

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

Fall 1999

SUSAN ABOD PERFORMS IN BENEFIT CONCERT FOR WOMEN'S CENTER ON SEPTEMBER 18, 1999

Women's Center supporter and singer/songwriter Susan Abod will delight us with a benefit concert on September 18, 1999 at 7:30pm at the First Parish Unitarian Church in Watertown.

Susan incorporates jazz, blues, pop and Broadway styles into her intimate cabaret-style performance. Her original songs cover topics from what to say to your friend who's in a hospital dying of AIDS (written for the *Living with AIDS Theatre Project* in 1989), to learning how to flirt. Her offbeat titles include *The Process Song* and *You Look Swell in Nothing*. Susan also sings moving versions of tunes like *Diamond in the Rough*, *Up On the Roof*, and *The Secret of Life*.

Susan Abod has been singing and playing since the early 70's, the heyday of the women's music scene. She was on Rounder Record's *Mountain Movin' Day* and played with the Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band. She's played with Willie Tyson, Cassie Culver, and Betsy Rose, among others, and produced concerts for Meg Christian and Margie Adams.

In 1986, Susan became ill with CFIDS (Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome) and Chemical Sensitivities. Unable to work full-time, Susan worked very part-time for 2½ years co-creating the video, *Funny, You Don't Look Sick: Autobiography of an Illness*, which was screened at the Museum of Fine Arts and is now distributed to schools and libraries nationwide.

When Susan received a fundraising appeal from the Women's Center, she offered to play a benefit as her donation. We happily accepted. She will perform with pianist/singer/composer Janet Hood, who has appeared on local and national television, as well as on numerous albums including her own *Jade & Sarsaparilla*. At the

"Susan Abod combines her extraordinary natural talents as a singer and songwriter with the depth of an experienced actor and the wit and timing of a born comic. She is that rarity, a total performer."

~ Martin Anderson, a *Next Move Theatre* founding member



September 18th concert, Susan Abod will be recording her first CD.

Join us for a fun and moving evening of song and festivity on September 18, 1999 at 7:30 pm, at the Unitarian Parish Church near Watertown Square. Tickets: \$12 gen. admission, \$10 students, \$6 low-income/seniors (or pay what you can). Tickets are available at the Women's Center, New Words bookstore, or at the door. Proceeds benefit the Women's Center. Info/directions: (617) 354-8807. Hope to see you there!!!

NEW GROUP PAGE 4

On Our Way

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

The Women's Center is a non-profit resource and support center for all women and their children, founded in 1971.

Our mission is twofold:

- * to provide women with the resources and support they need to emerge from conditions of abuse, poverty, discrimination, or social isolation
- * to challenge and change attitudes and actions which subjugate women

The Center relies upon the generosity of its community to provide its wealth of free programs. All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

For further information, address change/corrections, contact:

The Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 354-8807

Hours:
Monday-Thursday:
10am-10pm
Friday:
10am-8pm
Saturday:
11am-4pm

Women's Center Wish List:



COMPUTER WORK STATION

REAMS OF COPY PAPER

PENTIUM COMPUTER

EASEL

TOASTER OVEN

FANS

COMPUTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

*If you have any of these items and would like to make a donation to the Women's Center, please call (617) 354-8807
Thanks!*

A Fond Farewell to Montserrat Caballero

We are sad to bid farewell to Montserrat Caballero, the Women's Center Volunteer & Administrative Coordinator. Montserrat leaves us to travel back to her native Chile, where she will spend time with family members and reacquaint herself with her place of birth. She will travel throughout Chile, exploring her culture and learning more about Chilean history.

Montserrat volunteered at the Women's Center for one year, before joining the staff to coordinate our volunteer programming. For the past two years, she recruited, trained, and supervised all volunteers and interns at the Center. For many, she provided the first glimpse of the Women's Center. Her friendly, cheerful, and caring countenance became one of our trademarks in the community. Montserrat also hosted *Woman Speak*, a local cable program, on behalf of the Women's Center where she examined issues currently facing women.

Montserrat gave much to the women's community during the three years that she lived in Massachusetts. She was a founding member of *Act Out - Revolutionary Young Sisters For Social Justice*, which begins meeting at the Women's Center this month. Montserrat also volunteered at the *Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)* for one year and on various projects at the *Abortion Access Project* for the past three.

Montserrat's dedication to the advancement of women and the elimination of all oppressions will be missed by the Women's Center, but no doubt felt in Chile.



Patricia Hunt, LICSW

Individual & Group Therapy

Loss, Depression, Trauma, Sexual Abuse

Groups for:

Trauma survivors who are experiencing infertility

Women who are mothering while healing from sexual abuse

617-354-9787

44 Pearl Street Cambridge, Mass 02139

WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE

The Women of Color Reading Circle is a new book club with a purpose. We provide space for women of color to meet and discuss fiction and nonfiction written by authors who are also women of color. We exchange ideas and strategies for maneuvering in this world as women and people of color. We read books that challenge us and broaden our perspectives. Our discussions focus on how each book can help us develop practical responses to the issues we face in our lives.

The Reading Circle is a forum for women of color to share our thoughts, feelings and laughter. We critically examine the concepts and ideas presented by the books we read. The books we select inspire, teach and help us to shape constructive responses to the overt and covert attacks against our sex and race.

We meet the second Monday of every month from 7:00-8:30 pm. Join us on Monday, September 13, 1999 at 7:00pm. The book for this meeting is entitled *The Parable of the Sower* written by Octavia Butler. We'd love to see you there.

~ Lynn Murray

BATTERED WOMEN'S GROUP

Where would I be if it weren't for the Battered Women's Group on Wednesday evenings? Who knows. I'm so glad they were there when I needed them so that I didn't have to find out.

I left my husband of seventeen years with my two-year old son the night before I went to the group for the first time. A friend of mine brought me there. I was shell shocked and never said a single word that night. What was important to me was that everyone knew exactly how I was feeling even though I sat there mute.

I finally had the courage to leave my husband and the group gave me the strength to keep on going. The group gave me the strength to find a way to survive homelessness and depression. They helped me to sort out all of the mixed and confused feelings that I had. It was also great that the Women's Center had childcare, or I wouldn't have been able to go.

Betsy Warrior, who leads the group, is a beautiful person. She is sincere, compassionate and understanding. She never makes you feel stupid for having what you think are strange thoughts. Believe me, everyone thinks they are the only one with these feelings, thoughts and fears. You're not. That was one of the most important

things I needed to learn. I wasn't alone. I wasn't the only woman getting beaten and treated horribly.

Eventually, I found a job and an apartment. After I got back on my feet, I kept going every Wednesday. I hoped that someone sitting there shell shocked, not saying a word, would know that we understand what she's going through. I wanted other women to know that we'll get through it together. We help each other as only women who have been through this can. Even though I'm on my two feet and I don't go to the group anymore (because I'm now too far away), Betsy still keeps in touch. She still cares about how I'm doing. I also care about how the other women in the group are doing.

Thank you to the Women's Center and to Betsy Warrior for everything.

~ T.M.



WE'LL MISS YOU, MELISSA

As a volunteer at both the Women's Center and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC), I am committed to ending violence against women. It is this commitment that led me to train as a volunteer at BARCC five years ago.

During that time I met Melissa Gosule, who was also in training at BARCC, and we soon became fast friends. Melissa would often stop by the Women's Center, visiting the Resource Room to research writing and career opportunities. During the next five years, we saw each other through many changes, and even though we were different in many ways, I knew we would remain friends for a long time. I considered Melissa to be the first great friend I ever had.

In July our friendship took a tragic turn, as Melissa was brutally murdered on July 11th. The man accused of ending her life is being held without bail on charges of kidnapping and first-degree murder.

It is hard to fathom that this violence occurs at all, but it is even harder when it happens to someone who was intensely committed to making the world a safe place for women. Obviously the work needed to end this violence is far from over, but I'm convinced that Melissa will not have died in vain. Her work to end violence will continue in each of us. This work we do, and the awareness that we all share, is a bond uniting all women. Melissa's spirit is included in that bond. We'll miss her tremendously.

~ Maureen A. Barlow

SUSAN ABOD IN CONCERT

A Benefit for the Women's Center



Saturday, September 18, 7:30-10pm

First Parish Unitarian Church

35 Church Street, Watertown

(is near Watertown Sq. bus stop & has free parking)

Tickets: \$12 (\$10 students, \$6 seniors/low-income, or pay what you can). Info./directions: (617)354-8807.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP - Not Your Ordinary Career Development Workshop

Thursday, September 16, 6:30-9:30pm

Discover what you want to do & how to do it
With Barbara Harris of Leapfrog.

THE MAKING OF A HANDYWOMAN: THE BASICS IN ELECTRICAL REPAIR

Saturday, September 18, 1:30-3:30pm

With electrician Maggie Cohen

HEALING CIRCLE

Mondays, September 20 & 27, 7-8:30pm

Massage, meditation, singing & more

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT SEARCH SUPPORT

Wednesdays, 3-5pm

Find help writing resumes, tips for job interviews, info. on educational opportunities... Discuss concerns related to returning to work or school, etc. Sensitive to family trauma. Sponsored by Transition House. Call (617)354-2676 x21 to register before attending.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

- September 13 Flirting Dos & Don'ts.
20 Queer Cyberspots; Media.
27 Singles Scene 101.

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- September 14 Surviving Singlehood.
21 Signing 101.
28 Lesbian Fantasy Expectations.

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

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

- September 21 Are You ready for It? Timing.

WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE

Monday, September 13, 7-9pm

The book: *The Parable of the Sower*
by Octavia E. Butler

Info: Lynn, (617)436-0390

WOMEN'S READING GROUP

3rd Wednesdays, 7-9:30pm

- September 15: *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson
Info: Mary, (781)891-5727

FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

- September 24 Isolation & Belonging.
October 29 Family Relationships.
November 26 Health.
December 17 Culture & Religion.

ONGOING GROUPS

MONDAY

- ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters for Justice
(September 20, but usually 1st Monday) 6-8pm
- Women's AI-Anon (biweekly; begins in Oct.) 6-7:30pm
- 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 mtg./month; 661-1161 for information)
- Women of Color Reading Circle (2nd Monday) . 7-9pm

TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesday) . 7:30-9pm
- Separation & Divorce Support Group (weekly) 7-9pm
- Sexual Harassment Support Group (one Tuesday/mo;
Louise Bonar, 254-1729, for info, to register) . . 7-9pm
- 30+ Lesbian Rap (weekly) 7-8:30pm
- Transitioning out of the Patient Role [open every 6th
week - Sept. 7; info: Diane, (781)226-7097] . . 6-7:30pm
- Women with Disabilities and/or Chronic
Conditions (2nd & 4th Tuesday) 5:15-6:45pm
- Writers Circle [2nd Tuesday;
info: Cassandra, (617)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
- Lesbian AI-Anon (weekly) 6:30-8pm
- Single Women in Mid-life & Beyond [2nd &
4th Weds; info Esther: (781)396-3415] 7:30-9pm
- Storytelling/Playback Theater (weekly) 7:30-9pm
- 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) 7:15-9pm
- Older Women Finding Our Voices
(2nd & 4th Thursdays) 11am-12:30pm
- 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
- WRAG (♀'s Radical Action Group) (weekly) 6:30-9pm

FRIDAY

- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion Group for
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (last Fri) 6-7:30pm
- Incest Survivors Anonymous (weekly) 6:30-8pm
- South Asian Women for Action (2nd Friday) 5:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages
(1st Saturday, except holiday weekends) . . . 11am-1pm
- Making of a Handywoman (one Sat./month)
- Trauma Survivors Group (3rd Saturday) 1:30-3pm
- Women Writing (every other week) 12:30-2:30pm

THE THURSDAY NIGHT GATHERING

The Thursday Gathering is a weekly, open, drop-in discussion group for women survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). It meets every Thursday night from 7:30-9:30pm at the Women's Center. Participants may have been abused by parents, older siblings, other relatives, family friends, teachers, coaches, or other authority figures. Wimmin without clear memories of specific abuse and those questioning a CSA history are welcome. There is a "contact person" each night who helps people settle in, but there is no facilitator. On the first Thursday of each month, there is a pre-published topic which is the focal point of discussion. Recent topics have included forgiveness, anger, sexuality, and death and loss.

The group is unstructured, which means that cross-talk is acceptable, there are no strict time limits or content limits on speech, and arriving late or leaving early is welcome as long as wimmin are respectful to those who may be speaking. There are a few simple guidelines that we use to keep the room feeling safe for all. These include respect for others' speech and experiences, and being respectful of others' needs when discussing graphic material which may be triggering.

There are many different types of CSA groups, and each survivor needs to find the space that is most productive for their own healing. An unstructured group can be challenging, because the flow of ideas and discussion is controlled solely by the participants, and not by a facilitator or the exclusion of subject matter. Any topic is available for discussion, including sobriety issues, ritual abuse, multiplicity, and sexuality. Therefore, the Gathering offers a space in which survivors of different experiences and history can learn from their diversity.

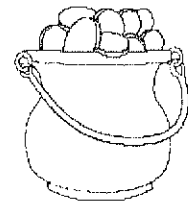
Participants of the Gathering over the years have included wimmin as young as seventeen and as old as seventy, traditional homemakers and lesbian separatists, from local communities and from overseas. We seek to offer a safe and supportive atmosphere in which all survivors can grow and heal.

If you would like more information about the Thursday Gathering before attending, please contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 and leave your contact information - a Thursday Gathering contact person will return your call.

~ Judy Feinberg



FROM THE DESK OF OUR



FUNDRAISER..

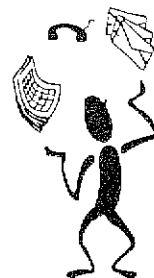
Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Spring appeal letter. We raised over \$4,000 for the Women's Center. Your generosity supports our many free programs. Survivors of child sexual abuse, battered women, women of color, older women, lesbians and bisexual women, mothers, and so many others depend on the Women's Center for resources that promote healing and growth. Your contribution also supports important internal changes at the Women's Center.

This is an exciting time. We are expanding the number and diversity of women participating in the Center's collective decision-making process. Many more voices are being heard. With your help, the Women's Center will be poised to enter the new millennium a stronger, more vibrant and representative women's organization. Your financial support is one of the things that makes this possible.

In other fundraising news, the "Trees of Life" *Commemorative Tile Mural* was completed this summer. (Hooray!) The mosaic reveals three birch trees with elegant green and gold leaves, intertwined with words of respect, love, memory, and dedication to women. The project raised more than \$16,000 and will be ceremoniously "unveiled" in the early fall. Please contact me if you would like to know when the mural is fully installed, or stop in for a viewing. The "Trees of Life" *Commemorative Tile Mural*, designed by Vermont-based artist Bekah Perks, is sure to be a stunning addition to our cozy Women's Center.

It's not too late to make a donation this season. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT to keep this thriving resource going (see the tear-off coupon in this issue). Thank you for putting your money where it counts for women: at the Women's Center.

~ Pamela Goldstein
Development Coordinator



WE NEED YOU!
Volunteer on the Women's Center
hotline.
It's fun and rewarding.
For more information,
call (617)354-8807

STORYTELLING/PLAYBACK THEATRE



Yes, I want to support the Women's Center!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other

or

I'd like to become a regular **monthly sustainer**, with a pledge of \$ per month.

Add me to the Women's Center mailing list.

I'm interested in volunteering at the Women's Center.

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone

Thank You!

"Storytelling Theatre," a mentor once said to me, "is enacting moments and situations from our own lives." Playback Theatre allows me to hear about people's lives and express feelings, conflicts and ideas, as well as the magic we live with everyday. We make strong connections and gain support in a myriad of circumstances.

Pairs: two women, one behind the other, play out conflicting feelings about a topic. For example, 'family.' "The family," Sarah says, smiling and flinging her arms open wide. "Ugh... the... family..." mutters Bonnie, as she drops toward the floor, clutching her head, leaning toward Sarah's knee. *Pairs* is an amazing way to watch two different voices in one woman play out her conflicting or symbiotic nature.

Another form we use is called *Fluids*. *Fluids* combine sound, movement, and musical instruments to create a kind of moving sculpture of a feeling, situation or aspiration.

I am facilitating Storytelling/Playback Theatre at the Women's Center, with the belief that our own style of playing evolves as we work together and develop trust.

If you would like to participate or learn more about Storytelling Theatre, please call (617)354-8807.

~ Kaeza Fearn

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

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