Embracing Change

When I arrived for my first day of work at the Women’s Center earlier this summer, I was notified of some troubling news. Katie, the Center’s Coordinator, had been attacked by a visitor. In response to this incident, the Board of Trustees temporarily suspended drop-in programming at the Women’s Center.

Upon hearing this news, I was heartbroken. Though Katie thankfully made a full physical recovery, I was dismayed that something like this could happen at the Women’s Center. I was aware of the critical role that the Women’s Center has played—and continues to play—in the community as an open, inclusive space that welcomes women from diverse backgrounds. For more than 40 years, the Women’s Center has served as a sanctuary for women in need. I worried that the Women’s Center would not be able to wholly fulfill its mission without the drop-in programming.

However, in the past month, I have come to realize that in spite of the many challenges facing us, this is a hopeful time for the Women’s Center.

Many of the Center’s programs are thriving. Every day, helpline volunteers have been hard at work providing women with emotional support and resources. The Center has continued to broaden and ramp up our programming to ensure that there are workshops and groups to address the diverse needs and interests of women in our community. Women have come together at the Center to participate in community conversations, improve their language and job skills, investigate resources, make beautiful crafts, and try their hand at cooking, creative writing, improvisational acting, yoga, and more! After months of recess, the Teen Group is up and running again, bringing a fresh, youthful energy to the Center. The computer labs now have daytime and evening drop-in hours several days a week, and the Center continues to look for ways to increase accessibility while maintaining safety. The helpline, groups and workshops are continuing, and women can make appointments to get assistance from volunteers.

Behind the scenes, the Board of Trustees has been working to put in place new measures to better ensure the safety of our community. The Center has formed new partnerships with local organizations including Rosie’s Place, On the Rise, Heading Home, Ruby Rogers Center and others, to learn about their strategies and security measures and to gain insight as it develops new safety protocols. A very promising development is a newly forged relationship with the Cambridge Police Department who are supporting our ongoing efforts to maintain safety through de-escalation, self-defense and other trainings meant to empower staff members and volunteers.

Local groups such as the Samaritans, the Asian Task Force on Domestic Violence, and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center are facilitating volunteer trainings on suicide/crisis calls, domestic violence in immigrant communities, and responding to disclosures. We have been encouraged by initial feedback on these trainings. One of our helpline volunteers, Irene, told us that the trainings “gave me the confidence to know that I have the tools I need to provide support to any woman in difficult situations, whether it’s an abusive relationship or someone who may be contemplating suicide.” Targeted education, increased awareness and better protocols will enable us to further expand our services to support marginalized women. Planning for this expansion is in the works.

Additionally, I have noticed a greater sense of ownership of the Center within our community. In the past two months, more than fifty visitors to the Center have expressed their reactions, thoughts, and suggestions for the future of the Center in two community meetings, and we look forward to continuing this open dialogue. Furthermore, a number of our volunteers have enthusiastically offered to start new groups and workshops, using their diverse skill sets and interests to bring women in our community together. In 1971, The Women’s Center was founded on the values of community participation and empowerment, and it is exciting to see these principles still in play at the Center today.

I believe that the year to come holds much promise for the Women’s Center as it continues to strengthen its role and visibility in the community, as well as build on its mission to support, educate, and empower women.

Thank you for your continued support of the Women’s Center as we move through this time of transition. We truly appreciate your commitment to the Center and your passion for helping us fulfill our mission to expand social and economic justice for women.

With hope,
Sara Allan, Board of Trustees Intern
Hello! My name is Rhonda Phillips, and I joined the Women’s Center Board of Trustees in February during the annual meeting. I have been volunteering at the Center for two and a half years, and I wanted to have a bigger role and take on more responsibility at the Center.

I started as a computer support volunteer in January of 2012. I was looking for an opportunity to use my computer expertise to help and empower women. Technology is intimidating for everyone, and I think sometimes it is especially intimidating to women. There are so few women in technical fields that I felt obligated to help as one of the few with my skillset. I wanted to show others that using a computer is not actually that difficult -- it just seems that way until you learn and feel comfortable trying things without fear of failure.

I joined the board to help us (the Women’s Center) make informed decisions about technology and be sure we could offer the best services to our community through our computer lab, website, online calendar, social networking sites, etc. I’m excited to work with all of you to strengthen our community and empower women. I look forward to doing my part as a volunteer and a board member to ensure that the Women’s Center continues to provide a sanctuary to women who are looking for help, support, and like me, looking for friendship with other strong and empowered women.

-Rhonda Phillips

As a lifelong feminist and believer in the power of women to support and sustain each other, I took over the position of Center Coordinator here at the Women’s Center in early February filled with excitement and a sense of possibility. Coming from a background in non-profit education and outreach work, I was excited to apply those skills to such a unique organization whose mission I believe so strongly in. I was ready to work hard, and in the past six months since I took over the role of Center Coordinator, I’ve never worked harder. There is so much to be done here at the Center—I certainly have my work cut out for me. Luckily, the Women’s Center’s amazing group of volunteers and interns are here right alongside me each step of the way, working hard to make the Center the best, most welcoming and inclusive space it possibly can be. They inspire me every day.

The past few months have been a time of transition at the Center. Change is never easy, and while there have been many difficult moments for all of us who devote our time and energy here on a regular basis, there are many reasons to be hopeful and excited about the future of the Center. Every day, we see new faces and hear new voices, in the Center and on the helpline. We also see and hear from women who have been a part of the Women’s Center community for many years. We witness new connections being formed and old connections being sustained and expanded upon. In the past three months, more than a dozen of our existing volunteers as well as other community members have stepped up to volunteer their time to expand our group offerings as well as run other workshops and events. In those three months, we’ve added almost 30 new groups and events to our calendar. These include a discussion group for mothers, an immigrant women’s discussion group, a body image group, a stress reduction series, a job skills workshop series, a “crafternoons” crafting series, a Saturday morning breakfast club and much more.

It’s been a privilege for me to work with and get to know the many amazing women who are a part of the Women’s Center community over the past six months, and I look forward to continuing to do so moving forward. I welcome suggestions for new programming or ideas about how we can continue to move the Center forward. To those of you who’ve welcomed me into this community and helped to make my job as Center Coordinator easier and more fulfilling in these first six months, thank you. And to those of you I have yet to meet, I look forward to the opportunity!

-Katie Heimer, M.A.

A warm welcome to Katie Heimer, our new Women’s Center Coordinator, and Rhonda Phillips, the newest member of our Board of Trustees. In her six months here, Katie has had a big impact. Her diligent efforts have generated a host of new groups and workshops, brought in many new volunteers, and greatly improved volunteer trainings. Rhonda’s is a great addition to the Board in the many ways she contributes both in the meetings and through taking on other work. She is also making great improvements to the computer labs with her hands on expertise. We look forward to reveling in the many ways Katie and Rhonda’s efforts will benefit the Women’s Center.

-Kathy, Susan, and Laura, Board of Trustees
Every Tuesday morning for the past few months, I have had the pleasure of facilitating the Painting and Drawing Group at the Women’s Center. We have a diverse group of women from different backgrounds with various interests including the study of shadow and light, ink and watercolor caricature work, and multimedia affirmation projects. The women either work independently or join the group project set for that week. Suggested group projects may include “Self Boxes,” a study in collage of social presentation: old shoe boxes are covered in images and words that represent the self that we show the world (exterior of box) and then aspects of ourselves we may keep hidden or protected (box interior). Other group projects’ themes include “What are you looking forward to?” and our on-going “Gratitude Journals.”

I strive for an atmosphere that is calm, welcoming and supportive as some women are beginners while others are more experienced artists who, in some way or another, have become “blocked” in their creative process. As one of the group attendees put it, “I was blocked, but now I am able to create more freely in the Center and at home.” The women in our group cheer each other to “keep going,” reminding one another that there really are no “mistakes” in art and that “the process is key.” We continually “take the temperature” of the group to maintain safety and comfort of all, and encourage members to speak up if they feel challenged in any way.

I am proud that our small group has grown via word of mouth and grateful that the Women’s Center provides such a sanctuary for our creative expression. In the words of an attendee, the group is a “warm, safe and relaxing environment in which to make art. I plan on it every week.”

**What the Women’s Center Means to Me**

I first came to the Women’s Center in April of 2013, looking for a 600 hour internship for Clinical Mental Health Counseling. I talked with Ming, the Coordinator at the time, and we discussed feminism, therapy, and relationships. She offered me a 20 hours/week internship for September to May. I signed aboard, with the warning of “you will be tired once April comes.” I laughed and said to myself, “clearly she doesn't know what I can handle.”

My first day, I was intimidated by a visitor, rejected by a helpline caller, and completed my first shift. My first day was heartbreaking, but I got up the next day and I got on the T and headed to the Center. I was determined to make what I could of this experience. I learned about the Center and what it had to offer the women who used it daily. Helpline callers began to ask for me personally and visitors began to share their stories. I started to find my place within the Center, but Ming was right, I would grow tired. Only a few callers are truly thankful. Some women will call you names, and tell you that you are not worth anything. There are days when I wondered if I made the right career choice. But for every one of those heartbreaking experiences, I reminded myself, I was there for them when the world might not have been. I listened without judgment. I think about the caller who calls me to tell me that I helped. Or ends the conversation with complete gratitude. The woman who walks into the Center and smiles because I am there. The woman having a cup of coffee and telling her story. There were a lot of stories—stories of strong, beautiful women. I heard (and felt) pain, loneliness, fear, and sadness. I eventually heard the story of the woman who intimidated me, the woman who rejected me, and I got to write a little more of my own story.

As I write my thoughts on my last day, I feel different than I thought I would. I am sad. As my internship comes to an end and I get ready to say goodbye, I know that I will miss walking in the door and feeling the stories surround me. The Women’s Center is now part of my story.

-Jess
Like many newcomers, I walked into the Women's Center for the first time with little idea about what to expect from the cozy house tucked away in Cambridgeport. I was immediately struck by the colorful walls, worn, mismatched furniture, and smell of coffee--like many, I was surprised to find that I had walked into a place that felt like home. As I learned over the following months, this was an accurate first impression. For the women that use the center, the old building has become a home of sorts--for some, their only home during a time of transition. It is this sense that distinguishes the Women's Center from other agencies. The building is not only a place for services to be delivered, but a safe space. It gives members of the community a place to cook, to use a computer, to attend a group, to explore a skill - and much more. Like a home, it does not cost anything to be a part of the community. It relies on trust in the women that use the space, and runs on the time and energy of a team of volunteers. It creates an environment of equality, and out of this, a sense of community.

Women come to the Center from all walks of life, often with little in common other than the fact that they identify as female. In any other situation, they would remain separate. It is a testimony to the space created by the Center that within its walls, this diverse group is able to build a community. In my time at the Center, I have listened to folk tales told by a woman from Tanzania and applied for shelter stays with a woman born and raised in Boston. I have watched friendships develop, and built them myself. I have been witness to a host of problems often hidden from the general public, including homelessness, domestic violence and mental illness. In the Center, it has been an honor to be able to talk openly about these issues, and to begin to work towards solutions. As a volunteer, the Women's Center has given me the opportunity to help create a space for my community to come home to.

- Casey

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.
Body Image and Technology

Volunteering at and attending my Body Image group at the Cambridge Women’s Center has been a very enriching and beautiful experience. The other volunteers, group coordinators, and group attendees have become like a family to me.

I was first introduced to the Center and its available volunteering opportunities during a production of the Vagina Monologues at MIT which I was performing in. I found it only fitting that I express interest in volunteering given that my research interests are in expanding female participation in technology. Since that time, I have been providing volunteer support in the Women’s Center during open computer hours, as well as attending the Body Image group.

As a transgendered woman, I find it especially helpful and necessary to have a place where I feel supported and where my gender identity is respected. This is even more important in my case, as my biological family treats my gender identity as an illness to be cured. They told me that no one will want to work with me because of my feminine name and that I have no future. This makes the support of the Center greatly appreciated.

A highlight of the incredible support that I received from the Center is when I told my Body Image group that I received psychological clearance to undergo gender reassignment surgery and had made an appointment with a surgeon for this purpose. They were overjoyed for me! This sharply contrasts with my family who say that it is their life’s mission to keep me from ‘mutilating’ myself.

What a wonderful place this is to spend a few (all too scarce) hours.

~Amy

Secrecy and Shame

It is difficult to imagine that in a home where love exists, childhood sexual abuse remains hidden for years behind the walls. The victim's secret and the perpetrator's actions do not penetrate these walls. The victim suffers immensely and alone.

As of September, the "Pro-Survivor Mothers' Group," sponsored by Incest Resources and the Women’s Center, has formed to address this issue and to begin to tear down the walls of secrecy and shame. For mothers of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, feelings of shame, shock, sorrow, rage, betrayal and grief are held deeply within us and need to be discussed. In a safe space, among women with similar experiences, we are able to share tears, growth, and even moments of laughter. The truth can be very painful to imagine, and to believe that someone you love has suffered and continues to suffer, challenges each of us to be more open, honest, willing to listen, learn, and be heard. It is my hope that as we become aware of the reality of this unimaginable truth, we will be able to face ourselves and those we love with a deeper love and understanding and we will be empowered to no longer remain silent as mothers of survivors.

The Pro-Survivor Mother’s Group meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 6-7:30pm at the Women’s Center. For more information, please call 508-446-1852 or email leaving your first name and preferred means of contact. prosurvivorsgroup@gmail.com

~Judy

Aspirations for 2015

With 2014 almost behind us, we are keen to look into the future and get going on the following goals:

- Hundreds more women using the Women’s Center
- Loads of new programming on vital topics
- Continued expansion of collaborations and outreach
- Board of Trustees expansion
- Social media explosion
- Website remodeling
- Increased community participation in decision-making

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Women’s Center this past year—by showing kindness and caring to callers, visitors, and each other; by leading a group or workshop; by listening to and respecting others; by donating funds or food or toilet paper. You give the Women’s Center its strength and value!
Welcome, Bea!

We are very pleased to introduce Beatriz Stratter, our new bookkeeper. Bea is replacing Marea Santos, who has been doing the Women’s Center bookkeeping for many years as a volunteer, generously continuing on well beyond any reasonable expectation. Thank you so much, Marea, and a warm welcome to Bea!

Bea has a Master Certificate in Non-profit Financial Management and Administration from Suffolk University, as well as a BS in Management, with a Human Resources Concentration, from UMass Boston. Along with having loads of experience with bookkeeping and financial management, Bea is committed to being supportive of organizations that have missions that affect and impact the community. A few of the many places she has worked: the Public Conversations Project, Inc. in Watertown, La Alianza Hispana, Inc., Community Labor United, the Boston Film Video Foundation, and the Boston History Collective. She has provided great help to these organizations and we're grateful to have her help here!

Welcome aboard, Bea!

~Rhonda, Judy, Susan, and Laura, Board of Trustees

Expanding Our Social Media Presence

My name is Kendall McGowan and I started an internship here at the Women’s Center a few weeks ago. I found the Women's Center through a program at my school, Brookline High School, called the Social Justice Leadership program. It aims to teach students about global and local issues of social injustice and get them involved in the community through internships such as this one. I chose the Women's Center out of dozens of other organizations because I really liked the mission and philosophy, and women's issues are something I've been interested in working with for a long time. I decided to dedicate most of my time at the Women's Center to exploring the many ways in which this organization can use social media to complement and augment the work we do in person.

One of these ways we are doing that has been creating and developing our YouTube channel, a project that I’ve taken the lead on. I try to update it regularly with interviews of Women's Center volunteers talking either about themselves and why they got involved, or a group they started, both of which are gathered during my weekly visits. This is a great way to give new and existing groups a human face and a platform to get the word out. It's also nice for women who may be interested in attending to learn more about them in a more personal way. We hope to continue filming and posting more video content, not just of volunteers and group facilitators, but of other women who visit the Center and are a part of our amazing community.

Besides YouTube, the Women's Center is also currently active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr. These are also regularly updated, with inspirational messages and news from both the Women's Center and the broader feminist community about progress being made towards women's rights both nationally and internationally. If you don't already, please consider following us on any of the social media platforms you use!

I’ve also been working on a project that I came up with: the idea to create a wall dedicated to the pictures, names, and possibly even short bios of the Women’s Center’s volunteers, so that those women coming in at different times would be able to match the name and face on the wall with the volunteer on duty. We hope this will make people see volunteers as approachable and accessible, and will decrease peoples’ nervousness about introducing themselves. I will be working on this project on my weekly shifts. We may even consider uploading the pictures and interesting facts or stories about each woman online, if they were comfortable with it, to give the Women's Center's online presence even more of a human face.

Many of these efforts are coordinated or organized by the Center’s new Social Media Committee, a new volunteer committee that was formed in June. If you’re interested in getting involved as part of this committee or with other volunteer projects here, let Katie know!

I look forward to continuing to meet many of you through my work at the Women’s Center!

~Kendall
The Song Project

My name is Natalie and I’ve recently started a songwriting group through The SONG Project at the Women’s Center that will run every Monday through January! The purpose of The SONG Project is to teach participants how to write songs while engaging in other musical activities such as group singing, community songwriting and group guitar lessons. Through this process, participants build community, and each individual is empowered to tell, record, and perform her story in a secure and nurturing environment that allows for healing, growth and creative transformation.

I’m particularly excited about this group as it’s open to all the women from the many diverse communities that utilize the center. In our first few groups we’ve gotten into brainstorming topics for our group song and worked on object writing to wake up our senses to writing for the day! Ideas the women had for our song include: how “it’s ok to not always be ok,” and how “it’s ok to be happy,” “transformation,” and being “consumed with darkness and finding light.” They’ll be sharing their learnings and wisdoms from their journey to contribute to our group song and I’m excited to see how it develops! One of many of the gifts that I see happening as part of this group is the opportunity for women to discuss their journeys about being a woman in this world with women that they might not normally gather with during their week. It’s a place to create an expression of the shared journey with others along this path that’s nurturing and supportive and hopefully fun!

One group participant has shared that “The Song Writing Project is my weekly outlet for ME TIME. I enjoy the company among other women and look forward to the process of group creation.”

The SONG Project introduces songwriting to women and girls who have been marginalized by poverty, homelessness, violence, or trauma, as a tool for empowering them to tell their stories of oppression, resilience and hope in a creative and transformative way. The group at the Women’s Center has been generously funded by The Blakeley Foundation. To find out more about The SONG Project and to support its programming at places like the Blakeley Foundation. To find out more about The SONG Project, visit www.nataliesara.com/thesongproject

A Big Thank You

To Our 2014 Corporate and Foundation Funders

Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
Bay State Federal Savings Charitable Foundation
The Boston Foundation
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
Cambridge/Agassiz/Harvard (CAH) Fund
Cambridge Arts Council
Cambridge Community Foundation
Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
Cambridge Trust Company
The Clipper Ship Foundation
Cummings Foundation
Draper Laboratory
East Cambridge Savings Bank Foundation M
Frederick E. Weber Charities Corporation
George A. Ramlose Foundation
Hartley Corporation
Harvard Memorial Church
John Donnelly Trust
JVH Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Lesley University
Marion Decrow Foundation
Martin Fund at The Boston Foundation
Mary Judith Meelia Family Foundation
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Santander Bank Foundation
Sheila Gamble Fund of the Cambridge Community Foundation
Staples Foundation for Learning
The Susan A. & Donald P. Babson Charitable Foundation
TD Charitable Foundation
TDX Foundation
WHOLE Foundation

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!

Mindful Art

Hello everyone! My name is Valerie and I have been an intern at the Cambridge Women’s Center since early September. I am excited to report that I have started a weekly art group centered around mindfulness techniques. My idea for the group is to facilitate a space where women can come together and engage in a creative environment. The group is centered around interacting with the art materials in a relaxed and curious way to focus our attention on the present moment. Practicing this sense of attention we can learn to apply it to a range of our human experiences. Using the creative arts in this fashion, we hope to cultivate a greater sense of awareness, find balance, and develop new kinds of wisdom in our lives.

A typical Mindful Art session begins with a guided meditation and transitions into the art making process. Each week brings something different. We’ve created mandalas using autumn leaves and woven discs using yarn, fabric, and other various materials. The group takes place Fridays from 1-2PM. Join us for an hour of relaxation and creation. All women are welcome, no art experience required!
My name is Forest and I’ve been attending the Painting & Drawing group here at the Women’s Center for about 8 months. The class really helped unblock my creativity. Quite often in the past I have felt afraid to do art when by myself. My fear of failure as well as of success would stop me in my tracks. In the group, the emphasis is on enjoying the process and having fun. We are all encouraged to express ourselves through color, line, composition, etc. Doing art with other women in a non-judgmental atmosphere is something I look forward to every week.

Recently, I took over as the group’s facilitator. I’m happy to be able to contribute to the group in this way. It will continue to be a place for women to come and do art (in a variety of mediums) in a non-judgmental and encouraging space. Occasionally, I’ll give a brief guided meditation or writing exercise to help us get centered and ready to create. I’ll also provide some guidance on technique and composition for those who are interested in it. As one group attendee said, “I enjoy the art group because it’s a way of expressing my creative personality. Forest gives me insights about my process. The group is fun and also part of my wellness and recovery plan. Doing art with other women helps me feel connected.”

All women are welcome, so please come on by! We meet every Tuesday from 11 am to 1 pm.

~Forest
Support the Women’s Center Online!
Go to www.cambridgewomenscenter.org and click on "Support Us" and then "Donate Now."
You will be contributing through “Network for Good”

Support the Women’s Center by mail

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”
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)

Name________________________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________________
City_______________________ State_____ Zip Code___________________
Phone_____________________ Email________________________________

____ My donation is in honor of: (name)_______________________________________________________
(address)_____________________________________________________________________________

____ My gift will be matched by my employer___________________________________________________

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

THANK YOU!
Give to women’s empowerment, healing and change!

December 2014

Dear Friends,

I’m writing to ask you to make a life-changing gift to the Women’s Center this holiday season.

The work of the Women’s Center is vibrant and transformative! It gives women a platform to define themselves and to determine their futures. Through Survivor Theatre Project, women who have experienced sexual and domestic violence are able to confront their pasts, tell their stories, and reclaim their power.

Daily, Women’s Center volunteers staff the helpline, fielding calls from women in need of nonjudgmental counsel, services to stave off a crisis, or simply a compassionate ear. Many women, who use this resource, eventually return to the Center to provide someone else with emotional support.

On December 1st, World AIDS Day, a group of female students from the Heller School of Social Work at Brandeis University spoke enthusiastically to their classmates about visiting the Women’s Center this fall. They had been on a mission to learn about local organizations that address women’s health. They were excited to share with their peers the Center's history of organizing; its evolution as an incubator for organizations and projects, such as Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Women's Cancer Project, Incest Resources, among others; and its current range of diverse programs and activities that holistically address mind, body, and soul through support groups, the arts, education, life skills development, yoga, nutrition, and other means. They were so moved by our story that they selected the Women’s Center to receive a unique $5,000 gift from the student led WHOLE Foundation.

Over the past year, hundreds of women have passed through our doors and stepped onto a pathway of healing and change. In the enclosed newsletter, you will hear some of their stories and how the Women’s Center has profoundly impacted them.
Your support is crucial in keeping our doors open to every woman who wants to enter. Since 1971, we have been a community supported organization, and today more than ever we need your monetary donations to offer young feminists, such as the students at Brandeis and seasoned organizers, such as the producers of the film “Left on Pearl,” our support to advance their initiatives and change our world.

Please give generously! Your gift to the Women’s Center will make a difference in every woman’s life.

In gratitude,

[Signature]

SoulBrown
Fundraiser
Women’s Center
http://cambridgewomenscenter.org/supportus/donate_now.html