

♀ ON OUR WAY

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

December 2001

Women's Center Members Challenge Racism

Under the auspices of its Diversity Committee, and as it entered its 30th year, the Women's Center made a commitment to challenge racism both within its own confines, and in the larger community. As part of this essential undertaking, all members of the Staff, Diversity Committee and Board of Directors who are white are participating in a series of anti-racism workshops. The series, facilitated by Martha Comfort, examines the roles and behaviors of white women both in perpetuating and in ending racism. The goal of the two-hour workshops is to explore interrupting racism by recognizing patterns, forming alliances, and strengthening participants to work for change at the Women's Center and beyond. A similar series will be available to volunteers in the near future.

The first gathering of the series was held on Wednesday, November 7,

2001 at the Women's Center. Comfort helped participants set guidelines for the group which are modeled on those of Cambridge Friends School's *Examining Our Own Racism* group.

Participants then looked at circumstances that hinder or help racial learning. An article by Nancy L.

Brown, *Conditions under which Racial Learning Occurs*, was the focal point for the discussion. Brown identifies twelve conditions which inhibit learning about racism, and the counterpart to each condition which helps such learning to occur. Included are ideas such as "look inside first," don't

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Latinas Vecinas: Cenando Con Nosotras

La Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana tiene el gusto de invitar a todas aquellas mujeres Latinas que viven en la región de Boston a compartir con nosotras una velada "LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS". La primera velada se llevará a cabo el día Jueves, 24 de Enero del 2002 en el "Centro de Mujeres" (The Women's Center) en Cambridge. La velada contará con la participación de las mujeres de la Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana de Boston, hablaremos en español y degustaremos deliciosos platos Latinos. También será una oportunidad de conocer a más mujeres Latinas que son nuestras

vecinas y no las conocemos. Como mujeres y Latinas nos enriquece conocer y compartir ratos agradables con nuestras compatriotas que de alguna forma pueden llegar a ser de gran ayuda en nuestros quehaceres cotidianos. La tradición Latina invita a todas las mujeres y que inviten ellas a sus vecinas para conocer a otras personas que viven en el vecindario y más allá. La velada estará llena de actividades divertidas y sorpresas agradables. Si necesitan asistencia con el transporte y el cuidado de los niños le podremos ayudar. El Centro de Mujeres está localizado cerca de la estación "Central" de la Línea Roja, es un sitio agradable y abierto a todas las mujeres. Te estaremos esperando. No hay ningún costo para asistir a la velada "LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS".

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On Our Way

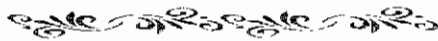
Is the newsletter of the Women's Center, published 3 times per year in *April, September, and December.*

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 tools and resources they need to emerge from abuse, discrimination, addiction, sexism and racism, harassment, social isolation, violence, poverty, or other injustice

to challenge and change attitudes and actions which subjugate women.



Volunteers

The Women's Center gratefully acknowledges the ongoing efforts and contributions of our volunteers.

Thank you for giving so generously of your time and of yourselves.

The Women's Center relies on the generosity of the community to provide our wealth of free programming.

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

email: wmnscntr@mediaone.net

Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 10am-10pm

Friday: 10am-8pm

Saturday: 11am-4pm

Helpline: (617)354-8807 TTY/Voice

It's a great time to be a part of the Women's Center! With programming going strong, the Computer/Internet Access and Training program growing, and the Community Organizing Project underway, there are many ways to meet, support and work with inspiring women in our community.

As the strength and scope of the Center grows, the Board is focused on three priority areas where we can provide support: strategic visioning for the Women's Center, addressing the current transgender policy and supporting increased community outreach and organizing for justice.

Envisioning the Future

Our strategic visioning process has begun! We started by taking a comprehensive look at the Women's Center - its current structure, processes and policies. We met with all staff members to solicit their feedback and suggestions for making the most out of the time, talent and resources we have. We also invite the input of volunteers and of women who use the Center. We created a survey and distributed it to group facilitators. We encourage you to take time to consider your own vision of the Center's future, and to share it with us. The next time you come by, please fill out a survey, located in the foyer or ask for one at the small office by the front door. The Board is reviewing the input from the staff and members of the Center. Then, we plan to focus on implementing the suggestions gathered from the Women's Center community.

Considering the Transgender Policy

The Board is addressing the Women's Center's transgender policy. The current policy states that only female-born women and post-operative transsexual women can enter the Women's Center and par-

ticipate in Women's Center programming. After learning of the recent efforts to have this policy reevaluated, the Board began researching the policies of similar organizations. We plan to host an educational event around this issue during the winter. We are developing the process for establishing the future transgender policy for the Center - whether it remains as is or is revised. We look forward to your participation and will post information about the upcoming event.

Expanding the Center's Reach

Led by the Diversity Committee, we have been looking at the current culture of the Center and are working to make changes that will enable the Center to serve as an important resource for a broader range of women in the community. Recent workshops with Board members, staff and volunteers have focused on anti-oppression training and challenging racism. We applaud the Political Action Gatherings in their efforts to focus attention on public policy issues of community concern in their informative workshops where women signed petitions, wrote letters, and were encouraged to share information with others. We also support the Community Organizing Project as it gains momentum in organizing low-income women to take power in their communities.

Supporting the Center's Growth

As we strengthen existing programming and take on new initiatives, our budget has grown from \$170,000 to \$220,000 in the past year! We recognize both the challenge and importance of meeting this increased budget, and thank all those who continue to provide financial support to the Women's Center. We value the involvement of every woman who makes the Women's Center what it is and we look forward to moving ahead with you!

~ Lynsey Miller

Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

“wait until others confront [you];” and “seek support for... learning primarily from whites who are also learning...” rather than “seek[ing] support... primarily from blacks, who have a different struggle regarding racism... are fighting racism directly, and for whom support of whites... is an added energy drain.”

In future discussions, workshop members will share stories of their experience as white women consciously or unconsciously participating in the system of racism in the U.S., consider actions to combat racism which can be taken as individuals and as members of the Women's Center, and support each other while actively dismantling racism.

As Comfort and her colleague, Jeanette Millard, have written, “[e]veryone, of all races and genders, shares a piece of the action when it comes to confronting racism.” White women “could be important resources for each other” in this struggle because “[a]s a group, we have moved ahead in the struggle to identify as women within patriarchy; we have examined the dynamics; we have connected with each other...” Challenging racism “enriches all of our connections across many dimensions of diversity. It opens us up to countless experiences... The world gets bigger and richer when we take a stand, and... new awareness and learning keep us energized and strong for the journey.”

The Board and Staff of the Women's Center consider this workshop series a first important step on the journey to eliminating racism.

~ Janne Hellgren



WISH LIST

- Ergonomic Computer Chairs
- 17" monitors
- 9X7 solid color rug for Children's Room
- Small CD/Radio Boombox
- Children's Educational Software
- Gift Certificate to Framing Shops
- Wood computer workstations
- TV/VCR Stands
- LARGE Plastic Bins to hold toys
- Gift Certificates to WBMason



Children's Computer

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We are delighted to announce that IBM has donated a Young Explorer's Computer Center especially designed for children ages 3-7. We have a number of fun computer games which teach children letters, numbers, how to tell time, and many other skills. If you would like to expose your child to computers, feel free to call (617) 354 6394 and reserve a time. Simply dropping by is fine, but we can't promise that the computer will be available. We ask that you supervise your child during use.

Foundations and Corporations

A special "thank you" to the foundations and organizations that have generously funded the Women's Center in 2001:

- Anonymous Donor
- The Boston Jewish Women's Community Fund
- The City of Cambridge
- The Cambridge Community Foundation
- Cambridge Savings Bank
- Cambridge Trust Company
- The Bushrod Campbell and Adah Hall Charity Fund
- Citizen's Bank
- The Clipper Ship Foundation
- The Howard C. Connor Charitable Foundation
- The Cornyn Foundation
- The Lotta M. Crabtree Trust
- The Marion L. Decrow Memorial Fund
- The Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
- The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory
- East Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
- The First American Title Insurance Company
- The Sheila Gamble Fund
- The Charles and Sara Goldberg Charitable Trust
- The Hartley Corporation
- IBM
- Parish of Christ Church
- The R.O.S.E. Fund
- The Marcia Rough and John Nietzsche Foundation
- The George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust
- The TJX Foundation

Thank You!

Thank You!

Thank You!

GROUPS

NEW AND FEATURED ACTIVITIES

MONDAY

- Al-Anon for Women (weekly).....6-7:30pm
- Healing Circle (weekly -on break until Jan 14,2002)....8-9:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors....7-8:45pm
(3rd Monday, Info: Daniela (617) 497-0911)
- *Lesbian Rap (weekly).....7:30-9pm
- *Volunteer Orientation (January 14).....6-7pm
- Women of Color Reading Circle (last meeting 12/10)..7-8:30pm
Info: Vanessa (617) 983-3928

TUESDAY

- *Bisexual Women's Rap (1st & 3rd Tuesdays).....7:30-9pm
Info: lucylizard@yahoo.com, or (617) 484-5964.
- Facilitated Mothers' Support Group (weekly)..... 10:30am-noon
[must contact group facilitator Diane beforehand
at (617) 876-2139 to insure group is right for you]
- *Support for Married Bisexual Women (2nd Tuesdays)7:30-9pm
- Women's Reading Group (4th Tuesdays)7:30-9:30pm
(not meeting in December)
- Writer's Circle (2nd Tuesdays).....7-9pm
Info: Cassandra at (617) 494-2695

WEDNESDAY

- Battered Women's Support Group (all Weds, except 3rd)..7-9pm
- *Holidaze Gathering (December 19).....6:30-8pm
- Liquid Poets (2nd & 4th Weds. On break until Jan 9th)...7-9pm
- Transitioning Out of the Patient Role6-7:15pm
(opens to new members on January 16)
- *Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN).....2-3:30pm
(1st & 3rd Weds.. Info: woman@braintrust.org)
- *Women Over 40 (2nd and 4th Wednesdays)7-8:30pm

THURSDAY

- *ABD to PhD: a Workshop for Women Having Trouble
Writing their Dissertations (December 13)7-9pm
- Healin' and Dealin' (January 10 & 24)6:30-8:30pm
- *Latinas Vecinas. Cenando con Nosotras (24 Enero)6-8pm
- Queer Jewish Women under 30 Gathering (weekly).....7-8pm
- Support and Strategies for Women with Language Based
Learning Disabilities (4th Thurs., begins Jan. 24)..6-7:30pm
- Thursday Night Gathering For Survivors
of Child Sexual Abuse (weekly)7:30-9:30pm
(Topic at 1st meeting of month)
- *Volunteer Orientation (December 6)6-7pm

FRIDAY

- Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (Dec. 21)6-7:30pm
(usually last Friday of month: Topic: Family Relationships)
- *Survivors of Incest Anonymous (SIA) (weekly).....6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- *Coming Out Discussion for Women of all Ages 11am-1pm
(Dec. 1, 1st Saturday of month, except holiday weekends)
- *Discover the Magic Within (January 12).....2-4pm
- *Options for Dealing with Personal Debt (January 26) 1-3pm
- *Yoga for Women of Color (2nd Saturdays)2:30-4pm
Info/to register: (617) 354-8807.

*** Wheelchair Accessible**

All events are free and open to women.

**The Women's Center is closed Dec. 24th & 25th, and
Jan. 1st & 22nd. We close at 6pm on Dec. 31st**

FREE CHILDCARE

**If given four days notice, we do our best to provide free
childcare for women attending groups and workshops.
Info/to request childcare: (617) 354-8807.**

COMING OUT EXPLORATION GROUP. New weekly group begins in February on Wednesdays, 7-9pm. Anna Tarquinio facilitates this group where members discuss any issues they have around coming out. For info, call Anna at (617) 547-6240 or (617) 287-6206(w).

DAYTIME BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP. This new group which begins early next year will focus on support for battered women. For info, call (617) 354-8807 after mid-December.

***DISCOVER THE MAGIC WITHIN.** Saturday, January 12, 2-4pm. Each participant will explore talents, gifts, and dreams she may not be aware of, and use them in creating a vision for her future. Free. Facilitated by Abby Yanow, Personal and Professional Coach. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and to pre-register.

HEALIN' AND DEALIN'. 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 6:30-8:30pm. A new support group for women survivors of non-sexual child abuse. The first two sessions on January 10 and 24 are open; the rest will be closed. Info: (617) 354-8807.

***HOLIDAZE GATHERING,** Wednesday, Dec. 19, 6:30-8pm. Come celebrate (or commiserate over) the coming of winter with its many holidays. Chat, play games, and eat yummy food. Children welcome too! Please bring a dish to share if you can. Info: (617) 354-8807

***LATINAS VECINAS: CENANDO CON NOSOTRAS.** Jueves, 24 de Enero del 2002, 6-8pm. La Iniciativa de Salud de la Mujer y el Niño/a del Instituto de Salud Latino Americana tiene el gusto de invitar a todas aquellas mujeres Latinas que viven en la región de Boston a compartir con nosotras una velada. Será una oportunidad de conocer a más mujeres Latinas hablar español, y degustar deliciosos platos Latinos. Info: Dora (Español), (617) 350-6900.

***NOTHING TOO HEAVY TO SHARE (NTHTS).** For survivors of severe sexual abuse, such as torture, forced isolation, severe neglect or sexual exploitation. Info/to join: Esther (617) 969-9347.

***OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH PERSONAL DEBT.** Saturday, January 26, 1-3pm. During this workshop, attorney Susan Grossberg will provide information to assist women in making educated decisions about debt management, including bankruptcy. Info: (617) 357-5555.

SUPPORT AND STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN WITH LANGUAGE BASED LEARNING DISABILITIES. 4th Thursday of each month beginning January 24, 6-7:30pm. Having a learning disability does not have to limit your options in education or career choice. Join with others to obtain support and learn about strategies for reaching your goals. Facilitated by Kai Long, Speech Therapist. Info: (617) 354-8807.

TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE PATIENT ROLE. A facilitated six-session group begins Wednesday, January 16, 6-7:15pm. For women who have been labeled "chronic patients" by the mental health system to get feedback, support, and suggestions about making changes to gain greater emotional and physical health. The first session is open to new members; the next five will be closed. Info: Diane at (781) 226-7097 [pager 10am to 8pm], or (617) 354-8807.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- *BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP - 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm**
Dec 18 Current holidays and how we are feeling this week
- INCEST RESOURCES FACILITATED DISCUSSION FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE -Last Fridays, 6-7:30pm**
Dec 21 Family Relationships Feb 22 Trust
Jan 25 Dissociation Mar 29 Power
- *LESBIAN RAP - Mondays, 7:30-9pm**
Dec 10 Best of 2001: Year in Review
17 Seasonal Celebration. Please bring a food you enjoy.
- WOMEN OF COLOR READING CIRCLE - Final Meeting, 7:30-9pm**
Monday, Dec10 Book: *Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor
- *WOMEN OVER 40 - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm**
Dec 12 Stress - dealing with guilt
26 Holiday Party - gifts to "give away"

The Year In Review

The Women's Center is bustling with activity.

This year our programming expansions produced many new faces and activities at the Center. As word spread about the Computer/Internet Access and Training Program, there was so much interest that we started a computer pass system and applied for and received several new computers, providing women with more access to this valuable resource. Thanks to our numerous computer training volunteers, many women are learning to use word processing and the Internet for the first time, and lots more are waiting for their turns!

During the past year, Charlene Gilbert, co-author of *Homecoming: The Story of African American Farmers*, showed her films and led discussions about them with large groups of women. The bi-monthly *Liquid Poets* meetings generated attendance so large that women sometimes overflowed the room. We introduced *SisterFriend*, *Are You Sure You Are Well?* workshops for women of color working on issues of internalized oppression. Other new groups included: the *Queer Jewish Women Under 30 Gathering*; the *Women of Color Financial Empowerment Workshop* series; a reading by Barbara Neely, author of the *Blanche on The Lam* mystery series; the *Women's Collage and Creativity Group*; and several stress management workshops.

We were fortunate to have a surge of talented and dynamic women participating in our Board and Staff this past year. In May, the Women's Center elected a new, hard-working board. In August, Lynn Murray enthusiastically took on the brand new position of Community Organizer. (As you read this, Lynn is knocking on doors, recruiting low-income women to organize for social and economic justice.)

During the year, we also developed a public policy program, which provided *Political Action Gatherings* for women to learn about public policy and legislative issues affecting women. Women immediately put their learning into action by writing to their legislators. Keep an eye out for upcoming events!

All of this – as well as our on-going programs, including support groups, the Resource Room, helpline, and library!

Always looking for new ways to support women, we plan to offer much more in the coming year. Starting in January, we will provide a daytime *Support Group for Battered Women*, a *Latina Women's Night*, a *Workshop for Women Dealing with Personal Debt*, and a support group for women survivors of non-sexual child abuse entitled *Healin' & Dealin'*.

As these groups take off and the Community Organizing Project agitates, you can expect great things to continue to happen at the Women's Center.

~ Mary Quinn

The Women's Center celebrates
our 30th Birthday in 2002!

30
YEARS

If you are interested in being on the 30th Anniversary Committee to plan the event, your diverse talents are greatly needed.

Please contact Mary at (617) 354-6394 for more information.

Thanks Jim & Germaine!

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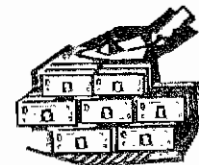
The Women's Center wants to extend a special thank you to Germaine Wong & Jim Forsythe of SBHN (Solutions: Business, Home, Network) for their invaluable assistance with our Computer Access Program. They networked our computers, repaired crashed hard drives, fixed pesky bugs in programs, and secured free replacement parts. In addition, they've donated four spiffy computers to us. THANKS GERMAINE & JIM!!! Our computer program couldn't have survived and thrived without you. If any of you want to hire these fine folks, check out their website at www.sbhn.net or call them at (617) 969-4841.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Thursday, DECEMBER 6, 6-7pm or
Monday, JANUARY 14, 6-7pm

Come learn about the Women's Center and all of our fabulous volunteer opportunities.

Call (617) 354-8807 to reserve a space.



Support The
Women's
Center

By

*Honoring a Friend
or Loved One
with a Gift to the
Women's Center*

ARE YOU A LOW-INCOME WOMAN
WITHOUT INSURANCE, BUT IN NEED
OF A THERAPIST?

OR

ARE YOU A THERAPIST LOOKING
FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO
VOLUNTEER?

**Call the Women's Counseling And
Resource Center at (617) 492-8568**

We may have what you need.

"Ohhh, won't he be proud of me!!! He won't believe his eyes." Vinnett chuckled with delight as she clicked her mouse to send her very first email to her grandson in Atlanta. We had just spent an hour discovering how to use a mouse, the keyboard, and to create an email account.

Vinnett is one of over thirty women who have benefitted from The Women's Center's *free* Computer Buddy program since May. Computer and internet skills are increasingly essential in today's society but many women are either too terrified

to sign up for a class or simply can't afford one.

Our computer buddy program matches volunteers with women in need of training.

As a computer volunteer you would meet with a woman once or twice a week for about an hour. The goal is to provide information in a fun, friendly, and patient atmosphere. You needn't be a wiz with computers, simply comfortable



with the internet, and the basics of Microsoft Word and Windows 98. Betty Koza, a current computer volunteer, raves that, "The students are always so appreciative and I get a great sense of accomplishment for doing something that I truly enjoy."

We need you! We desperately need women available during the daytime and Saturday. We need both English and Spanish speaking volunteers. Please email Heather at hls4@aol.com or call 617 354-8807 to get an application.

~ Heather Searles

Options for Dealing with Mounting Personal Debt

Around this time of year, most of us sit down to pay our bills and cringe at the charges mounting from the holiday cheer we have spread over the past couple months. And, for some of us, comes the realization that the debt is expanding beyond our capacity to stay on top of it. With most individuals living paycheck to paycheck, an unexpected expense or temporary job loss can be enough to tip the balance. Then finance charges, high interest rates, and late fees can cause debt to spiral out of control.

There are several options for bringing debt back under control. Homeowners can fold the high interest credit card

debt into a low interest home equity line. Individuals can negotiate forgiveness of credit card debt in exchange for a lump sum payment of some percentage, sometimes as low as 50% of the outstanding balance. Alternatively, consumer credit counseling agencies can offer affordable repayment plans which include negotiating lower interest rates on your credit card accounts. Bankruptcy is also available as a helpful tool to get out from under mounting debt and secure a fresh financial start.

My law practice specializes in helping individuals, who are otherwise

unable to manage their debt, choose among bankruptcy options, navigate through the bankruptcy process, and learn how to rebuild credit and make the most of their fresh start.

Come to the workshop "Options for Dealing with Mounting Personal Debt" on Saturday, January 26, 1-3pm, at the Women's Center. I will discuss the benefits and disadvantages of various methods of dealing with debt, describe the bankruptcy process itself, and look at the effects of these on your credit. I look forward to seeing you there and answering your questions.

~Susan Grossberg, Attorney at Law



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 _____

If you'd prefer to be taken off of our mailing list, please check the following

box and return to the Women's Center. (Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA 02139)

Thank You !