

Women's Center Newsletter

September 2007

Note from the Assistant Director

The feel of the crisp fall air tells you that change is happening. As we begin the school year, we relish our summer memories and look forward to a new semester here at Ramapo. We greet old friends and discover new ones in our classes, residence halls and campus walkways. We take comfort in the familiar and look around to see what is new.

At the Women's Center, we have added some new staff roles. We begin with Mandy Restivo, who continues to be the Director and now has the added responsibility of being the Acting Director of Student Activities. You can find her in the Student Development Office across from the Bookstore. With that move, we have added my position. My name is Cherrymae Aromas, and I am the new Acting Assistant Director of Student Activities for the Women's Center

and Diversity Education Programs. We have a great core of the student staff returning and three new faces. To know more about us, read our bios on pages 2 & 3.

With much deliberation this summer, the Women's Center staff revised our mission statement to make it more implicitly feminist and inclusive. With input from faculty, staff and students, the update reflects the contemporary work of the Women's Center.

As we get into a rhythm for this semester, I invite you to the Women's Center to see what we are doing. We have a variety of events and programs and many ways for you to get involved. Please enjoy this edition of our newsletter and I look forward to working with you here at Ramapo.

- Cherrymae Aromas

Ramapo College of New Jersey Women's Center Mission:

Founded in 1974, the Women's Center was established to:

Advocate on behalf of women to ensure an equitable environment as well as a community free from violence and harassment based on gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Dismantle all forms of oppression, including but not limited to those based on ability, age, class, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation from a feminist perspective.

Create an anti-racist, non-sexist, queer-affirmative space where all people can feel valued and safe.

Facilitate and strengthen connections among people across lines of difference through programming and educational campaigns.

Integrate across the curriculum an appreciation of Women's, Gender and Multicultural Studies.

Women's Center Services

Crisis Intervention Counseling	Safer Sex Supplies	Resource Collection	Queer Peer Services Coordinator	Men's Outreach Coordinator
<p>The Women's Center provides counseling for anyone in need of assistance for a crisis, problem, or issue. The director or a peer will listen and discuss any concerns you may have with confidential support. We are here to identify options and provide any information or referrals you may need.</p>	<p>The Women's Center promotes responsible intimacy and safer sex. We carry pamphlets and information on sexual decision-making, contraception, STDs, and abstinence. We also sell condoms for ten cents each and dental dams for twenty-five cents each.</p>	<p>The Center houses an extensive multicultural women's studies library with holdings in a variety of disciplines, including books, up-to-date fact sheets, statistics, reports, and articles. Books and videos are available for a two-week check out period. We also provide individualized assistance on research projects.</p>	<p>The Queer Peer Services Coordinator provides peer counseling and advocacy for students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered as well as students who may be questioning and/or struggling with their sexual identity. Other services include a resource collection on GLBTIQ issues and educational programs on sexual identity.</p>	<p>The Men's Outreach Coordinator provides peer counseling and advocacy for students who have questions or issues on domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual violence and rape. Other services include programming, forums, and conferences that encourage men to become involved in preventing violence against women and explore masculinity. There is also a growing resource collection on men's health, and masculinity.</p>

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Kat McGee

Graduate Assistant

I am a Class of 2006 Ramapo Graduate with a Political Science major. My interests include getting lost in the woods, skiing, mangos, and travel. I am a second year student at Pace Law School, and I am interested in higher education and student development. I work at the Women's Center because I am passionate about safer sex education, helping students reach their educational and leadership potential, and the role that women play in achieving in environmental sustainability.

Christopher Jeune

Queer Peer Services Coordinator

My name is Christopher Jeune and I am the Women's Queer Peer Services Coordinator. I am in my last year at Ramapo as a psychology major. I am planning on going to graduate school for higher education administration (keep your fingers crossed). In my spare time I love hanging out with my friends and just relaxing. I work in the Women's Center because I value all kinds of equality, be it gender related, race related, or sexual orientation equality. If you ever have any questions about Queer Peer Services or just want to talk, come find me in the Women's Center!

Jean Semelfort

Men's Outreach Coordinator

Hello my name is Jean Semelfort. I am a junior student-athlete here at Ramapo College of New Jersey majoring in psychology. I am the Men's Outreach Coordinator of the Women's Center as well as the President of the Men Of Strength Club. I am a part of the Ramapo College Track & Field Team and the Psychology Club. I work in the Women's Center because it allows me to create change and work on issues, which I feel are important in today's society, through creative outreach programs.

Cherrymae Aromas

Assistant Director

Kumusta. As the Acting Assistant Director of Student Activities, the Women's Center and Diversity Education Programs, I am the newest member of this dynamic staff. Hailing from the shores of Lake Erie, my hometown is Cleveland, Ohio. I earned my BA in Psychology from Mount Union College and my MA in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University. There is some West Coast pride in me. Stationed in beautiful San Diego, I served two years with the AmeriCorps*NCCC program. Now on the East Coast, you will find me planning my next road trip, learning to cook all sorts of food and most importantly spending time with good people. The Women's Center is a phenomenal organization. I look forward to working with you as we explore many issues that face our society today. Please drop by and say hello, my door is always open.



Sarah Costello

Office Manager

I'm currently a junior, double majoring in Political Science and History. I love to be busy, and so I keep my schedule packed with activities including being a sister of Theta Phi Alpha, the Student Government Association's Secretary of Greek Affairs, and volunteering full time for the American Cancer Society. I'm very passionate about working with families who have been touched by cancer and lobbying the government for more funding for research and treatment. I also love safer sex education and encouraging my peers to practice safe, healthy and responsible intimacy. My other interests include traveling around to see Jacks Mannequin/Something Corporate concerts, Will Ferrell or Vince Vaughn movies, tattoos, and shopping for anything with pink ribbons on it. As anyone who knows me could tell you, I LOVE to talk so feel free to stop by the WC to chat anytime! =)



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Elyse Jankowski
Publicist

As the Women's Center Publicist, I help create our monthly newsletters and flyers, as well as maintain our website and email list. I am a senior Music Industry major, President of RamaShows, WRPR DJ, and Concert Core committee member. I am very involved in music and enjoy maintaining my webzine, Stars and Scars. I work at the Women's Center to be an advocate for equality and justice. Working in such an informed space has allowed me to learn about feminism, LGBTIQQ issues, and international issues, among other topics. I am very eager to spread the word about the Women's Center!

Crysta Jarczyński
Program Coordinator

This is my first semester working at the Women's Center and I'm excited! I'm a junior Psychology major. Much of my free time is spent performing with the Ramapo Chorale. When I'm not singing I enjoy being outside, swimming, rock climbing, watching movies and the Food Network (I wish I could cook). I spent this past summer living with twenty-three 8 year olds at a summer camp in PA and it was an amazing time. I work at the Women's Center because I'm very interested in the psychology behind gender related issues and I want to become more involved. I don't know what I'm going to do with my life but I love helping people. I'm always around to listen.

Rachel Berry
Program Coordinator

My name is Rachel Berry. I am a junior Business major with a double concentration in Marketing and Management. I am the Program Coordinator for Diversity Outreach in the Women's Center. I am involved in several clubs and organizations including Organization for African Unity, Ebony Women for Social Change, and Feminist United. I am also a member of the Weekend Events Committee and Concert Core. I work in the Women's Center because it gives me a chance to do what I love doing, and that is helping people. The Women's Center also gives me a chance to reach out to the campus community.



Rachael Nagy
Program Coordinator

Hey everyone, my name is Rachael Nagy and I'm new to the Women's Center this year! I just started at Ramapo in the Spring semester of 07', and so far I really love it here. My major is Psychology and Gender Studies, and I am interested in non-profit work when I graduate. My mission, personally, while at the Women's Center, is to broaden the Ramapo community's thinking and knowledge on equality among all people. I would like to spread awareness of different issues and causes from around the world, and help people understand that it can start with one voice. I am also a musician, singer, activist, and love nature. So come in, and sit down, and have a conversation with me. I'm always here to help, and be a friend. Have a good semester!

Samantha Smith
Program Coordinator Assistant
Publicist

My name is Samantha Smith and I'm a Junior majoring in Psychology with a double minor in French and Women's Studies. I work in the Women's Center to advocate on behalf of those without a strong enough voice to be heard. I also want to help reach out in the community and educate others on important issues concerning equality among race, gender, class and sexual orientation. I am currently the President of Ramapo's gay-straight alliance, Ramapo Pride. The club means a lot to me and I am looking forward to doing all that I can do with it. Also, I am a program coordinator in the Women's Center and I now help out writing the newsletters. I am incredibly passionate about activism and I enjoy putting my time in the Women's Center. I am also honored to be able to work with the rest of the WC staff because they are all wonderful and I love them!

Women's Center Events September 2007

Women's Center Open House

Thursday, September 20

Women's Center @ 4pm-5pm

Come and enjoy our relaxing atmosphere and hear about our programs and services. Presentations about our services will be given at 4:15pm.

Special Meetings

Men Against Violence Meetings

Every other Monday (started on September 18)

SC217 @ 9pm

This discussion group creates a safe space for men to talk about masculinity and the prevention of violence against women. All men welcome!

Queer Peer Services Peer Support Group

Every Monday

Women's Center @ 9:30pm

This peer support group creates a safe space for members of the GLBTIQQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning) community to talk about issues students face on campus pertaining to sexuality, relationships, and dealing with homophobia and related issues. All GLBTIQQ people are welcome!

Ramapo Pride

Every Monday

Women's Center @ 1pm

Ramapo Pride provides a community for GLBTIQQ people and their allies.

Feminists United

Every Thursday

Women's Center @ 1pm

Feminists United is for students who support equality between the sexes and advocate to end the many problems that plague our society!

Upcoming Events Preview October 2007

Queer History Month

Female Friendly Funk

Tuesday, October 2

J. Lee's @ 7 pm

Enjoy music with a conscience and support pro-feminist, gay affirmative, anti-racist bands and musicians.



Peterson Toscano - Queer 101: Now I know my gAy, B, C's...

Thursday, October 4

Friends Hall @ 7 pm

We're here; we're queer, but what the heck does it mean? The creator of "Doin' Time in the Homo No Mo Halfway House--How I Survived the Ex-Gay Movement!" presents a bold new theater piece -- Queer 101. Find out what happens to Chad after he graduates from the Homo No Mo Halfway House and has to cover the Queer 101 class. He takes his class on a colorful tour as he introduces individuals who shaped queer history and his own.

National Coming Out Day

Thursday, October 11

SC219 @ 1 pm

Members of the LGBTIQQ community will share their coming out stories with the campus community in an open speak-out.



Judy Shepard

Tuesday, October 23

Auxiliary Gym @ 7 pm

In 1998, Judy Shepard lost her son, Matthew, to a murder motivated by anti-gay hate. Turning tragedy into a crusade for justice, and determined to prevent Matthew's fate from befalling others, she established The Matthew Shepard Foundation to help carry on his legacy. Shepard has testified before the United States Senate in support of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. She has appeared in two Human Rights Campaign advertisements urging an end to anti-gay violence and promoting a greater understanding of gay issues. Additionally, Shepard is actively involved with Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). In this capacity, she has written an open letter to schools across the country urging officials to make schools safer for gay students by promoting tolerance. Sheppard states: "We get so complacent in our lives that we forget not everyone is safe..." <http://www.keplerspeakers.com>





Hot Topics



The New Abortion Law

On November 5, 2003, President George W. Bush signed a bill into law that bans intact dilation and evacuation abortions, commonly called "partial-birth" abortions by pro-life organizations. This procedure is performed after 20 weeks of pregnancy, but before 24 weeks when the fetus becomes viable (when the fetus is able to survive outside the woman's body). In this procedure, a doctor dilates the woman's cervix. The fetus emerges feet first, and the fetal skull is collapsed in order to pass through the cervix and vagina. This procedure is reserved for pregnancies in which the woman's health is at risk or when there are serious abnormalities in the fetus. Less than 2% of the abortions performed in the United States are intact D&E abortions.

The US Supreme Court has overturned similar laws in the past. In 2000, the Supreme Court ruled on the constitutionality of a Nebraska law that banned the procedure. There were two problems with the law, and either problem alone would have made the law unconstitutional. The first problem with the Nebraska law is that it did not have an exception for the health of the mother. Under the law, even if the mother was going to risk extreme health problems if she went through childbirth, she was not allowed to have the abortion. The second problem was the vagueness of the law: It did not describe exactly what procedure it was banning. The Court thinks that this vagueness places an undue burden on both the abortion providers and the women seeking abortions.

Most likely, the Supreme Court will overturn this new law as well, since it has both of the problems that the Nebraska law had. As of November 6, three federal judges in Nebraska, New York, and California have placed restraining orders on the enforcement of the law due to constitutional issues. President Bush says that he will take every legal measure possible to fight those that attempt to block the enforcement of the law. In any case, it is interesting to note that President Clinton vetoed two similar laws during his presidency due to their obvious unconstitutionality.

Resources:

"Assessing the new anti-'partial-birth' abortion legislation" on CNN.com.
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/10/31/findlaw.analysis.lazarus.partialbirth/index.html>
Crooks, R., & Baur, K. (2002). *Our Sexuality*. Pacific Grove: Wadsworth.

Hot Topics continued on next page

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"Stop Denying Emergency Contraception to our Servicewomen!"

With over 350,000 women serving in our nation's armed services, it is reprehensible that this administration will not allow them complete access to emergency contraception. You can help.

Last year nearly 3,000 military women reported sexual assault while on active duty. Part of the recommended regimen for treating survivors of assault is to inform them about and offer them emergency contraception, yet it is only sporadically available to servicewomen at their base pharmacies and medical facilities in the U.S. and overseas.

This is simply unacceptable. Women in the military deserve more from their country. Until this sexual violence ends, we must at least ensure that they can prevent any pregnancy resulting from these criminal acts.

No one questions the need for the highest grade and most reliable form of protective body armor for our troops at war. Yet our women in the armed services are often defenseless to prevent pregnancies resulting from rape because they are being denied information about and access to emergency contraception. We must support legislation to guarantee that our servicewomen have the same access to emergency contraception as their civilian counterparts.

The Compassionate Care for Servicewomen Act (S.1800/H.R.2064), sponsored by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Representative Michael Michaud (D-Maine), requires full access to emergency contraception for servicewomen at all U.S. military health care facilities around the world.

Resources:

NOW and Emergency Contraception

Summary of the bills: S. 1800 | H.R. 2064

Senator Clinton Introduces Bill to Give Servicewomen Access to Emergency Contraception

The Denver Post investigative report: Betrayal in the Ranks (PDF)

Activism Corner



*Take action for the servicewomen who deserve contraception! Fill out a petition to send to congress at:

<http://www.capwiz.com/now/issues/alert/?alertid=10162416&type=CO>

*Support a woman's reproductive health by signing this petition:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/CHOICE/petition.html>

*Also, get involved at Now.org and Feministing.com

On the Web



Visit the Women's Center website at

<http://www.ramapo.edu/studentlife/womenscenter/>

for even more information!

Newsletter created by Elyse Jankowski
and Samantha Smith

If you want to write for the WC newsletter, e-mail
women@ramapo.edu!