

## CAN YOU HELP? *We need...*

Computer tech and social networking support; printing brochures, business cards, newsletter, etc.; more Companions, a Thistle Farms Sales Rep and general PR/marketing help.

## EMPOWERING QUOTE:

*"...despite our differences, we're all alike. Beyond identities and desires, there is a common core of self – an essential humanity whose nature is peace and whose expression is thought and whose action is unconditional love. When we identify it in others as well as ourselves, we experience healing in every area of life."*

-Joan Borysenko Minding the Body, Mending the Mind.  
Found in Walking the Tiger: Healing Trauma  
by Peter A. Levine.

## WISH LIST

**#1! Hygiene items: We are always running out!** Full sizes please, unopened - pads, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, razors, bar soap, lotion, toothpaste etc. (We have plenty of tampons and toothbrushes right now.)

Also needed...

- ❖ Beverages: instant coffee (reg. & decaf), creamer, powdered milk, honey, Stevia or other sweeteners, herbal teas, hot chocolate.
- ❖ Snacks: cookies, granola bars, dried fruit & nuts.
- ❖ Paper goods: toilet paper, napkins, paper towels, plates & cups.
- ❖ Gardening: Compost, shovels & hand spades, gloves, knee pads.
- ❖ Misc. Copier paper, newsprint tablets, large cork bulletin boards, scrap books, kitchy Bingo prizes.

And our badge maker broke! A new/better metal one, with supplies is about \$400 from Badge-a-Minit. (The old one was cheap plastic.)



**A lot of things happen here every day we are open! It's all free!**  
**No signing up! Just Come! Summer hours M-Th 9:00-2:00.**  
**Morning programs daily from 10-11:30. Afternoon programs 12:30-1:30.**  
**Coffee, tea always on! Oatmeal breakfast, shower, and hygiene items available.**

**Daily:** Gathering Circle at 9:30, walking at 11:30.

**Weekly:** Mondays – Marvelous Morning Munchies and a Writers' Workshop.

Tuesdays – Poetry Lunch    Wednesdays – Wise Women Cooking Club

New Books, New Readers – a book group for those with lower literacy abilities.

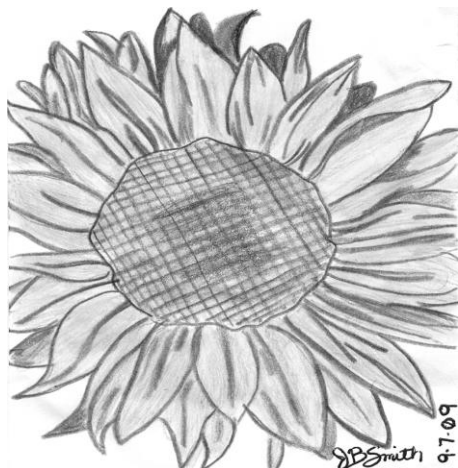
**Monthly Events:** BINGO, Art Van, Playing with Poetry, clothing give-away and a birthday party.

**Other Regular Offerings:** Scrapbooking & card making, crafts & painting, crocheting and quilting, game days, movie & popcorn, various workshops on health and wellness. **Ongoing:** Make Wisdom Boxes, Gratitude Beads & Sunflower quote cards.

### Support Groups:

AI-Anon, Caregivers, TREM, Women for Sobriety, Trans Support Group,

**The monthly activity schedule is now posted on our web site! [www.wisdomswomen.org](http://www.wisdomswomen.org)**



## WISDOM'S WHISPERS

Spring/Summer 2016

A newsletter from

**The Center for Wisdom's Women**

A Drop-in Center for Women

# WISDOM'S WHISPERS

The Center for Wisdom's Women  
A drop-in Center for Women

Spring/Summer 2016

207-513-3922 [www.wisdomswomen.org](http://www.wisdomswomen.org)

PO Box 1016, 97 Blake St. Lewiston, ME 04242

## HAVE YOU READ...

The Body Keeps the Score: The Brain, Mind and Body in the healing of trauma.  
by Bessel van der Kolk

We are becoming more aware of how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have affected women here at the Center. This book has been really helpful. FMI about ACEs:  
<http://maineaces.org/index.html>

## GREETINGS -

By Trisha - In the writing workshop 3/11/16

Say hello  
To people you know  
Don't be hesitant  
Or too slow.

It means a lot  
to people you greet  
even a wave  
when you meet.

Don't be shy  
Just raise your voice  
Sing it, screech it  
It's your choice.

It's time to start  
A new beginning  
A smile, a wink  
A friend you're winning!

## SAVE the DATE!

**Women's Nights Out**  
**Next is May 26, 5:30**

A new monthly, six session exploration of integrative medicine through the senses led by board member, Margo Goodman, DO and friends. April focused on aromatherapy and was complete with relaxing foot soaks. In May the topic will be the healing power of sound. Call ahead to sign up!

## Building a Healing Community

Recently our staff and Companion volunteers participated in a training day about the causes and consequences of trauma in women's lives and how to best respond. Since then, we have come to realize that a majority of those who come to the center have likely suffered from multiple **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**. It is a reality that underlies the issues most of them face to this day.

Twenty years of studies suggest a direct link between ACEs and chronic diseases, obesity, mental illness, and addiction...The more ACEs the higher the risk of medical, mental and social problems as an adult. Of women in prison 77-90% suffer from 2 or more ACEs. It has been proven that one of the most important pieces in healing from ACEs is by building community. When people are less isolated, they do better. Relationships of trust, respect, and love that extend over time are needed to build resilience. ***That is what the Center is all about.***

One example: X has come here for several years. When we first met, she was strung out, thin, with very unpredictable behaviors and mood swings. With case management support, she has made great strides in turning her life around, including treatment with Methadone. She is now at the Center nearly every day, is part of our community life, and even volunteers at the front desk. About two weeks ago, first thing on a Friday morning, X came in saying "I need to talk. I'm scared. The cravings won't go away. Usually they go away." She sat and talked. When she mentioned again her troubled childhood, because ACEs were newly on my mind, I responded - "Maybe there is a little girl inside who is trying to cope in the way she always has. Could you talk with her and thank her for helping you survive all these years? Let her know that she kept you going, but that you are OK now and you don't need those old coping skills anymore." X's eyes opened wide, she smiled and said "That makes sense! I never thought about it that way before!"

At a time when women are losing both case management services and Maine Care coverage, the need for the Center will only increase. We have created a unique healing community and are making a difference one woman at a time. You can continue to help us do so through your ongoing support, by volunteering at the Center, or by serving on the Center's Board or the Steering Committee for Sophia's House. You can find out more about specific dreams and needs in this newsletter.

By the way, X made it through that weekend and tomorrow is her last day at the Methadone clinic. We will have a celebration for her right here at the Center. Thanks to all of you who have helped make it possible!

-Klara Tammany, Executive Director 4/20/2016



A sacred and safe space for the support and empowerment of women.



## **KIND IN KIND WORK - Bates College/Harvard Center and Avena Botanicals**

**We thank these wonderful colleagues and supporters of our work:**

**Bates College** - This year we have had two work study students. Lisa Slivken helped with social media including a crowd sourcing fund-raising effort. Erin Hazlett-Norman has taken on office tasks and leads poetry discussions. As a Bonner Fellow, Jaqueline Forney (photo) started the "New Books, New Readers" program for us. It is a book group for lower literacy readers, sponsored by the Maine Humanities Council. We also had volunteers for class projects and Nicholas Luther and the Bobcat consulting group helped create the feasibility study for Sophia's House. This summer we will have a full time intern (see p.3). [www.bates.edu](http://www.bates.edu)

**Deb Soule and Avena Botanicals**- Deb is one of the premier herbalists in the country. Her company in Rockland, Maine focuses on organic, biodynamic gardening. Deb introduced us to the healing qualities of Calendula and has helped start our gardens by donating seedling and seeds. Last fall she came to Lewiston for two programs for us, and she will return this fall. Please check out their wonderful products. <http://www.avenabotanicals.com>

### **OUR VISTA – Dianna DeCosta... Reflections upon visiting Thistle Farms in Nashville, TN to learn more about how they do what they do.**

On the first day of the "Love Heals workshop" at the Thistle Stop Café, as I entered I could not help but notice how beautiful it was, both the space and the people. The tea-cup chandeliers are even more impressive than the photos, and the old wide pine barn floors, donated by Al Gore, are a deep contrast to the brightness.

On the first day, we learned all about community and how the issues of sex trafficking, addiction and abuse are global. Community is the most important thing at Thistle Farms. It is do-able, ancient, powerful, transformational, and is the foundation to recovery. Building a community takes patience, trust, and healthy relationships. Community is where the sum is greater than its parts. We were encouraged to work with other organizations across the country to create an even larger community of people doing this work, to help each other and know that we are not alone in this fight.

On the second day we experienced this idea of "community" as we visited one of the houses in the Magdalene Program. The "Big House" or Lena's House is a lavish 8 bedroom domicile in a not-so lavish part of Nashville. The neighborhood is pretty run down with signs of poverty obvious as we drive up to the front entrance. Then as we walk up the front steps and over the threshold, I am so overwhelmed I am almost in tears. The feeling is HOME. It is beautifully decorated, warm and inviting. The living room and kitchen feel just like being embraced by LOVE. The residents welcome us into the circle, allowing 30 strangers to wander through their sanctuary, taking pictures, "ooh-ing" and "ahh-ing." They truly embraced our presence as part of their community.

THANK YOU! Becca Stevens for inviting others to share in the dream, the Episcopal Diocese for funding our immersion trip, and Klara for the grant work that made it possible, and to VISTA for believing I can make a difference. I will NEVER forget this particular moment and what it meant to me.

**NOTE:** Dianna (Dee) is an Americorps VISTA assigned to the Center this year and hopefully one more, as project coordinator for our Sophia House dream. She is networking, helping with grant writing and fund raising and is creating and coordinating a Steering Committee. Let us know if you would like to be involved. We have a building, plans for renovating it, a feasibility study that says it will be self sustaining when opened. Next – the financing/funding!

Board member Anne Auer, who also is on the Steering Committee for Sophia's House, joined Dee on the trip. We will send another group in the fall.

### **BIHAG UPDATE**

(Big, Holy Audacious Goal)

**If money were no barrier and we could do anything... what would it be?**

We have been considering how to be an even better presence with and for the women we see every day. What is our niche for addressing their needs? How can we best be part of a healing community?

**The dreams...**

1) **Research & Learn:** Use the ACE questionnaire with women at the Center, guided and supported by social work professionals, to gauge the level of traumatic impact on the lives of women in the population we serve and learn how to better respond.

2) **Expand Capacity:** Gather more volunteer Companions, and hire a Coordinator for that team, who would be a consistent, trauma informed person at the Center every day.

3) All of this leads us to our **BIHAG of Sophia's House** - a housing first, long term, trauma informed, client directed, residential community for women who are healing from a life of trauma, especially from prostitution, addiction and prison.

Before we can do any of that, we first want to secure funding for the daily operations so that we don't have to worry about it anymore. It will take 250 SHEROs and another \$15,000 in larger and smaller gifts annually. We are just over halfway there. Please join us if you haven't already, and if you have, invite someone else!  
Thank you everyone!

## MOTHER'S DAY

For a lot of women it is a really hard day

Imagine...Your mother has died, or your child...You were not able to bear children...You lost a child to state custody, or you yourself were put into a foster home when you were young...You are estranged from your family of origin...you or your child suffers from addiction...

For those reasons, Mother's Day can be a difficult time for many women. So each year, on the Friday before Mother's day we host a ritual for women who feel lost and alone as mothers and daughters. We light a candle for women who have not found a way home, share stories about women who have been important in our lives, plant some sunflower seeds in our gardens. As the group members support each other, we see again how love can heal, and learn that love can indeed win.

Did you know that Mother's Day is rooted in an anti-war movement led by women who were protesting the loss of their sons to war? The original "Mother's Day Proclamation" was written in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe. Through an effort by Anna Jarvis, in 1914 the second Sunday of May was officially designated as "Mother's Day." Much to Jarvis' dismay, it quickly became commercialized by the card and flower industries, something she protested.

**This year, how you will recognize Mother's Day?** You can join us for our ritual on Friday, May 6 at 10:00 and participate with us in the international "Standing Women" movement: <http://www.standingwomen.net>. If your mother is still alive, don't just send a card. Do as Anna Jarvis encouraged and write her a letter.

**We also invite you to consider making a donation to the Center in honor of your mother or other important women in your life. Thank you!**

## WELCOME!

**Great news ☺** Ali Rabideau will be with us all summer fully funded through a fellowship from Bates College. She comes with a farming back-ground and lots of creative energy! Ali will help build and train a team of women as gardeners and assist them with weeding, watering, harvesting our calendula and herb gardens. She will also research small business development and health regulations to help start our social enterprise – making calendula products such as a healing calendula salve, calendula infused oil and a calendula tea. Last summer we successfully tried making a salve and salted herbs. They were a big hit! Calendula is known to have antiseptic qualities and can be especially good for women who have been abused.

It is easy to grow and it re-seeds. If you would like grow it too, ask us for some seeds!



## PHOTO GALLERY

You can find more photos and stories on our Facebook page!



< **2015 Gardeners!** After turning in 4 yards of compost last May with the help of Liberty Mutual volunteers. We'll do it again this year!

The old convent stairwell and library room >



The old convent >  
**Future Sophia's House**  
Two blocks away.

Did you see our Sophia's House campaign Video? It is on our website. Here are a few stills from it. Thanks to **Karen Hill** for volunteering to make it for us.

