available for a \$300 (tax-deductible) contribution. If you would like to remember a woman in your life with a tile at the Women's Center, please contact us at (617) 354-8807.

But hurry - branches are filling up! Thank you for supporting this campaign, which helps fund the wide diversity of free programs available at the Women's Center.

-Pamela Goldstein

OLDER WOMEN FINDING OUR VOICES

A group for women 50 and older is forming at the Women's Center! The two facilitators are women who have worked with individual women, families, and women's groups for many years.

The group will explore the experiences and skills we have acquired in our maturity. We will discuss how to use these talents to meet challenges and enhance our lives.

Discussion topics will vary, and include *Changes and Changing, Using Our Strengths, Family Relationships, and Where Do I Go from Here?*

The group will meet the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 10:30am-12pm. The next meeting will be January 14, at 10:30am. Please join us!

-Meg Harrigan

SINGLE WOMEN IN MID-LIFE AND BEYOND

I began *Single Women in Mid-Life and Beyond* in response to my own desire to form meaningful, supportive bonds with other single mid-life and older women. This was due to feeling a sense of increasing isolation after my few female friends dropped off the face of the planet once they had begun child-rearing. Moreover, I had been profoundly affected by the book *Flying Solo: Single Women in Mid-Life*, which maintains that happy, fulfilled, single, mid-life women have strong friendship networks -- something I had long been yearning to have.

The group began on September 9 and the format so far has been discussion of various topics that are to be determined in advance, via group process. It has been an illuminating and empowering experience for each group participant and for myself. I'm enjoying feeling my way through this interactive process of growth. Please join us the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, from 7:30-9pm.

-Esther Wolk

JEWISH LESBIAN & BISEXUAL WOMEN

We'll be meeting again at the Women's Center on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:30-8pm, beginning on February 11th. Join us!

TRAUMA SURVIVORS' GATHERING



The *Trauma Survivors' Gathering*, warmly guided by facilitator Amy Aisenberg, met for the second time on Saturday, November 21. About ten women ages 15-50 gathered just before Thanksgiving, a difficult time for many of us, to share time and space, feelings and thoughts.

In a quiet and safe space, we listened to one another's stories and hopes and began to fortify ourselves and support one another in preparation for the difficult holiday/family season ahead.

Without revealing much of our past experiences, our commonalities built instant bridges and we were able to learn from one another respectfully. Trauma has many faces, and our group reflected that. This writer came away profoundly moved by the group experience and feeling stronger and validated by having been in the company of these special women. Please join us in the new year, Saturday, January 16, from 1:00-3:00pm.

-Group member

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT SEARCH SUPPORT

Fridays, 2-4pm

Find help writing resumes/cover letters, tips for job interviews, info on educational opportunities, someone to talk with about fears/concerns related to going back to work or school, etc.

Sensitive to family trauma. All women are welcome.

Sponsored by Transition House

Call (617)354-2676 x21 to register before attending

HOLIDAZE PARTY

Tuesday, December 29, 6-8pm

Music and Munchies

All women and children are welcome

IMPROVING YOUR BODY IMAGE THROUGH HYPNOSIS

Saturday, January 2, 11am-1pm

With therapist & hypnotist Jean Fain

TRANSITIONING INTO MIDLIFE

Saturday, January 23, 11:30am-1pm

Come talk with others. It can be very helpful!

Facilitated by therapist Marcie Mitler, 497-5283

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

December 28 Goals for 1999

January 4 Recovering from the Holidays

11 Childhood Mischiefs & Absurdity

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

December 29 New Year's Resolutions

January 5 Asking Someone Out

12 Places to Go on a Date

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

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

January 5 Coming Out at Work

19 How Did You Know?

FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Usually last Friday/month, Sept.-June, 6-7:30pm

December 18 Culture of Origin & Recovery

January 29 Shame, Body Image & Self-care

February 26 Career & Work Issues

March 26 Parenting Ourselves & Others

THURSDAY NIGHT GATHERING FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Weekly on Thursdays, 7:30-9:30pm

A topic on the 1st Thursday of the month

January 7: Connecting

WOMEN OF COLOR RAP

1st Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm

January 6: Examining the Label "Women of Color"

Info: Montserrat, (617)354-8807.

WOMEN'S READING GROUP

3rd Wednesdays, 7-9:30pm

January 20: Paradise by Toni Morrison

Info: Mary, (781)891-5727

ONGOING GROUPS

MONDAY/LUNES

• Al-anon Grupo (*semanalente, en español*) ... 6:30-8pm

• Battered Women's Support Group (*weekly*) ... 7:30-9pm

• Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors
(*Usually 3rd Mon.; info: Daniella, 497-0911*) 7-8:45pm

• Lesbian Rap (*weekly*) ... 7:30-9pm

• Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2)

(*Usually one Monday/month; 661-1161 for information*)

TUESDAY

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

• 30+ Lesbian Rap (*weekly*) ... 7-8:30pm

• Transitioning out of the Patient Role [*open every 6th week - Jan. 12; info, Diane, (781)226-7097*] ... 6-7:30pm

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

• Writers Circle (*every other week;*
info: Cassandra, 494-2695) ... 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

• Healing Hearts - Grandmothers Raising
Grandchildren (*3rd Wednesday*) ... 10:30-11:30am

• Lesbian Al-Anon (*weekly*) ... 6:30-8pm

• Separation/Divorce Support Gp (*1st & 3rd Weds*) 7-9pm

• Single Women in Mid-life & Beyond [*2nd & 4th Weds; info Esther, (781)396-3415*] ... 7:30-9pm

• WomanSpeak (*2nd Wed, Camb. Cable TV, Ch. 9*) 5:30-6pm

• Women Maximizing Abilities Now (*1st & 3rd Wednesdays; women@braintrust.org*) ... 2-3:30pm

• Women of Color Rap (*1st Wednesday*) ... 7-8:30pm

• Women's Reading Group (*3rd Wednesday*) ... 7-9:30pm

THURSDAY

• Healing through Art (*weekly*) ... 7-9pm

• Mothers without Custody (*1st Thursday*) ... 7-8:30pm

• Older Women Finding Our Voices
(*2nd & 4th Thursdays*) ... 10:30am-noon

• Thursday Night Gathering for Survivors of
Child Sexual Abuse (*weekly*) ... 7:30-9:30pm

• Women's Community Cancer Project, Open
General Meeting (*1st Thursday*) ... 7-9pm

FRIDAY

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

• Eating Awareness & Body Acceptance (*meets two Fridays/month - Jan. 8 & 22, Feb. 5 & 19*) ... 6:30-8pm

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

• Incest Survivors Anonymous (*weekly*) ... 6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

• Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages
(*1st Saturday, except some holiday weekends*) 11am-1pm

• Ensemble (*one Sat./month - Jan. 9, Feb. 7*) 11am-1:30pm

• Trauma Survivors Group (*monthly - Jan. 16*) ... 1:30-3pm

• Women Writing (every other week) ... 12:30-2:30pm

IMPROVING YOUR BODY IMAGE WITH HYPNOSIS

In this 2-hour workshop I will take participants beyond the usual self-depreciation, and beyond New Year's resolutions. We will enter an altered consciousness, a timeless state, to work on improving body image. Participants will learn a variety of hypnotic techniques from visualization to post-hypnotic suggestion. These techniques can help participants accept their bodies as is, and deepen their appreciation of their physical being.

Come celebrate your body and the New Year on Saturday, January 2, 11am-1pm at the Women's Center.



-Jean Fain

WOMEN WRITING

Women Writing is a place to come every other Saturday to write and share with other writers. It's a safe, supportive place to share everything that comes up in our writing -- from the deep, emotional muck, to the lighthearted humor. We believe in positive feedback to encourage our inner voices to speak the truth. We're also trying to kill our inner censor a little more each week and create more and more freedom for our words to flow.

Come join us January 2, 12:30-2:30pm for our first meeting of 1999. Bring pen and pad and a willingness to share. This is a peer-facilitated group. There may be different people each time or many of the same. Come with openness, and experience your voice flourish and expand.

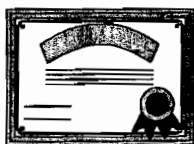
Call the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 for more information. Hope to see you soon!

-Christina Bolton

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SEARCH SUPPORT




This new offering at the Women's Center is for women who need help finding work or who have work-related concerns such as keeping jobs, dissatisfaction with jobs, fears about looking for work, etc. It is also for members to discuss educational opportunities.



We will focus on resumé preparation, interview skill-building, career development, referrals to job and training programs, as well as educational opportunities. Any interested woman over 18 is welcome to attend, Fridays from 2:00-4:00pm. The program is sensitive to survivors of family trauma. Please call (617) 354-2676 x21 to register before attending.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

THE WOMEN'S CENTER THIS SEASON

- 1) ♀ Become a Sustainer - sign up with the enclosed slip to make a monthly pledge, and receive the Center's monthly calendar & update. 
- 2) ♀ Read the enclosed appeal and send your donation in the envelope provided - TODAY.
- 3) ♀ Name the Women's Center as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, or other retirement plans.
- 4) ♀ Does your employer match your contribution to non-profit organizations? Find out! We'll help with the paperwork . . .
- 5) ♀ Buy a Women's Center T-shirt or cap! (Gifts no feminist should be without. ☺)
- 6) ♀ Volunteer! Shovel snow, help women in need, and more. Call for a volunteer form.
- 7) ♀ Support the Women's Center and women everywhere in spirit and in deed. ♀ ♀ ♀

Thank you and happy holidays from the Women's Center staff and friends. ♥❄♥



TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE PATIENT ROLE

Transitioning Out of the Patient Role has been meeting at the Women's Center since mid-August. The group is open to women who have been labeled "chronic patients" or "clients" by mental health professionals. The discussions range widely, from thinking about returning to school or work, to making changes in therapy or health care, or moving to a different housing situation.

The group is a place to bring concerns, questions, successes and roadblocks to share with other group members, and receive feedback, if wanted. We use topics as a framework for looking at transitions and the accompanying feelings. Recent topics have included *Feelings and Fears About Being a Grownup*, *Setting Limits* and *What to Do When You Don't Have the Right Answers*. While this is a facilitated group, the bulk of the discussion is carried out by members of the group as they express feelings, identify with one another, and gently offer suggestions.

The group runs in six-week cycles (an open meeting followed by five closed meetings) on Tuesdays from 6-7:30pm. Our next open meeting is Tuesday, January 12 at 6pm. Contact Diane at (781) 226-7097 (beeper) for more details. We look forward to welcoming new members!

-Diane Loud, M.Ed.