

# ♀ ON OUR WAY

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

March 2000

## WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY

Saturday, April 1, 10:45am-4pm.

Windsor Street Community & Health Center, 119 Windsor Street, Cambridge

**T**aking Charge of Your Health in the Year 2000 is the theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Health Day. And it will begin with a charge, if you come (on time) to one of the Wake-Up Workouts at 11am: Choose from Kick Boxing, Low Impact Aerobics, Chi-gong or Yoga. Other morning options include: free massages, spinal exams, blood pressure screening, and information tables (11am-1:15pm).

Whether you make it to the morning activities or not, don't miss the complimentary lunch at noon!

After lunch, about 20 workshops beckon. Some choices: Acupuncture, Reiki, Talking to Your Doctor, Riding Your Pen to Wellness, Transformational Breath, Fitness Startup Program, Using Computers to Enhance Your Health, Shiatsu, Health Issues for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Healthy Heart & Living Creatively with Disabilities. Several workshops will be in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole.

It's all free! All you have to do is get yourself to 119 Windsor Street. We are lucky to have a new site, the Windsor Street Community Center, this year. We hope that bringing Health Day into different communities will draw neighborhood women who



haven't attended before. And, of course, we hope the women who have enthusiastically attended before will come again. Childcare will be provided - please call (617)354-8807 with your child(ren)'s age(s) and when you'd need child care.

Getting the word out is always a challenge. This year we plan to have flyers in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole.

We need some help!! If you'd like to help out with publicity, or help out on the day (making signs, food preparation or pick-ups, set up, childcare, etc.), or in some other way, please call Judy at (617)354-8807. The event is sponsored by many organizations including Healthworks, the Women's Commission, Cambridge Health Alliance, the Mass Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Mount Auburn Hospital & the Women's Center.

This is a great opportunity for women of all ages to learn ways to take charge of their health. Lots of timely workshops, lunch, massages, information and more - make up this great free event. Call (617)354-8807 if you want to get specific workshop info., get directions, or request childcare. Hope to see you there!

-Judy Norris

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## On Our Way

is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published three times per year in March, 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 Women's Center Board

Annette Brown

Linda Duby

Judy Feinberg

Lynn Murray

Sandy Nickel

Kyoko Okamura

Pam Steinkamp

Debbie Wintner

The Women's Center relies on the generosity of the community to provide our wealth of free programs. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

For further information, contact:

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

Hours:

Monday-Thursday:

10am-10pm

Friday:

10am-8pm

Saturday:

11am-4pm

## NEW WOMEN'S TRAUMA GROUP

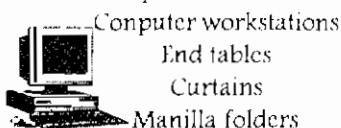
A free closed facilitated group: the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, April 11, 2000, is open; then the group will be closed for the rest of a 5-month cycle. Meetings will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month, 5:30-6:45pm.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday meetings, the facilitator will speak briefly about the topic, followed by a facilitated discussion. THE TOPICS: April 11: The effects of trauma; May 9: Repeating instead of remembering, kinds of remembering, mourning; June 13: Reparative relationships: doing over better what was once done badly; July 11: Self-Injury; self-soothing and sublimation; August 8: Giving what you didn't get.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays there will be facilitated general discussions. No need to register - just come to the first meeting of a five-month cycle. For more information call Amy Aisenberg at (617) 354-3721 (11am-8pm only, please).

## WOMEN'S CENTER WISH LIST

Pentium computers (200 MHz or better)



TV/VCR stand (for 19 inch TV)

Current women-centered posters

Washable carpet for children's room  
(8' x 8')

Reams of paper

*And, of course, your financial  
donations are always appreciated!  
Thank You!*

## RITUAL ABUSE

I am a survivor of cult ritual abuse, and one of the needs I have found most difficult to meet is that of emotional support during recovery. This has been not only my experience, but that of many others as well.

Whereas therapy groups can at times be found, support groups are far less common. Within the context of what I defined as a support group was an environment where I could tell my story, where I could own all the details of what I had experienced and felt, where I no longer had to deny and no longer had to obey my abusers' injunction of silence. I sought an environment where I could grieve openly, where I could feel fully, and feel whole.

Toward this end, a friend and I began a 12-step group in the early 1990's that ran for a number of years. Within the 12-step format, I found I could evaluate the moral implications of my experience without judgement or a preconceived determination of guilt or innocence. I could seek my own truth. I could acknowledge that I exist fragmented, and honor each part of myself and the various roles I created to survive. I found a community where I could be heard with understanding and where I would not have to pretend to feel what I did not feel, or spare others the burden of my reality. I found a world where my truth could be spoken, acknowledged, felt and owned.

Our group will be resuming this March at the Women's Center. It runs loosely on a 12 step format of anonymous sharing. It is open

*Continued next page*

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR FUNDRAISER

to all severe abuse or cult ritual abuse survivors. (We define severe abuse as abuse consistent with ritual abuse but having taken place outside of the context of a cult. Further definition is available upon request.) Any survivor who feels the need of this specialized focus is welcome.

To contribute to the sense of safety we all need, new members will be added the first week of each month and can obtain the meeting day and time from the group contact.

It has been said a survivor's rate of recovery will be directly proportional to the amount of support they receive. This group has been invaluable to me in providing both support and recovery. I sincerely hope the same might be found true for you as well. Please consider joining our community. For more information call our group contact Esther at 617-969-9347.

### NEW DAYTIME BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

**B**eginning in March, a support group for battered women is meeting every Tuesday from noon to 1:30pm at the Women's Center. This is a drop-in group, for women of all walks of life who have experienced or are currently experiencing abuse (physical, verbal, emotional, mental, sexual, financial, etc.) from an intimate partner (but not limited to intimate partners).

Participants are welcome to share their experiences, give and receive support, and strategize together about safety, transitioning, and much more. The group will be informal, but a facilitator will be present to help discussions be effective and rewarding as well as to maintain a safe atmosphere for all participants.

~ Kyoko Okamura

### OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO...

**The Catalogue For Philanthropy  
And Grant Contributors:**

**Cambridge Community Foundation  
City of Cambridge**

**Frederick Weber Charities Corporation  
George and Beatrice Sherman Family Trust  
Gillette Company**

**Haymarket People's Fund  
Hewat/ O'Connor Fund of the Tides Foundation  
Lassor and Fanny Agoos Charity Fund  
Loomis, Sayles and Company  
TJX Foundation**

**T**hank you to the hundreds of individuals who generously contributed at the year's end. Together, you provided the Women's Center with over \$20,000. You make it possible for the Women's Center to provide crucial support and resources absolutely free.

During my short time here I have been inspired by what an amazing place the Women's Center is. The day begins with caring volunteers offering women support and information on the hotline. Soon, women are in the Resource Room, accessing information on housing, employment, mental and physical health and community events. During the day and evening, women come together for support groups and workshops. By late evening, women have found emotional support, resources, friendship, activism — your support makes this possible.

We want to give a special thanks to the *Catalogue for Philanthropy* for selecting the Women's Center as one of 100 charitable organizations presented in its current edition. The *Catalogue* is dedicated to the promotion and celebration of philanthropic giving. The Center's debut in the *Catalogue* is a great honor. We also appreciate the generosity of *Catalogue* readers who sent us gifts. Thank you.

In other fundraising news, we are striving to increase our income so that we may develop new projects at the Women's Center. The *Community Organizing Project* will recruit and organize low-income women so that they may work together on issues of social and economic justice. The *Education, Training, Career Development, and Job Search Program* will soon include basic computer literacy training and support services for women who can't use traditional training programs. Also, we are developing a web page which will provide basic information and referral sources on-line. So many plans! So many changes!

It's a very exciting time. The Women's Center's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is on the horizon! We welcome volunteers to help prepare for the celebration. Yes, a home of our own for 30 years!

Each gift of time and financial support helps make all of this possible. We thank you. *Contact Eliza at (617) 354-6394 for information about joining the Fundraising or 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.*

## 7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 10:45am-4pm.

Wake-up workouts at 11am, free lunch at noon,  
a wealth of workshops from 1:15-4pm & more!

At the Windsor Street Community Center,  
119 Windsor Street, Cambridge. (617)354-8807.

### A-CASA (Against Child & Sexual Abuse)

Let's initiate community activities to help prevent  
child sexual abuse by increasing public awareness.

Some Thursdays, 6-7pm. Ellen, (617)776-7592.

email: [survivorhealth@chickmail.com](mailto:survivorhealth@chickmail.com)

### FILMS FOR THOUGHT:

Viewing & Discussion for Women

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays, 7-9pm; light refreshments

April 20 "The Long Walk Home"

with Sissy Spacek & Whoopi Goldberg.

### NEW WOMEN'S TRAUMA GROUP

Free closed facilitated group. 5-month cycle: the first  
meeting, April 11, is open; the rest closed. Will meet  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month, 5:30-6:45pm.

Amy Aisenberg, (617)354-3721(11am-8pm only, please)

### NOTHING TOO HEAVY TO SHARE (NTHTS)

For survivors of severe abuse, such as battering,  
torture, mind control, deprivation, isolation, child  
prostitution. Info/to join: Esther (617)969-9347.

### TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE PATIENT ROLE

Ongoing group, open to new members one meeting,  
then closed for the next 5 meetings.

Facilitated by Diane Loud, M.Ed.

Info: Diane, (781)226-7097(beeper)

### WOMEN CONCERNED ABOUT ALCOHOL USE

Facilitated 14-wk. non-12-step closed gp. Fris. 4-5:30pm.

Info/to register: Christine Saulnier, (617)353-7720.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### INCEST RESOURCES'

FACILITATED OPEN DISCUSSION FOR  
SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

March 31 Mothers

April 28 Self-Esteem

Facilitated by survivor-therapists. Please be on time.

### WOMEN OF COLOR RAP, 1<sup>st</sup> Weds. 7-8:30pm

April 5 The Spread of HIV in Women of Color in  
the U.S. & Internationally. Lynn, (617)436-0390.

### WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE

2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays, 7-9pm; Info: Lynn, (617)436-0390

April 10 Garden in the Dunes by Leslie Silko

### WOMEN OVER 40, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm

April 12 Books that have made a difference in our lives

April 26 What did you want to be/do you want to be  
when you grow up? Info: Suzanne, (781)393-4854.

## WOMEN WRITING THEIR LIVES

Saturday, April 8, Noon-4pm.

How to use your history in creative writing  
With published writer & teacher Julia Thacker

## YOUR CEREMONY, YOUR WAY

Saturday, April 15, 11am-1:30pm

Participatory workshop: create a commitment ceremony  
or wedding that reflects your beliefs & values.

Facilitated by Susan Teshu

## ONGOING GROUPS

### MONDAY

- ACT OUT - Revolutionary Young Sisters for Justice  
[1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays; info: Kat, (617)491-7243] ... 6-8pm
- Al-Anon for Women (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays) ..... 6-7:30pm
- Battered Women's Support Group(weekly) 7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors  
(Usually 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon.; info: Daniella, 497-0911) . 7-8:45pm
- Lesbian Rap (weekly) ... 7:30-9pm
- Women's Healing Circle (Brenda, 666-2876) 8-9:30pm

### TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays) ... 7:30-9pm
- Daytime Battered Women's Support Group  
(New, weekly) ..... Noon-1:30pm
- 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
- Women's Reading Group (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays) ... 7:30-9:30pm
- Writers Circle [info: Cassandra, (617)494-2695] . 7-9pm

### WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group  
(weekly, except 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month) ..... 7-9pm
- Education & Employment Search Support ..... 3-5pm
- Lesbian Al-Anon (weekly) ..... 6:30-8pm
- Storytelling/Playback Theater (3<sup>rd</sup> Weds.) .... 7-8:30pm
- Women Maximizing Abilities Now (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesdays; woman@braintrust.org) ..... 2-3:30pm

### THURSDAY

- Boston Bisexual Women's Network (2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays,  
odd numbered months; May 11) ..... 7:30-9pm
- Look Before You Leap - Not Your Ordinary Career  
Development Workshop (monthly; 4/27) 6:30-9:30pm
- Thursday Night Gathering for Survivors of  
Child Sexual Abuse (weekly) ..... 7:30-9:30pm
- Women's Community Cancer Project, Open  
General Meeting [1<sup>st</sup> Thursday; (617)354-9888] . 7-9pm
- WRAG (♀'s Radical Action Group) (weekly group for  
younger women; Ivanna, (617)562-8150) ..... 6-8pm

### FRIDAY

- Incest Survivors Anonymous (weekly) ..... 6:30-8pm
- South Asian Women for Action (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday) ... 6-8pm

### SATURDAY

- Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages  
(1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, except holiday weekends) ..... 11am-1pm
- Survivor's Health & Health Care (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.) 11:30am-1pm
- Trauma Survivors Group (open, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sats.) ..... 1:30-3pm
- Women Writing (usually alt. weeks; April 22) 12:30-2:30pm

## A NEW DIRECTION FOR WOMEN OF COLOR RAP

**U**nder the direction of Lynn Murray and Vanessa P. Washington, the Women of Color Rap has taken new direction. Entering the year 2000, the group has decided to become more political and action oriented. The group's mission has always been to provide a space for women of color to engage in a dialogue with each other, across differences of ethnicity, sexuality and age, about the frustrations of dealing with multiple oppressions. Now the focus will also include collective learning about political issues affecting our lives.

The structure of the group will also change. The group will meet at the Women's Center for discussion on the first Wednesday of the month, and will also plan a topic-related social outing. Last month the group discussed the effects of globalization on women of color around the world and here in the U.S. Members also have attended a series of lectures on the World Trade Organization to learn collectively about what is going on in the world. In April, we will discuss "The spread of HIV among women of color in the U.S. and internationally."

~ *Gabrie'l Atchison*

## WOMEN CONCERNED ABOUT ALCOHOL

**D**o you know someone who is concerned about her drinking? Are you concerned about your own? If so, you may be interested in a new and different support group offered at the Women's Center. Why? Even though many women are happy with traditional treatment programs like abstinence-based therapy or traditional self-help programs, others find it isn't a good fit.

Christine Saulnier, a Social Work Professor at BU, is researching alternative ways to help women. In her groups (Fridays from 4 - 5:30pm), women set their own goals, talk about how things are different for women than for men, and discuss how this relates to alcohol use. This is a closed 14-week group, followed by training in the facilitation of a self-help groups, without professional involvement, for interested participants. Christine will interview interested women before the group starts, after it ends, and a year later. She'll pay \$25 for each completed interview. For more information, call Christine at (617) 353-7720.

## JOIN THE WOMEN'S CENTER FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Learn new skills

Make friends

Help raise money for the Women's Center

For more information, call Eliza at (617) 354-6394

## SURVIVORS, HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

A group for women survivors of child sexual abuse.  
First meeting: Saturday, April 8, 11:30-1:00pm.

**I**nspiration for this group came from two places, one frustrating and disheartening and the other very positive and empowering. For many survivors, child sexual abuse takes a toll on our physical as well as our emotional health. Many of us experience chronic pain, gynecological problems, insomnia, anxiety, and other health challenges related to the abuse. We may also experience health care as triggering and have a difficult time with providers we don't trust enough to share our trauma histories. It may be especially hard to take care of ourselves when we are either uninsured or insured by HMOs that have the power to deny us adequate care or refuse to pay for the mental and physical health care we know we need.

At the same time, many of us have found creative paths to physical and emotional healing through art, exercise, meditation, and work with trusted health care providers. Hearing the stories of other survivors can be one of the best ways to find inspiration and practical information we need to create health and well-being in our lives.

It is my hope that this group will look critically at a medical system that is so often too expensive, ill-equipped, or unwilling to address our health challenges, learn together about different health care options and support each other as we work to achieve greater health in our lives. If you have further questions or are unable to attend the meeting, please call the Women's Center at 354-8807 or email [survivorhealth@chickmail.com](mailto:survivorhealth@chickmail.com).

~ *Anonymous*



*Honor Someone You Love  
With A Gift  
to the  
Women's Center  
In Their Name*



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

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of: \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ \$other

For a donation of \$150 or more, you'll receive a Women's Center T shirt or cap!

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!*

## A CALL TO WRITERS

### Workshop on Saturday, April 8

**O**ur personal histories, our stories of struggle, crisis, and survival, make rich source material for fiction and memoir. But how do we go about shaping the raw material of experience into a compelling narrative? Please join us for an afternoon-long workshop which will offer participants instruction and practice in weaving stories from their own lives into their writing. Through a series of in-class exercises we will spin out on-the-spot stories, drawing upon such topics as childhood, friendship, love and work. Participants will then have an opportunity to share their pieces with the group, and to receive guidance on ways to develop their stories further. We will also discuss short stories by

such notable authors as Julia Alvarez, Sandra Cisneros, and Grace Paley.

As a writer and a teacher of creative writing for many years — most recently in the Radcliffe Seminars — I know how empowering and transformative telling our stories can be. I was honored last month to receive a Creating and Presenting Grant from the Cambridge Arts Council for the completion of a short novel based upon my childhood experiences. The grant also allows me to present this special workshop at the Women's Center, Women Writing Their Lives: Using Personal History in Creative Writing, Saturday, April 8, 12:00 - 4:00pm. Do join us for a lively afternoon of writing and discussion.

This workshop is free and open to new writers, as well as to those with more writing experience. For more information, or to reserve a place, please call me at (617) 864-1033. Hope to see you there.

*~ Julia Thacker*

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

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