The Women’s Center Factors

Since January 2010, the International Herald Tribune has been running a pivotal series called “The Female Factor,” which examines the role of women in this century. Amidst inspirational reporting about women entrepreneurs defying Afghani traditions, leading Liberian peacekeeping efforts, or redefining U.S. soccer playing fields, women’s achievements are always tempered by the soon to follow article on sexual harassment, discrimination or violence relentlessly perpetrated against females globally. A recent multi-country WHO study found that "up to 70 percent of women aged 15-49 years report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.”

The United States is no less prone to gender-based violence. It took over a year and a half for Congress to pass the "Violence Against Women Act”; women soldiers are more likely to be sexually assaulted than killed in combat; 1 in 3 girls are abused by age 18; and child sexual abuse impacts more Americans each year than cancer, AIDS, gun violence, LGBT inequality, and the mortgage crisis combined.

At the Women’s Center, we’ve long understood the demoralizing effects of sexual violence and from our early days have been leading the struggle to help female victims receive the support, resources and environment they need to heal. We are a community where women are empowered to address their circumstances, reclaim their bodies and identities, and help other women do the same.

Women’s Center Factors are…

Women who’ve experienced abuse or been marginalized have the understanding, empathy and wisdom to bring about the changes they need for themselves and their children.

Change is a growth process. We are committed to be there throughout a woman’s journey for as long as needed.

Every woman’s path is unique. We honor all women and their process toward wellness—whether that requires a massage, compassionate listening or a support group.

Healing is holistic…encompassing resources, counseling, right relationships, stress free environments, creativity, self expression, and strength.

Women will be powerful agents to mend our broken world.

For over 40 years, women have used our Center as a beacon through storms, a sanctuary for creativity, and a force for activism. Here they are heard and accepted and determine the services that make sense for them. Monthly, we offer up to 60 program activities—from beading to discussions; health consultations to computer training. In addition, 55-hours per week our helpline and communal kitchen are open.

We are leaders in using art therapeutically to assist in recovery. This spring, our Survivor Theatre Project presented several short plays as part of the City of Cambridge’s 21 Days of Questions, 365 Days of Action; our Survivor Quilts were displayed at Lesley University; and women who participate in our arts and crafts classes exhibited and sold their work at the City HeArt Show and Sale at Prudential Center on May 4th. It is joyous, challenging and gratifying to be part of such a diverse, resilient and creative community.

The greatest factor at the Women’s Center is the generosity of spirit and resources that our loyal supporters provide. Annually, over 130 of you volunteer your time and labor to help out and even more of you provide much needed income through donations. We ask that you continue to give to our worthy work this spring! With your support, the Center will continue to evolve, touch and transform lives, and be a factor in this century until sexual violence and gender inequality end.

~Soul Fundraiser
Welcome, Soul!

A warm welcome to Soul Brown, who began working as our fundraiser on January 7, 2013. She also directs the outstanding youth literacy program Books of Hope, where she has been able to attract new funders to the program and increase its annual budget 300%, allowing the program to expand its hours of operation, hire additional teachers, provide jobs to youth, and increase the number of constituents served. “Over ten years ago, I made a critical shift in my career and committed to working with antiracism and anti-oppression organizations and groups focused on empowering the lives of low income families, people of color, women, youth and others who are marginalized in society.”

Since that time Soul has written successful grant proposals to private foundations, contributed to state and national government grant proposals, conducted research and helped organizations identify potential new funders and establish new funding relationships, including some multi-year support. Soul also has experience on the grant making side so she knows what funders are looking for! She has served as a site visitor for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as a member of the Boston Cultural Council, and as a founding member of a media giving circle with Haymarket People’s Fund. She has done nonprofit program management as well, especially for arts and social justice organizations.

Most recently, she was selected as a Diversity Fellow of the Association for Fundraising Professionals, a professional organization for those working in areas of charitable giving. She is an amazing, articulate, dedicated woman. You can see why we are excited that Soul is here – we don’t doubt for a minute that she will be a force, helping increase the Women’s Center’s budget, scope, and stability.

Susan Loomis, New Board Member

My involvement as a community volunteer in the Boston area launched in January 2008 when I stumbled across the “Women of Vision Exhibit” at the Brighton-Allston Heritage Museum at the Veronica Smith Senior Center in Brighton. As a Master’s Degree student in Interdisciplinary Studies at Lesley University in my last semester, I asked the curator about being involved in any capacity and then conducted research for the exhibit and overall Brighton-Allston Historical Society, which oversees the Heritage Museum. I joined the Board of Directors of the Historical Society in May 2008. I am also a founding member of a new visual arts non-profit called Unbound Visual Arts, which strives to expose the Brighton/Allston community to the creativity and talent of local visual artists.

After volunteering at the annual City HeArt art show and sale in April 2012, an artist/educator/activist friend referred me to the Women’s Center for a possible Board position. I accepted a Board of Trustees position in October of 2012. It is an honor to be involved in an organization that supports the vision of women in terms of feminist studies and social activism. The experience I have achieved academically and professionally has led me to this Board position.

I currently serve as the Assistant to the VP of Administration and Budget Coordinator at Lesley University. Also, as a newly accepted doctoral student in the PhD in Educational Studies program at Lesley University, I aspire to explore the inclusion and appreciation of visual arts in the public sector by demonstrating the healing, self-confidence shaping, and aesthetic appreciation these arts can bestow on a community. My personal goals have been inspired by an academic background of interdisciplinary study and an extreme appreciation of art-making. I believe that promoting the creation, value, critique and appreciation of art will further the accessibility of visual arts in all communities.

~Susan Loomis
Re-ignite the Feminist Flame

Let’s face it, sisters, life gets in the way. It gets in the way of relaxing, vacations, traveling. It gets in the way of staying connected to old friends, and in the way of making new ones. It gets in the way of creating and meeting goals. It gets in the way of PASSION and DEDICATION. We’re all guilty of it.

When the Women’s Center opened in 1972, women were so grateful to have a place of their own they sparked a movement in Cambridge and the greater Boston area. This movement swept through the streets as more and more women realized their desperate need for resources, support, and a community to help them fight. From this, incredible organizations were formed - many of which are still helping women today - from the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, to Incest Resources, to the Women’s Community Cancer Project, to the Survivor Theatre Project.

Over the decades many women’s groups, along with the Women’s Center, have noticed a growing complacency and lack of dedication to change and we feel it’s time for a refreshing surge of energy! The notion that women are “better off” than we were 20, 30, 40 years ago has spread through our country like a plague, but we’re a group of women who refuse to believe “better off” is the best we can hope for.

The Community Outreach Project at the Women’s Center is an attempt at re-igniting the feminist flame. Our mission is to reach, grow, and maintain our diverse and supportive community of women - something denied to most of us by our patriarchal society and the belief of “natural competition” among women. We want the Women’s Center to expand as a society that hears our sister’s calls and answers with fervent commitment and allegiance by increasing our connections with local organizations and with individuals and businesses in the community. As the Community Outreach Project attempts to re-ignite the feminist flame, together we can utilize the old “strength in numbers” mentality that has gotten women this far. Instead of silencing ourselves, we challenge you to show our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and friends their problems are OUR problems too.

So, consider this your Call to Action. WE NEED YOUR HELP! Help in the form of starting and promoting groups, advertising the center, managing our social media, contributing to our blog and YouTube channel, creating and organizing events, and a number of other things that will add a new dynamic dimension to the Women’s Center. Whatever your passion may be - activism, social service, relationship building, teaching, learning, athletics, art, crafts, meditation, cooking, science, and technology - we have space for you and a strong desire for your talents.

The fight isn’t over. We can’t stop until women are finally (actually) equal and, even when we are; we will always need a place of our own to join in friendship and unity. It’s time for us to put passion and dedication back on the table and organize ourselves to help this incredible women’s community center continue to grow and break barriers like our foremothers. Please contact us at twc.communityoutreachproject@gmail.com

Oh - if you get a moment or you’re lacking inspiration, check out some newsletters from the 70s. They’re raw and totally rad.

~In Solidarity, Stephanie Martin

Survivor Theatre Project Receives Award

Survivor Theatre Project (STP) was chosen as a recipient of the 2013 Violence Transformed Performing Arts Award. Mary Harvey, Director of Violence Transformed, presented the award to Melissa Redwin, founder of STP, in a ceremony at the State House on April 23rd. When Dr. Harvey initially informed STP of this honor, she wrote that the award "represent[s] our regard and respect for the work you do and our appreciation for your outstanding participation in this year's Violence Transformed events." Survivor Theatre Project, an arts opportunity for survivors of sexual violence, began in 2008 with the support of the Women's Center and Incest Resources and continues its invaluable collaboration with them today.

Well-Deserved, Elaine!

Elaine Westerlund, Co-founder and Director of Incest Resources and a volunteer at the Women’s Center for 33 years, was honored with an award from the Cambridge Senior Volunteer Clearinghouse as an outstanding senior who dedicates her time and talents in a volunteer capacity. We are so grateful to Elaine for starting survivor services at the Center in 1980; facilitating the Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, now going into its 30th year; being involved in the development of the survivor newsletter, For Crying Out Loud, the Deaf Women’s Counseling Project, the Survivor Quilt Project, and the Survivor Theatre Project; serving as an interim member of the Board of Trustees during a very critical time; and serving as a half-time fundraiser for the Center for over five very challenging years. All of us at the Center feel very lucky to know Elaine and are so appreciative of the many things she has done, and continues to do, both for the Women’s Center and for survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Hello from Soul

Hi, my name is Soul and as you’ve learned, I’m the new fundraiser at the Women’s Center and surprisingly, I kind of like asking people for money! This has not always been the case—that I’m a fundraiser or felt passionately about requesting monetary support for important work like that which happens here. My background is in arts, media and education with an emphasis on amplifying rarely heard voices of community members—youth, people of color, the poor, women, elders, immigrants and others who are often disregarded or spoken for by mainstream society. Besides working here, I direct a creative writing and spoken word program for youth that’s based in Somerville. I want to simply say thank you for opening up your doors to me. Thanks to the Board, Judy, Ming and everyone—from the Center’s founders, to those who use its services, to those who give their time, talents and treasures to keep it going. I have much to learn from all of you and look forward to our connecting!

~Soul

~3
When my co-founder Alyssa and I decided to form ButchBoi Life, we wanted to create a safe space for masculine-identified queer women to meet, share their experiences, make friends, and find a network of supportive peers. One of our biggest challenges was finding a physical space for all this to occur. We needed somewhere that was accessible, yet private, while also being open and welcoming to all. We've found that ideal space here at the Women's Center.

Twice a month, people from all walks of life, races, creeds, ages, and backgrounds come together in the Center to discuss a variety of topics that affect butches, studs, bois, and all flavors of masculine queer women. We’ve covered everything from coming out and dealing with family rejection to dating, sexual health, and the way media influences our lives.

Time and again, our group members have expressed how comfortable they feel meeting amongst the comfy couches and pleasant décor of the Center’s living room. The physical environment really does encourage people to relax, have fun, and open up to one another. I can say with complete certainty that ButchBoi Life would not be where we are today as an organization without the Women's Center.

~Bren Cole, ButchBoi Life Co-founder

Women’s Emotional Empowerment Group

The group is about letting ALL women be able to speak freely about what empowers them. The group was created by Carole who currently volunteers at the Women's Center, and I am the co-facilitator. But, everyone really is their own facilitator. The group is about letting ALL women be able to speak freely and open up to one another. I can say with complete certainty that ButchBoi Life would not be where we are today as an organization without the Women's Center.

~Christina

Find us on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter!

The Women’s Center is on the hottest social media! You can find us by going to www.cambridgewomenscenter.org and clicking on the facebook and twitter logos.

Women’s Center Hours:
Monday-Friday: 10am-8pm
Saturday: 10am-3pm
We are closed on major holidays.

On-Going Groups
- Beading Group (every Monday, 10am-12pm)
- Board of Trustees Meeting (monthly, 5:30-7pm)
- ButchBoi Life (2nd Tues., 6-7:30pm, & 4th Sat., 3-4:30pm)*
- Crochet/Knitting Group (every Thursday, 1-2pm)
- Drawing & Painting (every Tuesday, 10am-12pm)
- Come On Out (1st Mondays, 7:30-8:30pm)
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (Wed, 6-8pm)*
- Emotional Empowerment Group (1st and 3rd Wed, 6-7pm)
- Incest Resources’ Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, (3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm, September through June. No-one admitted after 6:15pm)
- Ladies, Let’s Talk About It—Women’s Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Meeting (every Thursday, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Conversation (1st Fridays, 6-8pm)*
- Lesbian Chat (2nd Fridays, 6-8pm)*
- Lesbian Connection (3rd Fridays, 6-8pm)*
- Lunch at the Women’s Center, noon-1pm, monthly
- One-on-One Computer Tutoring (12-3pm, 2nd Fridays)
- One-on-One with Nurse Pat (4th Thrusdays, 12:30-1:30pm)
- Reiki Sessions (2nd Fridays, 11am-2pm. Must sign up)
- Sewing Group (every Wednesday, 10am-12pm)
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. For women in straight relationships struggling with their sexual orientation. For details, kate.e.flynn@gmail.com*
- Theatre Arts Workshops (one Saturday/month, 1-3pm. Must sign up: 617-354-8807 or 617-354-6394.)
- Women and Media (3rd Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm)
- Women’s Health with Nurse Sonia (Wed, 10:30-11:30am)*
- Women’s Wellness Group (Thursdays, 1:30 - 2:30pm)*

Other Groups/Workshops
- Gentle Yoga for Healing and Empowerment (every Tuesday in June, 4-5:15pm). Come be guided through a gentle and nourishing practice with tools and a sense of ease that you can take home with you. Info: Sara, sarastar4@gmail.com
- Workshop: Women on the Screen. Wed, 6/19, 3-4pm, or Tue, 6/25, 6:30-7:30pm, Watch short clips from movies, TV shows, ads, music videos and talk about the image of women on the screen! Info/sign up: yrsn.koc@gmail.com
- *Special Event> Responding to Street Harassment and Gender-Based Violence. Wed., 6/26,1-2:30pm. Learn about street harassment, how to safely respond, get tips for bystander intervention. Info: boston.ihollaback.org
- * Monday cooking! 1-2:30pm, 6/10 & 24. Let’s make and cook with others (up to 5) as a team, sign up in advance! Info/ sign up: yrsn.koc@gmail.com and 617 354 6394.
- *Why Partners Abuse: This is for women who are seeking information about why their partners abuse them physically, mentally and emotionally. For more detailed information, please contact Jane at j061511986@gmail.com
- Drumming with the Batucada Belles (TBA) *
- Fem(s)ex– 12-week summer workshop series on female sexuality. Info/sign-up: femsexbos@gmail.com

For the most complete and detailed calendar, please go to our website at www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

* Wheelchair accessible groups; other groups accessible by pre-arrangement
If there was one change to make in my life to improve my health, what would it be?

The Cambridge Women’s Center strengthens our community by strengthening the women of our community. As a nurse practitioner I am interested in ways to strengthen women by improving health and wellbeing. I visit the Women’s Center monthly and appreciate the chance to share in the community. The other day a woman asked me “if there was one change to make in my life to improve my health, what would it be?”

There are many ways to answer this question. Research has shown some surprising things about what makes us healthy. Being in a community or group has been found to increase wellbeing and health. So keep coming to the Women’s Center, join an activity or group, help cook lunch, reach out to someone in need. Having contact with nature and with pets improves our health. Plant a garden, walk outside, look at the trees, care for an animal. Eating well, mostly fruits and vegetables, and cutting out sugar can lengthen and improve life. There is always the challenge of finding a way to stop smoking with the double benefit of saving money and improving health. All of these things make a difference.

But probably the most important thing a woman can do is exercise. There is more and more evidence that exercise helps much of what ails us these days. Studies have shown that exercise decreases stress, helps reduce depression and anxiety, is essential to weight loss, increases happiness, reduces fatigue, and even improves memory. Exercise is good for heart health, blood pressure control, and cuts the risk of cancer and diabetes. It makes bones stronger, prevents falls, and improves the immune system.

Exercise can be enjoyable and social. One of the best ways to start is by walking.

As the weather turns warmer we are planning to begin a walking group, followed by a healthy snack. Call 617-354-8807 for more information.

If you are looking for a good website and program go to Sparkpeople.com and sign up for free tips.

~Pat Maher ANP BC
Nurse Practitioner, Cambridge Health Alliance

You are a Woman

You live with broken locks, stone thrown windows, and consistently crashing walls,

Security and privacy is a foreign friend you greet with apprehension and intrigue.

You know that hunger does not mean growling stomachs but silenced ones.

You have reason to shut down, to function in a closed off world; a reality different from smiling faces and warm bodies around you.

People are symbols of your destruction, who load your gun and trigger you without intent of shooting.

Words which usually comfort, assault you.

You are plentiful in pain and friendly when you gain.

You are sure of the bad guys and comfortable with blame. You are black and white.

You vent like a freight train and your truth rises as steam does, horn blowing as the town wakes up.

You are ready to ask, resourceful, life affirming.

You are emerging from the past, rising from shattered glass, calling for help, reaching out, pointing to what is forgotten about, conversing to figure it out.

You are emotionally connected, community respecting.

You are a survivor, a chef, a comedian, a satirist, a peace offering.

You are a belly laugh, an embrace, a reciprocator, an artist.

You are a brave cup-half full drink the water and don’t let it spill resilient woman.

You are a woman.

~Caryn B. Oppenheim

Volunteer Corner

When I open the door to the Women’s Center after crunching through the snow on a cold day, I am enveloped by warmth, gentle chatter and the smell of coffee wafting through the air. This is what the Women’s Center is, in a nutshell: a place where women feel accepted and know that they are not alone.

As a computer volunteer, I have seen how powerful the Internet can be, especially to women with few resources at hand. When I show a woman how to navigate the Internet, use email and search engines, fill out applications– it gives them confidence to explore possibilities. I have seen women use this to transform their lives – regain contact with a friend, find resources, secure jobs, and more.

Volunteering on the helpline showed me that though we come from various backgrounds, we all have the same concerns and face similar challenges. As I listen to women’s stories and offer my support, I applaud the incredible courage, determination, and strength they have shown in changing their lives. We just give them a shoulder to lean on.

The Women's Center is not just about advocating women’s rights, fighting abuse and overcoming addiction. It is also about finding a safe space to be yourself, discuss everyday issues over coffee, spend quiet time with a computer, have conversations while knitting...

As a volunteer, I am keenly aware that the Women’s Center is by women, of women, and for women. It is a place where we support and empower each other, and in doing so strengthen the community. Seeing the way the center has impacted lives is uplifting and touching, and I am happy to have been a small part of it. I discovered that in helping women empower themselves, I have empowered myself as well.

~Pannaga
-- Headphones (for computer use)  
-- Can opener  
-- Kitchen towels  
-- Food containers  
-- Food storage bags  
-- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, honey, cream, milk, butter  
-- Silverware, especially knives and spoons  
-- Unscented hand and dish soap  
-- Paper towels and toilet paper  
-- Water color paint  
-- Pads of textured water color paper (20” x 15”)  
-- USB sticks/flash drives  
-- Printer & copier paper, white and colored 8½” x 11” and 11” x 17”  
-- Postage stamps  
-- Large garden watering can  
-- Herbs, perennials, or seedlings for the garden  
-- Garden chairs  
-- Good, flat monitors 17” or larger  
-- Mailing labels (30/page, eg: Avery 5160)  
-- Envelopes—regular (#10), or small (#6¾)  
-- Gift certificates for Target, Tags, Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores, Supermarkets, Home Depot, Best Buy, you name it!

THANK YOU!

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

__ $2,000 __ $1,000 __ $500 __ $250 __ $100 __ $50 __ $25 __ other $___________

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

__ My gift will be matched by my employer_____________________________________________________

__ My donation is in honor of: (name)___________________________________________________________

(address)_________________________________________________________________________________

Name_____________________________________________________________________________________

Address__________________________________________________________________________________

City_______________________ State_____ Zip Code____________________

Phone_____________________ Email________________________________

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

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

Thank You!

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”
December 2013

Dear Friends,

I hope you’re ready to take some **bold new steps** with the Women’s Center in 2014! The end of this year offers us a time for reflection and also opportunity to look ahead. We are once again standing on the precipice of change—as we make the transition from Ming’s steady and compassionate guidance (which has truly helped bring stability to the Center during her 7 years on board) to the fresh perspectives we anticipate Cho will bring to this amazing organization that you’ve helped us build.

We were reminded this fall during screenings of the near finished film, “**Left on Pearl,**” about the protest march and occupation that brought about the Women’s Center, that we exist because women like you have dared to take positive, and on occasion brazen, steps to address urgent needs!

In 1971 it was a need for a building of our own to gather and organize from. During our first two decades, it was the development of institutions and services for women who experienced battering or rape. Today we’re meeting **critical needs** to educate the public about physical and sexual violence against women and children, to provide **healing and wellness** programs to **survivors of abuse**, and to offer survivors and **low-income and homeless women** spaces for **creative expression**! We give women a launching pad for their ideas, actions, and solutions to overcome personal and societal challenges.

The Women’s Center is about… Survivors of sexual abuse, presenting original theater works during the City of Cambridge’s 21 Days of Questions, 365 Days of Action campaign against domestic abuse and taking home an outstanding artists award for their violence transforming performances.

The Women’s Center is about… Quilts that stitch together the pieces of women’s lives that were broken apart by child sexual abuse. The healing and resiliency reflected in these works, which have been exhibited at colleges and conferences, encourage viewers not to just witness their stories but to actively participate in helping end the sexual exploitation of children.

The Women’s Center is about… Low-income and homeless women bonding weekday mornings as they explore crafts of beading, sewing and fine arts. With the confidence and camaraderie that they’ve attained, they have organized exhibits and crafts fairs to showcase and sell their work.
The Women’s Center is about… Calling our helpline for guidance and strength through a crisis and speaking with an attentive peer counselor. Sometimes it’s simply about sitting in the kitchen and sharing a meal or accessing computers and getting information. Always, it’s being part of a caring community that contrasts the harsh realities of shelters, the streets, and society.

The Women’s Center is about… Responding to statistics such as: 40 percent of women heads of households live in poverty, 1 out of 6 U.S. women victims of attempted or completed rape, 1 in 3 U.S. girls sexually abused before age 18, 88% of Boston women experience street harassment… and for Black and Latina women these rates are growing higher and faster!

The Women’s Center is about… Women who march to a different beat, from the percussive sounds of the Batucada Belles to the lively swagger of Pride Parades to the brassy Honk Street Festival.

The Women’s Center is about… Over 130 volunteers giving selflessly of their time, hundreds of donors providing big-hearted contributions, and thousands of women entering our doors annually.

All that we’re able to do is not possible without you and your support!!!

We really need you to move forward with us! As we enter our next phase, please give generously, so that we will continue to meet the needs of today’s women and girls!!

Moving ahead in solidarity!

Judy Norris Soul Brown
Board of Trustees Fundraiser

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”

A 501(c )(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization (Federal I.D. #23-7131753)
Saying goodbye is never easy. It is with great sadness that I am informing you that my last day as the Women’s Center Coordinator will be December 31st, 2013.

Working at the Women’s Center has been an amazingly transformative journey for me. For the past 7 years, so many women at the Center, and in the larger community of women, have taught me tremendously about the meaning of empowerment, living with self-respect, social justice and organizing communities of support. Meeting such a diversity of women has been truly humbling and inspiring. It is very clear that the care and the passion of all the volunteers, group facilitators and women in the community have shaped and strengthened this very unique space. The generous and consistent collaboration of women from all walks of lives keeps the Center grounded. I have often encountered situations that have taught me important lessons about human spirit and resilience. It is very hard to leave this magical place. This very difficult decision finally came about because I am in need of longer and more frequent time to travel back and forth between Taiwan and the US to be with my family. I hope to develop some type of private practice that can give me the time flexibility.

Even when I am not physically here, my heart will be still lingering and sincerely grateful for the learning and gifts I have received from this special place. I know for a fact that with such strong roots in the community, the Women’s Center will continue to thrive and leave significant marks in women’s lives!

~ Ming Chang

Back in 2008 I was a little lost. I was finishing a Theatre Education degree and approached the Director of the Cambridge Women’s Center to see if she could help. I knew I wanted to work with other survivors of sexual abuse and do something artistic and kind of radical. I just didn't know what exactly. I met Ming Chang on the first floor of the Center on a crisp spring day. She shook my hand and gave me a warm smile with a twinkle in her eye. The Center was calm, some women were cooking in the kitchen. We went to her office and sat down at the table together, with the light streaming in through the window. Over the next hour, Ming and I talked about healing, the arts, women’s space, obstacles to recovery, social change, and much more.....Ming was a match sparking all kinds of new ideas and thoughts about what I wanted to do in my own healing, and in my life. Since that day, Ming has been a steadfast support, cheerleader, work horse, and anchor for not only my project but for so many other women connected to the Women's Center. I honestly don't know how she has kept it all together and been so energizing time and time again. Ming, you've been a champion for Survivor Theatre Project, and a hero and mentor for me. Thank you so much, and I wish you all the best.

~ Melissa Redwin, Founder & Director Survivor Theatre Project

As a social media coordinator, I have the awesome job of managing and creating content for the Women’s Center blog on Tumblr. The blog was created by fellow volunteers to express their thoughts and connect with other feminists. Volunteering was a great idea: I got to meet awesome ladies and gain more experience with social media/communications. It’s also given me a platform to express my own thoughts about being a feminist woman. But I would love to hear from you too! Feel free to share your thoughts on our page at: http://womenscommunityblog.tumblr.com. Our blog followers love reading and sharing our bloggers’ thoughts and opinions.

~ Rachel
Best Wishes to Ming!

We honor and thank Ming Chang, Center Coordinator, as she begins the next phase of her professional journey. Ming has been at the Women’s Center for over seven years, and for many of us, it is hard to remember what the Center was like before she arrived. Every day, Ming has brought to the Center her soothing mix of calm focus, compassion, and generous humor. Ming’s energy and hard work have made the Center a warm and welcoming place for many, many women. She has trained and worked with countless volunteers and interns, overseen numerous programs and events, and helped transform the Center in ways both large and small. She will certainly be missed, and we wish her every success as she sets out in private practice to use her clinical training to continue to change lives. Thank you, Ming!

~Laura Cherry, for the Women’s Center Board of Trustees

Welcome, Cho!

We welcome Cho Salma Win, who will be starting her position as full-time Center Coordinator on December 9. Cho comes to us with a recent background in union organizing, both in the medical field with the Committee of Interns and Residents, and also with the ACLU, where she served as interim Project Director for the Clara Bell Duvall Reproductive Freedom Project. In addition, she has worked as Program Coordinator for the Alzheimer’s Association. Cho has a Masters of Social Work with a specialization in program coordination. Originally from Burma, Cho has volunteered with Refugee Education Partners to mentor and provide tutoring for Burmese refugee children. Her multifaceted background and her passion for social justice and women’s issues make Cho a natural fit for the Women’s Center. She will be working with Ming until Ming’s departure at the end of December. Please stop by and say hi and help Cho transition into this important role!

~Laura Cherry for the Board of Trustees

Seeking New Board Members

Interested in helping the Women’s Center move forward and meet the challenges that lie ahead? The Board of Trustees is responsible for the organization’s vision, goal-setting, oversight, finances, policies, personnel issues, and setting policy to match the Center’s goals. Members attend monthly meetings and take or share responsibility for critical tasks, such as arranging building maintenance and restoration, fundraising, financial management, event planning, hiring, submitting required filings and overseeing taxes. In seeking new Board members we hope to increase our diversity and we encourage women of color to apply.

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 Women’s Center, have time and energy to contribute, and might be interested in joining a working Board that meets monthly, please write to tell us about why you would like to join, what skills or interests you would bring, etc. Please write to the Board of Trustees, Women’s Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge MA 02139 or email board@cambridgewomenscenter.org

New Volunteer Opportunities

Recently, volunteers at The Women’s Center have created new committees to help organize, inspire, and promote leadership roles within our community. These committees are Outreach (Women’s Center Events & Community Involvement), Fundraising, Teen, Women’s Culture & Collective Voice, Home Improvement & Garden, and Social Media. We also hope to fully launch our Volunteer Advisor program in January 2014, aimed at creating a “Buddy System” for new volunteers to feel even more welcome and supported at the Women’s Center. If you’d like more information or to get involved in any of these developing opportunities, please contact me at twc.communityoutreachproject@gmail.com.

~Stephanie Martin
Earlier this year, Survivor Theatre Project lost our first survivor/artist. Elisabeth Ann Morrison of Cambridge, Massachusetts died on April 10, 2013. Elisabeth joined Survivor Theatre Project in 2010 to create and perform *Memories of Trees*, a play based on stories of women survivors of sexual abuse. Elisabeth took her own life at the age of 56. As members of STP we are deeply saddened by her sudden departure and we join her family and friends to celebrate her many accomplishments.

Elisabeth Morrison was a Buddhist, a social activist, and a lover of dogs and cats. She was a member of the first Dartmouth College class to include women. After graduation, she moved to Cambridge and took up union organizing with office workers at Boston University. She received her law degree from Northeastern Law School. Her primary focus as an attorney was the welfare of abused children. For decades she was an active member of the Cambridge Riverside District of Soka Gakkai International—USA, Buddhist Organization for Peace, Culture and Education. Elisabeth’s Buddhist daily practice grounded and sustained her life-long efforts to relieve suffering and make the world a better and kinder place.

At Elisabeth’s Memorial Service this spring, Elisabeth’s friends and family remembered her strong spirit, her incisive mind and spiritual depth, her sense of humor and great laugh, her emotional honesty, her work for social justice, her willingness to speak difficult truths, and her strong personal resiliency in the face of much personal suffering.

Survivor Theatre project alumna Antonieta Gimeno remembers Elisabeth: “Elisabeth lived her life as a warrior. She did not allow herself to be defined by mental illness, but by her deep sense of justice, integrity, compassion and love. Her sweet and gentle spirit was always a reminder, particularly for those of us who live with depression and trauma, that life is an opportunity in the face of pain and challenges. Her presence always reminded me of a gentle and clear pool of water where I could reflect my own life. We love you and honor you Elisabeth.”

Elisabeth did not share very much about her trauma history during our theatre process together, but I believe she found in STP a place to be herself, to be wacky and outlandish, and to creatively express her values and hopes for a world based in respect, love and peace. We will remember most her keen sensitivity to others, her soulful wit, her vulnerability, and her serene and dynamic poetry performances. For Elisabeth, Survivor Theatre was, as she says her in poem, “A place to believe and be believed.” Elisabeth is missed by many. She will remain beloved to those of us at STP, and we will continue to be inspired by our “Bright Tiger.”

Bright beautiful tiger
beckoning Little Beth and Elisabeth:
summon up even more bravery
by believing in yourself

~Elisabeth Morrison

If you wish to honor Elisabeth’s life with a gift, friends and family would appreciate donations to SGI-USA in Elisabeth Morrison’s name. Boston Community Center of SGI-USA, 930 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston 02215.

~Melissa Redwin and Cynthia Mochowski
Survivor Theatre Project

**Understanding the Aftermath**

Victims of sexual assault are:
3 times more likely to suffer from depression
6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder
13 times more likely to abuse alcohol
26 times more likely to abuse drugs
4 times more likely to contemplate suicide.

These and many more statistics can be found at: http://www.rainn.org

More research is desperately needed to understand how deeply connected childhood sexual abuse, sex trafficking, ritual abuse, incest and other types of sexual violence are linked to suicide.

More safe spaces are needed in social services for those people who have extreme traumatic abuse histories. Survivors of extreme abuse are often silenced and isolated in support groups and survivor spaces, when other survivors become unable to hear to their stories. Where can they go? Where can they be heard and understood?

If you are interested in working with Survivor Theatre Project in creating performances that build awareness around sexual abuse and violence, please contact us!

~Melissa Redwin, Survivor Theatre Project
survivortheatreproject@gmail.com

**New Quilt Group Forming**

In January of 2014, Incest Resources, Inc. will be organizing a quilting group at the Women’s Center for the purpose of participating in a collective nationwide project. In the summer of 2014, the quilt produced by the group will be sewn together with over 5,000 others. The crowd-sourced Monument Quilt will blanket the lawn of the national mall! The Monument Quilt and Picnic will create a highly visible public space where sexual abuse survivors are honored and supported instead of silenced and shamed. If you are interested in joining the group for one or all of a series of Saturday workshops, please contact Dr. Elaine Westerlund at 617-661-9400. The group meeting will be facilitated by a survivor/artist and no sewing experience is necessary! If you would like more information please visit www.themonumentproject.org
Come shop for unique, hand-made gifts, and buy tasty home-made treats. Part of the proceeds will support the Women's Center!

**Fem(s)ex Workshop Series**

For the past four months, the Women’s Center has hosted the Fem(s)ex workshop—a safe-space for individuals to come together to discuss their experiences with female sexuality. As both a past participant in and current facilitator of the workshop, I have benefitted tremendously from the opportunity to engage with my peers in this setting.

Throughout Fem(s)ex’s 16-week curriculum, we cover a range of topics—including power and privilege, women’s health, sexual practices and pleasure, body image, boundaries and communication, and more. While our discussions and activities have certainly been informative for me, I have found that the act of sharing—and hearing others share—has been the most powerful part of my time in Fem(s)ex. There is no “expert” or “teacher” in the class; rather, each session centers around personal stories. We learn through our openness to the diversity of opinions and backgrounds in the room and by interrogating our assumptions.

My own journey through the workshop has been one of personal growth. I have always been passionate about women’s rights and empowerment and pursued my interest throughout my education. In Fem(s)ex, though, I pushed myself to consider my relationship with my gender, sexuality, and fellow women in ways that I had never done in more academic settings. I made connections with people from very different backgrounds. I recounted experiences and asked questions that I had never had the courage to before. I became part of a community of beautiful, kind women. In this way, I am empowered.

Applications for the next 16-week session will open in January. It is a rewarding experience for those who have spent a lot of time studying, discussing, or contemplating the subjects covered, as well as for those who have spent no time at all in these areas. For more information, please visit www.femsexbos.org or email us at femsexbos@gmail.com.

~Ashlie Williams

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**On-Going Groups**

- Beading Group (every Monday, 10am-12pm)
- Board of Trustees Meeting (monthly, 5:30-7pm)
- Crochet/Knitting Group (every Thursday, 1-2pm)
- Art Making Group (every Tuesday, 10am-12pm)
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (2 Weds, 6-8pm)*
- Emotional Empowerment Group (1st and 3rd Wed, 6-7pm)
- Incest Resources’ Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, (3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm, September through June. No one admitted after 6:15pm)
- Ladies, Let’s Talk About It—Women’s Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Meeting (every Thursday, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Conversation (1st Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Chat (2nd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Connection (3rd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Luncheon at the Women’s Center, noon-1pm, monthly
- One-on-One with Nurse Pat (4th Thursdays, 12-1:45pm)
- Sewing Group (every Thursday, 10am-12pm)
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. For women in straight relationships struggling with their sexual orientation. For details, kate.e.flynn@gmail.com*
- Teen Girls Empowerment Group (one Wed/month, 6-7pm)
- Theatre Arts Workshops (one Sat/month, 1-3pm). Must sign up: 617-354-6394 or cambridgewomenscenter@gmail.com

**Other Groups/Workshops**

- Fem(s)ex—12-week workshop series on female sexuality. www.femsexbos.org. Info/sign-up: femsexbos@gmail.com
- Gentle Yoga and Meditation (every Wednesday, 11:30am-12:30pm; advance sign up recommended: 617-354-6394)
- Drumming with the Batucada Belles (TBA) * Info: http://meetup.com/womyns-drumming
* Wheelchair accessible groups; other groups accessible by pre-arrangement

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**Teen Girls Empowerment Group**

The Teen Girls Empowerment Group is a new group at the Cambridge Women’s Center. It is open to all girls around ages 13-20 who would like to become more involved in discussing women’s empowerment and other topics that are specific to girls growing up in our society today. The group meets once a month on Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm. There will be group speakers and educators that will come to the meetings, including a sex educator and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. This month we meet on Wed., 12/11, and the theme will be sex education. All girls are invited to come and connect within our Women’s Center community!

For more info: rcryr2@lesley.edu or 617-354-6494.

~Becca
**Women’s Center Survey**

This June I interviewed 18 women who frequent the Women’s Center to get a better sense of their needs, interests, and use of the Center. When I asked what was their main reason for coming here, I was not surprised to hear that most came to use the computers, because the computers allow them to communicate with others and look for jobs and housing. However, many women also discussed the community within the Women’s Center, describing it as a safe place where they could interact with their peers. Many said they felt comforted to be with women who have gone through similar struggles and that this is a place to share their experiences with others.

I also asked the women to describe their ideal community and most women spoke of three main attributes: diversity, resources, and support. I found this pertinent because these are the three main characteristics I would assign to the Women’s Center. In my eyes, we are a diverse resource center designed to support women within our community and I am glad that in some ways we can be a place that is ideal to some women.

We also released a paper survey. We had 32 participants respond anonymously. The average age of the respondents was 38 years old. 72% of respondents were single and 84% identified as straight. Out of our sample, 59% of respondents have an abuse history: 47% have suffered from domestic violence, 28% suffered from emotional abuse or neglect as a child, and 25% have suffered from sexual abuse as an adult. 72% of respondents reported an income of under $20,000 last year. 72% of respondents answered that they are housed, whereas 22% were living in a homeless shelter. 41% of respondents identified as unemployed, the most popular answer for employment status.

These factors of abuse and poverty are reflected in the Women’s Center’s mission of social and economic justice. Our survey confirms that our mission is still relevant and that we must push on in the fight for equality.

While this fight is far from over, it is great to hear how the Women’s Center has benefitted many women. On the comments section of the survey, one woman wrote “It’s like a second home for some of the women. I have made leaps and strides while being allowed to come.”

~Maggie, Women’s Center Intern

**Outreach and Events**

Over the last 6 months, the Outreach team has organized, hosted, and helped out with numerous events from Networking Nights, Sunday Funday, Holistic Health and Wellness, the Honk! Parade, and a Lesbian Speed Dating Fundraiser. For December, we have a Teen Sex Education night with wonderful speakers from Fertility Awareness that will be a collaboration between our Teen and Outreach Committees. Stay tuned for 2014 as we are planning more events to include multiple Networking Nights, an Art Show Fundraiser, and Grandmothering the Modern Family. If you have any ideas for new events, want to help plan/organize/execute events, or would like to donate directly to volunteer-hosted events at the Women’s Center, email us at twc.communityoutreachproject@gmail.com.

~Stephanie Martin

**Left on Pearl Indiegogo**

Left on Pearl: Women Take Over 888 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, documents the successful occupation of a Harvard-owned building, the “surprise ending” of the 1971 International Women’s Day march in Boston. The women involved in this action had as their chief demands affordable housing for residents of the Riverside neighborhood and a women’s center for the Boston area community. They left the Memorial Drive building with enough donated money for the down payment on the building at 46 Pleasant Street, to establish the Cambridge Women’s Center.

To complete the film, the members of the 888 Women’s History Project, Libby Bouvier, Susan Jacoby, and Rochelle Ruthchild, with filmmaker Susie Rivo, editor Iftach Shavit, and Cheryl Stein, launched a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo, to raise $50,000.

A lively launch party on September 15, at the Cambridge Community Center, near the 888 Memorial Drive site, began the forty day campaign, with spirited testimonies by Caroline Hunter, Susan Jhirad, and Heike Schotten, and an energetic pitch by takeover participant Sue Katz. Partygoers feasted on delicious food, including pizzas donated by Cambridge’s Just Crust, and cakes by Harvard Square’s Finale.

On October 25, when the campaign ended, we rejoiced at its successful completion. Four hundred and fifty people had donated $52, 628, or 105% of what we had asked.

Now on to finishing the film. We expect to premiere the completed film by the end of 2014. Watch for more news in this space.

Check out our website: www.leftonpearl.org, or like us on Facebook.

~Rochelle G. Ruthchild

**Honk Festival Parade**

Last October the Women’s Center was fortunate enough to participate in the HONK Festival parade. We spent weeks decorating signs and preparing for this exciting event full of activist bands and community organizations dedicated to social justice. Next year, we want to do it even bigger and better, but we’ll need YOUR HELP, so keep an eye out for our Call to Action in the spring newsletter. Thanks to all who cheered us on as we represented our incredible organization! Feeling the love from all of our supporters reminded us how powerful it is to be a part of such a strong community!
Coffee machine
Unscented hand and dish soap
Paper towels and toilet paper
Sturdy brooms and mops
USB sticks/flash drives
Socks
Can opener
Kitchen towels
Food containers
Food storage bags
Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, honey, cream, milk, butter, cooking oil
Spoons and forks
Pens
Narrow dry erase markers for whiteboard
Headphones (for computer use)
Printer & copier paper, white and colored
Postage stamps
Mailing labels (30/page, eg: Avery 5160)
Envelopes—regular (#10), or small (#6 ⅜)
Gift certificates for Target, Tags, Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores, Supermarkets, Home Depot, Best Buy, Sears...

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”

“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 info@cambridgewomenscenter.org