



# ON OUR WAY

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

Spring 2012

## Making a Difference Together

Dear Friends,

For over forty years, the Women's Center has been a place where women from all backgrounds have come together to find community, discover hope, and experience healing. We have been able to keep the doors open to our 138 year old Victorian house only through the charitable support of people like you—people who believe in our goal of women's rights and empowerment. The ripple effect of this support has a profound impact on women of the Greater Boston area that in turn strengthens our communities. We'd like to thank you for your commitment to such a worthy endeavor and ask you to help us continue to reach the many women who are in such great need of our programs and services.

In the words of Sarah, a volunteer at the Center, "The Women's Center is about women helping women. Making a human connection. Everything on the outside falls away: race, ethnicity, status, sexual orientation, background, experience, intelligence, income level, material wealth. What is left are women interacting with other women, supporting each other, learning and experiencing together. It is about giving and receiving resources, comfort, understanding, acknowledgement, space. It's about a cup of hot coffee, a place to rest, a library full of books, a computer, somewhere that feels like a home, a family, a community. It's about acceptance. It's genuine and it is complete."

Sarah is one of over 100 volunteers who keep the Center thriving. The Women's Center has been a haven for thousands of women struggling to deal with homelessness, domestic violence, sexual abuse, poverty, discrimination, social isolation, and more. As the new fundraiser for the Women's Center, I am grateful and humbled to be working for such a groundbreaking organization. I've already met many inspiring and strong women who are supportive and encouraging in ways that foster growth and learning. I'm becoming more familiar with the many offerings of the Women's Center and am amazed that such a small place can house such a wide array of much needed support groups, educational workshops, and creative art programs. You can help ensure that we are able to continue to offer these services to deserving women by donating to us today.

I had the chance to sit down with Elaine Westerlund, Director of Incest Resources and former volunteer fundraiser for the Center. I was truly impressed by her commitment to her work and her belief in her survivor discussion group's ability to transform the lives of those who attend. I'm honored to be taking Elaine's seat next to Judy Norris, Board member and volunteer at the Center for over 39 years. Judy has already begun to impress upon me her wisdom and her gratifying experience of being a part of the Women's Center since its founding. I find myself surrounded by people with a common vision of celebrating how far we have come and taking stock of where we want to go—and we can only make those strides forward with your generous support. Please, give with your hearts and provide the opportunity for women to courageously confront their challenges and overcome their difficulties. We can't do this without you!

~Cynthia

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Left for us in the Children's Room by the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (6-8 year old) Brownies

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

**Website:**

[www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org)

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

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

**Email:**

[info@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto: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**

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**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](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org)

(617) 354-6394

**Welcome Cynthia!**

A warm welcome to Cynthia McCarty, who has just come aboard as our new part-time fundraiser! Cynthia has done volunteer work for Stop the Silence, a non-profit focused on the prevention and treatment of Child Abuse, United Way, and Bristol Women's Homeless Shelter in Waltham, where she designed and secured a grant to begin an arts program. Her work experience includes the Komen National Race for the Cure® and Big Brothers Big Sisters. She has experience with all aspects of the grant application process, event planning, fundraising from individuals, and volunteer management. She brings many skills, a strong commitment to women's empowerment, and great enthusiasm. Welcome, Cynthia!

**Hello from Cynthia**

I recently joined the Women's Center as the new part-time Fundraiser, and I've been warmly welcomed by the diverse and inspiring community. I'm eager and excited to be a part of a movement that works to empower women through a vast array of integral programs and services. I'm passionate about women's rights and I believe deeply that women can transform their lives through community, creativity, and courageousness. I'm so thankful for the support and direction of Judy Norris, who has been guiding me through the busy environment of the fundraising office. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to learn and grow in my role in the coming months, and I'm grateful for the chance to meet so many of you.

**Kudos to Judy!**

We are very pleased to announce that the Women's Center's Jill-of-all trades, Judy Norris, received the Beverly Benner Cassara Award in 2011! This award is presented, from time-to-time, to a special senior volunteer who embodies Beverly Cassara's unique and long-term commitment to the ideals of productive aging, lifelong learning, and the understanding that volunteering is an enduring resource for the entire community. One of the founders of the Women's Center, Judy has volunteered at the Center in every capacity imaginable for over 40 years! It was especially meaningful to have the award presented by longstanding friend and supporter of the Women's Center, Bob Hurlbut, Executive Director of the Cambridge Community Foundation, and Co-Founder & Chair of the Cambridge Senior Volunteer Clearinghouse. Our heartfelt thanks to Bob and the CSVC for recognizing and honoring Judy with this well-deserved community service award!

~Elaine

**Board of Trustees Expansion**

Interested in helping the Women's Center move forward and meet challenges that lie ahead? The Board of Trustees is responsible for the organization's vision, goal-setting, oversight, finances, policies, and personnel issues. Members attend monthly meetings and take or share responsibility for critical tasks, such as arranging building maintenance and restoration, fundraising, event planning, conducting hirings, and oversight of tax filings. We strive to uphold the Women's Center's mission, which is:

- To provide women with the resources and support they need to deal with domestic violence, sexual abuse, racism, poverty, discrimination, social isolation, and degradation
- To challenge and change attitudes, actions, and institutions that subjugate women

If you value the Center, have time and energy to contribute, and might be interested in joining, please write to tell us a little about why you might like to join, etc. Please write to: [board@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:board@cambridgewomenscenter.org) or Board of Trustees, Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA 02139.

## Activists On Stage

The Survivor Theatre Project extended its outreach in 2011, bringing empowerment through the arts to survivors of sexual abuse in Western Massachusetts! A Northampton-based group of survivors, facilitated by Rythea Lee, developed a compelling original play about attempting to heal from sexual violence in the context of the very culture that encourages it. An inspiring series of sincere, sarcastic, and soulful autobiographical vignettes, *The World We Live In Is Not The World We Live In* made its debut at the Wildlife Sanctuary Studio in Florence, MA in November of 2011. A 2012 tour is in the planning stages.

Also during 2011, the third Cambridge-based survivor group, facilitated by project founder and director, Melissa Penley, created *The Sound of Today*, a powerful original collection of poetry, story, music, and movement, which debuted at the Cambridge Community Center in November. This bold and dramatic piece is now being expanded in anticipation of a 2013 tour.

This past year additionally included a tour of *The Memories of Trees*, a moving work created in 2010 by the second Cambridge-based survivor group, which Melissa also facilitated. In July of 2011 the group performed at the International Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference in Chicago! We congratulate them on the honor of being selected and the success of their trip, as well as raising the funds to get there!

This year the Survivor Theatre Project has been and will continue to offer a different one-day workshop at the Women's Center each month. In the fall, an opportunity for survivors to participate in a three-session theatre and music workshop will be announced. In addition, an eight-week extended theatre workshop funded by the Northampton Arts Council, V-Day Ashfield, and individual donors will be taking place in Western Massachusetts. Extended theatre workshops at the Women's Center have been generously funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Cambridge Arts Council for two years running.

The Survivor Theatre Project is now seeking funding for their upcoming season. If you have funding leads or wish to contribute, please go to [www.survivortheatreproject.com](http://www.survivortheatreproject.com) or write to [survivortheatreproject@gmail.com](mailto:survivortheatreproject@gmail.com).

~Elaine Westerlund

## HERSTORY Quilt

As part of Women's History month, the women of the Women's Center in Cambridge designed and created this quilt as a way of sharing our stories. Women designed quilt squares in response to two prompts: "What is your secret?" (on green fabric) and "What is your strength?" (on pink fabric). By sewing the squares together into a quilt, this project serves as a reminder that our individual stories connect to each other to create a larger sense of the challenges we face, how we are empowered, and who we are as women today.

~Sarah



A section of the quilt.

The Women's Center is looking for  
**a volunteer bookkeeper.**

If you are interested in contributing your talent to  
this wonderful community,  
please contact Ming, Center Coordinator,  
at 617-354-6394 or via email—  
[ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org)

How does our garden grow? Will the sunflowers and cosmos seeds the Girl Scout Daisies started in the Children's Room grow and bloom? Any chances seed planted carefully in free compost from the Cambridge Recycling Center will give us parsley, basil, zinnias, and nasturtiums? Will we actually get some eggplants and butternut squash from two donated plants? Or will bugs and slugs do them in?

Each year the garden is an adventure, with a different cast of caretakers. To help out, a little or a lot, contact [judy@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:judy@cambridgewomenscenter.org) or 617-354-6394.

## **New Group: ButchBoi Life**

ButchBoi Life is a social group whose mission is to bring masculine of center identified queer women together. The founders of ButchBoi Life – Alyssa Green and Bren Cole - found that masculine identified women are often struggling for visibility in the LGBTQ community, and set out to change that. ButchBoi Life provides a safe space for all to discuss the issues we face, to socialize, and to find others we can relate to.

Meetings are held every second and fourth Tuesday from 6:00-7:30 PM in the living room of the Women's Center. ButchBoi Life also organizes group outings to local venues. All masculine women are welcome to join the fun and make some new friends – meeting attendance is not required to attend events.

ButchBoi Life strives to maintain a safe space where all opinions and ideas are respected. We welcome individuals from all races, backgrounds, and masculine of center identities.

## **New: Yoga Class**

Come and enjoy the innumerable benefits of yoga Tuesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at the Women's Center starting June 12. Practicing yoga not only promotes greater endurance, strength, and flexibility but also has shown to improve self-esteem and concentration and helps you to relax and better handle stress.

The instructor, Erin Colling, is a certified yoga teacher with experience practicing and teaching a wide range of yoga styles to students of all levels and abilities. By drawing on a style of Hatha yoga that integrates alignment of posture, attention to breathing, and flowing movement, she will teach you the basics of breathing, standing and seated poses, and sun salutations, and provide you with the tools you need for a successful and supportive yoga practice.

Erin pays great attention to the individual needs of her students, and is flexible in her approach to accommodate different experience levels, body types, degrees of flexibility and strength, and health issues. All necessary props will be provided and mats are available upon request. Space is limited, so please contact Erin ([erin.yogi@gmail.com](mailto:erin.yogi@gmail.com)) or call the Women's Center (617-354-8807) for reservations.

Incest Resources' Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse will be on break during July and August, but the popular group will be returning for yet another series in September. Meetings will be on the 3rd Fridays of the month from 6:00-7:30pm. Upcoming dates and topics will be: September 21, Breaking the Silence; October 19, Mother-Longing/Letting Go; November 16, Anger and Forgiveness; December 21, Self-Acceptance. For more information go to [IncestResourcesInc.org](http://IncestResourcesInc.org)

## **New Group for Women in Recovery**

Please join other women in recovery from addiction for a new group; *Who am I in my sober life?* This is a goal-making support group for women in recovery. The group will have an emphasis on finding out what we like and who we are as sober people. We will also focus on self-care in sobriety. The group will be meeting on Wednesday nights 6-7:30pm, starting Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. This is a dry support group. If you are interested please do not hesitate to email Lisa for more information- [lisa.coppola36@go.cambridgecollege.edu](mailto:lisa.coppola36@go.cambridgecollege.edu)

## **New Group: Songs of Empowerment for Women**

Do you like to sing? Are you interested in using your voice to express yourself? Would you like to experience the exhilaration just as the women marching to take over a Harvard building as the beginning of the Women's Center in 1971? Then come to this singing group where you don't need to worry about your voice and just show up and sing for the pure joy of it!!!

### **On-Going Groups**

- ♦ Battered Women's Support Group (every Wednesday, 7-8:30pm, except the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month)\*
- ♦ Beading Group (every Monday, 10am-12pm)
- ♦ ButchBoi Life (2nd Tue of the month, 6-7:30pm)\*
- ♦ Drawing & Painting (every Tuesday, 10am-12pm)
- ♦ Divorce Support Group (every Tuesday, 3-4pm)
- ♦ Drop-In Computer Support for Women (Mondays and Tuesdays, 2-4pm, and Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6-8pm)
- ♦ Grief Support Group (every Thu, 1-2pm)
- ♦ Healing Through Art (every Wed, 6:30-8:30pm)
- ♦ Incest Resources' Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, 6-7:30pm, September through June)
- ♦ Ladies, Let's Talk About It—Women's Narcotic Anonymous (NA) Meeting (Thursdays, 6:30-8pm)\*
- ♦ Lesbian Conversation (1<sup>st</sup> Fridays, 6:30-8pm)\*
- ♦ Lesbian Chat (2<sup>nd</sup> Fridays, 6:30-8pm)\*
- ♦ Lesbian Connection (3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, 6:30-8pm)\*
- ♦ Luncheon at the Women's Center, noon-1pm, monthly
- ♦ Monthly Theatre Workshops (one Sat./month, 1-3pm)\*
- ♦ One-on-One with Nurse Pat (4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, 1:30-1:30pm)\*
- ♦ 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](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com)\*
- ♦ Trauma Support Group (every Tuesday, 1:30-3pm)
- ♦ Board Meeting (monthly, call for dates, 5:30-7pm)
- ♦ Women & Media (Film Screenings, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat, 12:30-2pm)\*

### **New Groups**

- ♦ Anger Management Group (every Thu, 2-3pm)
- ♦ Goals in Recovery (every Wed, 6-7:30pm)
- ♦ Songs of Empowerment for Women (every Sat, 1-3pm, starting on 6/9)
- ♦ Yoga Class (every Tue, 6:30-8pm, starting 6/12)

\* Wheelchair accessible groups; other groups accessible by pre-arrangement



**City HeArt Art Show and Sale  
Saturday April 14, 2012 at Old South Church, Copley Square**

City Heart 2012 was an art show and sale representing 40 plus artists from eight different shelters and transitional programs in the Boston and Cambridge area. Setting storm in its second year, the annual event brought many sojourners together for a vibrant day of inspiration, teamwork, and sacrifice.

Unlike the typical competitive art scene, City Heart artists came together and found great meaning in giving, as well as receiving support and encouragement. Many of the artists surprisingly discovered another reason to see worth and dignity within oneself.

Art is a powerful bridge through which, as one artist put it "the human soul is found." Each volunteer, shelter staff member, art director, and artist, together, presented an art show of excellence, beauty, and truth. The Women's Center and many women artists from the Center were very proud to be a part of this amazing event.

~Heidi

**Traveling Quilts**

Several of the art quilts created by the Survivor Quilt Project were exhibited in Bulgaria in December of 2011 at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia! Survivor Quilt Project founder and director, Michelle Harris, spent the fall semester in Bulgaria and organized the quilt exhibit in collaboration with Professor Alexandra Ivanova. During the month-long exhibit, Michelle also presented a workshop at the University for Bulgarian professionals and art therapy students on the use of art therapy for trauma recovery. The types of art therapy that would be appropriate in Bulgaria were discussed, including approaches with orphans and disabled children who are now being de-institutionalized by mandate.

The international outreach and exposure are very exciting for everyone connected with the Survivor Quilt Project! We commend Michelle for making these meaningful events happen and generating such enthusiastic interest and positive feedback.

We welcome Michelle back to the Women's Center and her Cambridge psychotherapy and art therapy practice, and we congratulate her on her new position in the Expressive Therapies Department at Lesley University as Associate Director of Field Training!

~Elaine Westerlund

**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](mailto:info@cambridgewomenscenter.org)

*Spring 2012*

**Support the Women's Center Online!**

Go to [www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org) and click on "Support Us" and then "Donate Now."  
 You will be contributing through "Network for Good"

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Use of our Women's Center has increased steadily since 2007. In 2011, there were 9,146 visits to the Women's \*  
 \* Center; helpline volunteers answered 4,594 calls; and attendance at groups, workshops, and trainings totaled \*  
 \* 2,887. As more women come to depend on the Center as their lifeline, your support is needed more than ever. We \*  
 \* simply could not provide our extensive array of free programs and services without your generosity. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

**WISH LIST**

- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, honey, cream, milk, butter
- Herbs for the garden
- 50-75' Garden hose
- Large garden watering can
- Can opener
- USB sticks/flash drives
- Printer & copier paper
- Postage stamps
- Garden chairs
- Folding chairs
- Headphones (for computer use)
- Good, flat monitors 17" or larger
- Pads of textured water color paper (20" x 15")
- Unscented hand and dish soap
- Food containers
- Food storage bags
- Kitchen trash bags (13 gallon)
- Paper towels and toilet paper
- Mailing labels (30/page, eg: Avery 5160)
- Gift certificates for Target, Tags, Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores, Supermarkets, Home Depot, etc.



**Find us on Facebook**

**Follow us on Twitter!**

The Women's Center is on the hottest social media! You can locate us by going to [www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org) and clicking on the facebook and twitter logos which will take you directly to our page!

**FACILITATE/START THE GROUP OF YOUR DREAMS!**

Most groups and workshops at the Women's Center happen because one woman feels a need for a group or wants to provide others with support or information on a special topic. We'd love to offer classes/workshops on financial literacy, applying for jobs, knitting/crocheting, and home repairs. If you have an idea, let us know! Please contact Ming at [ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org) or 617-354-6394 about starting a group, workshop, or training,

There are lots of other great ways to volunteer at the Women's Center. Be a listening support on the helpline; do childcare, do gardening, shovel snow, do painting/building repairs, run errands, and more. Join us, and put your talents to good use! Please contact [ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org) or 617-354-6394.