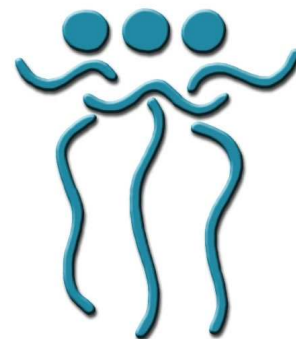


# Voices



## Maya Angelou Visits UConn

Election Day. A stressful week ahead. A busy, tiring weekend cut too short. Thanksgiving and finals on the horizon. Cold weather and shorter days. It could have been like any other crazed Monday in early November. But at 7PM on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, hundreds put aside their homework and chores, skipped the T.V., and met at Jorgensen Theater to see Maya Angelou, the world's beloved poet, writer, and singer, as the keynote speaker for UConn's Month of Kindness.



*If you don't like something change it.*

*If you can't change it, change your attitude.*

*-Maya Angelou*

For close to an hour, the entire theater listened to this amazing woman sing, recite her poetry, and talk about how important

it is to recognize the good that lives in everyone. A glow of inspiration warmed the entire building. She

spoke as if she knew us all personally, and reignited a flame of hope that sometimes, in today's world, seems smothered.

The Women's Center, along with SUBOG and the four other Cultural Centers presented this event for the University and surrounding community. The theater completely sold out and for good reason. In a time of constant movement and instability, the night with Dr. Angelou washed the audience clean of stress, worries, and unease (even if only for a few hours) and reminded us that sometimes the acknowledgment of all that is good in the world has the power to change your life.



## A Post-Election Rundown

The weeks leading up to November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 were especially busy for Maddie Ardito and Kelly Eblen, two student staff members of the Women Center. This fall semester, both collaborated with Community Outreach to work on a Civic Engagement Project geared towards educating and involving young women in politics.

They began by setting up a network on Facebook, a group called UConn Women Voters. There, they were able to spread news about upcoming events, remind members why their votes were important, and educate people in an easy, effective way.

Also, throughout the semester they held three tabling events. The first gave students an opportunity to register to vote. The second offered information on the Constitutional Convention, and the last took place on Election Day, as a last reminder for all students to vote.

Other programs they completed to help spread the importance of *(Continue on page 2)*

### Next Semester Happenings

- April 2009 is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- "Take Back The Night" Rally
- More volunteer opportunities with the Women's Center committees: Body Image and Reproductive Rights!
- More events and activities to promote gender equity on campus.



<http://www.geneseo.edu/CMS/image.php?>

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**"Feminism is the radical notion that women are people."**



# October Highlights A Need For Change

**“DID YOU SEE WHAT SHE WAS WEARING?” “SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT.” “SLUT.”**  
**“SHE MAY NOT HAVE SAID YES, BUT SHE DIDN’T SAY NO.” “SHE WAS WASTED.”**  
**“SHE SHOULDN’T HAVE WALKED ALONE.” “SHE SHOULD HAVE FOUGHT BACK.”**

It seems to be everywhere. It’s with us on the weekends, at the parties we attend. It adorns the walls of dorm rooms, taped over beds as silent, but loud, reminders. It can be heard by the runner in the whistles and hoots from the passing car. It’s in the music we listen to, the television we watch, and the conversations we share. It is the story we are told, day in and day out. It is the water we swim in and we don’t even know we are wet.



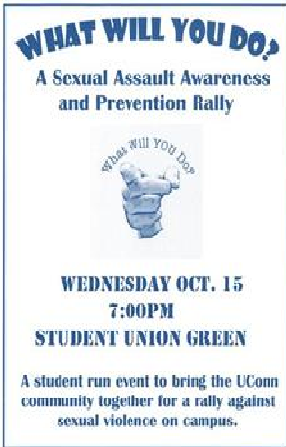
It is no secret that porn culture plays an immense role within the UConn campus and beyond. With the month of October recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the connection between the two did not go unnoticed by the Women’s Center and the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP). The groups presented the Clothesline Project during the week of October 6<sup>th</sup> through

October 10<sup>th</sup> and also organized the “What Will You Do?” Rally with other organizations on campus, both in an effort to educate the UConn community about the dangers of such a cultural disease.

The Clothesline Project is a visual display of domestic violence. For the entire week, members of the UConn community were invited to create t-shirts with a message that would then be displayed along Fairfield Way. The shirts gave a voice to a victim, survivor, or secondary survivor. They were words of hope, anger, strength, and sorrow. All the shirts that were displayed during the week were created by survivors in the UConn community, which should resonate with everyone: domestic violence is alive and well on our campus.



Getting the message out to students that we can no longer be silent to the surrounding violence motivated the Women’s Center to join with the Resident Housing Association in efforts to produce a campus-wide rally, created entirely by students, entitled “What Will You Do?” The goal of the event was to raise awareness in all students that we all have the power to end domestic violence and violence against women. It sparked a fire in students to want change. A candlelight vigil was held on the Union Green while various speakers discussed how to go about this much needed cultural evolution.



Change is more than a band-aid over the problem. Its more than giving women pepper spray and offering self defense classes. It goes further than installing more blue lights and preaching to women to walk in groups, carry their keys between their fingers, and to always have a cell phone. This does not fix the problem. Rather, it places responsibility and blame on the *victim*. This idea needs to change. Accountability and blame must be put on the perpetrator.

The cure to a disease does not lie on the surface, but rather where it grows and strengthens internally. Change resides in evolving the attitude of the entire society. This is not just a women’s issue, but a community’s concern. And everyone must work to end it.

## Post-Election *(continued from page 1)*

voting included a public service announcement that aired on WHUS, and an article in *The Daily Campus*. The two also hosted a viewing of the last presidential debate and showed the movie “Iron Jawed Angels” to inspire young women to become politically active.

Maddie and Kelly also incorporated outside sources as another tool to empower students to become engaged. They organized a workshop that centered on discussion with community and faculty members about the implications of a Constitutional Convention and a deliberative dialogue with State Secretary Susan Bysiewicz for a post-election rundown.





# The University of Connecticut's Men's Project

# MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE

This Spring of '09 will mark the 2nd year of the Men's Project at UConn. To continue the Women's Center commitment to gender equity and ending violence against women, the Men's Project aims to gather a group of men to discuss gender socialization, masculinities, and gender violence. This unique program allows men from all walks of life an understanding of how sexism plays out in their everyday lives. Gender roles and intersections of identities will also be discussed to challenge people who identify as men their place in our male dominated world.

This year's Men's Project will be facilitated by Kenny Importante and Ryan Barone. Kenny is a graduate student in the Higher Education & Student Affairs Program. He currently serves as the Graduate Assistant at the Asian American Cultural Center. He has a passion and commitment to challenging issues of oppression. Ryan Barone currently serves as a Hall Director with Residential Life. He has facilitated the Men's Project four different times, and each iteration is unique, challenging and rewarding.

The Men's Project welcomes all men who are interested in this unique educational opportunities and personal development to engage them in a safe space setting to learn and grow from topics of gender socialization. The training will consist of 10 weeks, Wednesdays 6-8pm beginning Feb. 11 and concludes with Take Back The Night, April 22. These meetings will be held at the Women's Center for the first half followed by the Asian American Cultural Center for the remaining five sessions.

It is our hope that participants gain a true knowledge about themselves and effectively communicate their feelings towards sexism and those that affect them. We must continue to teach everyone, including men, the implications of sexual assault and how to best advocate for gender issues. At the end, we hope to spark in the participants an interest in various programs such as VAWPP and continue the Women's Center's mission to educate and advocate for the achievement of women's equity.



## Guerilla Girls Invade The Center



*Kelly Eblen, Kaitlyn Widlak, and Maddie Ardito meet with State Secretary, Susan Bysiewicz.*



On October 17th, the feminist group, The Guerilla Girls, visited the Women's Center and UConn. The group produces posters, stickers, books, printed projects, and activities that expose racism and sexism in politics, the art world, film, and our overall culture. They use humor to convey their message and provoke discussion.

Disguised in their trademark gorilla masks, the founders of the Guerilla Girls facilitated a discussion of projects that the Women's Center staff could do. With humor and flowing conversation, the Center discussed their ideas about how to incorporate the ideas of the Guerilla Girls into our campus community.







# Letter From The Director

So here are some random thoughts for the first newsletter of 2009...

**Conversations** – not a day goes by that we aren't talking about how we can meet the fiscal challenges that we face in this economy. And for many of us that conversation is both personal and professional. At the same time we are asked to pare down our departmental budgets, we are going home and trying to find ways to manage our own living expenses. At the same time we are providing support to students who are trying to figure out how to stay in school, we are seeking support for our concerns about our own financial security. And yet...

**Priorities** – each day we make decisions about how and where we will spend our money – which program will we still put on, which bills will get paid first, which "extra" we cannot afford any more. It is more important than ever to make sure we are making decisions that are informed by our commitment to social justice. Difficult economic times can also be used as an excuse to not have to move ahead with commitments on the things that make us uncomfortable. But sexism, racism, and heterosexism don't disappear because budgets are shrinking.

**Gratitude** – and every day there are indications of the resources we do still have access to. The mere fact that we have a job to make budgetary decisions about cannot be taken for granted. Every day there are students who spend time at the Center in conversations about preventing violence against women on campus. Most days we have staff and faculty who are in the Center because they have chosen to hold their class in our space; or they are serving on one of our campus-wide planning committees; or they are making a commitment to meet twice a month to talk about how to make our campus a more welcoming and inclusive place; or they just want to stop by and check in. Those are the moments that make clear how we are supported by our community and the impact of our work.

**Mission** – While financial support to do our work is critical, it won't do the work on its own. Without the people resources, our vision of gender equity will never become a reality. So yes, we are in crisis, but crisis is from whence we came, and we know how to respond to crisis. The crisis of violence against women on campus; the crisis of being the target of discrimination; the crisis of earning only 77 (or 59, 69 or 89 if you are a woman of color) cents for a dollar's worth of work. Some days we get the opportunity to engage with a department or a division that has decided to focus attention on how to improve the climate for women on campus, such as our work with the Vice President for Student Affairs to create the Vice President's Task Force on the Campus Climate and Violence Against Women. You can find our report at [http://www.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/risk\\_mgt.html](http://www.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/risk_mgt.html) This report is just one example of the work we have ahead of us.

To those of you who are already part of the Women's Center's community of educator/activists, thank you for all you do – even in the difficult times. For those of you who are still looking to connect, we invite you to join the conversation and make it a priority to make decisions about your resources (both personal and financial) in the service of equity for all.

**"You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it."**



After a challenging and rewarding fall semester, the fulltime and student staff of the Women's Center gathered for an end of semester celebration. We're all looking forward to the many events this spring!





# Calendar Of Upcoming Events

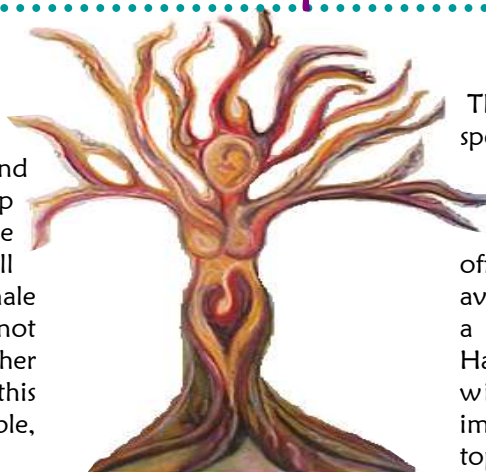
Visit our website for a complete listing of events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February	23 Helping Students with Eating Disorders	24	25 The Diet of the Year	26	27	28
March <i>Women's Herstory Month!</i>	2	3	4 New Female Faculty Luncheon	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>SPRING BREAK!!!</b>						
15	16	17	18 Living Our Religion Latinos and Mass Mediated Misrepresentation	19 Laughter Club (weekly through 4/23)	20	21
22	23 Beauty Mark	24	25 Manya: A Living History of Madame Marie Curie -UCHC (26th @ Storrs Campus)	26 Marie Curie, Her Life and Times  Film: <i>Tim Wise on White Privilege</i>	27	28

## Committee Updates

### Body Image Committee

For the upcoming spring semester, the Body Image Committee is organizing a healthy, nutritional picnic to educate and promote a healthy body image. The group is also planning another installment of "The Nether Regions" seminar. This project will focus on the understanding of female anatomy and 'taboo' subjects many may not feel comfortable discussing. "The Nether Regions" seminar will work to break this silence and educate women in a comfortable, knowledgeable environment.

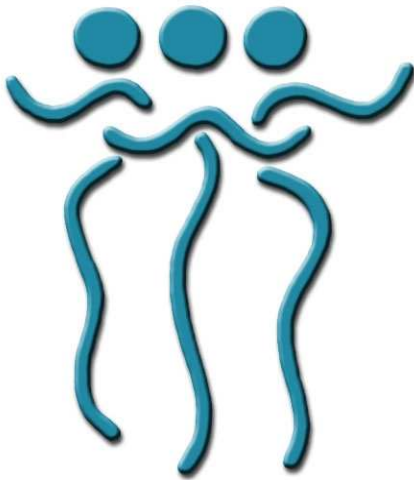


[www.kelliecarbone.com](http://www.kelliecarbone.com)

### Reproductive Rights

The Reproductive Rights Committee spent the fall semester raising the awareness on campus about reproductive rights. They held different tabling events and also offered contraceptive education and availability for students. They also held a campus event called, "Speak Out: I Had An Abortion". This semester, they will continue to educate the importance of reproductive rights topics.

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Storrs, CT 06269-3118  
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# Voices

*Where all the pieces come together.*

The mission of the Women's Center is to educate, advocate, and provide support services for the achievement of women's equity at the University and within the community at large. Special attention is focused on women who face additional challenges due to their race, nationality, class, sexual identity, religion, age, and physical or mental ability.

