Welcome to the first edition of Voices for the 2012-2013 academic year! We have news of transitions, celebrations, and commitments to share with you, as well as information on our on-going programs and activities.

**Transitions** Over the summer, Venida Rodman Jenkins, our Violence Against Women Prevention Program Coordinator, returned to her home state of New Jersey to become the Director of The Speicher-Rubin Women's Center for Equity and Diversity at New Jersey City University. While she will be greatly missed here at UConn, we wish her much success in her new role. Last May we said goodbye to almost half of our student staff, but we have added 18 new students to our staff roster this semester. In this edition you will hear their reflections about our annual Student Staff/VAWPP retreat, as well as updates on the exciting projects they are coordinating. We would especially like to welcome, Takina Pollock, our Newsletter Editor this year. In this edition, Takina shares with you her thoughts about taking on this role.

**Celebrations** We are continuing to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Women’s Center through the end of 2012. We are fortunate to be sharing this anniversary with several other major milestones of the feminist movement, such as the 40th anniversary of Ms. Magazine, the 40th anniversary of Title IX, and the 30th anniversary of the reintroduction of the Equal Rights Amendment. In recognition of the latter, we worked with the Provost’s Office to organize this year’s Constitution Day event, *The Equal Rights Amendment: Visualizing an Inclusive Constitution*. In November, we are hosting a panel of state and national experts to discuss the implications, 40 years later, of Title IX. As our capstone event, we are hosting a campus visit by Gloria Steinem, an icon of the women’s liberation movement. Her visit on Friday, November 30th will include a luncheon with students as part of our Coalition for Political Empowerment collaboration; a public lecture; and a 40th Anniversary Reunion Reception.

**Commitments** As many of you know, while gender may be our primary lens, we simultaneously recognize that no one is only influenced by their gender. We challenge ourselves to visibly and consistently articulate our commitment to addressing multiple forms of oppression. We recognize the particular function of racism in this cultural context, which requires an on-going commitment to dismantling racism and White privilege. We have engaged in dialogues with our full-time and student staff and our Advisory Board to more clearly identify what we mean by this commitment. To that end, we have expanded our definition of feminism to include: “More specifically, we promote an anti-racist feminist perspective which includes an analysis of the intersectionality of various forms of oppression; challenges the power structure/status quo that reinforces inequality based on race and gender simultaneously; and foregrounds the understanding of how racial discrimination complicates a concentration only on gender discrimination.”

**Join us** As supporters, alums, and collaborators of the Women’s Center, we invite you to come to our programs this semester to learn about our collective herstory; to celebrate the accomplishments of women; and to engage more deeply in the movement to liberate us all from the confines of inequity.

—Kathleen Holgerson
Although the Mayans said that 2012 would be the end of the world, 2012 is just a new beginning for us at the Women’s Center! Since 1972 we have been promoting, supporting, and encouraging the intellectual, professional, personal, and educational development of women. Gloria Steinem will be joining us, November 30th, to celebrate the success and the future of the Women’s Center, as we strive toward gender equity at the University and in the community.

**We’ve Heard History, Now for Herstory**

**his•to•ry** [HIS-tuh-ree] [HIS-tree] noun
a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating typically to male people, their country from a largely male perspective; usually written as a chronological account with the omission of female contribution; chronicle*

**hers•to•ry** [HERS-tuh-ree] [HERS-tree] noun
a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to female people, their country from a non-gendered perspective; written as a chronological account filling in the gaps of female involvement (see history); chronicle**

Since 1972 the Women’s Center has been advocating for gender equity within the University, as well as in the community at large. The Women’s Center was started in the wake of the Women’s Liberation Movement, alongside the Civil Rights Movement. As the atmosphere of inequality grew more heated, the national discontent called for change. In 1972 the Free Women’s Collective was formed, and by March, Elizabeth “Betty” Roper, the Director of Continuing Education for Women at the time, temporarily housed the Women’s Center in the Bishop Center. In addition to providing the first meeting space, she oversaw the hiring of our first full time director, Catherine M. Havens M.S.W., J.D., now the Director of the M.S.W. Program, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Assistant Professor of Community Organization at the School of Social Work.

Our first two years consisted of trying to find a permanent home for the Women’s Center, which is now conveniently located on the fourth floor of the Student Union! Forty years of advocacy and activism have yielded so many positive outcomes, taking steps toward gender equity and addressing the intersectionality of all forms of oppression. In our first two years our was informed by feedback from a variety of groups who came together based on identity and/or interest including the Black Women’s Collective, the Child Care Collective, the Counseling Collective, the Lesbian Collective, the Library Collective and the Writers’ Collective. All of these collectives have become independent organizations or amalgamated with the Women’s Center Board of Advisors.

You are cordially invited to celebrate forty years of dedication, activism, education and advocacy on our journey toward gender equity, and to become a part of our herstory!

Gloria Steinem, Public Lecture: Friday, November 30th, 2012
4pm, Student Union Theatre
40th Anniversary Reunion Reception to follow.
Click Here for Registration Information

*Credit: Dictionary.com
**Credit: Takina Pollock
HERSTORY, A CHRONOLOGY

1972-73 Women’s Center is established. It includes a library, counseling services, referral services, and rape crisis support and advocacy.

1975-76 Created 15 collectives serving needs of gay students, divorced women, rape survivors and Black students.

1976-77 Establishment of literary magazine. Center is recognized as a state resource for women.

1978-79 Expanded affiliation with state and national organizations. Involvement in National ERA March.


1979-80 Involvement in National ERA March.

1981-82 Rape Education Program established.


1986-87 Publication of CT Peer Project on Teen Pregnancy, Education, and Attrition. Involvement with Project on Women and Technology and CT Women's Network. Major advocacy efforts to improve child care on campus.


1988-89 Publication of Inching Toward Equality and Small Indignities/Large Affront: A Qualitative Study of Graduate Life. Establishment of Vocational Equity Research Training Evaluation Center with School of Education.

1992-93 Establishment of Mandatory Orientation Training for all incoming students on sexual assault and acquaintance rape. Expanded support groups for students, services for women of color, and advocacy services.

More to come in the next edition of Voices!

—Takina Pollock
For 20 years, Cheryl Galli owned a travel agency; she was a rarity amongst women in her family, and in the community at large, in owning her own business. She’s been at UConn for four years working in the Clinical Services Office at UConn’s Student Health Services. After one year of involvement with the Women’s Advance Conference Planning Committee, she offered to be the new Chair for this year’s event. She became involved with the committee through Michele Labonte, the former Director of Nursing at Student Health Services, who served on the committee. Galli also invited Catherine Healy, the Instructional Developer with Institute for Teaching and Learning, who has joined this year’s planning committee. Healy has worked at UConn for eight years, and this May was the first conference she attended. Because of this, Healy notes a more diverse group of staff and faculty should be encouraged to attend to gain a more representative sample of the working women on all levels at UConn, including our regional campuses; as a new member of the committee she seeks to make this a reality. Many women are looking for these types of events and are unaware that they are available. The Women's Advance Conference is a perfect time for female staff and faculty at all levels at UConn to join together and be empowered by through different speakers and workshops. Moving forward, Galli aspires to carry out Labonte’s vision for the Women’s Advance Conference.

At this year’s conference, Galli enjoyed the workshops and particularly the camaraderie amongst her peers. Both Galli and Healy agreed that this past year’s keynote speakers, Deborah Ranger, LaReese Harvey, and Kathleen Wyatt, all members of the Wally Lamb Writer’s Group and published in I’ll Fly Away, were exceptional in delivering powerful messages. One of Galli’s favorite contributions was the breakout session by Barbara O’Connor, the Chief of Police, discussing women in non-traditional roles. Healy discussed how she sees a glass-ceiling effect amongst UConn’s female staff and faculty, and how conferences like these are essential to shattering the glass and moving toward progress. The conference focused on personal growth opportunities, as well as professional success for women. Galli and Healy were thrilled with the success of the conference and seek to expound on the positive aspects, strengthen weaknesses, and allow for an opportunity of skill development, maintaining that interdepartmental bond amongst staff and faculty. As Chair Galli states: “The goal isn’t to top last year’s event, it’s to make it as equally empowering for everyone.”

“It’s like giving yourself a gift to spend a day with your coworkers and friends, [while] being inspired by such powerful, intelligent women. I left feeling empowered and ready to take on anything.”

- Cheryl Galli

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Empowered Women Build Strong Communities
Raising Voices—Creating Change
This year the Women’s Center Retreat included activities with the facilitators from Four Arrows Challenge Course. We held the spirit of cooperation and teamwork in all of our activities. We have tons of new staff at the Women’s Center this year, and we went from perfect strangers eating breakfast together, to a united front ready to tackle gender inequity in a matter of minutes. Teambuilding activities like this are vital to building a strong morale and a sense of community amongst those involved with the Women’s Center. Here’s what some of our participants had to say:

“The retreat was a great opportunity to get to know my coworkers who I wouldn’t have gotten to know otherwise.”
—Thomas Dickens

“I was very intrigued coming to the retreat. To be surrounded by people who are learning with you and are there for similar purposes makes everything less stressful and intimidating, especially as a freshman. The best part was the team-building exercises because they showed that one person can’t always get something done alone, and it’s imperative to seek help and also to cooperate. It takes many to put a movement into motion otherwise it wouldn’t be a movement but [only] a step.”
—JoJo Pullen

“Pterodactyl”
—Kat Montero

“As a freshman coming to UConn and starting a new job here as well, it was a perfect environment for me to be able to be myself and make new friends. I learned a lot about feminism and I was very inspired by my peers and everything I learned at the retreat. If you weren’t there you really missed out on a great time!”
—Sarita Harry
At the end of May, Keriana Kachmar had the opportunity to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at the University of Maryland. Every year, through a grant from the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the UConn Women’s Center holds a day-long event called Elect-Her: Campus Women Win. Having worked on Elect-Her, AAUW sponsored Keriana to attend NCCWSL and share her Elect-Her experiences.

NCCWSL is so much more than just attending an Elect-Her workshop; I met student leaders from across the country, attended wonderful and informative workshops, listened to amazing speakers, and prepared to take it all back to my work at the Women’s Center.

After a delayed flight and long bus ride, I decided to spend my first night in College Park getting some dinner and sleeping. But on my way into downtown College Park I met a group of women from a Native American college who were also attending NCCWSL. Noticing that I was alone, they invited me to join them for dinner. What I had intended to be a quick trip to Subway turned into an impromptu outing filled with interesting stories and even more interesting people — an indicator of how the rest of the conference would be.

Lilly Ledbetter was one of the keynote speakers, and listening to her was an amazing opportunity. Ledbetter was a supervisor at Goodyear Tire and discovered that she was being paid much less than her male counterparts. She is currently an equal-pay activist and was a driving force behind the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. Her story was a heartwarming one of strength and shows just how gender inequality affects everyone, even people who never imagined themselves to be impacted.

The other keynote speech was more of a performance. Spoken-word artist Mayda Del Valle spoke, switching between stories of her life and her poetry. Del Valle was on HBO’s Def Poetry and demonstrates the different forms of activism.

But these two were not the only amazing women who imparted their knowledge and wisdom. The Women of Distinction Awards honored Alison Cohen, Noorjahan Akbar, Liza Donnelly, Sandra Fluke, Maggie Williams, and Michel Martin. These women told their stories as well — all differing in their experiences, but equally inspiring activists.

Since we were about a half-hour from Washington, DC, in addition to the speakers, I got to venture into the city for a pre-conference session at the Newseum and then for “Night out in DC,” which was our time to explore the city. We also attended workshops. There was one that focused on Elect-Her, but there were dozens of other options as well. I went to one that focused on sexual violence on college campuses and the work one attorney was doing to prosecute perpetrators.

The best part of NCCWSL was the other students I met. They were interesting and inspirational and provided me with new perspectives on leadership and activism. It was such a great experience, and I look forward to using the skills I gained at NCCWSL and sharing them at the Women’s Center, at UConn, and in life.

—Keriana Kachmar
The Red Flag Campaign is an organized effort to recognize "red flags" for domestic violence and intimate partner violence, especially on college campuses. The event is organized around the "see something, say something" philosophy; bystanders are encouraged to intervene on a victim-survivor's behalf. The campaign focuses specifically around inclusiveness; red flags are paid attention to regardless of the victim-survivor's race, class, gender, or any combination thereof. UConn's Red Flag Campaign took place from Monday, October 22nd through Friday, October 26th. Displays of red flags around campus sparked conversations as to why they were set up.

The Clothesline Project is an annual awareness campaign centered on domestic and intimate partner violence, child abuse, sexual assault and rape, and sexual assault as a result of perceived or actual sexual orientation. A main goal of this campaign is to spread awareness about gendered violence. An additionally important goal is for survivors and secondary survivors to have a creative outlet to express themselves after their experiences of gendered violence. The Clothesline Project is an international movement that took place here at UConn on Monday, October 8th, through Friday, October 12th, on Fairfield Way outside of the Student Union. Artists and volunteers were welcome; VAWPP Peer Educators tabled throughout the week from 10am to 2pm with more information on the VAWPP Program, the Women’s Center, and how to get involved.

—Natalie Gaudette and Jenn Donnelly

Outstanding Senior Women Achievement Award Recipients

In 1993 the Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Awards were established following the University of Connecticut's celebration of the 100 Years of Women at UConn. The Provost's Office, the Alumni Association, and the Women’s Center sponsor the annual awards ceremony to honor outstanding women undergraduate (and graduate students from the Graduate School, the School of Social Work, the School of Law, the School of Medicine and the School of Dental Medicine) graduating each year. The award recognizes those graduating women who have excelled academically within each school and demonstrated dedication to research and service to the University community. The recipients are selected by the Dean of the school/college. A reception is held in their honor during graduation weekend.

Congratulations to this year's recipients!
CONSTITUTION DAY AND THE ERA

Our government’s birthday is September 17, 1787, making it 225 years since the Constitution was signed. Yet, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was only introduced in 1923, less than 90 years ago, and still faces opposition.

What is the ERA?
The ERA is a proposed amendment to the Constitution that guarantees that no one may be discriminated against on the basis of sex. It directly states: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

But Wait, It isn’t a Law?
No! Alice Paul, a women’s suffrage leader and lawyer, wrote the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, and for fifty years it was consistently reintroduced, but never agreed upon in Congress. Roberta W. Francis, Chair of the ERA Task Force, writes: “On March 22, 1972, the ERA finally passed the Senate and the House of Representatives by the required two-thirds majority and was sent to the states for ratification.” Thirty-eight states are required for ratification in order to synthesize any amendment into the Constitution, so the ERA remains left out.

Why is it Important?
When the Constitution was written it stated that “All men are created equal.” It truly meant men, and men only, and was qualified by denying rights to Blacks, which was amended in later years. The Equal Rights Amendment advocates toward a more gender-equitable Constitution. “It would guarantee that the rights affirmed by the U.S. Constitution are held equally by all citizens without regard to sex”. The ERA would help courts deal with gender discrimination more consistently, and gender would not be a basis for any bias or unfair rulings within the court, in order to protect the rights of all citizens equally and fairly.

The ERA & You
The ERA affects men and women alike. Gender equity is for everyone’s benefit. Feminism does not seek to make women more successful than men, but to bring everyone the same opportunity to be successful, and the ERA seeks to do just that. Connecticut is one of twenty-two states, which have partial guarantees of equal rights on the basis of sex. Some have an emphasis on rights to education and employment, whereas others prohibit “unreasonable” sex discrimination. There needs to be a nationwide unification on the ERA in order to have it ratified and written into the Constitution. With the political climate of today, YOU have the power to legalize truly equal rights.

“The unspoken assumption is that women are different. They do not have executive ability, orderly minds, stability, leadership skills, and they are too emotional.”

HON. Shirley Chisholm, NY, House of Representatives, May 21, 1969

—Takina Pollock

*Roberta W. Francis, Chair, ERA Task Force, National Council of Women’s Organizations, The Equal Rights Amendment: Frequently Asked Questions
This is an Emergency! is a print portfolio project surrounding reproductive rights and gender justice. A collective group of artists joined together to make a statement of how they have experienced injustice regarding reproductive rights and gender inequality. According to Meredith Stern, the innovator behind This is an Emergency!, the goal is, “along with other organizing efforts, to shift culture and provide historical perspectives about how these issues impact our lives in the 21st century.” The portfolio project is meant to inspire dialogue about subjects that are generally considered taboo, such as abortion and same-sex marriage. The This is an Emergency! exhibit was on display in the Student Union Art Gallery from October 6th-19th. The Opening Reception was held on Wednesday, Oct 10th where Meredith Stern gave a presentation on the print portfolio, the politics behind it, and exactly how she went about putting together such successful, inspirational project.

—Kat Montero

Artist Meredith Stern obtained a BFA in Ceramics at Tulane University in New Orleans. She went on to develop a multifaceted practice that includes printmaking, ’zine publishing, and socially engaged creative production. Meredith is a member of the Justseeds Artists Cooperative and has collaborated on several large scale art installations at Space 1026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; UWM Union Art Gallery at The University of Wisconsin at Madison; The Miller Gallery in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as part of the Pittsburgh Biennial; and in Ljubljana, Slovenia as part of the 29th Graphic Arts Biennial. Her work is part of the permanent collection of Book Arts at the MOMA, The Library Of Congress, and in Universities and Libraries around North America. “This is an Emergency!” is one of her recent projects which combines visual art, narrative, and social justice. Her work can be found at http://www.meredithstern.org.
**DONOR PROFILE: MANSFIELD OB/GYN PRACTICE**

Mansfield OB/GYN has been a sponsor of Lunafest at UConn since the very first year. They have been a major contributor, and their consistent support has helped to ensure a successful event every year. Mansfield OB/GYN recognizes the imperativeness not only of women’s health, but of women’s well-being and women’s rights. Their enthusiasm and their steadfast involvement with the Women’s Center makes it possible for us to continue on our path toward gender equity. Sponsors such as Mansfield OB/GYN are greatly appreciated, and we would like to extend a formal thank you for their continued support.

What would you like our readers to know about your practice?
We offer a full spectrum of OB/GYN and midwifery services including minimally and non-invasive surgery, office-based procedures, family planning, and individualized care. We encourage our patients to collaborate with us in their healthcare decisions.

Why do you support Lunafest?
Our professional lives are centered around women. We love the project’s reflections on, and celebration of, women. Lunafest is not only aligned with our values, it opens up an artistic, human glimpse into women’s issues.

Are there any professional (or personal) gains to supporting this organization?
Professionally, we will gain exposure to Lunafest supporters, hopefully gaining their appreciation because we support the efforts of Lunafest. Personally, our involvement stimulates a creative side of us that we find refreshing.

What's the best part about being involved with Lunafest?
We like connecting with both the arts and women in our community, as well as contributing to the development of strong women with UConn. Simply put, Lunafest is cool, and we like being associated with it. It’s a perfect fit.

What do you think one of the most important goals of the UConn Women’s Center should be and are we succeeding in achieving it?
The efforts of the Women’s Center drive education and empowerment of women, promoting discussion and thought about relevant issues. These endeavors contribute to the well-being of women on many fronts: encouraging political engagement, developing a healthy understanding of relationships, preventing sexual assault through education and awareness programs, and revealing the frequently hidden realm of eating disorders.

Why should others give to our organization?
The goals of the Women’s Center are important. The reality of successful programs is that they need to have adequate funding to be truly effective.

Are you involved in any other community organizations, if so, which one(s)?
Among the groups we support are: Windham Hospital Foundation, Suzuki Association for Mansfield, Town of Mansfield, Windham Youth Volleyball, E.O. Smith Foundation, Tri-Town Football Association, Mansfield Youth Lacrosse, as well as many other local programs.

—Takina Pollock
My name is Takina Pollock, and I am the new editor of *Voices*. I transferred from Southern Connecticut State University in Fall 2011, and I am now in my third year. I am an Allied Health major and relatively new to feminism.

I think I’ve always known that I was a feminist at heart, but was never really able to put it into words until a few months ago. I think gender equality is an admirable and entirely necessary goal. Being Black and female, I have the least desirable traits in America, whose primary focus is on White, male privilege. It’s extremely important to lift others up and seek allies in striving toward a common goal. My personal feminist focus is on the intersectionality of race and gender, particularly as it applies to being Black in America.

I applied to be the editor of *Voices* because I wanted to make a tangible step toward achieving gender equality, and to basically “get my feet wet” with feminism. I think the way that we talk about things and the language we use is extremely important, and *Voices* gives me an outlet and motivation to change my language not only in my work, but in my daily life and conversations. I find things in everyday language that are toxic to women and to progress. In order to change the world, you have to be willing to change yourself and be a living, breathing example of how you envision life and the world. It’s a challenge, but I’m accepting it, and I look forward to the next edition of *Voices*!

—Takina Pollock
Dear Friends of the Women's Center:

We'd like to take a moment to remind you that your contributions to the Women's Center ensure that the major activities can continue to address areas of priority around gender equity.

Your gift can support:

- Student participation in a variety of out-of-class academic experiences, such as regional and national conferences
- The Women of Color Recognition award
- The 100 Years of Women Scholarship
- Enhanced programming in honor of the Women's Center’s 40th anniversary
- Program development around issues of gender equity and social justice on campus, such as our continued work through our Violence Against Women Prevention Program to educate our community on and advocate for the prevention of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment on campus

For more information on ways to support the Women's Center, please visit our giving page at http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/support/give.php

Or, visit the UConn Foundation’s giving site, select “other” under Purpose and include one of the following designations:
- Women's Center: #20447
- Years of Women Scholarship: #30231

Don’t forget to check out our website!
http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu/

We welcome you to visit UConn’s Women’s Center!
We are located at:
Student Union, Room 421
2110 Hillside Road, Unit 3118
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3118
(860) 486-4738
www.womenscenter.uconn.edu
Hours: 8am-9pm, Monday thru Thursday;
8am-5pm Fridays