Women’s History Month

Women’s History Month (WHM), held in March, highlights and celebrates the contributions of women in history. WHM can be traced back to the first International Women’s Day, held annually on March 8th, in 1911.

In 1980, then President Jimmy Carter proclaimed the week of March 8th National Women’s History Week. In his proclamation, he stated, “From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well. As Dr. Gerda Lerner has noted, ‘Women’s History is Women’s Right.’ It is an essential and indispensable heritage from which we can draw pride, comfort, courage, and long-range vision. I ask my fellow Americans to recognize this heritage with appropriate activities during National Women’s History Week, March 2-8, 1980. I urge libraries, schools, and community organizations to focus their observances on the leaders who struggled for equality - Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, and Alice Paul. Understanding the true history of our country will help us to comprehend the need for full equality under the law for all our people. This goal can be achieved by ratifying the 27th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states that ‘Equality of Rights under the Law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.’ The National Women’s History Project (NWHP) sets the theme for WHM annually. The theme for the 2014 Women’s History Month is “Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment.”
International Women’s Day: March 8, 2014

International Women’s Day is a global day that celebrates women and their achievements around the world. Recognized by the United Nations as a global day dedicated to women’s rights and international peace, International Women’s Day serves to recognize the political, economic, and social achievements of women throughout the world.

International Women’s Day began in the early 1900’s, when political unrest and debate was leading women to become politically aware and active. In 1910, at an International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen the idea of International Women’s Day was proposed and approved unanimously. The first International Women’s Day was celebrated in 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland and was marked by International Women’s Day rallies for women’s rights to work, vote, and hold public office. In the 20th century International Women’s Day was used to protest the World Wars and demand “Bread and Peace” in continuation of many communist movements around the world. Since its early beginnings with the labor movement, International Women’s Day has been celebrated as an official holiday in countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Russia, and Vietnam. In 1975, the United Nations officially declared March 8th as International Women’s Day – a day to reflect on the progress of women and call for continued change for gender equality across the world.

Aggie Women in Leadership (AWIL), a student organization of the Women’s Resource Center, brought the first International Women’s Day celebration to Texas A&M in March of 2012. International Women’s Day in Aggieland was celebrated by a panel discussion of global women’s issues and a Cross-Cultural Fashion Show. Aggie Women in Leadership is excited to be planning International Women’s Day of 2014! As part of this celebration AWIL, MSC Aggie Cinema, and Life to Love will be co-hosting the screening of the movie “Girl Rising” on March, 27th at 7PM in Rudder Plaza. In case of rain the movie will be shown in MSC 2406B.
Which Woman You Admire?

In honor of Women’s History Month, every staff member at the Women’s Resource Center was asked which woman they admired most in history.

1. Sappho: Of all ancient Greek poets, Sappho is perhaps the most elusive and mysterious. Only fragments of her poetry remain – there is only one poem that has survived in its entirety out of nine volumes. My degree is in English and the classes where we studied the poet challenged our worldview and encouraged our creativity. Her poems are that of passionate expression describing love, longing, and desire often directed to girls and women. Students often read Homer, but Sappho is just as important.

“You may forget but let me tell you this: someone in some future time will think of us”
-Sappho, The Art of Loving Women

Sonia Mahabir, Assistant Coordinator

2. Helen Adams Keller: was an American author, political activist, and lecturer. She was the first deafblind person to earn a bachelor of arts degree. American educator Helen Keller overcame the adversity of being blind and deaf to become one of the 20th century’s leading humanitarians, as well as co-founder of the ACLU.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”
-Helen Keller

Shaida Kalbasi, Graduate Assistant

3. Eleanor Roosevelt: During her time in the White House, she changed what meant to be the First Lady of the United States. While her predecessors focused on domestic life, she held press conferences and wrote a column on the issues that she was passionate about, including rights for women and Depression Era workers. Redefinition of the role of the First Lady in a time when most women did not work outside of the home helped give legitimacy to the idea that women could contribute to society on a larger scale.

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”
-Eleanor Roosevelt

Heather Wheeler, Program Coordinator
The Women’s Center would serve as a symbol for the university’s commitment to inclusion and equal access for women faculty, staff, and students and as a resource center for members of the A&M community.

The History of the Women’s Resource Center

The Women’s Resource Center at Texas A&M opened in the Fall of 2001 after several attempts to open a center for women at the university. The Texas A&M administration felt a concern over the retention and treatment of women on campus after some negative and national attention regarding gender issues at the university. This concern, coupled with a lack of visible programs for women, put the university in a good position to improve the climate for female students, staff, and faculty.

This early Women’s Resource Center was located in Academic Building, and focused primarily on providing research resources, working with the Women’s Studies Program, and offering meeting space and a library of resources for Women’s Studies. Programming during this initial era of the Women’s Resource Center included a movie series, a lunchtime lecture series, the University Women of Color Network, “Be a Friend” Workshop for Sexual Assault Survivors, and Aggie Women in Leadership.

In the Fall of 2005, the Women’s Resource Center and Gender Issues Education Services merged to create one office – the GLBT Resource Center and the Women’s Resource Center. Though it was logical to merge the two departments to create a safe haven on campus for women and LGBTQ students, the visibility of the LGBTQ community as its own independent entity had been diminished, and there was a concern that the focus of the Women’s Center had been diluted as well. The new Women’s Resource Center, located in the Koldus Building, focused its efforts on improving gender relations on campus, raising awareness and encouraging open discussion of gender issues, supporting the personal and academic growth of women on campus, and offering programming and support on the topics of sexual harassment, women of color, violence against women, and lesbian/bisexual women. The Women’s Resource Center continued with programs such as the Silent Witness Project, Denim Day, These Hands Don’t Hurt, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, the Women’s Leadership Forum & Women’s Progress Awards.

The Women’s Resource Center Today

In the summer of 2012 the Women’s Resource Center joined the Offices of the Dean of Student Life and moved its office from Koldus to Cain Hall. This transition has allowed for greater programming and networking with other offices on campus. With this move to Student Life, the Women’s Resource Center was able to add programs such as Elect Her: Aggie Women Win, $tart $mart Salary Negotiation Workshops, Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Classes, and the Breastfeeding Welcomed Here Campaign, while continuing to support existing programs that work to enhance the climate for women at Texas A&M.

By 2007, the Women’s & Gender Equity Resource Center once again split into two offices – the GLBT Resource Center and the Women’s Resource Center. Though it was logical to merge the two departments to create a safe haven on campus for women and LGBTQ students, the visibility of the LGBTQ community as its own independent entity had been diminished, and there was a concern that the focus of the Women’s Center had been diluted as well. The new Women’s Resource Center, located in the Koldus Building, focused its efforts on improving gender relations on campus, raising awareness and encouraging open discussion of gender issues, supporting the personal and academic growth of women on campus, and offering programming and support on the topics of sexual harassment, women of color, violence against women, and lesbian/bisexual women. The Women’s Resource Center continued with programs such as the Silent Witness Project, Denim Day, These Hands Don’t Hurt, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, the Women’s Leadership Forum & Women’s Progress Awards.

Learn More about Women’s Resource Center

“The Women’s Center would serve as a symbol for the university’s commitment to inclusion and equal access for women faculty, staff, and students and as a resource center for members of the A&M community.”

*2001 Proposal for a Women’s Center at Texas A&M University
Snapshot of Past Events at Women’s Resource Center

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP FORUM, 2012

WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES, 2012

DENIM DAY, 2013
Phoebe’s Home

In honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month we conducted a short interview with Cathy Fields, Case Manager and Training Specialist at Phoebe’s Home, one of the places that provide support to the victims of sexual assault. This non-profit is located in City of Bryan. Here you can read some of the answers. To find more information about Phoebe’s Home please visit http://www.twincitymission.org/

1. First of all tell us a little bit about Phoebe’s Home. What are some of the services that your office provides to women?
   Services for residents of Phoebe’s home include: shelter, food, laundry, clothing and childcare vouchers, transportation and trolley passes, counseling, Case management, legal advocacy, safety planning and parenting classes.
   Nonresidents receive the same services without the shelter, transportation, food, laundry and vouchers. We also provide education to local organizations and agencies like the Health Science Center, TEEX Police Academy, local high schools and college groups on Domestic Violence and Teen Dating Violence.

2. What are some of the things that Phoebe’s Home has done in the past for A&M students?
   We have provided an internship program that is being developed more everyday. We have also provided volunteer opportunities for Aggies.

3. What is the cost of using your services for A&M students?
   All services are free of charge.

4. How can A&M students help you achieve your goal? Are there any volunteer opportunities?
   Dr. Dietrich with Sociology has provided us with her best candidates for our internship program. There are always volunteer opportunities available including: childcare, tutoring, landscape projects, cleaning, organization, filing and answering our hotline calls.

5. If there is someone out there who needs your services what is the best way to contact you?
   They can call the hotline at 979-775-5355. If it’s not an emergency, they can call our outreach office at 979-775-2255. Interested volunteers can also call this number and ask for Fanny Turcios, our Volunteer
In 1992, an 18-year-old Italian girl was raped by her 45-year old driving instructor and abandoned in an alley. She reported the assault to the police; the instructor was later convicted of rape and sentenced to jail. In 1999, the instructor appealed the sentence and the case made it all the way to the Italian Supreme Court. The conviction was overturned and he was released. The Court released the following statement in support of their decision, “because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them...and by removing the jeans... it was no longer rape, but consensual sex.” Enraged by the verdict, the women of the Italian Parliament protested the “denim defense” by wearing jeans to work. In April of the same year, the first Denim Day was held in the United States.

This year Denim Day will be held on **April 23rd, 2014.** On this day we ask you to participate in our protest.

**Wear your Jeans.**
**Pick up our Denim Day button.**
**Spread the word.**

Request your free button(s) online at http://studentlife.tamu.edu/wrc.denimday by calling 979-845-8784, or by visiting us at Cain Hall C-215. Buttons will be available beginning on April 11th.

**The Darensbrougs Research Groups at Department of Chemistry Wore Jeans on Denim Day of 2013**
Did You Know?

To close each newsletter, we will have a few questions to test your knowledge of the history of women at Texas A&M, and of those whose contributions have helped women succeed.

Picture on the left:
Maureen Turk, Standing, and Nancy Nielsen are studying nuclear engineering at Texas A&M, the first women to seek BS degree in the tough field at Aggieland. When Nielsen graduated in 1970, she was the first woman since the Hutson twins to complete a course of study in engineering and the first ever to receive a degree in the field. Turk graduated in 1972.

Picture on the right:
Victoria Spence was the first female staff member of Battalion in 1918.
**Are you ready to Walk a Mile in Her Shoes?**

Join us on **April 15th, 5:30-7:30pm at Koldus Plaza!** Early Registration runs through April 1st and costs $15, after the 1st registration will increase to $20. More information may be found at [http://walkamile.tamu.edu](http://walkamile.tamu.edu). Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is an annual event hosted by the Women’s Resource Center and the Student Anti-Violence Educators (SAVE) during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Often sexual violence is viewed as a women’s issue even though it affects people of all genders. Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is an opportunity for men to take a visible stand against sexual violence in our community. Walk a Mile in Her Shoes offers men and our community a learning experience on interpersonal violence and encourages us as a community to step up against these issues and proclaim that there is ‘No excuse for abuse!’

**Calendar of Events at Women’s Resource Center**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Women’s History Month</td>
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<td>March 6, 2014</td>
<td>Women’s Leadership Forum &amp; Women’s Progress Award</td>
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<td>March 10 &amp; 11, 2014</td>
<td>Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training for Faculty and Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26 &amp; 27, 2014</td>
<td>Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training for Students</td>
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<td>March 27, 2014</td>
<td>“Girl Rising” Movie Co-Programming with Aggie Cinema</td>
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<td>March 22, 2014</td>
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You can find more information about any of the programs by visiting our website at [http://wrc.tamu.edu](http://wrc.tamu.edu)

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**The 12th Woman**

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*The 12th Woman* is put together by our dedicated staff at the Women’s Resource Center to highlight special news and current events relevant to Aggie women and their supporters.

https://www.facebook.com/TAMUWRC

**Meet the WRC Staff!**

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