

Winter 2012



Auckland  
**Women's  
Centre**

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Women's Centre

**G O S S I P**

**Contact us:**

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PO Box 78 271

Grey Lynn

[www.awc.org.nz](http://www.awc.org.nz)

**Centre hours  
Monday to Friday**

**9am - 4pm**

**Library hours  
Monday to Friday  
9am - 4pm  
plus Sat 11am - 1.30pm  
on the first Sat of the  
month**

Thanks to Oxford Sports Trust Inc  
and Cuesports Foundation Ltd  
for funding this newsletter

## At the Women's Centre...

### Playgroup set up at the Ranui Caravan Park

The Auckland Women's Centre is thrilled to be running a Playgroup at the Ranui Caravan Park for the Ministry of Education. Playgroups are designed to give children the opportunity to initiate play and to show parents how children explore and develop by playing. We are delighted to welcome Anne Kelly as the Playgroup Coordinator. Anne lives in Ranui and works as a budget advisor and crèche worker. She was a PlayCentre mum for many years and has lived at the Caravan Park for a short time. Our FAB social worker, Robyn Lambourne, will be offering whānau support to the parents involved in the playgroup.



Anne Kelly

### SKIP Single Mothers Positive Parenting Project

It was through Rochelle's wonderful SKIP work at the Ranui Caravan Park that we established a relationship with the Ministry of Education. Rochelle also recently organised a Single Mothers Agency Network meeting where Mary Nicholas and Rebecca Harrington from Lifewise engaged us with the Know Your Neighbours initiative. The basic approach is to go door knocking with a few survey questions to identify what the residents want to do and what their strengths are. Then you play a background role - supporting the direction the neighbourhood has chosen, for example offering mentoring tools and skills, and helping people focus on the positive by organising fun joint activities together.

Coming up there is a SKIP Winter Warmer Swap Meet for single mothers on Friday 27 July at 10am at AWC, complete with hot chocolate, marshmallows and yummy morning tea. Come along with your children (there will be someone to help mind the kids), have a chat, and bring any clothes, toys, books etc you would like to swap. Go home with new things without spending a cent! Please RSVP to Rochelle by Tuesday 24 July for catering purposes: email: [skip@womensz.org.nz](mailto:skip@womensz.org.nz) phone: 376 3227 ext 203, mob: 021 0293 7195.

### Women's Library

Just a little reminder: We are always very happy to have books donated. Suitable books by women authors can be added to our library and the remaining books go on the sales trolley. We currently have no funds to buy new books and are hoping that our dear readers will donate the following books needed by our Book Club:

*When God was a Rabbit* by Sarah Wynn,  
*What Happened Then Mr Bones?* by Charlotte Randall  
*When I Was a Child I Read Books* by Marilynne Robinson and  
*Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel.

A year's sub is \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10 and \$20 for everyone else. Our library is open Monday to Friday (9am to 4pm), and thanks to our wonderful team of library volunteers, we are also open on the first Saturday of the month from 11am to 1.30pm. Great books currently on our recommendation shelf include: *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward, *Her Life's Work* by Deborah Shepherd, *A Train in Winter* by Caroline Moorehead, *Inheritance* by Jenny Patrick and *My Sister, My Love* by Joyce Carol Oates.

Pro-Choice People, ALRANZ, and the Auckland  
Women's Centre bring you a screening of

**The Coat? Hanger  
Project**

**A DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT  
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS  
IN AMERICA**



Monday 23 July 2012  
6.30pm  
Auckland

Please register for the event at  
<http://tinyurl.com/coathangerproject-auckland>

# At the Women's Centre ... (cont'd)

## Information, Advice and Referral Service

Please phone, email, or drop in for friendly, non-judgemental assistance. The fabulous Jo Easingwood has left her volunteer job at the Centre and taken a paid position near her home. AWC will always be grateful for the numerous gifts Jo gave to the Centre. Thank you Jo and all the best for the future. We are currently looking for a wonderful volunteer to staff our Frontline Service on Wednesdays (9am-4pm) and possibly Monday and Tuesday afternoons from 1pm-4pm. Ideally you'll be vibrant, welcoming, reliable and organised, and care about providing excellent service. Essentially you will be a feminist and will thrive within an agency which works to facilitate the empowerment of women. Please call Ellie on 09 376 3227 ext 202 for more information on what's involved. We look forward to hearing from you.



## Therapeutic massage - one hour long sessions

Available for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes on Mondays between 9.30am and 2.30pm. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries.

## Counselling

Low cost one-to-one counselling is available at the Centre. Our counsellors are professionally trained and supervised. They use a sliding scale of \$40 to \$80 for fees and cater for a diverse range of issues. Please ring the Centre for appointment availability.

## Courses and groups

We are offering four exciting new workshops: For the Love of Leather (the art of leather craft), How to start a Home-Based Business, Love it or Leave it, and Making Memories. Building a New Life after Separation will be running in September and our last Amazing Assertiveness for Women course for this year starts in August. Places are limited for all of these workshops so we recommend getting in quick so that you don't miss out. Enjoy the delights of winter reading with our Women's Book Club or keep yourself stretched, toned and limbered by joining our Hatha Yoga or Pilates/Stretch classes. Got questions about your mortgage? business? Kiwisaver? Financial Advisor Lisa Dudson will be coming back to run a question and answer session for us at the beginning of Term 4. Lot's to do and we look forward to seeing you here!

## Annual Cartwright Anniversary Seminar

### Women and the Family Law Courts

Friday 7 Sept, 1-3pm, Owen Glen Building, University of Auckland city campus

The seminar will explore women's pursuit of justice in the Family Courts and the gendered dynamics of the courts that undermine this. There will be a panel of presenters on the following issues: stereotyping of separated mothers; child custody arrangements and contact with fathers; separated mothers' relocation as a human rights issue; domestic violence and the Family Court; and the politics of child support. Panel presentations will be followed by ample time for discussion.

Enjoy afternoon tea and networking after the seminar. Numbers are limited, register with Women's Health Action [info@womens-health.org.nz](mailto:info@womens-health.org.nz). Cost \$10



## Sing for your Supper!

### An Auckland Women's Centre Fundraiser

Good company, great performers, world's best MC and a yummy supper at the Grey Lynn Community Centre



Saturday  
15 Sept, 2012  
7.30pm-11.00pm  
Tickets: sliding scale  
\$20-\$30



Thank you very much to our performers for donating their time and talent.  
**All welcome—This is a mixed event**  
Tickets are available from AWC and The Women's Bookshop  
For payment options, email [info@womens.org.nz](mailto:info@womens.org.nz) or phone 09 376 3227

# Aged Care Workers - Modern Day Slavery!

The Human Rights Commission's inquiry <http://www.hrc.co.nz/eeo/caring-counts-report-of-the-inquiry-into-the-aged-care-workforce> into the equal employment opportunity issues in the aged care workforce found that aged care workers, most of whom are women, are being discriminated against by earning low wages for difficult work that was "grossly undervalued" by society. "The reliance of New Zealand, of all of us, on the emotional umbilical cord between women working as carers and the older people they care for at \$13-14 an hour is a form of modern-day slavery," said Dr Judy McGregor in the inquiry report. "It exploits the goodwill of women, it is a knowing exploitation. We can claim neither ignorance nor amnesia."

Dr Judy McGregor's inquiry is based on evidence gathered from 900 participants over 12 months in 2011-12 and her own experience as a rest home worker for a week. Dr McGregor went under-cover and worked in a rest home to provide a first-hand account of the daily work and responsibilities aged care workers undertake for wages barely above the minimum wage. Among her recommendations was a Government-led move for pay parity – at present, carers working for in-home support and residential facilities earn on average \$3 less an hour than those employed by District Health Boards. She also called for higher training and safety standards, recommended that the minister with responsibility for older people should have a top ten Cabinet ranking, and that a "five-star" rating system of quality assurance be implemented comparing residential facilities.

Most aged care staff are represented by the Service and Food Workers Union who welcomed the report. The Union believes that all New Zealanders should receive a living wage which enables them not just to survive, but to participate in society. The Union has established Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand <http://www.livingwage.org.nz/> which brings together community, faith-based organisations and unions around a common goal of achieving a living wage as a necessary step in reducing inequality and poverty in our communities. The Women's Centre has joined Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand and urges you to encourage your favourite community group to also become part of this important initiative.



## Women's Talk

An evening of talk for women, by women

***There is a widespread belief that women have achieved equality. However statistics show that there are still many equality gaps . . .***

Join us to hear Julie Fairey speak about her feminist work and beliefs. Julie established [The Hand Mirror](#), a highly popular team blog on feminism. She is a mother (For Choice), a unionist, a feminist, a blogger, a leftie, and an elected member of the Puketapapa Local Board. She has worked for NZEI Te Riu Roa since 2005 and has recently reduced her hours to a part time role. Julie is also Vice President of the Auckland Branch of the National Council of Women. Come and chat with this wonderful woman.



***Women's Talk is a series of exchange for women by women - creating the space to reflect, discuss and converse. If you have ideas for speakers/topics contact us at the Auckland Women's Centre.***

\* to become a member phone 376 3227 x 201 or visit [www.awc.org.nz](http://www.awc.org.nz), Become Involved.

Wed 22 August '12 **7pm**

Auckland Women's Centre  
4 Warnock Street Grey Lynn

Members: free (you can join on the night)\*

Non members \$5.00

Wine/soft drink available cash only

# Auckland Women's Centre

# Child Support proposals will further impoverish single mothers and their children!

**The Child Support Amendment Bill currently at the Select Committee is strongly weighted in the interests of liable fathers. The main problems with the Bill are:**

## **1. The Bill is based on misconceptions about the nature of real change in families**

The Bill is based on the belief that today, unlike when the Bill was written in 1991, non-custodial fathers provide a considerable amount of emotional and practical care and financial support to their children. There is no research that backs this assumption. In fact, research shows the opposite: it is usual for mothers in nominal shared care arrangements to effectively remain full time mothers (taking primary responsibility for overseeing, organising and anticipating needs related to children's health, development, education, extracurricular activities, and their social and extended family relationships, even during the time that the children are not in their physical care).

## **2. The Bill will increase rates of mother and child poverty**

While claiming to be designed to "modernise" the Act, the Bill is in fact designed to decrease the amount that liable fathers will be required to pay. The Bill introduces a new definition of "shared care". Currently, to qualify for a reduction in the amount of Child Support a liable father must pay, the child must reside with him 40% of the time. The Bill will reduce this to 28%. This means a father with two children who currently contributes \$7,400 a year to their expenses, and has his children for an average of two nights a week, would only have to pay \$2,600 a year – a reduction of 64%!

## **3. The Bill decreases fathers' financial responsibility for their children**

The amount the liable father has to pay is also reduced if the mother has a "reasonable" income. This represents a hugely significant change in the financial responsibility required of fathers. Our current cultural belief is that parents are financially responsible for their off spring whether they reside with them or not. This Bill allows fathers' financial responsibility for their child to diminish if the child's mother has a "reasonable" income. This is hypocritical from this Government that rails about the need for single mothers to take financial responsibility for their children and then supports this Bill which could be said to encourage men to be serial parents – to create families and then abandon them.

## **4. The Bill increases mothers' and children's vulnerability to domestic violence**

Parents paying and receiving child support administered by IRD are likely to be in conflict. It is reasonable to assume that, in a significant proportion of cases, conflict will be associated with past and/or ongoing domestic violence and coercive control. The New Zealand Women's Safety Survey found that 70% of separated women had experienced domestic violence from their male partner.

In revising the formula assessment to define shared care as "commencing with 28% of the ongoing daily care provided" (p. 3), the Bill forces mothers to negotiate sharing the financial costs of child support with the child's father. There is no recognition of how difficult this can be in these circumstances, and how much stress this can place on mothers. If a father refuses to pay "his share" of school uniform costs or fees for a school trip for instance, the mother will be put under unnecessary financial and emotional strain, and the child may miss out on opportunities. In a study of mothers who had experienced custody disputes, the women gave poignant accounts of these difficulties when in situations that required such negotiation (*New Zealand Universities Law Review*, Vol 24, No 1, June 2010, Julia Tolmie, Vivienne Elizabeth and Nicola Gavey).

## **Oppose this Bill**

The Green Party and Mana Party oppose the Bill and we are hoping that, after hearing submissions to the Select Committee, the Labour Party, the Maori Party and New Zealand First will also oppose it.

