



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

G O S S I P

4 Warnock Street
Grey Lynn
Ph 376 3227
akcentre@womens.org.nz

P.O. Box 78 271
Grey Lynn
www.womens.org.nz
Summer 2006

Centre Hours

Mon to Fri
9am - 4pm

Library also

First Sat of month
11am - 1.30pm

Collective 2006

Abigail Vogt
Alison Greenaway
Anna Witten-Sage
Annalise Myers
Clare Abaffy
Leonie Morris
Paulette Benton-Greig
Sarah Greenaway
Shelley Fraser

Staff

Young Women's Advocate
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Kia ora koutou wahine ma! Greetings from the Women's Centre.

We hope you had an excellent break over Christmas and are enjoying your summer. Just before Christmas we held our first **GRRLZ DIY Workshop** in collaboration with Cherry Bomb Comics and supported by Creative Communities. This was a fabulous day where nearly 50 young women shared their skills: book binding, bike repairs, sewing, juggling, zine-making, using power tools, screen-printing, knitting and badge-making. Thanks very much to Cherry Bomb for all the work they did to help make the day such a success. Check out their web site www.cherrybombcomics.co.nz for photos of this great event.

This term we will be busy with a number of projects. Anna Witten-Sage, our Young Women's Advocate, is training to be a **girls self-defence teacher**. With assistance from the Zonta Club of Auckland, Anna has completed a training camp with Wahine Toa and this term will be co-teaching in several schools in the top half of the island. Another large part of Anna's work is co-facilitating our **Young Mothers Support Group (YMSG)** which will start in late February. Annalise Myers assists Anna with the YMSG and Annalise will also be very busy offering peer development training to young mothers who wish to become **SKIP Positive Parenting Champions**.

The Centre is supporting the **Employment Relations (Flexible Working Hours) Bill** which will assist parents who wish to work part-time. If you would like to help with our work on this bill please contact Leonie Morris. Leonie will also be researching a **brief history of the Centre** this term and is keen to hear from any women with interesting stories about the Centre.

At the end of last year we reluctantly farewelled two women who have made wonderful contributions to our Collective. Our heartfelt thanks to **Lou Renner** and **Nadine Rae**. We wish you both well and know that we will continue to enjoy plenty of contact with you in the future.

The Auckland Women's Centre was thrilled with the success of the **Women's Studies Association Conference** held in Auckland at the end of last year. 171 women attended, enjoying excellent keynote speeches, interesting workshops and great food. The Conference was also notable for both the number of community women and young women who attended, and its accessibility to women on low incomes. We are looking forward to the publication of the conference papers this April. For more information check out www.womens.org.nz/wsa/index.html or email Prue.Hyman@vuw.ac.nz

For information about our **courses, support groups and workshops** be sure to look at our brochure. As funding for promotion is limited we would be grateful if you shared the brochure with your friends, workmates and family.

AT THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE . . .

NEW SERVICE — FREE MAMMOGRAMS!

We will shortly be having the first of our regular visits from the mobile Breast Screening Unit and it would be great to see lots of the women who use the Auckland Women's Centre taking advantage of the free service.

Mammograms (breast x-rays) are the best way of picking up very early breast cancers, and the government provides free screening for women aged from 45 to 69. The entire visit only takes about 20 minutes – and although the mammogram can be a bit uncomfortable, it certainly is not unbearable.

If you are in the right age bracket and have not had a mammogram in the last year, you can enrol by either (a) filling in a form at the Centre, (b) asking your doctor for a referral, or (c) ringing 0800 270 200. When we get a definite date for the mobile visit, you will then be sent an appointment, which you can change if the time or place does not suit. Don't miss out; this is an easy way to have a simple check which may save your life.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

The Centre has a great deal of information about services, programmes and activities offered in the community. We also have contact details for women-friendly doctors, lawyers, natural health practitioners and counsellors.



Lesbian activities, events and services are advertised and the *Tamaki Makaurau Lesbian Newsletter* is available.

COUNSELLING

Low cost one-to-one counselling is available at the Centre. All counsellors are professionally trained and supervised. They use a sliding scale of \$30 to \$80 for fees and cater for a diverse range of issues. Please ring the Centre for an appointment.

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY

An abundant collection of books by women, about women and for women. The library is open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and on the first Saturday of every month from 11am to 1.30pm. We have a returns box on the porch for outside these times.

HEALTH SERVICES

In conjunction with Well Women's Nursing Services we have now extended our smear tests and breast examinations service to include full consultations on women's health issues such as menopause and PMS. Appointments available at the Centre on Friday mornings once a month. Next available dates are: 17 February and 24 March.

Low cost MASSAGE is now available on Mondays between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Cost is on a sliding scale between \$20 and \$35 for an hour-long session. Call for an appointment.

COURSES AND GROUPS . . .

At the centre we run courses, support groups and workshops during the four school terms. We are lucky to have many wonderful women who facilitate and share their knowledge and expertise with the women in the community who come along to these groups. It is important to us that our courses are of high quality but remain affordable. For this reason we operate a sliding scale, with students and beneficiaries paying the lowest amount. One of the exciting workshops we're holding this term is **Fair Play**.

Fair Play is a girl DJ workshop offering absolute beginners the chance to get behind the decks instead of leaving it to the boys. The DJ process is demystified and you will discover that DJ-ing is accessible to anyone keen to put in the practice. Equipment navigation, hands on practice, mix using a cross fader, fundamentals of beat mixing, and genres of electronic music are all covered in this day workshop. Your records or ours – any style of music!

ABORTION AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

By Dr Margaret Sparrow,
President ALRANZ (Abortion Law Reform Association of New Zealand)

The article "Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health"¹ from the Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) has put abortion back into the spotlight. Opponents of abortion claim that it proves abortion is harmful to mental health. This it does not do, although it suggests that it may do.

Principal author, Professor David Fergusson is the respected Director of the CHDS, a longitudinal study of a birth cohort of 1265 New Zealand children, 635 males and 630 females, all born in Christchurch in mid 1977. Assessments have taken place at birth, 4 months, one year, annually to 16 years then at 18 years, 21 years and 25 years. When the cohort was last interviewed at the age of 25, 80% were still involved. Since 1978 Fergusson has published over 275 articles in peer reviewed journals on a wide range of topics including breast feeding, behavioural problems, substance abuse, suicide and depression.

For the paper on abortion and mental health, records were available for between 506 and 520 women depending on the analysis. By age 25, 205 women (41% of the remaining cohort) had become pregnant on at least one occasion and 74 women (14.6% of the remaining cohort) had obtained an abortion at least once. In total these 74 women, had 90 abortions. It is a relatively small sample.

While cohort studies are extremely valuable, they have their limitations. Because of the method of collecting the sample from urban Christchurch, the CHDS has never claimed to be representative of the general population. Attrition is also a limiting factor. The 506 remaining may not be representative of the original 630.

The researchers acknowledge other limitations. When compared to the official statistics for New Zealand from the Abortion Supervisory Committee, the observed rate of abortion by age 25 was 81% of the rate expected, suggesting some under reporting of abortion. This is not uncommon in studies on abortion. They also caution that other confounding factors may have been overlooked.

They state that an important threat to the validity of the study comes from the lack of information on contextual factors, e.g. the extent to which the pregnancy is seen as unwanted, the extent of family and partner support and the woman's experience in seeking and obtaining an abortion. The results may reflect the effects of unwanted pregnancy on mental health rather than the effects of abortion *per se*, but the data was insufficient to explore this.

The question as to whether or not abortion has harmful effects on mental health is still unresolved by this study. What is not in dispute is the conclusion that further well-controlled studies are needed before strong conclusions can be drawn. A disappointing feature in the paper when discussing other research is the prominence given to American David Reardon's research without explaining his bias. He is a well known anti-abortionist, author of "Aborted Women: silent no more". The data that he used from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (USA) has since been analysed by others² who reached different conclusions.

It would be interesting if the researchers of the other New Zealand longitudinal study, the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development study, were able to analyse their data for comparison. This is a slightly earlier cohort of 1661 children born at Queen Mary's Hospital in Dunedin between April 1972 and March 1973. Assessments have taken place at birth, three years, every two years until age 15 and at 18, 21, 26 and 32 years.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recently published a resource for health professionals³ which concluded that abortion is unlikely to cause immediate or lasting negative psychological consequences in healthy women. Where there is a negative association it is difficult to tell whether this is actually due to the abortion or just that there are common risk factors.

What we must not forget is that not having access to safe legal abortion is potentially more hazardous to a woman's physical and mental health.

1. Fergusson DM, Horwood LJ, Ridder EM. Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 2006; 47: 16-24.
2. Schmiege S, Russo NF. Depression and unwanted first pregnancy: longitudinal cohort study. *British Medical Journal* 2005; 331(7528): 1303
URL: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint/331/7528/1303>
3. Bayly C, Shelley J, editors. *Termination of pregnancy: A resource for health professionals*. Melbourne: The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG); November 2005.
URL: <http://www.ranzcog.edu.au/womenshealth/pdfs/Termination-of-pregnancy.pdf>

WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC

Free

Cervical smear tests for women:

- ?? Community Service Card Holders who are due for a smear test
- ?? women who have not had a test in 5 years.

Advice

On managing periods, PMS, menopause, stress incontinence using natural remedies, diet & lifestyle Consultations \$45.00 (½ hour)

Clinics at Auckland Women's Centre
Ph: 376 3227
once a month and all Auckland areas

For more information ph: 523 0263



Well Women's Nursing Service

Kotare trust

Has a beautiful venue in Wellsford for hire
Reasonable rates
Accommodation for up to 22 people
Civil union ceremonies
Kaupapa reviews
Team building
Strategic planning . . .
Catering and facilitation assistance
by arrangement
Inquires to Mandi (09) 423 9228 or
kotare.trust@xtra.co.nz

Movie Fundraiser for Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation NZ Premier of *Three Dollars*

Full of unexpected humour, *Three Dollars* is the story of Eddie. Eddie's world revolves around the three women in his life. Surviving with a blend of self-deprecating wit, spirited sensitivity and a big heart, Eddie's life is rich with the pleasures and pains of family and friendship and marriage.



Wednesday 22 February, 7.15pm
Academy Theatre (underneath the Central Library)
\$20 (\$15 for students and beneficiaries)
Contact Julie Fairey on 620 9256 or
julie.fairey@xtra.co.nz

International Women's Day Breakfast Tuesday, 7 March 2006, 7.00am to 8.30am

Hon. Lianne Dalziel
Minister of Women's Affairs

Venue: Ellerslie Convention Centre

Tickets: \$30 per adult

All proceeds to UNI FEM NZ's Pacific Project

Inquiries: Ph: Aryana 576 1415
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HERO FESTIVAL

A POLYSEXUAL CELEBRATION

12-26 FEBRUARY 2006

Check out the events for women at www.hero.co.nz or in the *Tamaki Makaurau Lesbian Newsletter* - available at the Women's Centre and at the Women's Bookshop

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE!

MEMBERSHIP FORM:

Name

.....Address

.....

Phone (day)(evening).....

Age (optional)

Ethnicity: (optional).....

Signature

Please enclose membership fee (\$5-\$20 sliding scale).
Cheques to Auckland Women's Centre.

The AWC undertakes to collect, use & store information you provide on this form according to the principles of the Privacy Act 1993. The information will be used only for administrative purposes within the Centre.