



Happy 40th Anniversary!

ON OUR WAY

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 354-8807 www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

Spring 2011

WE MARCH ON

Dear Friends of the Women's Center,

It's time to celebrate! The Women's Center turns 40 this year, and we are definitely in a festive mood, proud of what the Center has accomplished in this time, hopeful for our future, and, yes, a little nostalgic about our past. The March screening of the incredible film "Left on Pearl" was inspiring to the entire sold-out crowd at the Brattle Theater. It was a vivid reminder of the Center's origins in the struggle for social justice and its dramatic beginning as a protest march from Boston to Cambridge, culminating in the audacious act of taking over a Harvard building. I can't remember when I've been so moved or energized. If you're unfamiliar with our amazing story and the climate of the times, please check out the Our History link on our website, www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

As you know, the Women's Center is not a high-profile organization, even by non-profit standards. The Women's Center is here in order to help women and to be a space where women can support and empower each other. The Center does this day after day, year after year, quietly changing women's lives and prospects for the better. Hundreds of volunteers work with Ming, our Center Coordinator, to keep it running.

We don't receive huge grants from foundations and corporations or any state or federal funding. Much of the money we use to operate comes from friends, supporters, and community members like you, who know the value of the Center and want to ensure that it continues to strengthen women through these hard times and those to come.

Picture all the women whose lives the Center has touched over the last forty years, walking together – what a march that would be! What a powerful river of women would wind through the streets of Cambridge! In this fortieth anniversary year, we ask that you stand together with us in spirit – share your memories with us, stop by for a visit, attend the celebration evening on October 1st – and please give as generously as you can to help the Center keep doing what it does best.

The Women's Center's role in women's history is undeniable, but our work is far from done. Let's build on our forty-year legacy together.

In sisterhood and solidarity,
Laura Cherry

Women's Center Board of Trustees

Computer Tutoring /Training Volunteers Needed

Share your computer savvy during computer lab drop-in hours and by arrangement. Women usually need help with basic computer skills, such as using email and the Internet, understanding how to organize documents or navigate the operating system, MS Office applications, social networking sites, and Craigslist.

We are especially looking for someone to be here 6-8pm one night a week, or every other week, but also need daytime volunteers (weekdays or Saturdays). Please call Ming at 617-354-6394 x17 or go to our website to download the volunteer application: <http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org/getinvolved/volunteer.html>. Then email it to Ming at ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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WISH LIST

- Gift certificates for Target, Tags, Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores, Supermarkets, Home Depot, etc.
- Printer & copier paper
- Garden Hose
- Postage Stamps
- Toner cartridges HP 05A (CE 505A) for computer labs
- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, honey, cream, milk, butter
- USB sticks/flash drives
- Headphones (for computer use)
- Good flat monitors 17" or larger
- Non-scented liquid hand and dish soap
- Food containers, food storage bags
- Large kitchen trash bags (13 gal)
- Paper towels and toilet paper
- Mailing labels (30/p, eg: Avery 5160)

**March 6, 1971 — March 6, 2011
40 Years of Celebrating Women**

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

Website:

www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

**What's up at the Women's
Center?**

**Check out our monthly calendar
on the website.**

Email:

info@cambridgewomenscenter.org

Hours:

Monday-Friday: 10am-8pm

Saturday: 10am-3pm

**We are closed on major
holidays.**

Helpline: (617) 354-8807

Business line: (617) 354-6394

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 a wealth of free programming.

All donations are tax-deductible.

For further information about various volunteer opportunities or to offer in-kind donations, contact Ming,

Women's Center Coordinator:

ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org

(617) 354-6394

40 years ago, at the end of an International Women's Day march, hundreds of women entered and took over a Harvard-owned building, proclaiming it a women's center. They occupied the building for 10 days. The remarkable action was captured in the documentary film "*Left on Pearl*," which was screened at the Brattle Theater on March 6, 2011, the fortieth anniversary of the take-over.

Before the film screening, the Women's Center honored our dramatic beginning with our own march from the Women's Center to the Brattle Theater, taking our first step(s) in celebrating our fortieth year! The marchers included many women, supportive men, Lila, the daughter of Laura Cherry, a Board member, Laura, and all the other Board members: co-chairs Judy Norris and Susan Noonan-Forster, Latanya Duncan, and Nancy Horwitz. Other marchers included Ming Chang, Center Coordinator, Elaine Westerlund, Incest Resources' co-founder and volunteer fundraiser for the Center, and volunteers Ann Lynch and Sarah Scammell. Sarah and Ann created the posters we carried as we walked up Massachusetts Avenue and Brattle Street to the Brattle Theater.

We then watched the film! "*Left on Pearl*" celebrates the women who courageously took over 888 Memorial Drive. It is a story of women finding themselves, discovering their own power and strength, and taking personal risks to establish a place for women to support each other and work together to create a more equitable society. And here we are now – forty years later – the longest continuously running Women's Center in the United States! The founders' legacy lives on as we work to maintain and enhance an empowering, supportive space where all women can find resources, community, and encouragement and where women work together for social and economic justice. As throughout our history, we learn as we go - making mistakes, making waves, finding our way. There are many ways you can be part of the unfolding story - your involvement is not just welcome, but necessary!

The celebration of the Women's Center's 40th anniversary continues. We invite you to join us on October 1, 2011 at First Church, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge at 7:00 PM for an evening of inspiration, entertainment, and fun.



Boston Slut Walk

How do you tell your mom you're going to an event called the Boston Slut Walk? I wanted to tell her because my picture was taken. Maybe some of the photographers work for the media. Maybe my mother will see my picture in the newspaper. So I should tell her first. But how?

This march advocated the right of women to be safe, no matter what we're doing, no matter how we're dressed. I feel passionate about this. We all deserve to be safe from sexual assault, whatever our life choices are. So I knew I wanted to be involved.

There were more than 200 participants (including several Women's Center volunteers), creative signs, meaningful slogans, fantastic energy, inspiring speakers, and dynamic workshops. I was so proud to be part of it! I loved going to an event that was not just political, but also fun. And at the same time, being out in public with women wearing "provocative outfits" reminded me of how cautious I am of my safety as a woman in the city, especially when walking late at night

So, what did I say? I said "Mom, I was at this exciting event I want to tell you about to promote rape awareness. It was called the... Boston Slut Walk." She paused, then responded, "Good, sweetie. That's important." Sigh of relief. For more information, visit these links. The first is to a video of the keynote by Jaclyn Friedman. It is a hard look at why and how we should reclaim the word "slut" and includes explicit language. The second link shows pictures of the protest: images that capture what it was like to be at the event as well as its playful spirit.

www.fistwavingfeminism.tumblr.com/post/5299070120/jaclyn-friedman-at-slut-walk-boston
and www.flickr.com/photos/31167233@N08/sets/72157626545202061/

~Honey

How Will You Live Now?

Survivor Theatre Project Spring Tour

Survivor Theatre Project recently toured its performance, "Memories of Trees," calling on survivors and allies to break the silence around sexual violence in their daily lives. "Memories of Trees" is a multimedia play about surviving sexual violence, overcoming burden, and finding liberation. It is an intricately woven tempest, beautifully written and performed by survivors themselves. Recovery Learning Communities (RLC) in Quincy, Worcester and Framingham invited Survivor Theatre to perform the piece and facilitate community dialogues on sexual violence during the month of April. The RLC creates conditions that support recovery at both the individual and community level through trauma-sensitive peer supports and the development of a regional network. Performances at the RLC brought survivors in the audience to talk openly about their abuse, and allies to reflect on new understandings of sexual violence and what it must be like to be a survivor. The final line of the play, "How will you live now?" places an undeniable challenge, and hope for the future, at the feet of each audience member.

Survivor Theatre Project Touring Company will be traveling to Chicago to perform "Memories of Trees" and teach theatre workshops at the Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed Conference in July. They are actively seeking funding to support their trip. Contact Melissa at survivortheatreproject@gmail.com to help. More info on STP can be found at www.survivortheatreproject.com.

~Melissa



Cambridge Historical Commission Grant to the Women's Center

The Women's Center applied for an Institutional Preservation Grant from the Cambridge Historical Commission in June 2010. On July 9, 2010 we were notified that the Commission had granted our request for window restoration, installation of storm windows, and miscellaneous exterior repairs. The notification from the CHC required five contracts to be signed by the City Solicitor, the Executive Director of the Historical Commission, the City Manager, and three members of our Board of Trustees,

Before we could begin we were required to get and submit multiple bids on all the work, which then had to be reviewed and approved by the CHC. This took quite a bit of time, but we have finally been able to get started. We are now replacing deteriorated clapboard, trim, molding, soffits, and thresholds. After this work is done, we can begin staining the house and painting the trim. The staining/painting is not covered by the Historical Commission. We are very grateful to a generous anonymous donor who has pledged \$6,000 for this work, which will cover half the cost. If you would be willing to support this project, that would be AWESOME! Send in your contribution or email judy@cambridgewomenscenter.org

After the painting is done, we will use CHC funds to replace all existing storm windows with Tru Channel black Low E storm windows and to replace the back storm door. Next on the agenda is the restoration of the 33 original windows, which is the costliest of all the work that the grant will cover. Window Woman of New England will do all of this work at her workroom in Peabody. She will restore about eight windows at a time, and then reinstall the restored windows and take out the next eight. We are so excited to be able to make these important improvements, which will make a big difference in the building's energy efficiency, appearance, and long-term health, make it less drafty, and simplify opening and closing windows. Thank you Cambridge Historical Commission!

~Susan-Noonan Forster, Co-Chair, Board of Trustees

Art Groups

Painting. Beading. Sewing. Embroidery. Collage.

We have done a little bit of everything in the art groups over the past year. The Women's Center has free art groups that are open to anyone. No experience is necessary to come. From 10 A.M. to 12 P.M. we have Beading (on Mondays), Painting and Drawing (on Tuesdays), and Sewing (on Wednesdays).

It has been a real pleasure helping organize the art groups. I have been amazed at how generous the community has been. We received donations of paints, watercolor paper and canvasses, sewing machines and fabrics. In addition, the Cambridge Arts Council awarded us a grant to buy some additional supplies.

I have loved being in the art groups because it is such an inspiring and supportive environment. Many women have come in with little or no experience painting, beading, or sewing. Everyone helps each other and provides moral support as we go on our creative adventures! Please come join us in any of the groups, if you are interested. It is a very welcoming environment!

~Liz, group facilitator



Before I found out about the Women's Center art groups my days were empty. I had nothing to look forward to. Now since I have been coming here, I feel that my life has some structure. The women here encourage each other with art. I now have a feeling of accomplishment. I had given up on beading and now with the group I have gained some momentum. The painting group encourages creativity and everyone is an artist. Some have painted for the first time and others come with experience. The sewing group is also very interesting because we make handbags out of cloth that look like they are store-bought. What a concept! Who would know that I have artistic ability. The groups are in a very relaxed atmosphere and last 2 hours which goes by very fast. Sometimes I stay a little longer if I want to finish a project I am working on. There is no pressure here and I enjoy the groups immensely.

~Rebecca

Health Group

Do you ever wonder how to increase your strength and energy? Come hear about ways to tap into your natural sources of energy and improve your strength and well-being. This support group is facilitated by Pat Maher, Nurse Practitioner, Cambridge Health Alliance. It is held every 4th Thursday of the month, 12:30-1:30PM, in the living room. Info: pmaher@challiance.org

Monthly Luncheon

The women's luncheon is a great time for people who frequent the center to get together and talk about issues that impact their lives, as well as to listen to the stories that have brought other women into this community. It is one of the rare times when many of us can put aside our demanding individualistic concerns, tune out noise from the outside world for a while, and partake of a communal event that facilitates open communication and empowerment. It is an important time for shared experience, because women in this community come from so many different kinds of backgrounds. We need a time when everyone can come and have a seat at the conference table. It is important that everyone gets a chance to let others in on who they are, where they come from, and where they want to take their lives. The sense of community created is wonderful, and the salads are not bad either.

~Lisa

On-Going Groups

- Battered Women's Support Group (Every Wednesday, 7-9pm, except the 3rd Wednesday)*
- Beading Group (every Monday, 10am-12pm)
- Drawing & Painting (every Tuesday, 10am-12pm)
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (every Tuesday, 2-4pm)*
- Incest Resources' Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (September through June, 3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm)
- Ladies, Let's Talk About It—Women's Narcotic Anonymous (NA) Meeting (Thursdays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Chat (1st and 2nd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Connection (3rd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Monthly Theatre Arts Workshops (one Saturday/month, 1:30-3pm)*
- Sewing Group (every Wednesday, 10am-12pm)
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. Peer led support group for the woman in a straight relationship struggling with her sexual orientation. For details please email kate.e.flynn@gmail.com*
- Board Meeting (monthly, call for dates, 5:30-7pm)
- Women & Media (Film Screenings on the 2nd and Discussions on the 4th Saturdays, 12:30-2pm)
- Writer's Circle (2nd Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm. No meetings in June, July, and August)

New Groups

- Health Group (4th Thursdays, 12:30-1:30pm)*
 - Luncheon at the Women's Center, 12-1:30pm (monthly) - check calendar on our website for dates*
 - Urban Mamasong Café (3rd Saturdays, 12-2:30pm)
 - Vocational Support Group (4th Saturdays, 11am-12pm)
- * Wheelchair accessible groups; other groups accessible by pre-arrangement

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

___ \$2,000 ___ \$1,000 ___ \$500 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ other \$ _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to The Women's Center.

___ My gift will be matched by my employer _____

___ My donation is in honor of: (name) _____

(address) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Checks payable to **The Women's Center**. Mail to: Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA 02139

If you'd prefer to be taken off our mailing list, please check this box and return this slip, or email us at info@cambridgewomenscenter.org. Thank you for your patience.

Spring 2011

Support the Women's Center Online!

Go to www.cambridgewomenscenter.org and click on "support us" and then "Donate Now."

You can also support the Center by using GOODSEARCH to search the Internet.

Go to www.goodsearch.com and select

"Cambridge Women's Center (Cambridge, MA) ID: 875340" as your charity destination.

Volunteer Corner

I was unsure of what to expect when I first walked into The Women's Center, but after the interview and the training, I learned how it is more than just a house for women to walk into Monday through Saturday. It is a place where women are able to share a general space to empower each other in their own ways. The helpline, which I was involved with the most, was a different space women could communicate through. Although I was only there for two hours out of my week, just being there seemed like a different world. I explicitly heard the troubles some women must endure, while realizing just how fortunate I am for having friends and family to go to for support. These women need someone to listen to them, and the helpline is a great resource for any woman to just express herself without judgment or criticism. Volunteering at the Center has taught me how to use these skills and also created an opportunity for me to interact with women from all walks of life.

~Lynn

Conflict Resolution

Although difficult to deal with at times, conflict is a common occurrence between and among people. It need not always be a negative—in fact, conflict can be very constructive. And it can be managed. Board member Nancy Horwitz, who also works as an Executive Coach and Human Resources Consultant, presented several recent workshops on this topic at the Women's Center. Participants included a mix of volunteers, community members, and first time Center visitors.

During these interactive workshops participants had an opportunity to reflect on their own perceptions and experiences with conflict and learn tools and strategies to better manage it. We learned that differences are often the driver of conflict—differences in perceptions about how we see a situation and differences in our backgrounds and experiences. A lack of understanding/empathy and dissimilar goals/expectations frequently make resolution difficult. Conflict can be destructive/negative when it creates dysfunctional behavior, when it polarizes groups, when it destroys morale. It can be constructive when it leads to open dialogue, when it builds cohesiveness, when it relieves tension. Among other things, we discussed different ways to respond to specific situations—and when/how to use each.

The participants walked away with a greater feeling of empowerment that they can, in fact, deal with conflict better—having learned multiple approaches to use rather than continuing the less effective patterns used in the past. Overwhelmingly positive feedback included: "I would absolutely recommend this workshop, as you really learn new skills to be able to better resolve issues" and "The open format/interactive style worked particularly well and allowed for a very full and rewarding workshop." For more information or to express interest in attending a future workshop, contact Ming at ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org.

~Nancy

Memories?

Do you have memories/stories about the Women's Center that you'd like to share??? We plan to have an area at the 40th Anniversary event for women to write anything they want about what the Women's Center means or has meant to them. Sometimes women let us know about a way the Women's Center impacted their lives when sending in a donation (for example, a woman who had a child because of the support of members of "Lesbians Choosing Children"), or they may just send in a note or letter. It's encouraging, heartwarming, and exciting, and to learn about some of the ways the Women's Center has impacted people's lives.

We'd love to have your story—if you have a chance, please email us at ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org or mail a note/letter to



Ming Chang
Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street
Cambridge MA 02139



Volunteer!



There are lots of great ways to volunteer at the Women's Center. Be a listening support on the helpline; facilitate a group, workshop, or training; do childcare for attending mothers; work on events; help with gardening; do painting, building repairs, and more.

Join us and put your talents to good use!

Please contact Ming at 617-354-6394 or

ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org

or go to

www.cambridgewomenscenter.org,

click on

"GET INVOLVED"

and then

"Volunteer"

Download and fill out a volunteer application!



40th Anniversary Event -- Saturday, October 1-- 7pm

Mark your calendars and spread the word – we'll be celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Women's Center on 10/1/11 at the First Church at 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, near Harvard Square. So many of us have had a hand in keeping the Women's Center going, so many others have benefitted from its existence – let's get together and enjoy! Hope YOU can come.

And if you would like to help make the evening a big success, that would be fantastic!

- ▶ Help with the Program Booklet in various ways:
 - Lay-out and design
 - Seek out ads (local businesses, organizations, people)
- ▶ Create event poster and flier
- ▶ Contact Media (send Press Releases, Public Service Announcements, etc.)
- ▶ Work on a timeline/display/retrospective of our 40 year history
- ▶ Request or Donate Free Stuff:
 - Donations for a Silent Auction
 - Food and/or drink (beer/wine/soda/juice) for the event
- ▶ Decorate/prepare the space (early evening on Saturday, October 1):
 - Set up food and drink areas and a table and chairs for accepting & selling tickets
 - Set up Silent Auction (items, descriptions, bidding sheets for each)
 - Create signage (prices for food, drinks; acknowledgement of food/drink donors; etc.)
 - Hang a huge sheet on a wall for people to write whatever about the Women's Center
- ▶ Do childcare, if needed, at the event
- ▶ Something else you think of!

Please contact [Ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org) or 617-354-6394 x13 to get the ball rolling.

If you can make a commitment, please let us know now! **THANKS!**

Thank You, Blue State Coffee!

The Women's Center has been selected as one of the local non-profits Blue State coffee shop supported the last 2 quarters!

Check out their store at 957 Commonwealth Ave, Boston (near Boston University)

