



The Women's Center

# ON OUR WAY

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

Spring 2004

## The Women's Center Springs Into Summer 2004

This spring, the Women's Center introduces a new atmosphere — celebrating the lives, victories, and voices of women.

As you enter the Center, you are greeted with music, the aroma of brewing coffee, and snacks. On the first floor, magazines, newspapers, and other publications are available for your perusal.

Upon arrival, you are offered a copy of the new *Women's Center Guide and Guidelines*, a pamphlet designed to assist you in accessing our programs and services. The guide provides a layout of the building, a description of each program, guidelines for utilizing the Center, our philosophy statement and mission.

The Women's Center is building a stronger sense of community and a celebratory community environment. As we broaden our constituency base, we are incorporating different cultures and styles of both healing and celebration. For example: Some women prefer quiet, uninterrupted space for healing. Others heal through laughter, lively

conversation and activism. We honor and provide space for both.

Our Resource Room has a new look. Thanks to a donation from Bose of Burlington, our resource and referral information now rests within two beautiful new cherry bookcases. In addition, an entire wall is designated to political issues affecting the lives of women. We encourage all to get involved and make a difference!

Soon, the Women's Center will begin holding community forums twice per year. The forums will provide an opportunity for women in the community to share their ideas and feedback with the Women's Center board and staff. Watch for an announcement in our monthly calendar.

In the Fall, we hope to begin a 40 hour, state certified training program for all of our Helpline volunteers. This new approach promises to enhance our Helpline services. It also will provide stronger professional development for our dedicated volunteers.

At a time when there are more

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attempts to restrict our rights—especially women's and immigrant's rights, the Women's Center stretches to meet the growing challenges. We continue providing a refuge of healing, laughter, and activism. The Center fosters critical thinking and, when necessary, dissent.

We welcome you to visit the Center and participate in the new and exciting changes to our programming. Together, we inspire one another in the pursuit of justice and celebration of all women

~Mary Quinn  
Executive Director

## WISH LIST



- "White Noise" machine
- Set of kitchen knives & storage block
- Dehumidifier
- Digital camera
- Desktop Computers: Pentium III or faster desktops, working mother boards & processor
- Monitors: 17" or larger
- Hard Drive: 10 GB of capacity or larger
- CD-ROM drives & CD burners
- HP inkjet toner cartridges (#45)
- Gift Certificate to Home Depot
- Closet organizing storage bins
- Office Supplies
- Printing/Copier Paper (white and colored)
- Subscriptions to magazines: *Z Magazine*, *Utne Reader*, *Bitch*, *Mother Jones*, *Parenting Magazine*, *Colorlines*, *Curve*, *Bust*, *Hip Mama*
- Magazine rack
- Dishwashing detergent
- Hand soap (liquid)
- Herbal tea, coffee, cookies, crackers, and sugar

## On Our Way

The newsletter of the Women's Center is published 3 times per year in *May, 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:

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

**Hours:**

**Monday-Thursday: 10am-10pm**

**Friday: 10am-8pm**

**Saturday: 11am-4pm**

**Helpline: (617) 354-8807**

## From the Desk of the Fundraiser

One afternoon at a local coffee shop, a woman came to my table and introduced herself as someone who had met me at the Women's Center. I remembered her immediately. She came to the Center a few months before desperate for emergency shelter and peer support. I happened to be the person staffing the Helpline and assisting women in the Center. I helped to set up a phone interview for her at a long-term shelter for women. I did not see her leave the Center that day, and wondered if she was able to obtain shelter.

Over coffee, she told me that she did get into shelter that day. She shared with me that when she came to the Women's Center for help, she had no where else to turn. Now, she has housing and attends a support group to heal from the trauma that she experienced. She thanked me for assisting her saying, "no one had ever cared enough to help me before."

Everyday, the Women's Center empowers women with life-changing assistance and support. When women connect with the Center, they obtain resources and services that foster healing and activism.

It is your support that makes this work possible. Join us this spring with a generous tax-deductible donation to the Women's Center. Your contribution makes a real difference in the lives of women.

~Nicole Marcotte

*Development Coordinator*

## Introducing Melissa Jean-Charles

Allow me the opportunity to introduce myself as the NEW volunteer coordinator for the Women's Center. I took on the position on April 26<sup>th</sup> and have been smiling since.

My walk into working with women began with the Association of Haitian Women of Boston (AFAB). At AFAB, I became a member of the Haitian Roundtable on Domestic Violence, which provides outreach, education, prevention, and crisis intervention of domestic violence in the Haitian Community.

I was attracted to the Women's Center because of its mission and dedication to providing women with the resources to emerge from trying times. Not only is the Women's Center is a testament of sisterhood and human love, but also a witness to the power we have as women. We live in a world where women are homeless, cannot get health care, are raped, beaten- exhausted from all that bombards them. It warms my soul to know that there is a place where women can come to heal. To quiet down after the emotional storms have passed and learn to harness their power as incredible beings.

Every day I come to work, I am overwhelmed with hope, pleasure, and pure joy. I am reminded of a quote by Margaret Mead saying, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This is what the Women's Center is all about: a small group of committed women, dedicated to making a change.

I look forward to being a voice, a force, a guide, and a friend here. I look forward to continuing my walk with the Women's Center.

~Melissa Jean-Charles  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

## Women's Counseling and Resource Center

Do you feel stuck in your life? Feeling troubled by circumstances of the past that you have not been able to resolve? Needing to find new strategies for coping?

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center (WCRC), a volunteer collective of well-trained psychotherapists, can help. We offer women who have no or low incomes an opportunity to receive excellent individual counseling or psychotherapy by well-trained psychotherapists with graduate degrees and years of experience helping women to understand themselves and their lives.

WCRC is located at the Women's Center. For more information, please call the WCRC at (617) 492-8568. You may leave a confidential message on our voicemail and a therapist will return your call as soon as possible within five to seven days.

~Women's Counseling and Resource Center

## Gaining Strength and Hope from the Battered Women's Support Group

The Women's Center's Battered Women's Support Group has been one of the most memorable and supportive groups that I have ever belonged to. It was extremely supportive and very helpful to me at the most difficult time in my life.

When I first attended this group back in 1999, I had been a victim of physical, emotional, and mental abuse. I appeared at my first meeting with bruises all over my body, very scared and intimidated by everything and everyone! It even makes me sad to remember that day again. It took two consistent solid years of my life to get myself back together again.

Now, I am a very stable, highly confident, strong woman. From the tools and support I gained at the Battered Women's Support Group, I am aware right away aware of when man is being abusive. Now, if I notice the slightest sign of abuse, which usually starts out as verbal and then escalates, I do not get involved in a relationship with that person. I will leave that relationship right away without hesitation. I keep up my protective shield to safeguard myself from getting hurt again.

I highly recommend the Center's Battered Women's Support Group to anyone who has ever encountered battering in their relationships. Because the group is small, every person has the opportunity share, ask questions, and learn from one another. The group facilitator is extremely encouraging. Her strength, courage, hope, and skills help battered women build other individual empowerment & strength for a much better future.

If you are experiencing abuse in your relationships, do not let a day pass without trying this group out for yourself. It's free, so what have you got to lose? I guarantee that you will truly benefit from it as I have!

~Theresa Chern

## The Women's Community Wants YOU!

When you join the Women's Center as a volunteer, you are plugged into a vibrant community of women. As a volunteer, you will

- Provide peer support to women in crisis
- Update critical resource information
- Develop your political analysis
- Connect to your own power!

Why wait any longer to get involved in what is sure to be an amazing experience? Our summer volunteer orientation begins June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. To sign up for the orientation or learn more about our volunteer opportunities, please contact Melissa at 617-354-6394 or

[Melissa@cambridgewomenscenter.org](mailto:Melissa@cambridgewomenscenter.org).

~Melissa Jean-Charles  
Volunteer Coordinator

## Honor Someone in your Life with a Gift to the Women's Center



**A donation to the Women's Center is the perfect gift for birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, or just to say thank you!**

Send a contribution to the Women's Center with a note giving us the name and address of the person you are honoring. We send your loved one a note telling them that you've made a gift in their name.

**GROUPS**

**Monday**

\*6-7:30pm ~ **Al-Anon for Women** (weekly)

\*7:30-9pm ~ **Lesbian Rap**, (weekly)

Topics: 6/7- *Sexuality and Religion*  
6/14 - *Women's Health*, 6/21- *Lesbians in the Media*, 6/28 - *Movie Night: "But I'm A Cheerleader!"*

7:30-9pm ~ **Lesbian Partners & Ex-partners of Incest Survivors**, 6/21.

**Tuesday**

7:30-9pm ~ **Bisexual Women's Rap**, 6/1 and 6/15

10:30am-12pm ~ **Parenting Support** (weekly), to join call Diane @ (617) 876-2139

\*7:30-9:30pm ~ **Support for Queer Married Women**, 6/8

7-9pm ~ **Writer's Circle**, 6/8  
info: Cassandra @ (617) 494-2695

**Wednesday**

7-9pm ~ **Battered Women's Support Group**, 6/2, 6/9, 6/23, & 6/30

\*6-8pm ~ **"Grand" Moms**, 6/9

7-9pm ~ **Liquid Poets**, 6/9 & 6/23  
Info: liquidwriters@hotmail.com

\*2-3:30pm ~ **Women Maximizing Abilities Now (WOMAN)**, [for women w/disabilities] 6/2 & 6/16

\*7-9pm ~ **Women's Center Annual Meeting**, 6/23



\* wheelchair accessible groups

**Thursday**

\*6:30-8:30pm ~ **Women of Action Open Mic**, 6/3 [Please call Lynn at (617) 308-7330 or (617) 354-6394 before attending.]

6:30-8:30pm ~ **Healing & Art for Trauma Survivors**, 6/10 & 6/24

7-8:30 ~ **Lesbian Buddhist Book Group**, 6/3 [Book: *The Beginner's Guide to Insight Meditation* by Arinna Weisman]

\*7-9pm ~ **30-50+ Multicultural Lesbian Rap**, 6/10

7:30-9:30pm ~ **Thursday Night Gathering of Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse** (weekly), Info: lilitlive@aol.com

**Friday**

6-7:30pm ~ **Incest Resources Facilitated Discussion for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**, 6/4

**Saturday**

\*11am-1pm ~ **Coming Out Discussion for Women of All Ages**, 6/5 & 6/19

\*11am-1pm ~ **Women of Action**, 6/12 & 6/26: *Campaign Meeting*, call Lynn before attending your first meeting (617) 308-7330 or (617) 354-6394.



**Note:** Watch for other Women's Center events and activities in our monthly calendars.

**New and Featured Activities**

**"Grand" Moms:** Join in conversation, laughing, resource sharing, and enjoying a meal. Let's support each other as we raise a second generation of kids. RSVP: (617) 354-8807. Call, so we have enough food and childcare.

**Healing and Art:** For Trauma Survivors. Tell the truth about the past, explore the present, create the future through artistic expression. No prior experience or skill needed. Info: (617) 354-8807

**Healing Circle:** Will not meet June — August. Resumes in September. Info: ashanti@intentionality.net.

**Nothing Too Heavy to Share (NTHTS):** For daytime meeting and evening meeting per survivors of extreme abuse One week—come to either or both. Info/Join: Esther (617) 354-8807.

**Mother/Child Art Classes:** For children 2-4 years of age with mom. Encourage and explore creative play. Learn about easy and affordable art projects for your home. Register at (617) 354-8807 or (617)283-8715.

**Women Center Annual Meeting:** Join the Women's Center Board and Staff in evaluating our accomplishments and planning for the coming year. Info: (617)354-8807

**That Takes Ovaries:** June 19-20, 26-27 at The Blacksmith House, Cambridge Center For Adult Education, 56 Brattle Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA. Saturdays at 8pm. Sundays 2:30pm & 7:30pm. Sliding scale contribution. Co-sponsored by the Women's Center.

## Section 8: A New Series on WomenSpeak

This spring, the Women's Center launches its two part series *Section 8: The Fight for Housing Justice in Cambridge* on its Cambridge Community Television program, *WomenSpeak*. This series explains the complicated and often misunderstood Federal Housing Voucher Program, Section 8. It also offers strategies and hope for navigating the world of expensive housing in light of budget cuts that impact low income communities.

In the first series (which aired May 12<sup>th</sup>), housing organizer, Mary Regan of Cambridge Eviction Free Zone, housing attorney Ellen Shacter of Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services and Cambridge tenant and community organizer Nancy Hall, discuss who is eligible for a Section 8, how to deal with discrimination when presenting a Section 8 voucher to a landlord, and whether or not the Section 8 program is secure enough to support those most in need.

Part Two of *Section 8* (which airs June 9<sup>th</sup>) focuses on the work of local grassroots organizations in the fight for more affordable housing in Cambridge as well protecting the services that exist currently for low income folks. We talk to tenants in public housing as well as tenants with Section 8 to learn first hand their experiences with various housing agencies and to exchange strategies for navigating the system. In addition, we highlight various campaigns that are in full swing in Cambridge so that viewers can plug in and join the struggle for housing justice.

In Cambridge alone, over 2,000 low-income families have Section 8. This program is the lifeline of security for those most vulnerable in our city. It is important that we all know of the impact of budget cuts on Section 8 and become involved in organizing campaigns to keep the program alive. The future of Section 8 depends on it.

Please tune in on June 9th to learn what's happening around Section 8 and how you can get involved.

~Lynn Murray, Community Organizer

"Hundreds and thousands of people are being affected because of Section 8 budget cuts...Everywhere in the country, public housing tenants, section 8 tenants, anyone who cares about public housing and social justice communities should be on the alert [about] budget cuts to Section 8."

- Mary Regan,

Tenant Organizer, Cambridge Eviction Free Zone



*WomenSpeak* airs the 2nd Wednesday of the month on CCTV. For info, email: [womenspeak2004@yahoo.com](mailto:womenspeak2004@yahoo.com)

## Foundation and Corporate Support

*A special "thank you" to the foundations and organizations who have contributed \$250 or more since December 2003*

BOSTON WOMEN'S FUND  
 Bushrod H. Campbell & Adah F. Hall Charity Fund  
 Cambridge Community Foundation  
 Cambridge Trust Company  
 Chahara Foundation  
 City of Cambridge  
 Clipper Ship Foundation  
 First American Title Insurance Co.  
 Frances R. Dewing Foundation  
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 Mind's Eye Yarn  
 George and Beatrice Sherman Family Charitable Trust  
 The R.O.S.E Fund  
 Women Empowered

*We gratefully acknowledge the many inkind contributions that help to make our work possible and the Center more comfortable including those from:*

Bose of Burlington, MA  
 MINUTEMAN PRESS  
 NECS  
 SBHN

## Women Say 'NO' to Dieting

**Fact:** Each year 65 million Americans choose from 30,000 diet plans and 1 out of 4 college women is bulimic.

**Fact:** American women spend over 33 billion dollars on diet products and 1 out of 200 teenage girls is anorexic.

**Fact:** We have become a food phobic, fat phobic nation and millions of us have become driven, compulsive eaters who ultimately hate ourselves in a culture that defines our self worth by the size of our jeans.

**Fact:** Each year, events occur all over the world on May 6<sup>th</sup> to encourage women to feel free in their own bodies and to develop positive self esteem from within rather than from what society says we "should" be.

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

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**Women say 'NO' to Dieting *continued...***

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Gabriele Atchison of Atchison Productions sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual International *No Diet Day Event* at the Cambridge YWCA. Each year at this event, women come together to take a break from diet insanity, if only for one day. The event celebrates *International No Diet Day*, which began in Canada in 1992 with the goal of ending chronic dieting, weight obsession and size discrimination. Today, events occur all over the world on May 6<sup>th</sup> to encourage women to feel free in their bodies and to stop spending money and passion chasing self-esteem by chasing a ideal size.

Atchison Productions, a healing dance and empowerment organization for women—kicked this year's *No Diet Day Event* off with a bang. Women came from all over the Greater Boston area to rally around fabulously diverse and first time models in a "Love Her Body" Fashion Show. In addition, musical and spoken word acts by such arts as Mia Anderson of Drag Kings Sluts and Goddesses fame and Raquel Evita Seidel, poet and dancer, led the way in self-affirmation of all bodies.

*No Diet Day* is not just a day. It's a movement toward embracing yourself as you are, and not what society says you should be.

~Lynn Murray, Community Organizer

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



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

\_\_\_ I'm interested in volunteering at the Women's Center.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*Thank You!*