

W h o I a m

August
2005

Note From the Director

Welcome (back) to Messiah College and to the Gender Studies Project! We (the GSP) are a centralized resource designed to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff, both within the Messiah College community as well as the larger society, through a variety of educational programs, culturally-diverse events, resource opportunities, and other support services all related to gender. We have a number of exciting events planned for the coming year around the themes of healthy relationships, healthy living, and international violence/rights, including alternate chapels, races/walks for different causes, and a candlelight vigil. (However, our programming is not limited to these themes and we will be sponsoring events on other topics as well.) We encourage you to attend as many of our events as you can! Events will be publicized via our newsletter, listserv, and website as well as Community News, the Intercom, and mass emails.

Perhaps you met my Student Assistant, Jennifer Straub, if you stopped by our table at the Opportunities Fair. If not, I encourage you to drop by and meet her during her office hours Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 am -12:30 am or email her at genderstudies@messiah.edu and set up a time to meet (I am on sabbatical this fall but will be back on campus in the spring). Jen would like to know your interests and if you might like to volunteer for the Gender Studies Project. We encourage you to become involved with the Project and there are lots of volunteer opportunities. For example, students could join any of the committees listed in our GSP newsletter or organize a service project. There are also opportunities for students, faculty and staff to write for the GSP newsletter, work on a GSP initiative, or even start your own initiative. There is no shortage of ways to make the Gender Studies Project a significant part of your Messiah experience; we are looking forward to meeting you!

Debra Berke
Associate Professor of
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Director, Messiah College's Gender Studies Project

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Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS Connections

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) website, violence against women plays a crucial role in understanding the risk to women of HIV infection. Violence and infection are connected by a complex mix of biological, social and cultural conditions. These factors are a significant reason why the numbers of women who are infected with the HIV virus are rising and why women are more vulnerable to infection than men.

In the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the term “violence against women” means:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

World Health Organization research indicates that in some countries, as many as one in four women may experience sexual violence by an intimate partner in her lifetime. Violent or forced sex

situations, especially to adolescent girls, increases the risk of HIV transmission.

In a South African study, 1,366 women who attended local health centers agreed to be tested for HIV and interviewed about their home lives, revealed some sobering results. Women who were beaten by their husbands or boyfriends and women who were emotionally or financially dominated by their partners were significantly more likely to test positive than those who were not.

Certainly power roles, stereotypes, behavioral norms, and dominant social expectations all were factors in these results. Both men and women are victims of these social forces that prevent joint decision making and prevent communication and negotiation about safe sex practices.

Other studies confirm that in different parts of the world, as many as one third of adolescent girls report that their first sexual experience was coerced. Many girls are often married to older men and the power inequities in these relationships leads to violence.

In addition, the threat of violence or sexual abuse is high for girls who have been orphaned by AIDS. The Human Rights Watch found that many young girls who had been orphaned by AIDS were being sexually assaulted by family members or guardians or were being forced into sex work to survive.

The fear of violence and retribution inhibits women from seeking treatment. A positive test result may

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result in physical violence, expulsion from their home, or social ostracism. Women have admitted to health professionals that they are afraid of their partner's reaction if he finds out about a positive HIV result. This fear prevents women from being tested, returning for their test results, and from participating in prevention and treatment programs. If they do receive treatment, they have difficulty adhering to the regimen because they try to hide their pills.

So how can these sobering facts be addressed? A comprehensive response must first make violence against women unacceptable in the global community. Additionally, the relationship between violence against women and HIV and AIDS needs to be made known so that researchers and health practitioners can have a more complete knowledge base from which to work in the field. Finally, global, national and community level efforts to improve the educational and legal standing of women will help to ensure that their vulnerability to infection due to violence will be eradicated.

(Adapted from information provided on the website

www.genderandaids.org.)

For more information on HIV/AIDS issues and gender, please see the UNIFEM website at

www.genderandaids.org.

“In many parts of the world, women and girls are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because they lack control over most aspects of their life. Cultural expectations and gender roles expose women and girls to violence, sexual exploitation and far greater risk for infection.”

--Hillary Clinton

FYI: The Gender Studies Website has a great database for your use. There are many resources listed in the database so be sure to check it out!! The site address is www.messiah.edu/gender/. Click on the link at the left called “resources.”

Women's Equality Day is August 26, 2005

This year will be the 85th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage!!

On July 13, 1848, five women met for tea in upstate New York. Having commiserated about the lot of women in American society, they did something brash and wonderful... they sent off notice to the local newspaper announcing "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious conditions and rights of women" to be held just six days later in Seneca Falls.

The Women's Rights Movement was born!

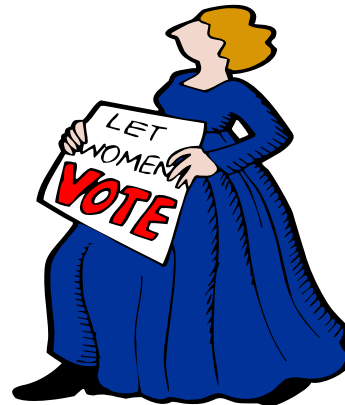
Convention participants drafted a Declaration of Sentiments which began: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal..." One of the resolutions called for universal women's suffrage. One hundred women and men from all walks of life signed that Declaration. Only one, nineteen year old Charlotte Woodward, lived to see women win the vote.

On August 26, 1920, after a 72-year struggle, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the U.S. was finally ratified, granting women the right to vote nationwide. The actual text states:

Section 1. The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

In 1971, President Carter designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day, as a reminder of women's continuing efforts for equality. (A Brief History of the Suffrage Movement and Women's Equality Day from www.creativefolk.com)



stress Busters for Men and Women

(From LHJ.com) When it comes to stress, men and women tend to be from the same planet. Just about anyone can benefit from certain stress busters, including getting a good night's sleep or skipping the anxiety-inducing caffeine

However, there are some differences between men and women. Some studies have suggested that women are more likely than men to develop depression when stressed. A 2003 survey found that 48 percent of men said their job was a source of stress compared with 32 percent of women. In contrast, 37 percent of women said their family was a source of stress compared with 21 percent of men. Check out the following stress busters for women and men.

Women:

1. Get your antioxidants: crank up the juices or scarf down the veggies, rich in Vitamins E and C, plus selenium and beta-carotene.
2. Exercise more: Nothing relieves stress better than a good workout, unfortunately stressed out women are more likely than men to let exercise fall by the wayside.
3. Ask for help: Are there any responsibilities that someone could give you a hand with?
4. Visit a therapist: If your stress has you losing sleep, experiencing flashbacks, or avoiding certain places or

activities, you may need extra help.

Men:

1. Turn off the TV: Men are more likely to say they relieve stress by turning to the tube. To prevent your hours from slipping away in a haze of reruns, pick up a book, plan your next vacation, or hit the hay early.
2. Spruce up your resume: If your boss has your blood boiling, update your resume, and send it to at least three people.
3. Try some books on tape/CD: Getting involved in a good story may give you the calm you need to ignore the guy who cut you off on the road.
4. Talk about it: Ignore eons of gender stereotyping requiring men to go the strong and silent route. All you'll get for your trouble is stress-induced chest pain, headaches, and stomach problems. Real men have no qualms about bending the ear of a sympathetic friend.

(information adapted from www.lhj.com)

Domestic Violence Awareness at Messiah College

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Gender Studies Project, in conjunction with Cumberland Perry Domestic Violence Services, is planning to host a week of events from October 24 – 27, 2005 in order to inform the Messiah College Community about domestic violence issues.

Monday, October 24: there will be a program for all female students called S.A.F.E. (Self-defense Awareness & Familiarization Exchange), presented by the Dept. of Safety to educate females about assaults. This program will be held in S165 and S166 from 6:30-8:30pm.

Tuesday, October 25: Robin Williams, from the Victim Services Agency of Cumberland County, will be on campus to discuss dating and relationship violence issues. All students are encouraged to attend this very informative and important event. It will be held in Boyer 131 from 7:00-9:00pm.

Thursday, October 27: Healing and Hope Vigil. Have you or someone you know been affected by domestic violence? This evening will be a very moving and thoughtful look at domestic violence, victims and survivors. A mother of a victim will be on campus to speak about her own journey from heartbreak to healing due to domestic violence. Other guest speakers and events are planned; more information will be coming soon. This event will be held in Frey 110 from 7:00-9:00pm.

There will be more information about these events made available closer to

the date. Stay tuned to the Community News, Intercom, email, and bulletin boards for more information!!

The Silent Witness Project

As part of the GSP's Domestic Violence Week, the Cumberland Perry Domestic Violence Services will be loaning to the Messiah campus their Silent Witnesses. What is this project, you ask?

The Silent Witness Project began in Minnesota in 1990 when a group of women artists and writers joined together to form the Arts Action Against Domestic Violence. They wanted to address the escalating domestic violence in their state and to memorialize those women whose lives had been lost in 1990 as a result of domestic violence. Free-standing, life size wooden figures were created to do just that. Each figure displayed the name of a woman who had been killed by a husband, ex-husband, partner, or acquaintance. The original 27 figures were named the Silent Witnesses. Today, all 50 states have created Silent Witnesses of their own. The goal of the Silent Witness Project is to eliminate domestic violence murders in the United States by the year 2010.

In October, the Witnesses will be here on campus. When you see these life-sized red silhouettes of women, please take the time to read about the women represented, who lost their lives due to domestic violence.

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Events Calendar

September 12-16: Spiritual Life Week

October 1 – Making Strides Against Breast Cancer: noncompetitive walk to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer. Harrisburg City Island, registration begins at 8:00 am, walk begins at 10:00 am.

October 24: S.A.F.E. class , 6:30-8:30 pm, S165 and S166

October 25: Dating and Relationship Violence program, 7:00-9:00pm, Boyer 131

October 27: Healing and Hope Vigil, 7:00-9:00 pm, Frey 110

November 8: Pastor Jane Peiffer, Alternate Chapel, 7:00-8:30, Boyer 336

November 9: Camille Baughman, Drumming Program, 7:00-8:30, Boyer 335

Did you know???? Messiah College has a Women's Studies minor. For more information, go to the Human Development and Family Science Department website and look under minors, or contact Debra Berke at dberke@messiah.edu.

Quote of the Month:

“Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas or submissions for *Who I Am* please contact Jen Straub, Box 6388, email GenderStudies@messiah.edu.

Or stop by the Gender Studies Project office in Hoffman 315
Fall hours will be Monday and Wednesday 9:30-12:30 am
Other hours are available, so please call ext. 7214