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November
2005

Note From the Director

Well, it's hard to believe that almost another semester has come and gone! Time seems to rush by so quickly and if you are like me, you exist in a constant flurry of activity. There are always assignments to be completed, tests to take, meetings to attend, and sleep to catch up on. In the midst of the busy-ness, I hope that you are finding time to spend with friends and family and seeking some solitude to refresh your spirit. Perhaps as the holiday season approaches you will be able to take a deep breath and rejoice at all that you have accomplished this semester.

The Gender Studies Project has had a very busy fall semester. In October, we sponsored two programs in order to raise awareness about Domestic Violence Issues. In November, we invited Pastor Jane Peifer from Blossom Hill Methodist Church to campus to speak about her experiences as a woman in ministry. Also, Camille Baughman led a small group in a drum circle experience. In the near future, the GSP is hoping to schedule another time when Camille can come back to help us form a drum circle of our own here on campus.

Looking ahead, the GSP will be having a planning meeting on February 15, 2006 that is open to anyone who is interested. We encourage you to become involved with the Project as 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!

Jennifer Straub
Student Assistant
Gender Studies Project

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Stand Up:
A Campaign to End Sexual Harassment and Domestic Violence
Inspired by the movie “North Country”

Have you seen the movie “North Country” starring Charlize Theron? She plays Josey Aimes, who returns to her hometown in Northern Minnesota after a failed marriage and begins to look for a good job. As a single mother with two children to support, she turns to the predominant source of employment in the region – the iron mines.

The mines provide a livelihood that has sustained the community for generations. The work is hard but the pay is good and friendships that form on the job extend into everyday life, bonding families and neighborhoods with a common thread. However, it’s an industry long dominated by men in a place unaccustomed to change. Since times are tough, the last thing the miners want is women competing for scarce jobs – women who, in their opinion, have no business driving trucks and hauling rock anyway.

When Josey speaks out against the treatment she and her fellow workers face she is met with resistance – not only from those in power but from a community that doesn’t want to hear the truth. Through her struggles, Josey will find the courage to stand up for what she believes in – even if that means standing alone.

This movie is based on a true story. “North Country” follows Josey’s journey on a road that will take her farther than she ever imagined, ultimately inspiring countless others and leading to the nation’s first ever class action lawsuit for sexual harassment.

Inspired by this movie, the Stand Up campaign is designed to raise awareness about the terrible impact that Sexual Harassment and Domestic Violence has on society, as well as to educate and inspire victims, witnesses, and all concerned people to Stand Up for these injustices.

The fact is, each year millions of women and children fall victim to violence and intimidation, often resulting in a life filled with pain and instability, or, tragically, in death. These terrible consequences affect not just the victims, but also witnesses and the perpetrators themselves. Workplace and domestic abuses occur all over the world, and one in three women in the United States will be affected in her lifetime.

The medical care, lost wages, and reduced productivity that result from sexual harassment, violence, discrimination, and rape cost over \$5 billion annually in the U.S. Discrimination and abuse thrive on silence – the silence of victims and the silence of witnesses. This can and must stop. We all have a part to play and a stake in the result.

Sexual harassment and domestic violence are not just women’s issues. Men have an important role to play. While most men are not violent toward women, the majority have not been offered the opportunity to be part of the solution. Many men don’t recognize the important role that they have to play, and they have never been asked to participate. The active involvement of men is essential if we are to progress from helping some people avoid violence to actually ending it.

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If you would like to know more about the Stand Up campaign or how you can make a difference, check out www.participate.net/standup. The above information was found on this website. In addition, there are suggestions for how to get a Stand Up discussion group started and what you can do to help. Participate.net is a growing community of film lovers and activists who are dedicated to engaging their minds, sharing their passions, and improving the world around them.

Are you interested in Gender Studies issues? Would you like to serve on our advisory board? Plan the programming for 2006? Then you should plan to be at the Gender Studies Project Planning Meeting on February 15, 2006 in Boyer 102. The meeting will be from 5:30-7:00. Pizza and drinks will be provided so please come, bring your ideas and get involved!



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.”

Our Voices: Refugee & Immigrant Women Tell Their Stories

The Institute for Cultural Partnerships, the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network, the State Museum of Pennsylvania, and Women Create! are sponsoring a unique and exciting exhibit at the PA State Museum.

Our Voices is an exhibit that celebrates diversity and tells the stories of the newest residents of Pennsylvania. With sounds, images and objects this remarkable exhibit tells the tale of 23 new immigrants to the United States who settled in Pennsylvania. Taken from their own culture either by choice or by necessity, these women found ways to educate themselves, provide for their families and contribute to their communities. These are ordinary women with extraordinary lives!

Included in this exhibit is:

Portrait Gallery: portraits of these women including excerpts from their stories

Objects of Beauty: precious possessions that could not be left behind

Kitchen Cupboard: including food and other resourceful ways that these women have found to bring a bit of home to their tables.

Story Circle: A circle of chairs, designed and painted by the women, shares their stories.

This exhibit will run until January 2, 2006 so be sure not to miss it!

(Information for this article taken from www.statemuseumpa.org/voices.html)

Our Voices: A Young Woman's Perspective

Jennifer O'Connor
Messiah College
October 17, 2005

It has been a week since I first viewed the exhibit entitled "Our Voices: Refugee and Immigrant Women Tell Their Stories," yet the impression which it left upon me has not diminished from my mind. The exhibit opened my mind to a number of amazing women, all of whom have accomplished remarkable feats, all of whom I greatly admire.

The intricate nature of the exhibit itself, from the beautifully decorated chairs to the immense detail placed in collecting and formulating these women's stories, continues to astound me. The stories, as told by the women, are displayed around the perimeter of the exhibit, stories which show great diversity among the participants. Each woman has experienced something drastically different in her life as compared with another, yet these women genuinely show how diversity does not equate with separation and animosity. These women have come together against all

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odds, showing that their main identity does not lie in their racial or ethnic makeup, neither in their ideological beliefs; rather, they come together simply as women, each with past struggles, each with present success.

For me, however, the most amazing aspect of the exhibit was the incredible opportunity to meet many of the women, to understand who they were beyond the exhibit. These women were surrounded by their families and friends, people who have supported them in their long journey which led them to Pennsylvania. Most of all, the women were joyful, filled with hope for the future. It is hope which these stories offer, hope and courage to a world which is in desperate need of such a message.

(Photos submitted by Abigail Carlisle, Agape Center)



Jenna Ness (right), Messiah student, listens to Sarla share her story of coming to the United States.



Amy Skillman of ICP with Sarla, a PAIRWN woman who shared her story of coming to the U.S. from India as a young newlywed.

Foreman House

Messiah offers satellite houses to junior and seniors as alternate housing. The houses are scattered along the edges of campus and were purchased with the intention of increasing community by allowing a group of students to live intentionally and with a common purpose. In order to gain a house a group must write a statement of purpose which defines how their living in satellite housing will enhance the Messiah College community. The Foreman House is one of these houses. Built as a small brick house, and located on Grantham Road, the residence looks unassuming. However, a unique purpose and experiment is actually being conducted within.

Six women are living together within the brick walls, with the intention of educating themselves and the Messiah community about women's issues. They are doing so through discussion, research, and service. The women of the Foreman House feel that it is important that issues relating to women and service, ministry, political and social rights, and the world in general are important to discuss in light of their Christian faith and ever growing need for interest and interaction with the global community.

In order to further their education on issues concerning women, the members are volunteering at the Brethren Housing Association in Harrisburg. BHA is a ministry for single mothers and their children who need a place to help them get back on their feet. The Harrisburg ministry has bought a number of apartment spaces on Hummel Street in Harrisburg, restored them to livable condition, and given them to women who apply and meet requirements. The families living in the apartments can live their for a maximum of two years in which there are counseling sessions, computer skills courses, child care, and other helpful services available to them. The Foreman House is volunteering specifically with one mother and her son; developing a relationship with the mother and hoping to be able to help her in any way possible, such as rides, cleaning, babysitting, laundry, or fellowship. BHA is using the Foreman House as the guinea pig for a pilot program in which they hope to eventually have community support for each of the Housing Members.

The women of the Foreman House hope to participate in BHA workdays, which occur twice a month and serve to help the organization renovate the apartments to allow for more future families.

Hopefully Messiah students will become interested in the workdays and attend along with the satellite house; therefore merging the Messiah Community with the Harrisburg Community.

Along with the Women in Ministry Initiative the house is co-hosting other events such as a light dinner and discussion on November 9th, with chapel speaker JoAnne Lyon. Lyon is renowned for her work with missions, specifically with missions such as childhood prostitution, and others which resonate deeply with discussion on women's issues. All of campus will be invited by email and hopefully discussion will spur heightened awareness. The house is also planning to participate in collaboration with Bethesda Women's Shelter, the Women's Issue Group on campus, and the Gender Studies Project; where they will be doing readings during domestic violence week for the Silent Witness Project.

The women are interested in informing themselves as well as others. They hope to be able to use the knowledge they gain to make a significant impact on the way the college community looks at such issues. They also firmly believe that such a discussion can not be effectively held without the participation of men as well as women and therefore hope to gain a variety of students as participants in order to support the recognition of women, men, and minorities.

-Article submitted by Morgan Moore

Domestic Violence Awareness at Messiah College

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Gender Studies Project, in conjunction with Cumberland Perry Domestic Violence Services (CPDVS), planned two events on October 25 and October 27, 2005, in order to inform the Messiah College Community about domestic violence issues.

Tuesday, October 25: Robin Williams, from the CPDVS, was on campus to discuss dating and relationship violence issues. About 50 students attended this very informative and important event. Robin shared with those in attendance the warning signs of a potentially abusive dating relationship and also where to go to seek help if you are in an abusive dating relationship.

Thursday, October 27: Healing and Hope Vigil. Have you or someone you know ever been affected by domestic violence? This evening was a very moving and thoughtful look at domestic violence, victims and survivors. A mother of a victim, Nancy Chavez, was on campus to speak about her own journey from heartbreak to healing due to domestic violence. She shared her own story of how she broke out of a violent marriage and began to rebuild her life. However, two years ago her daughter, Randi, was murdered by a hit man hired by her husband. Nancy's story is tragic, but she graciously shared with the Messiah Community how she has been working through her healing process.



In addition, Pastor Eldon Fry spoke about how the church and the faith community can be a source of hope and healing for those who are suffering with domestic violence. Dr. Debra Heath Thornton spoke as well from a restorative justice perspective. She said that domestic violence is not just a personal issue, but it is in fact a community issue and as such, it is up to the community to address domestic violence.

The GSP is very grateful to the guest speakers who were willing to come and share their thoughts on such an important topic. The Gender Studies Project is also very thankful that the CPDVS office was willing to help coordinate these programs. The CPDVS can be reached at their 24 hour hotline number: 1-800-852-2102 or locally at 258-4249.

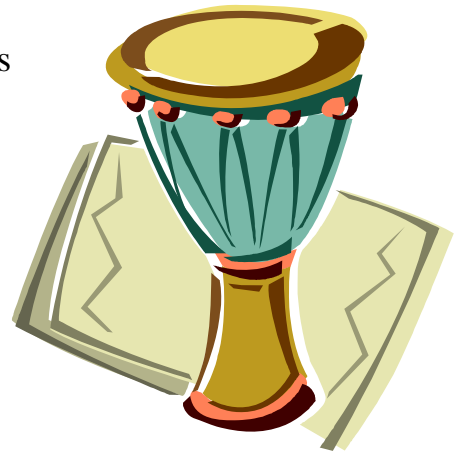
The Silent Witness Project

As part of the GSP's Domestic Violence Week, the Cumberland Perry Domestic Violence Services office loaned to the Messiah campus their Silent Witnesses. Perhaps you saw the red ladies in Boyer! 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.

Drumming Circle at Messiah College

On November 9, we began a drumming circle here on campus!! Camille Baughman, a licensed massage therapist, was here on campus to teach us some basics of drumming. She has studied percussion and rhythm with a variety of teachers and has led small classes in beginning percussion. In addition, she has presented nationally at Women Healing Conferences as well as presenting locally for conferences, in-service trainings, and community drum circles. Camille brought her skills as a teacher and her eclectic training together with her belief that rhythm is life and all people are drummers. This program was an awesome opportunity to have fun, relieve stress, make friendships and celebrate life.

If you missed this program, don't worry! The GSP is looking for more people who may be interested in meeting with Camille again in January to learn more about how we can form our own drum circle. Interested persons should contact the GSP office.



Pastor Jane Peifer at Messiah College

On November 8, Pastor Jane Peifer came to campus to speak about her experiences as a woman pastor in the Mennonite Church. This program was co-sponsored by the GSP and the Women in Ministry Initiative.

She received her Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite University and in 1999 moved back to her home area of Lancaster County to become the head pastor of Blossom Hill Mennonite Church. Pastor Peifer is the author of several childrens books and co-author of "Welcoming New Christians."

Pastor Peifer stated that a huge theme in her life has been to trust in the Lord. She has been on a journey that she never could have imagined earlier in her life and through it all she has had to lean on the Lord and trust in his sovereignty. She never imagined that she would be a pastor, let alone in the community that she grew up in. Pastor Peifer spoke with much grace and eloquence. Her story is an inspiration and a source of hope for everyone.



CHECK OUT THESE SPRING CLASSES!!

If you are still looking for a class to take in J-term or Spring Semester, look at these two options!!

J-Term:

BIL210W Studies in Biblical Texts: Women in the New Testament

More women than men are Christian believers. Yet women's voices are often ignored or submerged in the biblical writings or by their interpreters. This course will look for women and their important roles in the gospels and letters of the New Testament, as well as analyzing what men have said about women in these writings. Two smaller writing assignments plus a research paper will provide "W" credit for this course. It also meets a requirement for the Women's Studies minor. Taught by Reta Finger

Spring Semester:

ENG 250W:

A course on reading and discussing contemporary women's plays as literature. These plays are about women's issues now, no hlds barred. Because of the nature of contemporary theatre, the texts are quite bold, so if you like some meat in your reading and discussing, you will like this class. Literature is a wonderful way to see issues from a different perspective. Note: it is a W class too. Taught by Helen Walker

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.

Events Calendar

February 15, 2006 – Gender Studies Project Planning Committee,
Boyer 102, 5:30-7:30

February 27 – March 3, 2006 – Healthy Living Week for Every Body

Quote of the Month:

**“If women do not help women, no one else is going to do it”
–Lisa Ling**

The Gender Studies Project would like to express our condolences to the Riegsecker family on the death of Nancy Riegsecker on September 12, 2005. She is survived by her husband Marlin, their four children, and seven grandchildren.

Nancy has served as a trustee on the Messiah College Board of Trustees. In addition, Nancy also had a particular interest in the role of women in leadership. The Riegsecker’s gift to the college helped to fund the Gender Studies Project and the annual Riegsecker lecture.

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