

FYI

- Special thanks to Jori Cotton, our staff member who also helped with social work responsibilities during Alisa's maternity leave.
- Congratulations to Alisa and Jeff Washnock on the birth of their first child, the beautiful Cecilia Renee, born December 7th - 7 lbs, 7 ozs.
- Our cup overflows! Whether it is through volunteer opportunities, individual financial donations, involvement in behind the scenes support, TWC is most grateful to the Sisters of Charity and the Associate members for all they do.
- The Women's Connection wishes to acknowledge the generosity of St. William parish for their December giving tree donations and the many ways that they support us throughout the year.
- Healthy Moms and Babes, an agency that provides free and confidential service to women who are pregnant or raising children, comes to TWC's Learning Center between 9:30-5:00. No appointment is necessary; please call 471-4673 to check their schedule.

Calendar of coming events in 2010

March 18 –**New Teen Opportunity Fair** at Seton High School
5:00-7:00 p.m.

April 1 –**Adult Job Fair** at Elder High School's Schaeper Center
9:00-1:00 p.m.

April 10 –TWC **Cabaret** at St. William parish- see insert flyer

April 24 –**Violence Against Women National Conference** at Seton High School
8:30-4:30 p.m.



513-471-HOPE (4673)
Fax 513-557-3741

Thanks!

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Our Mission

We are a neighborhood center providing support for change by educating, empowering, and enriching women, children and families.

Our Priorities

- ❖ To be a welcoming place
- ❖ To connect women and children with available resources
- ❖ To provide educational and personal growth opportunities that respond to community needs
- ❖ To initiate and promote collaborative programs and services within the community

Gratitude Runs High at TWC

For thirteen years The Women's Connection has had a steady, guiding hand in the area of finance and grant writing. Day after day, Sister Kathleen Hebbeler, a Dominican Sister of Hope, has served the Center and the mission of TWC so well. She, as Associate Director, and Sister Mary Jo Gasdorf, Executive Director, established a wonderful working relationship and have worked as a team ever since. As a "fallen away nurse", Kathleen saw a need for better health care in Price Hill, and started the collaborative Health Fair in the neighborhood. She was a part of another collaborative effort, the Back to School Fair. She is a quiet, "behind the scenes" support in many ways. We at TWC will miss her presence, her wit and insight.

Now is the time Kathleen has chosen to move on, to bring her gifts to another place, and discover new ways of serving. She is not retiring! She is praying, researching, listening and remaining open to possibilities.

On January 10th, 2010, The Women's Connection held a farewell celebration and open house in her honor. What a very special afternoon it was! Many current and past board members, current and past staff members, close associates, family and friends came to celebrate the woman she is.

If you would like to make a donation to The Women's Connection in honor of Kathleen's service and the many lives of the women, children, and families she has touched, we thank you!



Message from Kathleen

I know it is a cliché but it does seem like yesterday when I started working with Mary Jo. She had established the need for a neighborhood center for women in Price Hill and had formed a task force to help with the project. I joined that task force in January 1997. That was the beginning of a new career for which my nursing education and experience had not prepared me. It seems like overnight I became a grant writer and a bookkeeper! I have learned a lot and worked with some remarkable women and men. I have been inspired by the women who come to TWC and their ability to survive and thrive despite great obstacles. My commitment to The Women's Connection and its mission remains strong.

However, I am ready for new challenges. I am not retiring. I am discerning my next career. I look forward to a reformed health care system and the opportunities it might provide for a "fallen away nurse". Aimee Shinkle, TWC Marketing and Development Coordinator, has my support and prayers as the new grant writer. Theresa Bengel will be a great bookkeeper.

Thank you for your support and care. I will miss TWC, its staff, board, participants, and volunteers. I plan to stay connected and hope to see many of you again at the Cabaret and other TWC events. In the words of e. e. cummings, "i carry your heart with me (i carry it in my heart)..."



Another day in the life of The Women's Connection

Loren was listed as "baby girl Cornfield" on her birth certificate. She had little trouble most of her life with this certificate, but upon attempting to rent a new apartment, she was told that she needed a corrected birth certificate in order to apply. She came to TWC several months ago to have her documents notarized. Time passed. She heard nothing. She came back so that we could investigate, and with some persistence over the phone, we were able to uncover her affidavit. Her name change is now effective!!! She was just so grateful to have this weight lifted and to be able to move along with her apartment search.

Jean is a volunteer with Las Hispanas. She comes with her adopted son, Joseph. Joseph is Hispanic, and their original intention was to learn and practice some Spanish. That goal has not come to fruition, but another more exciting thing is happening. Joseph is gaining confidence and a new sense of self by spending time with other children who look like him and share his birth culture. His mother is so happy that she has been able to see him grow in this way.

Lucy had the courage to call TWC and then lost that courage, for a day. She registered to come to one of our enrichment programs a few months earlier. As time drew closer, we made a reminder call about the date and time. That very day she called the Center, sounding very reluctant, maybe ill, and definitely wavering in her hopes to be part of the program. She got the right person on the other end of the line that listened, heard the anxiety and uncertainty in her voice, and yet encouraged her to make the effort to come. At the appointed time, she came! The class went well; she was so glad that she could step out of her fear, try something new to her, feel connected with other women after being alone so often, and be proud enough to show her therapist and friend what she had accomplished. It was a giant first step, full of new days to come at The Women's Connection!

Advocacy and Social Services

One of the most important services TWC provides to the Hispanic community is our presence as a constant, compassionate resource in the neighborhood. Katie Sawyer, our full time Americorps Hispanic outreach coordinator, keeps updated on the needs and concerns of the community. Recently the Bureau of Motor Vehicles created a new policy which cut short the time on many vehicle registrations. This impacted family and school transportation. A community came together to listen to an attorney help 70 Hispanic residents understand what they needed to do. A major difficulty in the community is that Hispanic women are extremely isolated. When they find themselves in difficult situations, their troubles are compounded by the fact that they have no idea of where to look for help, or even how to ask for it. TWC is happy to help women navigate complicated systems and learn where to look for resources. One participant summed it up so well, saying, "Usted es mi voz," or, "You are my voice."

Volunteer Social Worker



The Women's Connection has been blessed with the support of a wonderful volunteer social worker, Joanne Queenan, who worked with us while Alisa was on maternity leave. Joanne previously worked with Hospice of Cincinnati, our Over the Rhine neighbors, and parents of children with disabilities. She and her husband have two grown children. She enjoys reading, writing, cartooning and she loves to travel. Thank you Joanne; we appreciated working with you.

When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.

G.K. Chesterton

HISPANIC OUTREACH



traditional Mexican Posada, complete with music, tamales, and hundreds of cookies provided by Seton High School's Spanish students! The students from Seton and an adult Spanish class from Elder's tech-reach program enjoyed the opportunity to have a glimpse into another culture's traditions.

2010 outreach is well under way. Activities include a concert by the choral group from the University of Cincinnati at Heritage Community Church, a presentation by an attorney who works exclusively with the Hispanic population discussing the rights they and their children have as immigrants, and involvement in the Recreation Center's Community Garden project. One of our Hispanic Outreach goals for the year is to help the women discover resources and opportunities in the community at large, and we trust that these new opportunities will broaden those horizons.

Hola! Las Hispanas, our Hispanic women's group, enjoyed two very popular cultural events: they and their families celebrated Thanksgiving in a wonderful collaboration with Shiloh United Methodist Church; we were able to provide a traditional Thanksgiving feast for 100 people. For our Christmas celebration, families took part in a

Planned Giving

The Women's Connection proudly acknowledges those individuals and families who make a gift to TWC through their estate plans with planned giving. Your generous planned gift will support TWC and its mission, and may also qualify for a charitable gift tax deduction or decreased capital gains taxes, depending on the type of asset donated. For further discussion about a planned gift, contact your tax representative.

Volunteers Needed for 9th Annual Employment Fair

SEEKING - Business minded individuals who can review and provide recommendations for resume improvements. We will be offering job seekers the opportunity to have their resume evaluated on April 1st, (the day of the employment fair), as well as *before* the day of the fair, so that the job seekers can arrive with the best possible chance of presenting a winning resume. If you can help, please call Linda at 471-4673, ext. 12.

ESOL Classes

Our ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) class got underway in October and has been going strong ever since. The class meets twice a week at TWC, and focuses on language that the students can use every day- things like dates and time, talking about family, filling out applications and going over forms and letters from schools and landlords. As new needs present themselves, TWC will respond.



La Posada celebration.

YOUTH CORNER

Catch the excitement! **Girl's Night In** planned several special workshops in early February. In collaboration with the YWCA's "girl's inc" program, "Loving Yourself" was presented, and TWC joined with the YWCA's Family Violence Prevention Program and took a special field trip to Elementz Hip Hop Youth Center for an Open Mic Night. On April 1st "Prom Princess" will take place. The evening includes a "Prom Dress Consignment Shop" to assist girls in selecting a free dress to wear for their upcoming proms. **We are requesting donations of larger size prom, bridesmaid or formal dresses; if you would like to donate, please contact Jori at 471-4673.**

A fun and exciting New Year is ready for **Girl's Club Girl's Life**. The YWCA's "girl's inc" will facilitate 2 ten week programs, *Dollar and Sense*, a financial literacy program, and *Willpower/Won't Power*, a healthy self-esteem and decision making program.

The **Teen Mom** group continues to meet every Thursday from 4-5p.m. for girls from 14 - 19.

NEW Teen Opportunity

This year The Women's Connection is taking a new approach to the Teen Job Fair. The evening will now focus on a Teen Opportunity Fair, to be held Thursday, March 18 from 5-7p.m. at Seton High School. Check into the value of volunteering, take advantage of new experiences, meet business people who are looking for responsible and motivated teens. Be a part of the new movement.