

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



By Joyce Skobinsky

Five years ago, at the request of Board President, Marilyn Roskam and with the approval and support of the Board, I assumed the role of President of the Board of Directors of The Women's Center. This was a great honor accompanied by a great deal of responsibility. Feelings of doubt and personal insecurity about my ability to preside over this important organization were very strong. My mind went through a million reasons to decline; this time however, I allowed myself to be convinced by the confidence of my peers.

Looking back over my tenure, I am very happy about where the Women's Center is today. One of my dreams as President was to see The Women's Center of Montgomery County become the prototype for other organizations in the nation whose mission is also to empower women and end domestic violence! We have recently been granted such status by PCADV who has declared us a leader for "best practices" in the State; a good beginning for becoming the best in the nation! This resulted because we are serving women consistently; with the excellence that is driven by heart felt concern. They **are** our best practices, and that is what makes the Women's Center unique!

Our volunteers are second to none. Inspired by the leadership, commitment and passion of our Executive Director, Maria Macaluso and her staff we are exposed to the highest standards of professionalism and undaunted spirit!

During my tenure, Vice Presidents' Sandy Kravitz and Lillian Sulliman were my special gems and advocates who gave generously of their friendship and loyalty. They did much to bolster my confidence with their listening skills, vitality and involvement; and, when asked, their respected opinions.

I thank all of the Board Members with whom I have worked over the years. You have steered the Women's Center with wisdom and expertise.

So important to me, is Maria Macaluso, our devoted Executive Director and my dear and trusted friend. Clearly, I could not have done my job without her, and there simply is no way to thank her. Maria is always available to share her knowledge, offer suggestions, and to help in any way she can. She always shows consideration and appreciation for the board and for all of our volunteers.

Maria is truly an inspiration to me. She makes things happen!! She is a woman who works untold hours, and beyond that, volunteers her time on the hotline as well as countless other volunteer tasks for the community at large. Maria always creates time for those who need her ear or her help with anything. With all that she does, she keeps a sunny disposition and has a great sense of humor. She is smart, funny and fast!! How lucky we are to have her!

Though I am leaving my office, I am looking forward to new responsibilities within the center and I'll be mulling over my options. In the meantime, my plan is to remain on the board as "Past President", and keep a voice in our future.

I am thrilled to tell you that Beth Brinly will be stepping up to the office of Board President. Beth has been a member of the Board of Directors since 2004 and from that time she has supported the board with her active participation in all of our conversations, activities and projects. She is well informed about the Women's Center, our volunteers and our history. She

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has created and conducted a new member Board Training and led us through a detailed process of a board evaluation, compiling all that we shared in a cohesive summary from which we were able to move forward. She is currently chairing our Operations Committee which consists of Personnel, Finance, Governance and Facility; and is also an active participant on the Planning Committee. She is unanimously respected by the board members and we are all looking forward to her fresh leadership as President. I invite the membership to attend board meetings from time to time and get to know Beth personally. You will not be disappointed.

I am very proud that I have had the opportunity to lead this wonderful organization. It has been a time in my life of personal challenge and personal growth and accomplishment. I am very appreciative and thank all of you for your support in achieving the success that the Women's Center has earned.

Board of Directors Announce the Scheduling of The Annual Meeting of the Membership

The Board of Directors invite you to their June board meeting, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the membership, on **Thursday, June 21, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Elkins Park** office. For those of you new to the Center, although all of our Board meetings are open to our members, in accordance with our bylaws, the June meeting is held concurrently with the Annual Meeting of the Membership. This meeting is an opportunity for our members to hear the results of the election of new members to our Board and a chance to express our thanks and say goodbye to departing Board members.

This year is especially bittersweet for all of us here as our current Board President, Joyce Skobinsky, will be stepping down from office after five years. While Joyce will remain on the Board, we view this meeting as an opportunity to thank Joyce for her passionate and dedicated leadership and to celebrate all of her accomplishments as our President.

It is also a great opportunity to meet incoming Board President, Beth Brinly. Beth has served on our Board since July 2004, and been an active part of our organization and our leadership during the past three years. In her professional life, Beth currently works for the U.S. Department of Labor. Prior to taking on this post in 2005, Beth served as an Education Program Specialist in the Secretary's Regional Representative Office in the U.S. Department of Education's Philadelphia Regional Office. In that capacity, she provided technical assistance and support regarding national education initiatives including the No Child Left Behind Act in the Mid-Atlantic region. Beth also collaborated on issues such as Youth Development, Welfare Reform, Workforce Investment Act and Welfare-to-Work as well as those affecting children and families. Beth is an Elder and on the Board of Directors of Victory Center Church. She draws on her experiences growing up with six sisters, some of whom have been victims of domestic violence themselves. Beth was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky where she received her undergraduate degree from the University of Louisville and her graduate degree from Pennsylvania State University. She has also served as the President of the Kentucky Junior Chamber of Commerce.

With the prospect of celebrating two such accomplished women included in our agenda, we believe the June meeting will be an informative and festive occasion. In addition to meeting Joyce and Beth, we will also be saying goodbye to several long-time Board members, including Sandy Kravitz and Sandy Hyman, who have both served on the Board for six years and must, in accordance with our bylaws, 'take a break.' We will also be inviting prospective new Board members to attend the meeting (Note: the slate of nominees will be announced in the June newsletter).

We welcome members of the Women's Center to join us at this meeting, but ask that you contact the Elkins Park office at **215-635-7340** between **June 1st and June 15th** to **RSVP** to ensure that we have adequate space and refreshments for everyone!

Norristown Volunteer Update

I want to again thank all the volunteers for their time and dedication to the Norristown office! I enjoyed celebrating Volunteer Appreciation week with you all last month! You are all truly devoted to the work and are like family to all of us in the office! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the center!

In-Services:

Our next in-service will be **Tuesday, May 15, 2007** from **1-3 p.m.** in the Norristown office. This will be an Advocates Issues in-service. Guest speaker is TBA.

Our Farewell in-service will be **June 12, 2007** from **1-3pm** in the Norristown office. Our guest speakers are Maureen Allen and Pat Robins from Community Housing Services. Maureen is the STEPS Coordinator and Pat is the Director of Client Services. They will be discussing services and transitional housing. Please let me know if you plan to attend. In-services will resume in September.

Legal Remedies:

A special thanks to Ellen Fischer, Esq. for her participation in last month's Legal Remedies workshop. Your support is greatly appreciated!

The next Legal Remedies Workshop will be **Tuesday; May 15, 2007** from **5-7 p.m.** Attorney Amara Chaudhry, Esq. will be facilitating this workshop. The information sessions are held at our Norristown office at 18 West Airy Street, 4th floor. Please call 610-279-7474 to register to attend. Also, please refer a family member or friend to this valuable program!

Walk-a-Thon Committee:

The Walk-a-thon for this year will be **October 27, 2007** from **10-12 p.m.** at the Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, Athletic Department.

To all staff, WCMC volunteers, members and others: Anyone who has an interest to be part of the organizing committee, please call Denise @ 610-279-7474.

Happy Mother's Day!

Jenn B.

Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

Pottstown's Potpourri

The Pottstown office has been bustling with activity in 2007. As part of the Women's Advocacy Project (WAP), Pottstown's legal advocates have been providing court accompaniment to the local preliminary hearings. The monthly, average number of hearings attended in 2007 is currently double the 2005-06 monthly average and the monthly totals in 2007 have shown a steady increase with each passing month.

The Pottstown office also continues to offer a Support Group which has been a source of understanding, encouragement, and empowerment for the women who participate in it. Attendance at the weekly meetings is growing in 2007 but there is still room for more members. New members are welcome to attend our meetings which are still held every Tuesday evening from 5:30 – 7:30 in the Pottstown office.

Naturally, this is just a glimpse of what transpires in the Pottstown office. In future issues of the Womenews, we hope to share more about our telephone and peer counseling, as well as our participation in community events and domestic violence committees/task forces.

Look for more of **Pottstown's Potpourri** next month!

Kristine Wickward

Legal Advocate - Pottstown

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEGAL REMEDIES INFO SESSION

by Denise Flynn, WAP Program Director

Our Legal Remedies Program began July 20, 2004. Eighteen (18) attorneys have participated in this program so far, which is still going strong, monthly. To date in Norristown, we have had 16 attorneys to give us their time, pro bono or free, many oft more than once. Eighty-five (85) individuals have benefited from the kindness of these men and women who have unselfishly given their time and expertise to this worthwhile and needed program. Likewise, in Pottstown, two dedicated attorneys have donated time and helped 16 women in our support group, for a **total of 101 individuals served by 18 attorneys**. In this program, the attorneys come once a month for two (2) hours and speak to approximately one to twelve individuals and answer questions relative to their family and civil law circumstances.

Many of these attorneys also participate in our Lawyer Referral Program in which an attorney agrees to give an ½ hour free consultation to whomever the Women's Center refers to them for legal advice. That advice could entail custody, divorce, support, Protection from Abuse or any other Family/Civil law questions they may have.

I will periodically use this space to highlight one or two of our 18 attorneys. This article will just name them and give recognition to the service they have given to the community and the Women's Center programs. They will also receive certificates of appreciation for the service they have provided:

Matthew Fox
Peter Bort
James Flood
Bill Baldwin
Kelly Walk
Craig Kellerman

Laurence Pauker
Richard Cohen
Bill English
Scott Kreiger
Rochelle Bobman
David Kaplan

Colleen Consolo
Betty Lupo
Dan McCartney
Ellen Fischer
Amara Chaudhry
Edward Skypala

We thank all of these attorneys for their unselfish acts of kindness, in giving back to our Montgomery County residents and communities and empowering them with knowledge support and advice about their legal rights.

Wonderful Older Women (W.O.W.) Revisited

As some of you may remember, for many years the Women's Center offered an enrichment program with activities focused on the needs and interests of women age 50 and over. This support/social group was called W.O.W. (short for Wonderful Older Women) and, in addition to a monthly meeting, offered activities that included play-reading, investment club, theater parties, day trips and guest speakers for their meetings, speaking on topics of interest requested by the group. The only pre-requisites for participation were that members be paid members of the Women's Center and that they be women over the age of 50.

Sadly, our ability to provide space and supportive services to this group was compromised, along with other programs, when, in 2004 and 2005, the Center experienced devastating flooding and subsequent mold at our old location in Jenkintown. During the months that preceded our move to our great new location in Elkins Park in August 2005, our inability to house the meetings in a healthy environment contributed to the eventual dissolution of WOW as a program of the Center.

Happily, in recent months, we have received calls from members of the Center and the surrounding community who are interested in possibility revitalizing WOW. We are therefore trying to identify the level of interest within our membership for reconvening WOW within the Women's Center. So, if you are interested in participating in this revitalization or have ideas about a direction for WOW, please contact the Elkins Park office at 215-635-7340 and ask for Maria.

The Women's Center Wednesday Evening Book Club April 2007

<u>Date</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Hostess</u>
May	Brick Lane (M.Ali)	Linda B.	Judy M.
June	Memory Keepers Daughter (K.Edwards)	Judy M.	Ellen

Reading enthusiasts please call Sunny at 215-576-6215 to join our lively and interesting book discussions. New members are always welcome!

A reminder from the Women's Center: If you are interested in buying any of these books online, we encourage you to use the shopping link on our site (www.wcmontco.org) to visit Amazon.com or Barnes&Noble.com. Both vendors donate approximately 5% of the sale price back to the Women's Center to support our efforts to empower women in our community.

Maternity and Children's Clothing Exchange



Saturday, May 19
1-4 pm

Sponsored by:



Hosted by:

Holy Martyrs Church
120 Allison Rd.
Oreland, PA 19075

Volunteers and Donations are Welcome!

For more info call 215-886-2869
or go to www.onefitmama.com.

Bring what you have... Take what you need... The rest gets donated



EILEEN
FISHER

Charity Event

for

Women's Center
of Montgomery County
Domestic Violence Project

10% of the profits on your Eileen Fisher purchases on Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12 will be donated to the Women's Center of Montgomery County Domestic Violence Project.

And you'll receive a Special Gift with your EILEEN FISHER purchase.

LA
PETITE
FEMME

Upcoming Events for the Women's Center of Montgomery County

Check out website for updates and additions. www.wcmontco.org

Pre-School Program – My Hands Are Not For Hurting

May 3, 2007 – Saint Andrew Preschool
1 group @20 minutes from 9:15- 9:40
2 groups @20 minutes from 12:30-1:20
May 4, 2007 – Saint Andrew Preschool
3 groups @20 minutes from 9:15- 10:40
2 groups @20 minutes from 12:30-1:20
May 14, 2007 – ACLAMO Family Center – 9:30-10:00
September 19, 2007 – Carmel Nursery School 10:00-11:00 AM
September 20, 2007 – Carmel Nursery School 10:00-10:30 AM

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS And SPEAKING EVENTS

May 3, 2007 – 18th Annual Teen Parent Conference – 9:00-10:00 – Norristown – Workshop time 10:15-11:00 and 11:00-11:45

TABLE EVENTS

May 2, 2007 – Masonic Village at Lafayette Hill – Health and Fitness Day – 10:00AM-2:00PM
May 3, 2007 – 18th Annual Teen Parent Conference – 9:00-10:00 – Norristown
May 11, 2007 – Montgomery County Community College Blue Bell Senior Games – 9:00-12:00
May 19, 2007 – CADCOM's Community Action Day – 11:00 – 3:00
June 14, 2007 Wonderling and Mensch's Healthy Community Expo 4:00-7:00 PM
June 23, 2007 – Walmart – "Speaking of Women's Health" – 9:00-4:00
September 29, 2007 – 2007 Lower Gwynedd Township Country Picnic
October 13, 2007 – Community Harvest Festival '07 – Whippen Township Community Health Fair 11:00-5:00

Contact Janine Kelly
The Women's Center of Montgomery County
Community Education Coordinator
610-525-1428
616-525-1429 (fax)
jkelly1@dca.net
www.wcmontco.org

Notes from the Elkins Park Office

Submitted by Deanna Linn, Director of Volunteers

This month's newsletter contains a calendar insert for MAY and JUNE which lists in-services, community education activities and other Women's Center events. Each month the calendars are updated so check the information on the new one and place it on your bulletin board.

All hotline counselors need be aware that the deadline for completing your required inservice hours is July 1. The Active Listening inservice is an absolute requirement. Day and evening inservices are scheduled for the convenience of all counselors, for active listening and other topics. Check this month's insert for dates and topics for inservices for May and June. Active listening will be given on day and evening sessions both in May and June.

Women's Center Movie for May will be "Water," directed by Deepa Mehta, on May 14, 1 p.m. and May 15, 7 p.m.. Popcorn provided.

For all inservices and movie times, *please, please* RSVP. And check the calendar in the June newsletter for a revised schedule.

**Searching for the Treasures Found In Books:
Rewards found in Lasting Friendships and Inspiring Stories**

**You are cordially invited to join the
Women's Center of Montgomery County
Evening Book Club**

Meetings held the 3rd Wednesday of Every Month
7:30 for socializing
8:00 p.m. for discussion

The July 18, 2007 meeting will be held in our Elkins Park office.

For many years this group has been a vital part of keeping our mission of enrichment and enlightenment for women strong. Beyond offering the opportunity to read and discuss some fascinating books, this group promotes social interaction and enduring friendships that will inspire you as well.

We invite you to come on out this summer and get a read on the book club!!

The upcoming schedule of books to be read are published monthly in Womenews.

**Women's Center
of Montgomery
County**

Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

FAX: 215-635-7347

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

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