

Womenews

W o m e n ' s C e n t e r o f M o n t g o m e r y C o u n t y

Presidential Notes:



Spring arrived in all its glory making an appearance just in time for our Champagne Brunch celebration on April 10th, which honored four individuals *who light the way for others*. *Julie Greenbaum, Rabbi Robert Leib, Meg McGoldrick and Erica Weinstein*; remarkable and inspiring individuals who are role models of conscience and community service...

The event was a success from friendship, warmth and goodwill generated by our guests, dignitaries and our membership to the accomplishment of our financial goal. This was a loving and caring community coming together to show our appreciation for each other as well as our extraordinary honorees. The day was picture perfect and the joy of spring appeared inside through the beautiful glass windows reflecting the radiant sunshine that glowed from within. I hope that all of you who attended shared my feelings. The efforts of Donna Jarrett-Kane and Sandy Kravitz and their hard working committee, Rhoda Birnbaum, Nora Boardman, Harriet Brecher, Norma Jarrett and Ann Miller Sobel was clearly reflected by the success of the day. I was so proud to be part of the team!

To all of our volunteers at the Women's Center who are performing invaluable counseling services, legal advocacy, thrift shop services, community education and office reception, I thank you for all that you are doing to make a difference for others. To our general membership, your selfless contributions and donations of money, items for our thrift shop and your support for our work is essential to the needs of our center. Thank you. To the board of directors, I thank you for your support, your committee work, your good will on behalf of the center, your talent and expertise and for generously offering it whenever needed. I am incredibly fortunate to know and work with all of you.

To MARIA MACALUSO: Executive Director extraordinaire, there are not enough accolades that can pay tribute to her dedication to the center, her skills in performing her job, and her commitment to the friends and colleagues she has made from her numerous associations with community organizations around the county. She not only gives her heart and soul, but physically does Herculean tasks clearly way out of the realm of her job description to save someone else's back. Nothing is too much, and she tells me time and again how much she loves what she does. Clearly it shows. I am thankful for Maria's dedication to her work and the success of the center, but most grateful for the blessing of our friendship which is her greatest gift to me.

On behalf of our volunteers, I thank our staff for their patience and guidance and for setting the standards we need to help us to be the best at what we do.

There has been much adversity relating to flooding and destruction in our Jenkintown office which has created tremendous burdens in the face of the amount of work that needs to be done out of that office. To our volunteers in Jenkintown, to Maria and the staff who have continued to steadfastly work under the current conditions, you have our thanks and admiration for your dedication in continuing to get the job done in spite of the uncomfortable conditions. We are in the process of remedying the situation and expect that very soon you will be in a better working environment.

continued on Page 6

Board News

Nominating Committee Presents the 2005 Slate of Proposed New Board Members

By the time you receive this newsletter, ballots will be in the mail to our active, voting members for the re-election of Board members whose two-year term will be ending in June, as well as to elect new members. Ann Miller Sobel, Committee Chair, and her Committee ask that you send your completed ballot to the Jenkintown office in care of the Nominating Committee prior to the June Board Meeting (*date to be announced*) or bring them in person to that meeting. Extra ballots will be available at the Jenkintown office, for those needing them. Votes will be tabulated at the June meeting, with final results announced at that time.

In order to help you feel more informed and comfortable with the decision-making process, we wanted to share with you some background information on our proposed new additions to the Board of Directors. These individuals, if elected, will serve a two-year term beginning July 1, 2005.

Renee Brock – Renee is Chief Financial Officer and Counsel for Selas Fluid Processing Corporation, Division of Linde AG in Blue Bell, PA. Her responsibilities include oversight of company commercial matters including accounting, customer contracts, purchasing, intellectual property and real estate, in addition to the direct supervision of purchasing, Human Resources and finance/accounting personnel. Renee believes in the goals of the Women's Center with respect to empowering women in many aspects of their lives and would like to utilize her education and experience to help in furthering the accomplishment of those goals.

Margie Cherry – Margie is currently a member of the New Choices team at Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. Margie is actively helping women in transition who are emerging from abusive situations into rediscovering their worth and new paths in life. Currently she is pursuing an MA in Counseling Psychology, so she can better counsel women in transition in issues of career, self-esteem, and personal growth, created workshops dealing with women and change, and women and parenting –related stress. She is a former volunteer nursing mother's counselor and local group leader. Her personal passion is helping women make positive changes.

Dorothy Enright – Dot is returning to the board after a two year hiatus, during her time away from the board she continued to volunteer her support through her committee work and other efforts. In addition she has served as Deputy Director of the Montgomery County Office on Aging and Adult Services, a county agency familiar with, and funders of, services to clients of the Women's Center. She has also served on the American Red Cross's Eastern Montgomery County Board and held a gubernatorial appointment to the Montgomery County Board of Assistance for approximately twelve years. Dot feels that after watching the Women's Center develop into it's current status in the community she is ready to return to the board and continue to help it prosper.

Nancy Mellon – Nancy Mellon was a mental health therapist for eleven years primarily working with women with eating disorders. Currently she is the Director of the New Choices program at Montgomery County Community College helping women in transition. Nancy looks forward to bringing her vast experience and knowledge to the varied women at the center. Her earliest recollections of the Women's Center were when the American Association of University Women started talking about starting a center in Jenkintown; Nancy was at one of the first planning meetings and after attending and presenting many workshops looks forward to being a member of the Board.

R. Michael Owens – Michael is a civic leader, writer and public speaker with excellent interpersonal skills and proven ability to interact successfully with diverse groups. Presently he is the Chief Executive and Financial Officer of the North Penn Chamber of Commerce. He has been a freelance contributing writer to several local publications including the Philadelphia Inquirer and Suburban and Wayne Times. He is a practiced litigator specializing in Corporate/Business and Financial services. Michael spent many years as an attorney with the Community Legal Services. Michael has not taken

his commitment to the Women's Center lightly; he is already working on the Board's behalf and has become a member of the Development Committee.

Lillian Sulliman – Lillian has been a constant in the Women's Center for many years. She has worked as one of the Center's Legal Advocates since 1996 and was awarded both the Linda Collins and Victim Advocate of Montgomery County Commission on Women and Families Awards in 2004. Her work on dedication to domestic issues began in the early 1980's when she lived in California and the Women's Center was fortunate when she moved east that she joined the center as a volunteer in the mid 1990's. Lillian will be a great asset as the Center expands its services to Geriatric needs as she has published articles on research she completed on Geriatrics during her graduate studies. The Women's Center is looking forward to having Lillian return to Board since her last term in 2001.

LESSONS FROM GEESE

Something to think about...

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates "uplift" for the bird following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the "lifting power" of the bird immediately in front.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point, taking the leadership. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and stay with the goose until it is able to fly again or dies. They then launch out on their own with another formation to catch up with the flock.

Consider a flock of geese in formation.

Consider what they might teach a human family.

-from the 'Center for Families and Relationships'

Welcome to a Hotline Counselor

Congratulations to Jenkintown volunteer Patty Tracy for successfully completing the domestic violence counselor/advocate training and practicum. Patty also works in our thrift shop on Saturdays. Welcome!

Book Club Meetings

May 18th Sunny will do My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult at Martha's house

June & July To be announced

All book club meeting start at 7:30 for socializing and 8:00 the discussion begins. Any questions call Dorothy at 215-782-2259.

Sweden Boldly Exposes a Secret Side of Women's Lives

Lizette Alvarez, April 6, 2005, New York Times.

Full-throated feminism and its offspring, gender equality, have never gone out of vogue in Sweden. Feminists here are seldom hectored about quashing family values or derided, at least publicly, as a gang of castration-happy women. Relentlessly, they have pushed for women's rights, and their triumphs are well known. Sweden ranks at the top (or near it) in the number of women who hold public office, serve as cabinet ministers, graduate from college and hold jobs. Mothers are granted long maternity leaves and send their children to excellent day care centers.

If anything, the movement is gaining strength: Sweden is expected later this year to create its first feminist political party, which could court as many as 1 in 5 voters, a recent opinion poll indicated. But there is one significant blot on the record of women's empowerment here: domestic violence, a crime that until recently remained muffled in shame.

Swedish men are not any more violent toward women than the men of most other Western European countries. It has simply been easier for them to get away with violence against wives and girlfriends, experts and politicians said, and harder for women to get the help they need.

In an unforeseen twist, Sweden's well-guarded sense of privacy and its leadership on women's rights served for many years to mute the issue. Rather than boldly tackle the pattern of violence, many in Sweden reflexively dismissed it as the sort of thing that happens somewhere else.

"The equality thing put a wet blanket over the issue," said Eva Hassel Calais, assistant to the chairwoman of the National Organization for Women's Shelters in Sweden. But this is changing.

It took a stinging Amnesty International report and startling admission by well-known victims to set off a national reckoning that began last year. That has been followed by calls for action, not for new laws- Sweden has passed a series of tough, progressive laws in recent years- but for new attitudes. A period of self-reflection was inevitable.

"We've had to change our picture of ourselves in Sweden," said Maria Carlshamre, a former television journalist who acknowledged last summer to viewers, against the stations's wishes, that her husband had abused her for a decade. "We are not the gender equality champions of the world."

The turmoil began a year ago with the Amnesty International report, which took Sweden to task for failing to adequately curb violence against women and help victims cope with their situations. The organization also cited spotty prosecutions, vague statistics, old-fashioned judges and unresponsive local governments.

The report praised Sweden's laws as "unambiguous," but warned that "strongly worded legislation is not in itself a sufficient instrument to ensure women's right to a life without violence." The group concluded that acts of violence against women had spiraled upward in Sweden in the last 15 years, a jump that could not be explained away as merely a greater willingness by women to report the incidents. The number of police reports filed for assault against women increased 40 percent in the 1990's, according to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

By 2003 the number of reported assaults had swelled to 22,400, from 14,000 in 1990. An estimated 16 women are killed by a husband or partner each year, the report said. And only a fraction of the cases involving assaults, rape, breaches of restraining orders or continuing abuse lead to prosecution, the report stated. The report also underscored that most incidents of violence against women continue to go unreported.

In addition, the network of shelters for battered women is deeply frayed, the report says, with only about 150 of the 289 municipalities in Sweden operating shelters. Those open for business rely almost entirely on volunteer workers.

Like a picture-perfect family forced to come clean, Sweden found itself baring its own foibles, women and experts said. “There has been a turning point,” said Liza Marklund, a journalist and best-selling novelist whose books have explored themes of violence against women. “Now people are beginning to take it seriously.”

In October, Gudrun Schyman, one of Sweden’s most colorful and radical feminist politicians, proposed a “man tax” in Parliament, where she is a member of the Left Party. The idea was to force men to pay for the consequences of their violence against women. The proposal stalled, but seized the public’s attention.

Not long after, the justice minister, Thomas Bodstroem, declared his own outrage during a November demonstration to protest men’s violence against women. “Let this become an election issue in 2006,” he announced. “Silence is a betrayal to all abused women, and a help to all violent men.”

In March, the prosecutor general proposed building a team of 35 special prosecutors devoted to the issue of violence against women. There have also been proposals to electronically tag men who break the law. The pervading sense that domestic violence is a crime affecting “others” is dissipating.

“It’s not a question of a group of criminals,” said Ms. Schyman, who is leading the campaign for the feminist party. “It’s not alcoholics and drug users, and it’s not people that are put out from the society. It’s every man in every class of society.” The same is true of the victims.

Ms. Carlshamre, 48, helped crack the code of silence last summer with her surprising on-air admission that she had been beaten and psychologically abused for 10 years. “I said, ‘Do you want to know what a battered woman looks like? Here she is,’ ” she recalled. Ms. Carlshamre said she was fired because her bosses, fearing slander charges, had warned that the topic was off limits. She then ran for a seat in the European Parliament on an anti-violence platform, and won. “Now you can’t talk about battered women like ‘them’ anymore,” she said. “It’s no longer about poor women on the fringe of society.”

Still, many women are skeptical that things will change all that much, or that fast, and they point to the stubborn gender imbalance in the country’s power and pay structure as the major reason why. This is precisely the reason why feminists are trying to form a political party. “We have made much progress in the discussion of gender equality; it is a more advanced political debate,” Ms. Schyman said. “This is one thing, and reality is another.”

UPS & Citizen’s Bank Support the Women’s Center of Montgomery County

The Women’s Center received a \$2,000 grant from United Parcel Services (UPS) in support of our domestic violence program. We are extremely grateful to both UPS and to our Board member Thom McGowan, chair of our Board Development Committee and also a UPS employee, who advocated most eloquently on behalf of the Center in his presentation to their grant review committee. Thank you, Thom, for your efforts on our behalf, as well as your faith in our mission and commitment to ensuring the Center’s future! And thank you to UPS for your support and your recognition!

We also received a \$5,000 grant from Citizen’s Bank Foundation, again with the assistance and support of a Board member, Kathy Gallagher, who, like Thom, represented our interests and her confidence in our work to her employer. It is so heartwarming to have such incredibly thoughtful and dedicated Board members who are powerful ambassadors and spokespersons working in their community and their workplace on our behalf! Thanks to Kathy and Citizen’s Bank for your generous assistance in our efforts to end domestic violence in our community!

We want to express our admiration for both of these corporations – UPS and Citizens Bank – for serving as outstanding examples of community giving at its finest and for dedication toward improving the lives of their customers, employees and their world in general!

The World Health Report - April 12, 2005

The World Health Organization's 2005 Report, *Make Every Mother and Child Count*, examines why eleven million children under age five will die this year, and why 529,000 mothers will die during pregnancy, childbirth, or soon thereafter. One strategy that can make pregnancy safer is to reduce gender-based violence, it says.

Make Every Mother and Child Count proposes building societies that support women who are pregnant by tackling the low status of women, violence against women, and the lack of employment rights for pregnant women. "Gender-based violence or exposure to hazards in the workplace may not be readily recognized by pregnant women as problems that health workers can help to resolve," the report says, "but [they] constitute major and underestimated public health problems."

It notes that unequal power relations between man and women often cause unwanted pregnancy, finding that seven to 48 percent of adolescent girls around the world report that their first sexual experience was forced. Women who have experienced a sexual assault often fear the pregnancy and delay getting health care.

"Violence against women by a partner is a global public health problem and a human rights violation," says *Make Every Mother and Child Count*. Studies from Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Mexico and Nicaragua have found that 14 to 32 percent of women report having been physically or sexually abused during pregnancy- and the perpetrator is usually their partner. Violence increases risk of premature labor, low birth weight babies, sexually transmitted diseases, depression and other mental health problems.

Violence can also kill. In Pune, India, 16 percent of all deaths during pregnancy in 400 villages and seven hospitals were attributed to partner violence.

The World Health Organization recommends screening for abuse to protect women during and after pregnancy. "Health workers must not only be sensitive to the subject, but also need to know how to deal with it," the report says. It recommends that doctors, nurses, midwives and other health care providers be specifically trained to recognize and inquire about intimate partner violence and provide information, care, support and referrals.

Make Every Mother and Child Count also notes that laws establishing a minimum age for marriage, criminalizing violence against women, and prohibiting harmful practices such as female genital mutilation can protect girls and women who are pregnant and improve their overall health.

In the U.S., the Pan American Health Organization, the regional office of WHO, is sponsoring a series of events featuring Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt, U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Andrew S. Natsios, PAHO Director Dr. Mirta Roses, and others to draw attention to efforts to reduce maternal deaths and child mortality.

Make Every Mother and Child Count is available online at www.who.int/whr/2005/en/index/html

continued from page 1

Inside this issue you will find the biography's of the slate of perspective board members for next year. Please take the time to read about them. This is the first step in becoming acquainted with who they are, and hopefully you will endorse the board's recommendation for the new slate. I think you will agree that our center is fortunate to have such talented and caring individuals who wish to contribute to the Women's Center by offering their service as board members.

I am really looking forward to seeing everyone together at our volunteer dinner on June 2nd, where we can celebrate and honor each other for making a difference and to take pride in the accomplishments of all of the great things that we are doing at the women's center! Congratulations to all of us!

**Upcoming Events:
Community Education**

**ALL VOLUNTEERS:
WELCOMED, NEEDED, AND WANTED!**

MY HANDS ARE NOT FOR HURTING

June 8, 2005 – Mulberry Child Care - Collegeville - 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM

July 26, 2005 – Girl Scouts of Southeastern PA – Miquon – 1:00 – 1:20 PM and 1:30 – 1:50 PM

August 16, 2005 – Girl Scouts of Southeastern PA – Miquon – 1:00 – 1:20 PM and 1:30 – 1:50 PM

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS:

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – Self Esteem Workshop – 12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – Healthy Relationships – 1:20 PM – 2:10 PM

TABLE EVENTS:

May 5, 2005 – Mont. County Teen Parent Task Force – 16th Annual Teen Parent Conference – 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

May 13, 2005 – MontCo Senior Games and Expo – Montgomery Co. Community College – 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

May 20, 2005 – Harriton High School - 10:45 AM – 12:30 PM

May 26, 2005 – Senior Citizen Expo – Fort Washington Expo Center 10:00-1:30PM

June 16, 2005 – Senate Republican Caucus Services – Red Hill – 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

On behalf of the Board and Staff of the Women's Center, we are pleased to announce that the following individuals will receive our annual Linda Collins Awards for Volunteer Excellence. This year, as we enter our 30th anniversary year as a volunteer-driven organization, we will be honoring five individuals, one from each office. Linda Collins, who is stepping down on June 1st from her position as Executive Director at Laurel House, will be present at our June 2nd Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to help us recognize these individuals, as thank all of our volunteers for all that you do each day for the Women's Center of Montgomery County!

Betsy Galante (Jenkintown)

Jane Hill (Norristown)

Nikki Stansbury (Pottstown)

Dorothy Yeh (Lansdale)

Grace Miller (Bryn Mawr)

Congratulations to you all!

Pursuant to a vote by the active membership held in March 2005, the Board of Directors is pleased to announce the adoption of a new mission statement for the Women's Center of Montgomery County, effective April 1, 2005:

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is a volunteer, community organization with a primary focus on freedom from domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Our programs, policies and procedures reflect our strong commitment to empowering women.

Benefit the Women's Center When You Shop On-Line! Website Shopping Links

The Women's Center of Montgomery County will earn a percentage of each purchase you make with our online vendors if you link to their site through the Women's Center website at www.wcmontco.org:

Staples.com
Boscovs.com
Barnes&Noble.com
IBM.com
PetSmart.com
Priceline.com
MusiciansFriend.com
Kmart.com
Amazon.com
OldNavy.com
Modell's Sporting Goods
Verizon Wireless
Proflowers.com
Entertainment Book

Women's Center of Montgomery County

Jenkintown Office

215-885-8440

Korean: 215-886-8725

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

FAX: 215-885-8156

Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

FAX: 610-970-0705

Lansdale Office

215-853-8060

FAX: 215-853-8065

Bryn Mawr Office

610-525-1427

FAX: 610-525-1429

www.wcmontco.org

**1-800-773-
2424**



DATED MATERIAL

**NONPROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
JENKINTOWN
PA
PERMIT NO. 5**