

VOICES

The Women's Center Newsletter

University of Connecticut

April/May 2003

Highlights of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

SNEAK PEEK

A Quick Guide to What's Inside

Read about Sexual Assault Awareness Month
See pgs 1 and 4

Check out What Events We Have Planned!
See page 2

Read about Advisory Board member Marita McComiskey
See pgs 1 & 4

Reminders and group information
See page 5

By Jennifer Babulsky

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a month dedicated to educating people on the issue of sexual assault and on ways to support survivors of sexual assault.

One of the many events going on during April is the Take Back the Night rally. Take Back the Night is an international rally and march that is organized in local communities with the purpose of unifying women, men and children in an awareness of violence against women, children and families.

This event is a collaboration of any communities, campus and

other interested people who want to take a stand against violence and make the night safe for everyone.

Take Back the Night rallies and marches began in England as a protest against the fear that women encountered walking the streets at night. The first Take Back the Night in the United States occurred in San Francisco in 1978. Since then, hundreds of rallies have taken place each year, including at UConn, to show support and unite, as well as show that women, men and children can work together to end sexual assault.

People uniting to end sexual assault and violence is

also the goal of other events during April.

The Women's Center has a variety of events going on all month including The Clothesline Project, A Day of Healing and a day of Journal Making.

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

A Day of Healing is an evening of empowerment to begin the healing process for survivors and secondary survivors as well as provide closure after Take Back the

Continued on pg. 4

The Outstanding Woman of Connecticut Marita McComiskey

By Cori Simek

The Outstanding Women of Connecticut Award was started in 1976, and has been awarded only in 1976, 1987, and 2003. Each of these award ceremonies has honored one hundred outstanding women in Connecticut for their work in the fields of equality, peace and development. This year, Marita McComiskey, our University of Connecticut Women's Studies Program Director was honored with this award.

"I can't remember a time when I haven't been committed to working toward peace," McComiskey stated.

Her motivation to work for peace began during the Civil Rights Movement.

"I was outraged by the injustices during

that period. It pains me to see people not having justice."

Ever since this spark of fury, McComiskey has given her heart to volunteering and doing her part as a leader of peace.

Since 1991 Marita McComiskey has been the Women's Studies Internship Coordinator and recently became the Women's Studies Program Director at the University of Connecticut. She is also a member of the Women's Center Advisory Board and is on the Programming/Political Action Committee. Among her many responsibilities, she continues to teach in the department and claims her students are "the best."

The students she has taught all feel honored and enlightened by McComiskey's experience and knowledge. She was recently

Continued on pg. 4

Calendar of Events

April

22 Adrienne Rich

Part of the Wallace Stevens Poetry Program

Co-sponsored with the Department of English, Women's Studies, the Rainbow Center, Multicultural Affairs, and The Hartford.

Tuesday, 8 pm, Jorgenson Auditorium

23 Take Back the Night March, Rally and Coffeehouse

The Women's Center invites all survivors, secondary survivors, friends and allies to this event.

Wednesday, 7 pm Rally, 8 pm March, 9 pm Coffeehouse, Student Union-Jonathan's area. Call the Women's Center for the location of the rally/march at 486-4738.

24 Day of Healing

An evening of empowerment to begin the healing process for survivors and secondary survivors. Magdalena Gomez will talk about using creative expression to heal from abuse and emerge from the silence and shame so many have experienced.

Thursday, 6 pm, Women's Center Lounge

29 Aromatherapy Part of the Life Balance Series

Co-sponsored with Health Education, Student Health Services.

Thursday, 6 pm, Women's Center Lounge

30 Journal Making

Journal Making is a peaceful way of meditation and a good way to release for survivors and secondary survivors. At the end of the month, many thoughts have been processed for sexual assault awareness month and a closing including relaxation and meditation.

Thursday, 6 pm Women's Center Lounge

May

8 Stress Down Day

Stress down before finals begin with free massage, Reiki, reflexology, aromatherapy and more! Co-sponsored with Health Education, Office of Special Programs.

Thursday, 11 am—2 pm, South Campus

16 Annual Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards Ceremony

Co-sponsored with the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women

Friday, 4 pm-6 pm, Student Union, Room 378

20 11th Annual Women's Advance Conference

UConn Women: Making Their Way in the World

Tuesday, Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, Ashford, CT

Watch for your registration brochure in April.

Cyber Stalking : An Internet Warning

By Cori Simek

According to the 1999 U.S. Department of Justice report, cyber stalking is identified as a growing problem. There are currently more than 80 million adults and 10 million children with access to the internet in the United States. Because of the widespread usage of technology, there is an estimate of around ten to a hundred thousand cyber stalking victims.

Cyber stalking is a form of stalking that involves persistent, offensive, and threatening communication through the Internet, via e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging or through other electronics such as cell phones, telephones or beepers. This electronic stalking is equally as serious as conventional stalking, and has led to off-line incidents of violent crime. Lawmakers have addressed this criminal conduct, and in some states separate laws have been written against cyber stalking. Although victims are getting attention from the state, law enforcement agencies are not taking stalking victims seriously. "You can't be hurt on the internet- it's just words" or "Just turn off your computer" are the unacceptable responses some victims have received.

There is now an availability of software that provides a high degree of protection for stalkers, and they can cover their tracks more effectively. Programs such as *Stratfor's Shredder* act like an electronic paper shredder that overwrites deleted files. This allows the stalker to stay faceless and unidentified.

There are now organizations working for safety. Working to Halt Online Abuse (WHOA) is a volunteer organization that is providing policies for a better internet community, and works with victims of harassment. Their web address is www.haltabuse.org. Network Solutions, an Internet company, provides searches in its registrar database to assist people in determining the contents of a domain name registration record. This will help provide contact information to locate the harasser. Their web address is www.networksolutions.com.

If you or someone you know is ever a victim of cyber stalking there are certain steps to immediately consider. First, save every piece of communication you receive from the stalker. Second, start a log of each communication explaining the situation in more detail. Finally, once (and only once) contact your harasser directly and simply state that you wish for he or she to stop contacting you. If these steps are not effective WHOA at www.haltabuse.com will provide more assistance.

Out of the 13% of college women that have been stalked in college, one-fourth of the harassments involved are cyber stalking. Protect yourself online.

Going Full Steam Ahead

The search for information on the herstory of the Women's Center is as strong as ever. Meghan Kimball, a Women's Center intern, has undertaken the task of compiling a comprehensive account of the past thirty years of the Center. Fortunately, the herstory of the first ten years is complete, but the Center has been alive and well for another twenty years! Meghan would appreciate any information people could provide.

Please contact Kathy Fluckiger at 486-4738 or Kathy.Fluckiger@uconn.edu with any contributions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Student Health Services has formed a herpes support group which is open to all students. This group provides a confidential, supportive environment where students can obtain accurate information and share experiences with others who have herpes. The group will meet April 30, 2003 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Student Health Services, Lower Level Conference Room. For more information, contact Michele LaBonte at 486-0026.

Artists, poets, musicians, performance artists and the like are needed to perform at the Take Back the Night Coffee House on Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Sasha Smith at 486-4738 or at sasha.smith@uconn.edu.

There are two opportunities each week to vigil for peace. **Storrs** - Tuesdays 4-5 p.m., 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.

The Rainbow Center is looking for people to become peer educators. If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or an ally who is interested in getting involved at the Rainbow Center as part of its Speakers Bureau, contact Stephanie Marnin at 486-5821 or rnbdwdir@uconn.edu.

Branford Dental Care in Branford, CT is offering for the fifth year in a row, their "Brighter Smiles for Y-ME" fundraiser this April and May. BDC will whiten your teeth for the tax deductible cost of \$200, and the money will benefit Y-ME. For more information, contact Branford Dental Care at 203-488-7444.

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

Continued from pg. 1 (Sexual Assault Awareness Month)

Night. Magdalena Gomez will talk about using creative expression to heal from abuse and emerge from the silence and shame so many have experienced. The workshop will create a safe atmosphere for people to explore the power of their imagination to liberate feelings and express those feelings strongly, safely and creatively through theater games, voice work and movement.

The day for Journal Making will provide a peaceful way of meditation and a good release for survivors and secondary survivors. At the end of the month, many thoughts will be processed for sexual assault awareness month and Journal Making will provide a closing day for relaxation and meditation.

For more information on these events or on Sexual Assault Awareness Month, visit the Women's Center website at www.womenscenter.uconn.edu.

Women's Lacrosse Schedule

4/9	Boston College*	7 p.m.
4/12	at Rutgers	4 p.m.
4/16	at Boston University	4 p.m.
4/19	Virginia Tech*	1 p.m.
4/23	Fairfield	7 p.m.
4/27	at Georgetown*	1 p.m.

Softball Schedule

4/11	at Virginia Tech (dh)*	2 p.m.
4/13	at Pittsburgh (dh)*	11 a.m.
4/15	UMass	3:30 p.m.
4/16	at Boston University	4 p.m.
4/19	at Boston College (dh)*	noon
4/26	Syracuse (dh)*	noon
4/27	Notre Dame (dh)*	11 a.m.
5/8 - 5/10	BIG EAST	TBA
5/15-5/18	NCAA Regionals (Salem, VA)	TBA

All Home games are in bold

(dh) double header

*BIG EAST opponent

Ticket Information...

Tickets for women's sports events are available through the Athletic Ticket Office, 2111 Hillside Road, U-3078 Storrs, CT 06269-3078. The office phone number is toll free from anywhere in the U.S. 1-877-AT-UCONN (1-877-288-2666) or 860-486-2724.

Continued from pg. 1 (Outstanding Women of Conn.)

graded an A+ on a national website where students rate their teachers.

Although the Outstanding Women of Connecticut Award was quite the honor for McComiskey, she was truly honored when awarded the Mu Sigma Upsilon Phenomenal Women Award for Outstanding Service in Promoting Sisterhood Among All Women. The purpose of this award is to recognize and honor women that influenced women's lives and the lives of the entire university and community in a distinctive way.

"I was moved by the MSU Phenomenal Woman Award because it was from the students on campus who recognized my commitment," McComiskey said.

"In everything I have ever done, I have based my foundation on peace," she said.

In speaking with Marita McComiskey, I heard the sincerity and passion behind her words. She truly believes that if every person did his or her part, a difference would be made in this world. She has surely done her part, and the Women's Center congratulates her contribution immensely.

Words From Graduating Seniors

By Jennifer Babulsky

Part of the success of the Women's Center is the dedication of its student workers. This Spring, the Center will be losing some of the students who helped make the Center what it is today. With senior student workers graduating, this space is dedicated to giving them a chance to say their goodbyes.

Shante Powers, who has worked at the Center since the fall of 1999 and is a peer-educator for the Violence Against Women Prevention Program, said she found a second family at the Center and will miss the conversations everyone had. "I'm going to miss the great conversations and trading date stories," Powers said.

The Center was never lacking in good times when the seniors are around. Senior Chavonne Shaw said she made great friends since she started working at the Center three years ago. She also said her last day at the Center will be filled with both laughs and tears. "I'll be very emotional," she said. "It will be sad but I am ready to move on."

Moving on to graduate school is what senior Meredith Williams plans to do after graduation. She said she has loved the comforting atmosphere of the

Continued on pg. 5

Continued from pg. 4 (Seniors)

Center and will miss the people she has worked with.

One of the reasons why many of the graduating seniors said they would miss working at the Center was because people do not have to be afraid of letting their voices be heard. When people felt stifled outside the Center and wanted to vent, all they had to do was walk through the doors of the Center. Senior Indre Jarmusyte said she never felt uncomfortable letting her opinions be heard at the Center. "I like the comfortable feeling of speaking your mind and discussing the same kinds of problems we face in society," she said.

The Center has faced good and bad over the years. Jarmusyte said one of the major problems the Center faces is overcoming stereotypes and educating the members of the UConn community. One of the stereotypes the Center faces is that it is a Center only for women. "It is amazing that people do not think the Center is for everyone," she said. "It still amazes me to this day."

The Center has educated the student workers on a variety of issues along with the surrounding community. Senior Jessica Hwang said she enjoyed her time at the Center because the Center kept her up to date on issues around the world.

Whether it be taking time off or furthering their education, these graduating seniors will make their mark in the world.

VOICES

Kathleen Holgerson
Director

Jennifer Babulsky
Editor

Kathy Fluckiger
Associate Director

Cori Simek
Co-Editor

Annie Rodriguez
VAWPP Coordinator

Carol Millette
Administrative Assistant

Phone: 860-486-4738

TDD: 860-486-1546

Fax: 860-486-1104

Semester Hours: M-Th: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
& F: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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 Website

Be sure to visit our newly updated website at www.womenscenter.uconn.edu. You can find out about all our events for the Spring 2003 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. This group meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. 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

This support group is undergoing structural changes to better meet the needs identified by those who have been participating, as well as those who wish to participate. Updates and information will be available on our website in the near future. For more information, contact Kathy Fluckiger at 486-4738.

Greetings from the Editor

I would like to thank those people who participated in providing information for the articles in this issue of *VOICES*.

I would like to congratulate those seniors at the Women's Center who are graduating in May. Your hard work at UConn and at the Women's Center has been greatly appreciated.

VOICES

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

#289500
University of Connecticut
Women's Center
417 Whitney Road, Unit 1118
Storrs, CT 06269-1118