What is the Women’s Center? Different women would give different descriptions, but very often they would include the word “empower” or “empowerment.” How does empowering women take place at 46 Pleasant Street?

A snapshot of the Women’s Center would look like this: women are gathered in different rooms of the house - many are participating in support groups, workshops, or trainings; many are using the computers; some are in the kitchen preparing food, eating, and washing dishes; some are talking to the helpline volunteers or looking through our resource notebooks; others are resting on couches, reading in the library or children’s room, working in the garden, cleaning the house.

Some women comfortably chat with each other. Some ask questions and some listen. Some recognize one another and exchange how they are doing lately. Some don’t recognize each other, but smile and make polite eye contact. Some join one another over coffee or tea and discuss particular topics. Some share their histories and life perspectives. Some show others what the computer can do and how to navigate the Internet. And some keep to themselves.

Because the Women’s Center strives to be a community resource that can be used and contributed to by as many women as possible, a very diverse population of women come here. The Women’s Center is a place where information, ideas, and values from many different cultures coexist. Being women is what holds us together, and our sense of community emerges from that holding.

The Women’s Center’s doors are open to all women. Our differences are sometimes exciting discoveries and sometimes upsetting realities that shake up our familiar world. This community does not have all the answers, but answers unfold when women ask themselves questions such as these: “How can I respond differently?” “How can I understand the other person better?” Answers also unfold when women take certain actions: when one woman makes it a point to greet everyone when she comes in and to say goodbye to everyone when she leaves, changes in others begin to happen. Ours is a community in which, regardless of all the different walks of life, so much learning and growth can take place.

Differences present opportunities that challenge us to take a broader view of people and of life. It is sometimes only through very difficult emotions and reflection that women find ways to be with each other in our shared space that are cooperative and respectful. It is empowering for women to move, to change and to care in spite of their discomfort or fear. And yes, it’s a process. It’s a journey. It’s a ride that you can’t prepare yourself for, but that you need to step into and experience.

As long as we keep the Women’s Center’s doors open to all, we will keep learning from each other and the possibilities are endless. And that is the Women’s Center: a community of empowering possibilities.

~Ming & Judy
Rita Arditti, who had been living with metastatic breast cancer since 1979, died December 25, 2009 of complications of the disease at age 75. She was a wonderful, caring, friendly woman, an author, biologist, unwavering feminist, and dedicated human rights activist.

Among her many accomplishments, she was one of the founders of the Women’s Community Cancer Project (WCCP) at the Women’s Center in 1989. WCCP was the first grassroots organization in the country to confront the need for and lack of research focused on cancer prevention versus cancer treatment, and the lack of policy related to environmental factors.

WCCP is dedicated to the precautionary principal: “Indication of harm, not proof of harm, is our call to action.” Rita was a leader in WCCP for the past two decades and in a national and international movement to look “upstream” to the moral imperative of preventing women from getting cancer in the first place.

In a 2006 French documentary film about the war on cancer, Rita said: “My personal experience made me question the limits of the cure approach, because… contrary to what the doctor was saying, I wasn’t cured… So my experience made me skeptical about what the medical establishment was doing… I’m happy that they’re finding new ways to treat cancer because I can benefit from it. But, when you look at the overall situation, you see that the whole emphasis has been on treatment for those who already have cancer… or early detection… and that the emphasis on research for prevention, which should be on the same level or more for the millions of people who still don’t have cancer, this is totally deficient.”

Rita’s activism included an article, “Why Cancer's Gaining on Us” in the Boston Globe on October 27, 2008. She wrote: “For all the pink ribbons, breast-cancer awareness events, fund-raisers, and celebrations of ‘survivorship,’ the facts remain grim. In this country, a woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer is one in eight. In 1975, the risk was about one in eleven… Since World War II, the proliferation of synthetic chemicals has gone hand-in-hand with the increased incidence of breast cancer. About 80,000 synthetic chemicals are used today in the United States, and their number increases by about 1,000 each year. Only about 7 percent of them have been screened for their health effects… According to a recent review by the Silent Spring Institute in Newton, 216 chemicals and radiation sources cause breast cancer in animals.

Is there definitive evidence that these substances cause breast cancer? Have they been sufficiently studied? Well, no… But shouldn't we do everything possible to reduce exposure to the suspected chemicals? Shouldn't we take precautionary measures, as we continue and deepen the research?”

Rita believed that the only struggle that is lost is the one that is abandoned. “Persistence is the key to anything. It doesn’t matter if you are young or old or super intelligent. Once you are convinced to the core of the importance of something you just keep doing it. It’s such an empowering feeling.”

Rita was a great friend to the Women’s Center and we are proud and grateful to have known her.

You can honor Rita and continue her inspiring work by participating with WCCP and the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow in their campaigns. Please go to: www.healthytomorrow.org or send your email address to wccporg@gmail.com.
Recycling Cell Phones

Recycle your Cell Phone at the Women’s Center—Preserve the environment, help the Women’s Center, lessen the mining impact on women in the Congo

The widespread use and constant upgrading of our cell phones is causing more than a revolution in communication. Cell phones also have an ugly side that we’re rarely aware of when using them.

Our cell phones contain a rare and precious mineral called coltan, which is critical to their operation. The largest source of this mineral is found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Most of us have heard of the atrocities happening to women in the Congo who are being raped and killed, (See Third World Traveler: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Africa/Congo_BehindNumbers.html) but few of us are aware of the role our cell phones play in these events. The coltan in our cell phones, as well as other ores and oil, attract corporate predators from all over the globe to rob resources wherever they can. Coltan is used in products like cellphones, laptops, playstations, jet engines, rockets, weapons, pacemakers, digital cameras, and the war industry in countries which are big electronics producers like the United States, Israel, Belgium, and Germany.

Local populations where coltan is exploited by corporations must turn to mining for economic survival. Young men form or are conscripted into militias to secure mining areas and women and children are often forced into survival sex. Deliberately mislabeled ethnic wars, these conflicts are really land grabs by foreigners in collusion with corrupt local officials who are willing to betray their countries for cash. These industries are worth trillions, but none of it goes back to the communities it was taken from.

There are several components in your cell phone which can be harmful to the environment or can be beneficially recycled. By recycling your phone you can save precious minerals like coltan to be used repeatedly. In doing so you can also raise money for the Women’s Center, help the environment, and lessen the impact of coltan mining.

For now, you can drop off your cell phones at the Women’s Center. In the future we will let you know of additional drop-off locations. Thank you for supporting this Project!

~B. Warrior

Stop Porn Culture Conference

Women & Media Group is going to attend Stop Porn Culture: An International Feminist Anti-Pornography Conference

June 12-13, 2010
Wheelock College, Boston MA
Join us!
For more info, please call (617) 354-8807
or go to http://stoppornculture.org/conference/
We will discuss the conference at our Saturday, June 26 meeting at the Women’s Center

About the Lesbian Chat

I facilitate the Lesbian Chat the first two Fridays of every month at the CWC. Almost three years ago I moved to Boston for grad school. As an older, non-traditional student I struggled to find my way in an unfamiliar city. Then I found the Cambridge Women’s Center and attended a Lesbian Rap (now “Queer, etc.”). The next day I called to volunteer as a facilitator and the Lesbian Chat came into being, a new incarnation of the CWC’s long commitment to LBT community groups.

My life in Boston changed dramatically over the next several months. I began to make friends among the bright, insightful, and diverse group of women who attended the Chat regularly.

Home can be many things. For me it is rooted in people I respect and love, a socially, intellectually and spiritually stimulating experience of community, the nourishment—affirmation—of sisterhood, and a sense of belonging and contributing to something greater than myself. Largely because of the CWC and the Lesbian Chat, I decided to make Boston my home.

Many women find a home at CWC—being many things to many women is the Center’s magic. Valerie, a regular at Chat, says it’s a great place to go on a Friday night “to get grounded.” For Leslie the Chat has been “a wonderful re-entry into the Boston lesbian community” and a place where she has encountered “a diverse group of women that [she] otherwise would never have met.” Niyati echoes the rich experience of diversity stating, “It’s good to hear and reflect on different viewpoints.” She thinks, “the Women’s Center provides important and irreplaceable services and the city is better for it.” Joan has found spiritual enrichment, expressing her gratitude: “We have a herstory in this physical space, joined by the spiritual energy that opens when you enter through the door. I am grateful to all who have given the time, effort and love that allows this to continue and grow.”

Barb feels that the Chat “broadens our awareness” and Sandy values it for being “a healthy and brain-enriching alternative to the bars.” Hilary asserts, “If you're looking for a group of women that make you feel right at home the first moment you meet them, I'd say you've come to the right place.”

Beth, another Chat regular, notes the importance of feminism in this shared experience of community and sisterhood: “I found the Lesbian Chat at the Women's Center at a time when I was really feeling the absence of community in my life - both community among queer women, but also community among feminist women. Going to the Chat allows me to connect with women of varied experiences, backgrounds, ages, and perspectives. While I delight in these differences, I also benefit tremendously from participants' common desire to build community and women-positive space.”

“Women-positive space,” is a phrase that might be said to sum up the power, richness, and creativity of the CWC’s women-centered mission, its commitment to community and sisterhood, and the foundation of feminism. Women-positive space is the source of the CWC’s extraordinary vitality.

~Mairic
After I participated in a healing art group led by Lesley students at the Women’s Center, I enjoyed it so much I decided I could run it myself by structuring it in a way that’s similar to how they did it. I ran the group again after the initial 10 weeks last year because I know how healing it can be for myself as well as for the participants.

The group usually starts with a brief verbal check-in—people talk a little bit about their day or whatever they want to share. After the check-in, I usually lead a guided meditation or a theater game to get people to laugh and loosen up and be present. Most of the time, the guided meditation or the theater game is related to the suggested topic of that week. And then we do art usually for about 45 minutes. People can do art on the suggested topic. Or, if the topic doesn’t speak to them, they can make art on a topic of their choice. And then we have sharing and feedback at the end. If the person feels like it, she can share her art with other people and hear others’ responses. I encourage people not to analyze the art, but to speak from their own experience related to the art.

If there is any newcomer in the group, I start the group with group guidelines and emphasize that there is no good or bad art here, and that art is about expressing ourselves. I see our art as sacred and I want people to feel safe here in a non-judgmental, respectful space. I want women to feel empowered to use the group in the way that feels most healing and/or fun for them.

Many times it seems that people get a whole lot out of the group. They seem fulfilled by doing the art. Often people’s issues seem to get clarified or worked out. Many people say “It’s a nurturing thing” or “It nurtures my spirit.” Sometimes people just enjoy experimenting with the media or material. I know women often save their art or put their art up on the wall. So the experience of making it lives on a bit longer.

Healing Through Art meets every Tuesday 7-9pm until 6/22 in the children’s room. ~Forest

One participant’s feedback on “Healing through Art”

The solidarity among the women was palpable as we shared empathy, excitement, hugs, and laughter. I loved the opening meditation before we explored various topics through collage, painting, clay sculpture, and writing. Forest creates a safe space to come together and experience a little bit of joy in a challenging world. ~Nan

Your Own Group!

Start your own support group, facilitate a workshop or workshops series, or run a class or training! Your ideas can become realities at the Women’s Center, and benefit other women. Talk to Ming and find out how easy it is to get started. You’ll soon discover how rewarding it is.

Call or email Ming—(617) 354-6394 or Ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org.

About Healing Through Art

On-Going Groups

- Battered Women’s Support Group (Every Wednesday, 7-9pm, except the 3rd Wednesday)*
- Coming Out Open Discussion (2nd Tue, 6:30-8:30pm)*
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (Every Tuesday & Thursday, 6-7:45pm)*
- Healing Through Art (every Tue through 6/22, 7-9pm)
- Incest Resources’ Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (Sept through June, 3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm). 6/18: “The Healing Process”
- Queer, etc. (3rd and 4th Fri of the month, 6:30-8pm)*
- Radical Lesbian Book Group (4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8pm)
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. Peer led support group for the woman in a straight relationship struggling with her sexual orientation. For details please email kate.e.flynn@gmail.com
- The Lesbian Chat (1st and 2nd Fridays of the month, 6:30-8pm)*
- The Women’s Center Board Meeting (One Mon/ month, 5:30-7pm)*
- Vinyasa Flow Yoga (1st & 3rd Wed 7-8pm).
- Women & Media (2nd and 4th Sat of the month, Noon-1:30pm). Film screenings and discussion.
- Writer’s Circle (2nd Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30pm. No meetings in June, July and August)

New Group

- Tibetan Yoga (Every Mon through 6/14, 6:30-7:30pm)
* Wheelchair accessible groups
Other groups accessible by prearrangement

Vinyasa Flow Yoga

Every first and third Wednesday a room on the third floor of the Women’s Center is transformed into a "Zen Den". Yes, Yoga is being offered now at the center! Practicing Yoga has proven to produce positive life altering changes in women’s lives. It helps them to regain their "true self" as they reap satisfaction and stability by practicing yoga moves. In addition a routine yoga practice helps women reduce low self esteem, diminishes negative body image issues and increases personal empowerment.

Instructor, Patty Kantlehner is a seasoned yoga practitioner and certified Yoga teacher. She brings support and encouragement to all students. Beginners are absolutely welcome. Patty teaches a Vinyasa style yoga which links breath to body movement. Mats and props are provided. Space is limited, so please call the Women’s Center for reservations. 617-354-8807.
We are looking for volunteers to share their computer savvy with women as part of our computer program. We offer one-on-one tutoring sessions during drop-in hours and by arrangement. Women are usually looking for help in basic computer skills, such as using email and the Internet, understanding how to organize documents or navigate the operating system, MS Office applications, social networking sites, and Craigslist. You might also help maintain the computers by running virus scans, cleaning up the desktop, and troubleshooting problems in the lab (you don't have to be a networking expert).

Our current drop-in hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6:00 – 7:45pm (you should expect to stay until 8pm if you need to do administrative tasks). We would also like to find a few women who could volunteer consistently (every week or every other week) for Saturdays (time to be determined). If these drop-in schedules don't fit your availability, we also need women to provide personalized help by appointment. Request forms are available from the first-floor volunteer for women to fill out (or the volunteer can fill them out by phone).

You might also help us to expand the program by:
1. Offering online or lab-taught training on a specific topic (such as how to use Craigslist, Internet safety, setting up an online email account, etc.)
2. Doing outreach in the community to market the program, form partnerships, share resources with other organizations, etc.

Please go to [http://cambridgewomenscenter.org/getinvolved/volunteer.html](http://cambridgewomenscenter.org/getinvolved/volunteer.html) to download the volunteer application. Email the completed form Ming at ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

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**Therapy Openings**

The Women’s Counseling and Resource Center (WCRC), whose office and counseling rooms are located at the Women’s Center, is currently expanding its volunteer staff. We are able to take requests from low-income women for individual counseling and therapy at this time. The number to call to request therapy is 617-492-8568. Your message will be taken and a call returned within a week to ten days.

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**A Volunteer’s Experience**

We may be from totally different backgrounds. We may be 20 years apart in age. We may see the world in two very different ways. The one thing that will always bond us together is that we are both women. As a helpline volunteer I feel that my role is to offer my non-judgmental support to any and every woman who calls the Women's Center. I am not a professional counselor. I don't pretend to have the answers. I am just a woman who makes herself available once a week to be there for another woman in need. I never judge or criticize. I am attentive, and engaged. I will root for you, I will cry with you. I am there to listen, to help you work through a problem, to offer advice, to make suggestions. I am there to offer my emotional support. I will share with you my own personal experiences. Maybe my truths will help you feel more understood and less alone. As women we are all trying to navigate our way through our own private oceans, and it can get daunting and lonely. It is not easy to reach out and ask for help. I work the helpline because we all need to be reminded that we are not alone and we all need a little encouragement and support from each other from time to time. I work the helpline today because I might need to call it tomorrow.

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**The Women’s Center goes to the River Festival on Saturday, June 5 and the Dyke March on Friday, June 11**

The Women’s Center will have a table along the Charles River for this year’s Cambridge River Festival, which is on Saturday, June 5th, noon-6pm. The Women’s Center will also have a table on Boston Common at this year’s Dyke March. The event is on Friday, June 11th, 6-9pm, starting and ending at the Boston Common Gazebo.

Join us!

Bring a friend!

Spread the word!

Hope to see you there!

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**WISH LIST**

- Headphones (for computer use)
- Flat Monitors 17” or larger
- USB sticks
- Non-scented liquid hand and dish soap
- Food Containers, Food Storage Bags
- Large Kitchen Trash Bags (13 gallon)
- Paper Towels and Toilet Paper
- Coffee, Tea, Sugar, Honey, Cream
- Gift Certificates for Home Depot, Target, Tags, Staples, Office Max, Drug Stores
- Toner Cartridges HP 05A (CE 505A) and mouse pads for Computer Labs
- Mailing Labels
- Printer & Copier Paper
- Shade-tolerant Shrubs, Perennials, Annuals, Herbs, Veggie Seedlings
- Mulch, Organic Fertilizer

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**Please support the Women’s Center!**

Go to [www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org) and click on "support us" and then "donate now!"

Or send your check, payable to the Women’s Center, to:

Women’s Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge MA 02139

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Thank You!
Dear Friends of the Women’s Center,

I am writing to you as a devoted volunteer at the Women’s Center and as one of the co-founders of Incest Resources, Inc. This year Incest Resources is celebrating its 30th anniversary!

There is a reason Incest Resources was the first organization in the country for survivors of child sexual abuse, and that reason is the Women’s Center. In 1980, when the literature said incest cases were one in a million, the Women’s Center gave us a welcoming home, a supportive community of allies, and the opportunity to prove the absurdity of that claim. The Women’s Center believed in the co-founders of Incest Resources and, with the Center’s help, we became pioneers of the national and international survivor movement. We now know that more than 20% of female children are victims of incest and more than 40% are victims of child sexual abuse.

Incest Resources provided survivors with many firsts in 1980, including their first political voice, first speaker’s bureau, first helpline, first self-help support groups, first referral and resource network, first survivor self-help literature, and first legislative advocates. In the 30 years since then, we have introduced many other firsts, continuing to support both survivor activism and survivor recovery.

We are only one of many groundbreaking groups, organizations, and projects nurtured by the Women’s Center. Others include the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, the Battered Women’s Support Group and Directory, Transition House, Finex House, the Elizabeth Stone House, For Crying Out Loud Survivor Newsletter Collective, the Women’s Community Cancer Project, Women of Action, the Survivor Quilt Project, and the Survivor Theatre Project, to name but a few.

Incest Resources continues to operate as an all-survivor, all-volunteer organization in affiliation with the Women’s Center. The Center provides us with a warm, inclusive space that feels safe to survivors, a mailing address, comfortable meeting rooms, staffed phone lines, promotion, outreach, and more. Without the Center’s generosity and support, we would never have accomplished what we have.

Three and a half years ago I became a volunteer fundraiser at the Center, along with Judy Norris, to ensure the Center’s future. Although on much better footing now, we need to give long overdue attention to maintaining the house, as well as the crucial programs and services that take place under its roof. We cannot do both without your support. Our much-loved, well-trafficked, 136 year old home needs major capital improvements now!

The Women’s Center can only continue to be the amazing community resource it has always been with everyone’s help. Please send the most generous contribution you can today!

My thanks and my best,

\textit{Elaine}

Dr. Elaine Westerlund

In celebration of Incest Resources’ 30th anniversary, an exciting event will be coming your way this fall!
The Women’s Center has been for me a real source of insight and companionship when I’ve called many times over the years. So last April I became a volunteer on the helpline, myself, as a way of saying thank you to the Women’s Center.

While my initial intention in volunteering was to try to help empower helpline callers, as I had been empowered, I find that I myself am being transformed in good and sometimes surprising ways. Volunteering has really been an amazing time of renewed hope and awakening for me because I’ve witnessed repeatedly, in the stories of the callers and the women who come to the center, incredible courage, strength, humor, imagination, reverence for life, willingness to express vulnerability, and deep commitment to searching for personal truths. This deepens in me the realization that we women, no matter what challenges we may be facing, or how we may be feeling on any given day, are really strong, gifted, and capable, despite all the centuries of sexism that would deny this fact.

Of course volunteering can, at times, be difficult and painful. I am new to the work and have much to learn. I make mistakes, which sometimes really bug me, but usually I learn from them. Another inevitable and deep challenge springs from the harsh political and social context of our times. We women, like all marginalized people, often face overwhelming social and economic obstacles - challenges which are spiking in this political season of heightened stress from war, increased racism, and the flagging economy. Often helpline callers and visitors contact the center when feeling understandably hurt, angry, sad and/or helpless about hardships and injustices they face, like domestic violence, loneliness, homelessness, poverty, racism, illness, abuse at work, or some combination of these. Often when I sense the gravity of a caller’s situation, I find that I, too, feel considerable pain, anger, sadness, or cluelessness. Sometimes I have nothing to share but wordless, or almost wordless, care for the caller and her process. But I have found, to my surprise, that it is often precisely in these moments of shared darkness that little bits of light emerge mysteriously, like the first hints of dawn in the sky.

What a great lesson for me, a woman who strives to overcome fear! Thank you, Women’s Center!

~ Phoebe
Porn Culture

This past June, Wheelock College in Boston hosted the 3rd international Stop Porn Culture conference. Stop Porn Culture is an organization that aims to educate about the harms done, at both the personal and societal levels, by pornography. Speakers at the conference explained the ways that porn eroticizes violence and stated that mainstream porn has become very violent. Dr Rebecca Whisnart elaborated on how many porn consumers lose touch with their own perceptions as they put their arousal before basic human compassion. We were also informed by Dr. Sharon Cooper from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that in instances of child sexual abuse it has now become the norm for the perpetrator to also make pornography of the child.

Stop Porn Culture focuses in particular on how the normalization of porn is affecting our culture. Fantasies do shape beliefs and beliefs shape behavior. While a direct cause and effect relationship between porn and rape hasn’t been scientifically proven, we do know that porn decreases peoples’ empathy to survivors of sexual violence. How many of these people with decreased empathy end up on juries or even as judges?

While it was encouraging to meet so many people at the conference who care about the deleterious effects of porn, there was the constant return to the question, “Why do men enjoy seeing women hurt and degraded?” Listening to Stop Porn Culture’s September 19th interview of Dr Gail Dines on 88.1 FM WMBR’s “Radio with a View,” it would seem that men (even those who identify as feminists) are loathe to answer that question themselves. As daunting as this question is, the time has come when we can no longer turn away from it. It is time to put the focus on the choices men make. It is time to look at them.

A handful of women here at the Cambridge Women’s Center are interested in starting a Stop Porn Culture chapter in the coming year. In addition to doing slide show presentations, we are also interested in examining why many men delight in the misogyny inherent to porn and in illuminating what we believe porn addiction does. In short, we want to develop an artistic counter-strike against porn. We want to elucidate the personal and political defamation that results from choosing carnal hunger over human rights and, of course, it is our first amendment right to do so.

~ Amelia

A Fond Farewell

Diane Lowenstein passed away on Monday, July 5th, 2010. A long-time Women’s Center volunteer, she led parenting and single parenting groups and met one-on-one with many mothers for over twenty years.

“I knew Diane from the Women's Center, where I was in a group with her 15 years ago. I then did some private counseling with her over the years. She was a beautiful person who always made everyone feel like they were her favorite.”

Diane maintained an unflinchingly positive spirit in the face of decades of medical adversity. Her fortitude, enthusiasm, friendliness, generosity, and kindness touched us all, brightening our lives. We are so grateful to have known her.

~ Judy, Jennifer, and Ming
Incest Resources’ 30th Anniversary Celebration on October 17, 2010 was a very special event right from the start. Co-founders Elaine Westerlund and Kathy Morrissey shared some amusing and sobering recollections from the early days, snippets of which follow. Founded in 1980, Incest Resources was the first organization in the country for survivors of child sexual abuse.

Kathy: We were trying to introduce ourselves to the community and called places we thought would be receptive.

Elaine: Could I spell that? Sure, I-N-C-E-S-T Resources.

Kathy: One person said, “Insect what?”...and after Incest Resources was repeated, said, “So you do pest control?”

Elaine, on trying to get the word out: Hello, I’m looking at your newspaper and the ad we sent in doesn’t seem to be there…I’m calling from Incest Resources…No, that wasn’t a practical joke. It was a real ad for a real group for incest survivors…Yes, please do put it in the next issue. Kathy: The word incest just wasn’t in the vocabulary and for good reasons! There was no Child Abuse Reporting Law until 1983 and no Victim Rights Law until 1984.

Elaine: But some people were receptive. We couldn’t believe it when we heard you were going to Toronto to address the American Psychiatric Association! Who knew they would be open to hearing from a survivor?!

There was no Child Abuse Reporting Law until 1983 and no Victim Rights Law until 1984.

Kathy: Talk about scary! Try telling 200 psychiatrists in 1982 that they’ve missed several beats, and be talking about incest on top of it. Elaine: But they actually appreciated what they could learn from you and published the presentation! I remember that Boston Globe article the same year...

Kathy: Judge William Reineke sentenced a 24 year old man to 90 days in a work-release program for sexually assaulting the 5 year old daughter of the woman with whom he lived. The Judge described the child as “an unusually sexually promiscuous young lady” and declared, “no way do I believe the man initiated sexual contact.”

Elaine: Yep, they blamed the five year old! And a decade later, after millions of adult survivors had come forward, they blamed it on “false memories.” But it didn’t shut us up. The truth has its own way of coming out. A decade after the heyday of “false memories,” the clergy abuse scandal broke – right here in Boston – and, like our own early survivor movement, went national and international.

Kathy: Some truths have to come out over and over again, and childhood sexual abuse is one of them.

During the Q & A that followed, one audience member asked, “Were you both therapists when you started Incest Resources?”

Elaine: Oh no, I was a disabled dental hygienist living on food stamps...

Kathy: I had just put myself through college by working as a legal secretary.

Michelle Harris, founder of the Survivor Quilt Project, then discussed the history of the project. Her presentation included projecting images of the quilts, sharing the artists’ statements for each quilt, and describing many aspects of the quilts, We were moved by her eloquence and her engaging manner, as well as the significance of the Quilt Project. At the end of her presentation Michelle announced that the first quilt made by the Survivor Quilt Project was missing from its display area in the Women’s Center. We were relieved and delighted that it was found elsewhere in the Center the following week.

After the intermission we were treated to a powerful and affecting performance of Rescuing Persephone: Surviving and Transforming Sexual Violence by the Survivor Theatre Project, followed by a dialogue between the audience and the performers and director. The courage and honesty of the actors were awe-inspiring. Many accolades were given to Melissa Penley, the founder of the project and director of the performance, as well as to the talented cast.

What a night! The house was full and the event raised over $2,400 for the Women’s Center. Thank you, Elaine Westerlund, and all the other founders and members of Incest Resources!

~ Judy Norris, Susan Noonan-Forster, Nancy Horwitz, Laura Cherry & Latanya Duncan, Board of Trustees, and Ming Chang, Women’s Center Coordinator

The 2010 Survivor Theatre Project Touring Company performed their original piece Rescuing Persephone: Surviving and Transforming Sexual Violence during the month of October in Brooklyn, Northampton, Florence, and at Incest Resources’ 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Central Square Theater in Cambridge. Survivor Theatre, a project of the Women’s Center, is honored to be bringing the voices of survivors to the public discourse on sexual violence. We aim to bring empowerment and healing through theatre arts exploration, and support the activist community with, what we hope, is truly inspiring work. Also in October, a new group of Survivor-Artists brought childhood moments, transformative movement, and dynamic poetry to the stage in The Memories of Trees. The play was set in a multimedia world that included music, drumming, and full screen projections. In the post-discussion, one audience member ardently stated, “I see that there needs to be a different word than survivor, these women have done so much more than just survive.” The Survivor Theatre Project is made up of the radiant, brave, and tender warriors who have chosen to create theatre about their experiences as survivors. On our team are also many survivors and allies who have helped us document our work, print programs, design posters, support the plays as musicians, and encourage us in an abundance of ways. The artists and I are so grateful for your solidarity.

The Survivor Theatre Project wishes to thank the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Cambridge Arts Council, The Puffin Foundation, Moonifest, and our wonderful donors for supporting this important work. We are seeking additional funding sources for 2011, so please let us know your ideas! Our next round of theatre workshops for survivors will happen in fall 2011 in Cambridge and Western Mass, so please be in touch if you are interested in bringing your voice, passion, and talent to this project.

Email us at: survivortheatreproject@gmail.com or for more info go to: www survivortheatreproject com

With gratitude,

Melissa Penley
On-Going Groups

- Battered Women’s Support Group (Every Wednesday, 7-9pm, except the 3rd Wednesday)*
- Coming Out Open Discussion (2nd Tue, 6:30-8:30pm)*
- Drop-In Computer Support for Women (every Monday and Tuesday, 2-4pm)*
- Incest Resources’ Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (Sept through June, 3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm - topics below)
- Ladies, Let’s Talk About It—Women’s Narcotic Anonymous (NA) Meeting (Thursdays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Chat (1st and 2nd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Lesbian Connection (3rd Fridays, 6:30-8pm)*
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. Peer led support group for the woman in a straight relationship struggling with her sexual orientation. For details please email kate.e.flynn@gmail.com
- Board Meeting (2nd Thursdays, 5:30-7pm)
- Annual Meeting: Thursday, February 10, 2011
- Women & Media (2nd and 4th Saturdays, 12:30-2pm)
- Film Screenings 2nd and Discussions 4th Saturdays
- Writer’s Circle (2nd Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm. No meetings in June, July, and August)

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

Monthly Theatre Workshops

For those who are curious, for those who are artists, for those who’ve always wanted to try, for those who have a passion for the real magic of artistic performance. Starting in July 2010, the Women’s Center, in collaboration with the Survivor Theatre Project, has been offering monthly theatre arts workshops taught by local working artists. We’ve had a different theme each month, including Acting, Clowning, Dealing with Stage Fright, The Breathing and Drawing Space, and Storytelling. These free, inclusive workshops include a range of performing arts and approaches. The only regret is that we must limit the number of participants due to lack of space. However, the small group provides a real sense of intimacy and safety that is so nourishing when taking risks that performing requires. These workshops cater to everyone; they are challenging, fun and accessible, even if you have never performed a day in your life! The Monthly Theatre Arts Workshops will take a winter break, but will pick back up in February. Also, we are seeking more artists to teach workshops in 2011, so if you are an artist or you know one, please get in touch: survivorthetreeproject@gmail.com! See you on stage!

~ Melissa

Monthly Luncheons

Every woman at the Women’s Center is a part of the community. At this monthly gathering, lunch is provided, and women have an opportunity to get to know and appreciate each other. It is also a time to hear each other’s ideas on how to make our shared space comfortable for all women, and how each of us can best respond when differences challenge us. Together we can make this precious place work well for everyone! The next luncheon will be on Thursday, December 16 from noon-1:30pm.

Please come. We look forward to seeing you!

The Empowerment Group

The focus of this group is to instill empowerment within each other through the support of other women. The group will be a place where women can come together and talk about problems and issues in a warm, inviting, and non-judgmental atmosphere. If you are interested in attending, or if you have any questions, please email Verna at vskeete@gmail.com.

Need Ideas for Holiday Gifts?
Check out
Charite Jewels
www.charitejewels.com
All profits go to the Women’s Center!

Incest Resources’ Drop-In Discussion Group for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse
3rd Fridays, 6-7:30pm

Upcoming Dates and Topics
- December 17: Anger
- January 21: Control
- February 18: Victim or Survivor
- March 18: Self-Acceptance
- April 15: Trust and Intimacy
- May 20: Sexuality
- June 17: Resilience

Therapists Needed
Are you a therapist looking for an opportunity to volunteer?
Call the Women’s Counseling and Resource Center at the Women’s Center (617) 492-8588
Happy Graduation, Allie! Many Thanks, Allie!

In August this amazing letter arrived at the Women’s Center accompanied by $1,031! “Two years ago I participated in the Pine Manor College Women’s Leadership Conference. Overall, the group of girls who attended has had a lasting impact on me, but more specifically my time spent at your house for females in need was an incredible experience. We installed air conditioners, pulled apart a fence, weeded, painted, cleaned, and more. The special part was I have never seen a group of young girls so motivated to help. Your organization and cause is simply outstanding and your devotion is touching to all who observe your work. During the day I was also fortunate enough to speak with the ‘real women’ behind the production making it all happen. I was told some personal stories and it was so inspiring. Recently I had a graduation party and in lieu of gifts I asked for donations to your cause. I wish you the most of luck continuing your truly impactful venture helping women in need.

Yours Truly, Allison Lonstein

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Call for Volunteers

There are lots of great ways to volunteer at the Women’s Center. Be a listening support on the helpline; facilitate a group, workshop, or training; do childcare for attending mothers; work on events; help with snow shoveling; do painting, building repairs, and more. Join us and put your talents to good use! Please contact Ming at 617-354-6394 or ming@cambridgewomenscenter.org

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Foundation and Corporate Support

Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
Bay State Federal Savings Charitable Foundation
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
Cabot Family Charitable Trust
Cambridge Arts Council
Cambridge Community Foundation
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George H. and Jane A. Mifflin Memorial Fund
Glass Charitable Foundation
Hartley Corporation
John Donnelly Trust
John M. Sawyer Memorial Trust
Puffin Foundation
SAP, AG
Sovereign Bank Foundation
TD Charitable Foundation
TJX Foundation

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Rasheeda Abdul-Musawwir was an intern this past summer at the Women's Center. She is a student at Wheaton College and is interested in women's rights issues. She has expressed her gratitude for the profound experiences she has had with the Women's Center. The picture above is of Rasheeda in the helpline office.

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888 Women's History Project Inc.
Left on Pearl

40th Anniversary Screening

Sunday March 6, 2011
2:00pm at the Brattle Theater

On March 6, 1971, International Women’s Day marchers turned LEFT ON PEARL and marched into a Harvard University building, declaring it a Women’s Center! This documentary film commemorates the takeover and 10-day occupation of the building, which transformed participants’ lives and sparked the creation of many community-based projects including our own Women’s Center! Join us in celebrating this fascinating, little-known chapter in 2nd Wave Feminist history.

www.888womenshistory.org
www.cambridgewomenscenter.org
www.brattlefilm.org
November 23, 2010

Dear Friend of the Women’s Center,

As we near the close of yet another difficult year economically, we have much to be pleased about and much to be concerned about. As the hard times have become ongoing, women are facing greater challenges than ever. Approximately 20% of the women we now serve are homeless, and many, many more are struggling with unemployment, poverty, and domestic violence, which is alarmedly on the rise with the economic downturn.

A growing number of women are looking to the Women’s Center for support, resources, and opportunities to change their lives. We have expanded our groups, workshops, and trainings to over 190, with free childcare, and more mothers are participating. Our computer labs continue to be open six days a week, with both formal and informal instruction available. And we continue to offer peer counseling 55 hours a week by phone or in person, along with extensive resource and referral information. In addition, many women appreciate the opportunities at the Center to become involved in activism. All this is made possible by dedicated volunteers, including interns and pro bono professionals. New volunteers are needed and welcome throughout the year!

All of our programs and services remain free of charge. The Women’s Center continues to operate on a budget that was cut by 60% in August of 2006 by the new Board. We continue to pay $900 per month on the $80,000 loan the previous administration took out after depleting the Center’s funds and investments. After other expenses, revenue has covered only one salary for our gracious Center Coordinator, Ming Chang, who is very overextended. In the past we had both a paid Volunteer Coordinator and a paid Program Coordinator. Ming is presently responsible for both these roles. In addition, we had a paid fundraiser to do what we have done as volunteers for the past four years.

As we enter our 40th year in a much more stable position than in 2006, our fiscal goal is to move toward hiring a part-time Program Coordinator and a part-time Fundraiser. To get there we need to maintain our current supporters and bring more individuals, corporations, and foundations aboard as new contributors. We would be thrilled to have you join us in expanding our donor base.

Please send the most generous contribution you can today. Please tap into any matching gift sources you have at work or elsewhere. And please tell any prospective donors you know what a rare and invaluable community resource the Women’s Center is. With your help, we can look forward to an exciting future with adequate paid staff positions, a well-maintained home, and freedom from debt!

Our thanks and our best,

Judy Norris
Co-Chair, Board of Trustees

Elaine Westerlund
Director, Incest Resources

P.S. If you have ideas and energy for 40th anniversary celebratory events, we want to hear from you!

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization (Federal I.D. #23-7131753)
Support the Women's Center Online!

Go to www.cambridgewomenscenter.org and click on "support us" and then "Donate Now."

You can also support the Center by using GOODSEARCH to search the Internet.

Go to www.goodsearch.com and select "Cambridge Women's Center (Cambridge, MA) ID: 875340" as your charity destination.