



# ON OUR WAY



Newsletter of the Women's Center

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## It's All Because of YOU—Tribute to Volunteers

The other day, a woman who is new to the Women's Center came to the monthly luncheon. As we were talking, she was delighted and astonished to learn that the Women's Center is the longest continuously running women's center in the country! Even though I know this already, somehow bringing up the fact struck me deeply.

Have you ever wondered how the Women's Center has been able to run continuously all these years? The answer is obvious, but that it could happen is astounding ~ it is thanks to the collective effort and team work of countless volunteers pouring their hearts and souls into sharing their time and wisdom that the Women's Center has been able to be here through thick and thin, for all women and their children for more than forty years.

Volunteers open and close the Center six days a week and keep up with the day-to-day operations, such as answering the helpline, maintaining a friendly and supportive atmosphere, organizing and keeping the space clean and tidy, stocking supplies, watering the plants, making sure the computers are up and running, teaching classes, facilitating support groups,

providing childcare, baking and cooking, telling people about the Center, and helping prepare this newsletter for bulk mailing.

They are also often behind the scenes serving on the Board of Trustees, doing fundraising, bookkeeping, organizing the library, representing the Center by tabling at community events, updating the website, putting together resource lists, and much more.

I know some women at the Center don't like to be called a volunteer since they know what they do is what they think is important to do or what they feel they should do simply as a part of the community and giving back. I know some women would rather call themselves an activist or an organizer than a volunteer because they are acting out of their sense of purpose and their mission to elevate the status of women in society. I agree with all of them. Whatever we call these women, their selfless actions are amazing role models in this community!

I know I will never say often enough: THANK YOU!

~Ming

## The Women's Center—Breaking the Mold and Breaking Barriers

When I arrived at the Women's Center in early September, I didn't know what to expect. A Brandeis University undergrad, I had decided to be an intern at the Center as part of a Women's and Gender Studies course. Many of my friends had secured internships at organizations like REACH and Emerge, and as a result, I expected the Women's Center to be of a similar mold.

Every week, my peers and I met during class and shared stories about our respective internships. As I listened to my classmates share their experiences, I was struck by how unique the Women's Center is. While they talked about the hours of training they endured in preparation for their internships, I talked about the batch of chocolate chip peanut butter chunk cookies I made at the Center. While they discussed the professional psychologists they had had the pleasure of meeting, I described the inspiring conversation I once had with a homeless activist over dinner. While they explained that they had never met the President or Coordinator of their programs, I depicted the weekly one-on-one chats I looked forward to having in Ming's office. Is the Women's Center "better" than these other organizations? Not necessarily. But the Center's approach to fostering

relationships and sisterhood among women is incomparable, and I wouldn't have traded it for the world.

My time at the Center has taught me that there are virtually no differences between myself and the women I meet there. On the surface, we are certainly different; they are often older than me, sometimes by twenty years or more; they have been married, divorced, have owned homes, have been homeless; they have lived in the "real world" and gleaned insights about life that I will not learn for years to come. But our struggles and our passions are the same. We have endured life's trials and reveled in its beauties, and though our *experiences* have been different, our reactions and underlying emotions - the stuff that makes us human - are identical.

When I arrived at the Women's Center in September, I didn't know what to expect - but I know I did not expect to leave this place with the depth of compassion and love that I have today. The women have taught me more about myself than I ever could have learned alone. They have taught me that, underneath our races, social classes, and life experiences, we are all sisters deserving of respect and happiness.

~Hailey Magee

# Thank you!

- Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
- Alnylam US, Inc.
- Bay State Federal Savings Charitable Foundation
- Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
- Cambridge Arts Council (Art Collectives)
- Cambridge Community Foundation
- Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
- Cambridge Trust Company
- Charles Stark Draper Laboratory
- Clipper Ship Foundation
- East Cambridge Savings Bank
- Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
- Frederick E. Weber Charities Corporation
- George A. Ramlose Foundation, Inc.
- Google Matching Gifts Program
- Hurlbut Family Foundation
- John Hancock Matching Gifts Program
- Liberty Mutual Matching Gifts Program
- Marion Decrow Foundation
- Martin Fund at Boston Foundation
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Memorial Church, Harvard University
- Northampton Arts Council
- River Foundation
- Sheila Gamble Fund
- TD Charitable Foundation
- TJX Foundation

## My Second Home

There is this place that I go to that I would like to consider my second home: the Women's Center. I heard about the Women's Center from a friend. I went there for a group that takes place on Thursdays called "Let's talk about it." I really felt at home there. The volunteers are so kind as well as the women that go there. I feel so safe there and feel like I can be myself.

At the time I was looking for volunteer work. I knew I could go anywhere. However, when I went to the Women's Center for the first time, I knew right away that the house needed me and I needed it as well. I spoke with Ming, the coordinator that works there. I spoke with her about my situation. She was so caring and understanding about my needs. A few days later, I was volunteering.

I clean the bathrooms, sweep, mop, and tidy up the front and back of the house.

On Tuesdays there is an art group that I go too. Megan, who runs the group, puts together creative crafts that I look forward to doing, such as origami, collage, or sometimes we will just color or paint.

The Women's Center has been, and I hope will be, an interesting and significant part of my life for many years to come.

~Toni

## Beading Group

I have been coming to the Women's Center because it's a place you can call home and feel safe. I come to the Women's Center every week to run the beading group and I really enjoy coming to the group because I get to be around others who also love to do beading. And not only that I get to meet new and exciting people, I am getting to know them and talking, laughing and just having fun helping them and teaching them how to bead. Doing beading helps keep my mind occupied and it is relaxing. Knowing that my presence is appreciated I feel real good coming to the group.

Edith Watson

## Interview with April

April, age 30, is an intern from Cambridge College. "I'm a proud cancer survivor, published poet, and have a strong belief in the resiliency of the human spirit."

*What made you decide to facilitate this group?*

I thought it could be a tool to empower women by giving them a creative outlet for self-expression, self-discovery, and self-reflection.

*Why do you continue to facilitate this group.*

Because of the positive effects I've seen it have on the group members, who are more expressive and creative.

*Has the group encountered challenges and if so how were they dealt with?*

Surprisingly, there has not been much conflict. The group has created a level of safety and respect so women feel they can share deep thoughts in a variety of ways and know they will not be ridiculed or belittled. My only challenge is having materials planned for the group that allow them to stretch their imaginations and feel engaged.

*What does the Women's Center mean to you?*

To me, the Women's Center is a valuable resource for women who are looking for a place to belong, make positive connections, and find a pathway to personal growth and empowerment.

*What have you learned at the Women's Center?*

That all women are strong, talented, and imaginative in a variety of ways but do not always get an opportunity to show they are strong, talented, and imaginative. I think the Women's Center provides new opportunities for women who may have felt they had none.

*Is there anything else you would like to say?*

I would just like to thank all of the women who have come to the Creative Writing Workshop for opening their hearts and minds and sharing their talent and creativity with me ---- and with each other.

### Women's Center Hours:

Monday-Friday: 10am-8pm

Saturday: 10am-3pm

We are closed on major holidays.

## Healing is Possible

*Healing is possible, and we are not alone.* As a survivor of childhood incest, this message has been a life-changing gift I've received from my years in the Incest Resources' Discussion Group at the Women's Center. Monthly our group comes together to bear witness to each other's unique life stories and healing processes. I feel empowered by the courage displayed by this diverse group of women, and I am always amazed by the beauty and eloquence of the wisdom shared among the group. Together we speak the unspeakable; together we collectively reach forward toward richer, fuller lives

Incest Resources is truly a *rare* gift since the Women's Center is the only provider of free services available to survivors. Because of this, women travel from all across the region – from Western Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut - to find the resources it provides. Many of us in the group lack the financial means required for other private groups, and thus are tremendously grateful the Women's Center exists.

Seven years ago I traveled cross-country to Boston in search of healing and a new life. I have since found that healing and life, and it is among this extraordinary community.

~Stacy H.

## Battered Women's Support Group

The Wednesday night battered women's support group has given me the understanding support and insight that I need to go on with my life in a productive and positive manner, despite the personal circumstances which make it sometimes difficult. Besides getting support, I am also able to give support to other women. The interaction makes for a caring and nonjudgmental group.

Betsy, the facilitator, has the ability to address each woman's situation lovingly and with respect, in a manner in which a woman feels truly supported. During the course of the two years which I have been part of this group, I have witnessed a lot of healing and growth, and seen women change their lives in profound ways.

J.B.

### Incest Resources' Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, 6-7:30pm, September—June

#### Upcoming Dates and Topics:

December 21	Self-Acceptance
January 18	Interdependence/Codependence
February 15	Trauma and Reenactment
March 15	Trust and Safety
April 19	Intimacy
May 17	Sexuality
June 21	Moving Forward

## Winter Gathering~Community Talent Show

Tuesday, 12/18, 12-1pm, Come enjoy a holiday meal from Community Cooks and entertainment. And if you'd like to perform - sing, play an instrument, tell a joke or story, read a poem, whatever - please contact Ming at 617-354-6384 or [ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org)

### On-Going Groups

- Beading Group (every Monday, 10am-12pm)
- ButchBoi Life (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 6-7:30pm)\*
- Crochet/Knitting Group (every Thursday, 1-2pm)
- Drawing & Painting (every Tuesday, 10am-12pm)
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6-8pm)
- Incest Resources' Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Childhood 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)\* (not in Dec)
- Luncheon at the Women's Center, noon-1pm, monthly
- One-on-One with Nurse Pat (4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, 12:30-1:30pm)
- 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)\*
- Theatre Arts Workshops (one Saturday/month, 1-3pm)\*
- Trauma Support Group (Tuesdays, 1:30-3pm)
- Board Meeting (monthly, call for dates, 5:30-7pm)

### New Groups

- Creative Writing Workshop (Three Thursdays, 12/6, 13 and 20, 6-7pm)

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

**For complete monthly calendars, please go to our website at [www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org)**

If you are interested in starting and/or leading a group, please contact Ming at 617-354-6384 or [ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org)

## NEW GROUP STARTING

The Women's Emotional Empowerment Group is a support group open to women of all backgrounds, ages, and sexual orientations, whose mission is to empower women who have experienced emotional abuse or have had the feeling of being emotionally drained in relationships. Together we can inspire each other to positively move forward with our lives through healing dialogue, activities, and encouraging personal growth in all areas of our lives. Join us for our empowerment series in a safe atmosphere where we can express ourselves and help each other let go of painful emotions, regain confidence, and invite trusting and caring relationships in the future. For more info: Carole: [kbreevlife@gmail.com](mailto:kbreevlife@gmail.com)

# Wish List



- Coffee Maker
- Can opener
- Large Electric Crock Pot
- Food containers
- Food storage bags
- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, honey, cream, milk, butter
- Unscented hand and dish soap
- Paper towels and toilet paper
- Pads of textured water color paper (20" x 15")
- Good, flat monitors 17" or larger
- USB sticks/flash drives
- Headphones (for computer use)
- Printer & copier paper
- Mailing labels (30/page, eg: Avery 5160)
- Postage stamps
- Gift certificates for Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores, Supermarkets, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Harvest, Target,

## The Quilt Collection is Growing!

The Survivor Quilt Project, which has its home at the Women's Center, will be exhibiting its stunning collection of quilts, Speaking Truth to the Next Generation: An Incest Survivor Quilt Series, from February 14<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The exhibit will be part of Lesley University's February events to raise awareness about violence against girls and women. We are thrilled that the Lesley community is collaborating with faculty member Michelle Harris to create a new quilt for the exhibit, and we look forward to its unveiling! Founder of the Survivor Quilt Project, Michelle is an Art Therapist and a member of Incest Resources. Please don't miss this powerful, must-see exhibit!

~Elaine Westerlund

## Survivor Theatre Project presents The World We Live In Is Not The World We Live In



Healing your life from sexual violence within a culture that encourages it.

"I expected to feel outrage and grief, but I came away transformed by the wit, courage and solidarity of the performers." -Audience member, Northampton, MA

**Saturday December 15th 8pm**

Yoga Sanctuary, Thornes Marketplace  
150 Main Street, Northampton MA (3rd Floor)

**Sunday December 16th 2pm**

Cumington Community House  
33 Main Street, Cumington MA

Written & Performed by STP Touring Company / Directed by Rythea Lee

Tickets at the door only: \$10-\$20 Sliding Scale

(no one turned away for lack of funds)



[www.survivortheatreproject.com](http://www.survivortheatreproject.com)

## See the Vagina Monologues at Lesley!

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>, Lesley University undergraduate and graduate students will perform Eve Ensler's 'Vagina Monologues' and the Women's Center will receive some of the proceeds! Please come and celebrate the resilience of women - and the resilience of our very own Women's Center - at this moving and meaningful event!

~Elaine Westerlund

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

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

On the Women's Center website click on "Support Us" and then "Donate Now."  
You will be contributing through the non-profit "Network for Good"

**Or send a check to 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**

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

My donation is in honor of: (name) \_\_\_\_\_

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

My gift will be matched by my employer \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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All donations are tax deductible. The Women's Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit,  
tax-exempt organization, Federal I.D. #23-7131753

*Thank You!*