



VOICES



THE WOMEN'S CENTER NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

SUMMER 2004

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BY NATASHA SMITH

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Dear Parents:

I am writing to you in regards to your student coming to UConn this fall. I know that many of you might have lots of questions and concerns. I would like to reassure you as much as possible that your child has many resources and opportunities here at UConn. The Women's Center is just one of the many places that a student can find an abundant amount of positive reinforcement away from home.

I am now a graduate student at UConn, and I experienced first-hand five great years at the Women's Center. I was able to find friends, mentors, great self-esteem, people that shared the same morals and values, and most of all life long learning experiences. The Women's Center has a reputation for guiding young adults to look at life and their experiences more

analytically. As young people transform into adults there are several challenges that occur. At times, students might have difficulty identifying with other students that are different from what they have known. Integrating into a new set of neighbors, classmates and friends is something that many students have not done for a long while, if ever.

Parents and loved ones will have to fully trust their students to make the right decisions, which can sometimes be difficult. I believe this is where the Women's Center, and the other cultural centers, can make a difference in a student's experience at UConn. The Center is a good place for the transition from their homogeneous lifestyle to their new heterogeneous lifestyle. The Center was able to ground me and keep me from dropping out of

school. The positive influence of the great staff, the support and great mentors that are here were able to keep me on top of my game. It is a place where a student might not feel like a small fish in a large ocean. I was able to leave the Center and walk on campus with more confidence about my self and my life choices.

I think one of the most challenging pieces of the college experience is to find your limits. If a student is able to experience all that they want to experience and still have most of the values and morals that they believed in when they arrived, then they have succeeded in college. I find it very common for students to have struggles with what they grew up with and what they want to grow into. A problem that I myself struggled with as a first year student is the new identity

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DID YOU KNOW?

A WOMEN'S HERSTORY FACT

The concept of an organized Women's Center at UConn was initiated in 1969 by a group of feminists who were interested in promoting feminist ideology and activism on campus. However, no formal organizing was done until the spring of 1972, when the Free Women's Collective was formed. One of their primary objectives was to establish a Women's Center on campus. (Researched by Lindsey Howie.)

EVENTS WE SPONSORED THIS PAST YEAR...

September 22nd *Colonize This!* Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism

The editors of *Colonize This!*, Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman, in company with contributor Kahente Horn-Miller, shared diverse perspectives and an enlightening discussion from young women of color on the concerns of a new feminism, and their place in it.

October 29th Men's March Against Domestic Violence and Coffeehouse

A men's march to bring attention to, and a call for, men to be involved in ending violence against women. Male students, staff, community members, and University leaders joined us in this 2nd annual event.

November 19th Reality Feminism—Waking up to Privilege Systems

Hugh Vasquez, Co-director of the Center for Diversity Leadership, and Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, examined several intersecting oppressions through the theoretical lens of privilege systems. They discussed the developmental processes by which each of them came to understand that they benefited from unearned advantage in ways that they had been taught not to notice and looked at the question of what keeps privilege so invisible to those whom it benefits.

March is Women's History Month**March 1st On Her Own Ground — The Life and The Times of Madam C.J. Walker**

A'Lelia Bundles is Madam C.J. Walker's great-great-granddaughter, an Emmy Award-winning network television news producer and former ABC News Washington Deputy Bureau Chief. In her national best-selling biography, Bundles revealed surprising and new information about this amazing entrepreneur, philanthropist and political activist. Co-sponsored by the African American Cultural Center.

March 16th International Women's Day Celebration

A day of celebrating women's contributions to the Arts worldwide. Exhibits, food and performances. Co-sponsored with the African American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, the Rainbow Center, and Student Union Board Of Governors. A faculty panel discussion, "Women and Globalization" was held at lunch and evening performances included Erika Avery, Rubyfruit, and Staceyann Chinn.

March 26th Yo Soy Latina!

YO SOY LATINA!™, the hit stage play, written, directed and produced by Linda Nieves-Powell, is funny, honest and evocative. Through stories flavored with the Latina experience, Latinas are encouraged to think about how they self identify as a Latin woman living in America. Co-sponsored with the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month**Clothesline Project**

The Clothesline Project is a visual display that calls attention to violence against women. The project displays shirts designed by survivors of violence and the families and friends of victims of violence.

Arte Sana/Corazon Lastimado

The Corazon Lastimado: Healing the Wounded Heart survivor art exhibit offers a visual testimony to the impact of sexual violence in our lives. This display will offer a network of support for the underserved survivors of color and advocates who work to prevent gender-based violence. Sexual abuse survivors and those who work with them are invited to use wooden hearts as vehicles of expression and healing.

May 7th Annual Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards Ceremony

An awards ceremony in recognition of the top graduating females, and the 100 Years of Women Scholarship recipients. Co-sponsored with the Provost's Commission on the Status of Women.

For a complete listing of Women's Center sponsored events, visit our website at: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

WOMEN'S HERSTORY

BY KATHERINE E. LEONARD

ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

The full article was originally published in the March 2004 edition of Voices.

This March we celebrate National Women's History Month, recognizing where we come from and where we're going. In 2004, the national theme is "Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility", challenging women to stand tall and reach for the stars with compassion and courage against great odds.

Starting in California in the 1970's, "Women's History Week" was started by the Education Task Force of Sonoma County to help raise awareness of the contributions of women to society. This took place the week of March 8th, International Women's Day, to make sure the events included a multi-cultural perspective, raised awareness of past contributions by women and encouraged a bright future for women. By 1980, President Jimmy Carter was encouraging and promoting the week, eventually making it "National Women's History Week". By 1987, demand from organizations, museums, libraries, youth leaders and educators around the country was too overwhelming for just one week.

The House and Senate approved a National Women's History Month, which has been in effect since 1992.

Here at UConn, we put a feminist spin on the word "history" and changed it into "Women's Herstory", reminding one that history is made through the stories we each tell. In anticipation, the Women's Center is excited to bring some wonderful events to the community this March. Lea LeBel, coordinator of Women's Herstory Month and student employee at the Women's Center, recognizes March as "a month to celebrate the women who have shaped the world as we know it through their contributions." She, as well as the rest of the Women's Center staff, would like to extend a warm invitation to all of our events this semester!

For more information about National Women's History Month, go to the National Women's History Project

<http://www.nwhp.org> ♀



Grad Women's Group

An ongoing, peer-led group that is intended to provide support, focus, ideas and problem-solving strategies for female graduate students at various stages in the process, as well as build a sense of community among participants. This support group offers objective reactions and fresh perspectives from a group of like-minded people, as well as a place to unwind and network with other students in a variety of disciplines.



Women's Book Club

Got books? The Women's Book Club is looking for new members. Come and explore the world through the eyes and words of women. All meetings will be held in the Conference room of the Office of Special Programs (located on the Garden Level of the Wilbur Cross building). The next meeting we will discuss *Fall on Your Knees* by Ann-Marie MacDonald on Tuesday, September 14th at noon.



Between Women

A rap group for women who love women... or think they might! For more information call the Women's Center at (860) 486-4738 or email: betweenwomen@hotmail.com.



(Continued from Page 1) Welcome to UConn

that you must create for yourself. At home you might have been the ace in the crowd. Arriving at a new school, it might be difficult to work your way back to the top of the pile again. I found that this feeling quickly disappeared once I became involved with the Center. I worked on building my self-esteem, which enabled me to deal with the pressures of college much better. I was able to say no to peer pressure and recognize that it was okay to be different from everyone else. The Center has taught me to love myself and to understand how societal pressures have a large affect on young people today. The main theme of my Women's Center experience is that I am a stronger student and person today.

The Women's Center is a resource that has an educational background, support

networks, and social/cultural events to help students acclimate into the real world and to guide them to trust and learn about themselves. In the first weeks of your student's attendance at UConn, I challenge you to encourage your students to learn more about the Women's Center and the other cultural centers on campus. The Rainbow Center, African American, Puerto Rican/Latin American and Asian American Cultural Centers have so much to offer. I feel as though coming to college at the age of 18, many feel as though they know who they are already. They dismiss these opportunities because they feel they do not need them. If you go back to when you were 18 years old, you might remember that you still had much to learn, even when you thought you knew it all. I would like to welcome you and your student to the UConn community and to let you know that the Women's Center is a wonderful resource open to all.



RECOGNIZING OUR STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We would like to introduce you to our graduates in recognition of their accomplishments at UConn and wish them the best of luck in the future!

Sarah Carlson, of Newtown, CT, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Sarah plans to work full time then onto graduate school.

Elise Curtain, of South Glastonbury, CT, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in English.

Nicole Graf, of Vernon/Rockville, CT, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Family Studies, and a double minor in Sociology and Human Rights. Nicole plans to take a year off and move to Cape

Cod, finding a women's rights internship/organization to be a part of.

Aly Lanzone, of Edgartown, MA, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, and a minor in Women's Studies. Aly plans on pursuing an MS in Counseling Psychology in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences at Northeastern University, Boston.

Kate Leonard, of Hillsdale, NJ, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Human Rights. Kate plans to work full time then continue her education in graduate school.

Valencia Louis, of Stamford, CT, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Valencia plans on working at Greenwich Hospital.

We would also like to acknowledge *Michelle Noehren*, UConn NOW President. Michelle, of Trumbull, CT, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, an individualized double major in Female Identity Formation and a minor in Women's Studies. Following graduation, Michelle will be the Canvas Director at the Connecticut Citizens Action Group in West Hartford. We would also like to congratulate Michelle on recently receiving the "CT NOW Young Feminist" award this year.



WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH: AN OVERVIEW

BY: LEA LABEL



This article was originally published in the April 2004 edition of Voices.

I have to admit I was a little apprehensive when Kate asked me to write for this month's newsletter. However, I decided that it was important to let our readers know what the Women's Center has been doing for Women's Herstory Month.

Our opening event went off without a hitch; A'Lelia Bundles was fabulous! She spent the whole day with the Women's Center staff, talking about her work and her book. We had a wonderful time!

International Women's Day on March 16th was a bit of an interesting day to say the least! As you all know, that night Mother Nature decided she didn't want it to be spring just yet. She ended up sprinkling about 4 inches of white stuff all over the Storrs campus. Fortunately, the snow held off for our lunchtime panel on Women and Globalization. About 30 students, staff and faculty turned out to

hear Professor Asma Abdel-Halim (Women's Studies) and Professor Bandana Purkayastha (Sociology) speak on the topic. Even though the snow fell later that afternoon and into the night we did not want to cancel the evening celebration. Two of our performers were unable to make it but despite the change in schedule, Rubyfruit, Erika Avery and Staceyann Chin put on a terrific show! Over forty people had fun listening to music and poetry, eating the delicious food and creating their own goddesses out of clay. Currently, the goddesses are on display in the Women's Center.

I would like to thank the committee: Blenda Chau from AsACC, Zulma Rios & Carissa Roman from PR/LACC, Deborah Rea from the International Center, Sarah Lessard from SUBOG, Kevin Fahey from Campus Activities and Kathleen Holgerson from the Women's Center. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. The success of International Women's Day is completely due to you!

The Multi-Generational Panel on women's activism was an inspirational evening. Ruthe Boyea, Leslie Lindenhauer, Xaé Reyes and Jenny Lai all told their stories about how and why they became activists. They offered those in the audience who were activists a sense of pride and encouragement to continue their hard work.

The closing event was phenomenal. The authors of the book, *MANIFESTA: Young Women, Feminism & the Future*, Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner, spoke about what it means to be a feminist. They told the audience that being a feminist was a way of living and treating people, not a laundry list of characteristics. The event was very well attended.

In conclusion, I have had a great time planning and working with the UConn community. This has been a month I will not soon forget.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Women's Center is to advocate, educate, and provide 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.



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Some Reminders...

Join Our Listserv!

Want to keep up with the Women's Center on a weekly basis? Then join the UWomen-L Listserv, a weekly updated email featuring Women's Center events, on and off campus events, announcements and local, national, and international news. For information on how to subscribe, please call (860) 486-4738. ♀

Check Out Our Website:

Be sure to visit our regularly updated website at: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu. You can find a complete list of events for the semester, learn about all of our ongoing groups, and get informed on issues such as dating violence and sexual assault. You can also find out what kind of resources we keep in our library. Past newsletters are also posted. ♀

This article was originally published in the April 2004 edition of Voices.

Greetings from the Editor:

Hello Readers,

Thank you for taking the time to pick up and read our newsletter. This month, we have covered some very important issues such as: Sexual Assault Awareness, the March for Women's Lives and Child Care at UConn. Each of these issues is so important right now because they all have such an impact on the UConn community. Educating yourself on the issues surrounding you is important; we hope you will take this knowledge and put it to action. I would also like to thank Hilary Jones, Aly Lanzone, Lea LeBel and Carol Millette for their contributions to this month's newsletter!

As for me, well, this is my last newsletter for the Women's Center. I will be graduating with the Class of 2004 in May. I want to thank the Women's Center for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of your lives; this experience has been incredible for me. Like Lea, it has been one that I will not soon forget. With the Warmest & Best Wishes, - Kate (April, 2004)

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VOICES

WHERE ALL THE PIECES COME TOGETHER