

VOICES

The Women's Center Newsletter

University of Connecticut

October 2002

SNEAK PEEK

A Quick Guide to What's Inside

Women's Center: 30 Years of History
See pg. 1 and 4

Check out What events we have planned!
See pg. 2

Read about the Chair of the Women's Center Advisory Board
See pg. 1 and 4

Learn about Domestic Violence Awareness Month
See pg. 3

Three Decades of Struggles and Triumph: The Women's Center 30 Years Later

Part 3 of a 4 part series
By Jennifer Babulsky

The early 1970s was a time filled with people not just struggling for an end to the Vietnam War, but also for an end to gender discrimination.

The inequality of women was felt all over the country, including at UConn.

Supportive outlets for women students, faculty and staff were few and far between. That is until the Free Women's Collective came along, which later turned into the Women's Center.

The third article in a four

part series on the history of the Women's Center will concentrate on where we are 30 years later.

Bessy Reyna, the first Director of the Women's Center, said some things have not changed that much in 30 years.

"In some ways, gender roles have not changed," Reyna said. "In suburban areas, men tend to do the yard work while women take care of the household."

Reyna, who was part of a Lesbian Collective on campus at the time, was invited to a meeting with the Free Women's Collective.

She said that at first she was worried that the group was not going to be very supportive or welcoming.

"I went to the meeting thinking they would not want us to be a part of the center, but instead they embraced us," she said.

The welcoming and supportive atmosphere still exists 30 years later. At the anniversary celebration on Sept. 21, 2002, Reyna joined dozens of Women's Center supporters, both past and present.

Betty Roper, who passed away in January 2001, was on the minds of many people at

(Continued on page 4)

Maria Martinez Lives Her Life Fighting For What She Wants

By Jennifer Babulsky

Coming from a big family prepared Maria Martinez for her life devoted to helping others. Martinez has been associated with the Women's Center on and off since her arrival at UConn in 1986.

"You learn quick when you come from a big family," she said. "I had to learn how to fight for what I wanted in life."

Promoting education and job equality has been a large part of Martinez's life for as long as she can remember. To ensure she would be able to reach her goals of helping people, Martinez received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Education and her Master's degree in Social Work. She then went on to earn her Ph.D. in higher

education administration.

Her degrees and experience came in handy once she became the Director of the Center for Academic Programs (CAP) at UConn.

Martinez is also the Chair of the Women's Center Advisory Board. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Director of the Women's Center on many different issues including programming, policies and other issues.

Working closely with the Women's Center has given Martinez the chance to participate in a Center known for spreading diversity and helping others.

"The Women's Center has given me an opportunity to do the things that I like to do," she said.

As Director of CAP, Martinez said she is able to promote diversity and equality.

(Continued on page 4)

Calendar of Events

December

12 Stress Down Day

Stress down before finals beginning with a free massage, Reiki, reflexology, aromatherapy and more.

11 a.m.—2 p.m., South Campus

Co-sponsored with Health Education and Student Health Services

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By Jennifer Babulsky

The purpose of dedicating an entire month to domestic violence awareness is to educate people about the magnitude and severity of the issue. The Women's Center wants people to recognize that domestic violence is an escalating problem. Some people may not realize that thousands of women are survivors of domestic violence or are still being abused by their partners.

For some, domestic violence is not an issue they think about. Perhaps they do not think they are affected by it. They are wrong. Someone's mother, aunt, sister, neighbor, teacher or the person walking down the street could be a survivor of domestic violence without you knowing.

The events sponsored by the Violence Against Women Prevention Program of the Women's Center this past month were designed to both educate and heal. To help in the healing process, a campaign known as Thursdays in Black will occur every Thursday in October. Students, faculty and staff are asked to wear black on Thursday's to acknowledge the impact that relationship violence has on our lives.

Fall Women's Sports Schedule

November

Women's Basketball

11/1	Melbourne Tigers	7:30 p.m.
11/13	Houston Jaguars AAU	7:30 p.m.
11/22	Wright State	7:30 p.m.
11/24	North Carolina State	4:30 p.m.

Women's Cross Country

11/1	BIG EAST in Boston	TBA
11/16	District I-NCAA Qualifier	TBA
11/25	NCAA Championships	TBA

Women's Rowing

11/2	Yale Invitational	TBA
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Women's Swimming and Diving

11/2	Villanova	TBA
11/9	Rutgers	TBA
11/16	Boston University	TBA
11/22-24	Pittsburgh Invitational	TBA

More sports on page 5

Can You Help?

Lindsey Howie, a Women's Center intern, has taken on the task of trying to compile a comprehensive account of everything the Center has done since its early beginnings. Fortunately, another woman has already documented the first 10 years, but the Center has been alive and kicking for an additional two decades! Lindsey would appreciate any information, stories, or contact information for interviews.

Lindsey can be reached via e-mail at Lindsey.Howie@uconn.edu or by phone at 860-486-4738.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Student Parent Organization is being planned on campus for the fall. The organization will be designed as a forum for undergraduate and graduate students with children to address university and life issues relevant to the experiences of student parents. One does not necessarily need to be a parent to become involved. For more information, contact Laura Steck via e-mail at lauraweststeck@yahoo.com.

The world lost one of its greatest citizens on Sept. 28 with the death of Hawaii Congresswoman Patsy Mink, co-author of Title IX. Girls and women also lost one of their most valiant and steadfast. You may read NOW's tribute to Rep. Patsy Mink at <http://www.now.org/history/patsymink.html>.

Send a personal tribute that will be forwarded to Rep. Mink's family at <http://www.now.org/history/mink-tribute.html>.

A new student organization, War Resisters, has formed on campus. For more information about the UConn chapter, contact Suzy Stockton, campus representative, at suzystockton@virgilio.it. Information about the War Resisters League is available at www.warresisters.org.

There are two opportunities each week to vigil for peace. **Storrs** - Tuesdays 4-5 pm, North Eagleville Rd & 195. **Willimantic** - Thursdays 5-6 p.m., corner of Main & Jackson St. Bring signs, candles and anyone who is willing to stand for peace.

If you have any announcements that you would like to be included in *Voices*, please contact Jen Babulsky, Editor, at 486-4738.

(Continued from page 1) **Three Decades**

the celebration and with good reason. Thirty years ago, Roper, who was the Director of the Office of Continuing Education for Women, gave the Free Women's Collective space to meet in her office. Roper is considered one of the key founders of the Women's Center.

Reyna said Roper's efforts, as well as the efforts of countless others, allowed women to feel like they had a voice during a time when many felt like they had none. "We were women trying to make a better world for everyone," Reyna said.

The Women's Center is a necessity, Reyna said. She said many of the same issues, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence and other relevant issues were also discussed 30 years ago. The Center provides a space where these issues can be discussed, she said.

Myra Hindus, Center Director in the early nineties, said it is a remarkable achievement that the Women's Center has lasted for so many years.

"There are not a lot of women's centers in the country that can say they have been around for 30 years," Hindus said.

She said it is also an exceptional accomplishment because the Center faced strong adversity in its beginning, yet it has lasted through all of its struggles. The fact that the Center has been around so long only goes to prove the strength of its staff and the people that have been involved with it over the years. It also proves the strength of women on the campus, Hindus said.

"We must always move forward," she said. "It is tough sometimes to stay on solid ground, but the Center has done that."

Kathleen Holgerson, the current Director of the Women's Center, told the crowd at the anniversary celebration that the longevity of the Center has to do with a lot of hard work and cooperation among many campus departments.

Although the Center has accomplished a lot in its 30 years, there is still a lot more that needs to be done, Holgerson said.

She said women still must deal with earning less money than men for the same work, not having adequate, affordable child care, dealing with violence against women, and working in hostile environments.

"Many struggles the Women's Center was founded on still exist today," she said.

What would the campus be like if the Women's Center was never founded? Where would women go for help on any issue? People may not like to think of what the campus would be like without it. The Women's Center filled a need when it was created. In the past 30 years, the Center has provided numerous services to

thousands of people, including, but not limited to educational programs, counseling and crisis intervention.

Since it is likely many of the issues currently being dealt with will continue to be challenges in the future, one thing is for sure; the Women's Center will still be around advocating as strong as ever for the next 30 years.

The Women's Center would like to thank all the people who have stood by us through the years. Your support and hard work have been greatly appreciated.

(Continued from page 1) **Maria Martinez**

Martinez said she was so happy when the Women's Center reached its 30th anniversary this year. The Center hit many bumps along the way but came out on top, she said.

"One of its biggest strengths is its ability to offer a place where women feel advocated for," she said. "The information they provide is not just for women, but for anyone in need of information. There is great accessibility for women."

Although the future is unpredictable, Martinez said she is sure the Women's Center will still be around and the need for spreading diversity will also be around. She said the Advisory Board has been working on ways to effectively promote diversity.

One way is to infuse diversity in the curriculum, she said. Other possibilities include making changes to different policies and talking about diversity more with students, faculty and staff. The goal of helping people understand diversity is impossible without cooperation, Martinez said.

"The entire institution needs to be committed to this issue," she said. "People can't expect one department to take care of it."

Despite the difficulty involved in the goals Martinez has set, she remains confident that her goals will be met.

"I see diversity going places in this institution," she said. "I see things happening."

UConn NOW Chapter has formed!

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is a national membership organization dedicated to making legal, political, social and economic changes in our society in order eliminate sexism and end all oppression. People get involved with NOW to help eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia and promote equality and justice in our society. If you are interested in getting involved or would like more information, send an email to huskyNOW@yahoo.com.

Women's Sports Schedule Winter/Spring

Women's Basketball

12/5	Holy Cross	7:30 p.m.
12/30	Florida State	7 p.m.
1/8	Rutgers	7 p.m.
3/14-15	NCAA Championships	TBA

Women's Swimming and Diving

12/5-7	U.S. Open	TBA
12/6-8	Yale Invitational	TBA
2/14-15	Swimming Qualifier	TBA
2/20-22	BIG EAST	TBA

Women's Ice Hockey

12/8	New Hampshire	2 p.m.
12/30	Boston College	2 p.m.
1/30	Quinnipiac	7 p.m.
2/14	Boston College	7 p.m.
3/1-2	Maine	1 p.m.

Ticket Information...

Tickets for women's sports events are available through the Athletic Ticket Office, 2111 Hillside Road, U-78 Storrs, CT 06269. The office phone number is toll free from anywhere in the U.S. 1-877-AT-UConn or 1-877-288-2666 or 860-486-2724.

VOICES

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Website: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

Some Reminders...

Join Our Listserv!

Want to keep up with the Women's Center on a weekly basis? Then join the U-WOMEN Listserv, a weekly updated e-mail featuring Women's Center events, on and off campus events, announcements and national/international news. For information on how to subscribe, email j06374@yahoo.com.

Check Out Our New Website

Be sure to visit our newly updated website at www.womenscenter.uconn.edu. You can find out about all our events for the Fall 2002 semester, learn about our ongoing groups, get informed on issues such as dating violence and sexual assault and find out what resources we have at our library. You can even find past newsletters on the site.

Ongoing Groups:

Between Women

A rap group for women who love women...or think they might! Come and discuss fun topics, movies and more with women who share your feelings and experiences. For more information call the Women's Center or email betweenwomen@hotmail.com.

Sexual Assault Survivor's Group

A support group for women who have experienced actual or attempted sexual assault at any time.

Co-sponsored with Mental Health Services. Contact Jenn Fox at 486-4705 for information and registration.

Caregivers of the Elderly

A support group for those charged with caring for an aging parent, relative or friend. This group will take place in a safe, confidential arena in which participants can share emotions, experiences, problems, information and resources, as well as offer support to others. This group meets on Thursdays at 5 p.m. at the Women's Center and is open to anyone interested.

Greetings from the Editor

As the new editor of *Voices* this year, I hope to continue bringing the most up to date information on a wide range of topics including relevant articles and program information.

I want this newsletter to not only be a representation of the Women's Center, but of every reader. I hope readers continue to enjoy *Voices!*

VOICES

THE WOMEN'S CENTER...WHERE ALL THE PIECES COME TOGETHER

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