

Montgomery County Commission for Women



ANNUAL REPORT



**Fiscal Year 2011
July 2010 – June 2011**

**Montgomery County Commission for Women
Counseling and Career Center
401 Hungerford Drive ~ 1st Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-8300**

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

July 2010 – June 2011

∞ COMMISSION ∞

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Jaclyn Lichter Vincent

First Vice President

Wilma K. Holmes

Second Vice President

Vanessa E. Atterbear

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Noha A. Bakr
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Executive Director

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Commission for Women



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2011

Montgomery County Commission for Women
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Rockville, Maryland 20850

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President's Message

Jaclyn Lichter Vincent

President John F. Kennedy appointed the first Commission on the Status of Women. Chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, its 1961 seminal report recommended the establishment of Commissions for Women in every state.

The Montgomery County Commission for Women was established almost 40 years ago. Its primary purpose is to identify areas in our system of laws and policies, practices and procedures, rules, regulations and programs that impact women and girls disparately. The Commission's role then is to determine a remedy for such inequities and to advocate the implementation of that remedy.

The county's obvious commitment to equity for all its residents, demonstrated by its provision of adequate staffing for this office, has made the Montgomery County Commission for Women the shining star among Commissions across the nation, a model and a beacon of hope for other commissions.

This year, the work of the all-volunteer Commission for Women involved the sponsorship of four important conferences, including the conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women. The Commission decided, because of this heavy work load in planning and sponsoring these events, to advance its advocacy for its priority areas of concern this year – immigrant women's issues, flexible and family-friendly workplace policies, and single mothers and poverty – through these four public events.

Due to the very hard work and dedication of our commissioners and staff, all four conferences were enormous successes and proved very effective venues for the advancement of the Commission's concerns.

However, over the course of the year, a more immediate and close-to-home "crisis" arose. As the county's budget and revenue situation became more apparent, proposals were made to eliminate the office of the Commission altogether, including the Counseling and Career Center, or to reduce the status of the Commission to that of a "committee" and attach it to "some other entity" in county government, with whatever staff the county executive and county council deemed appropriate.

Many people wrote, called, emailed and testified their opposition to this proposal, and the members of the Commission for Women are most appreciative of the support the community has demonstrated for its work and especially for the Counseling and Career Center. Opposition came not just from the Commission, but from current, former and potential clients, volunteers, professionals who refer clients, attorneys, community organizations and just people who knew of this work and believed it was important.

However, in the end, the decision was made to close the Counseling and Career Center completely, effective June 30, 2011. All the staff positions were eliminated from the Commission for Women except for the Director whose position was moved to the newly created Community Engagement Cluster where the Commission will share resources with other agencies.

It is the legislative mandate of the Commission for Women to advise the County Executive and the County Council on issues of concern to women. The Commission for Women very much appreciates the words of support that came from both the Executive and the Council, and understands that these were very difficult circumstances and that terribly difficult decisions had to be made. However, the Commission stands firm in its resolve that these cuts were far too deep with devastating effects for the people who need the Commission for Women's services.

As we enter the next fiscal year, the Commission will identify broad issues of concern to women and girls and will continue its advocacy work, with greatly reduced resources. However, the Commission for Women also hopes for opportunities to work with the Executive and the Council, as well as with its supporters in the community, to find ways to restore some of what has been lost in the closing of the Counseling Center.

Report of the Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather

Introduction

The Montgomery County Commission for Women was established by county law in 1972, as a department of the County Government. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of advising the County Executive, the County Council, the public, and the agencies of the county, state and federal governments on the issues of concern to women. It is one of over 200 such bodies across the nation.

The law provides that there will be 15 commissioners, county residents who are each appointed to three-year terms and serve without compensation. Of the 15 commissioners, nine must be endorsed by organizations concerned with women's issues and six must serve independently. Commissioners generally contribute an average of four hours per week in service to the county.

The purpose of the Commission is to advance women's equal and full participation in the benefits, responsibilities and opportunities of society. In achieving this mission, the Commission examines laws, policies, practices and procedures; identifies disparities that impact women; and advocates remedies for those disparities. The Commission has undertaken successful and effective initiatives on such issues as educational equity, sexual harassment in the workplace, family equity in the courts, pay equity, workplace flexibility, violence in relationships, immigrant women, domestic workers rights, single mothers and poverty and many more.

The Commission for Women in Montgomery County has for 35 years served two primary functions: advocacy and service. Since 1976 this office has, in addition to the advocacy work of the Commission, provided counseling services for those experiencing serious life transitions in family or career. In that year, the Commission opened a counseling center named A Woman's Place, providing personal and family counseling, legal referrals, information, support groups and workshops. In 1979, the New Phase Career Center was opened, providing career counseling and career-focused seminars. In 1991, the two centers were combined into one: the Commission for Women Counseling and Career Center. The Center has always been staffed with a small team of paid employees complemented by volunteers who provided services to those in our community struggling with difficult life crises and life transitions. The Center's services included:

- Personal, couples and career counseling
- Classes, support groups and workshops
- Information and referral
- Legal Call Back Program (staffed by volunteer attorneys)
- Career aptitude and personality type testing and interpretation
- Professional training for licensed social workers and counselors.

At its peak, the department had a staff of 21, a volunteer corps of at least 150, and a budget of over \$1 million. In the years since then, the staff has been steadily reduced as county budget and revenue problems occurred. Last year, the Counseling Center lost three of its remaining nine positions, leaving five half-time positions and the full-time Center manager for FY 11, in addition to the three full-time staff dedicated to the advocacy work of the commission and the administration of the department. The department was required to relocate at the end of the last fiscal year to the current facility which provided much less office and classroom space, no parking for the corps of volunteers and graduate student interns, and very little parking for clients. Still, the Counseling Center, through the extraordinary dedication of its professional staff and volunteers and our many partners in the community, managed to serve more than 2500 people over the course of this very difficult year. Groups services (classes, seminars and support groups) were attended by 1645, and the center provided 1972 counseling sessions to over 770 individuals, in addition to other services. Those services, made possible with significant amount of volunteer effort, generated well almost \$110,000 in fees returned to the county's general funds.

The Commission for Women, despite these difficult circumstances, sponsored the annual conference for the National Association of Commissions for Women in July, the Women's Legislative Briefing in January, and a conference on Workplace Flexibility in the Restaurant, Hospitality and Tourism Industry in March, among its other activities.

However, for FY 12, the County Executive recommended and the County Council approved the closing of the Counseling and Career Center entirely, the elimination of staff support except the Executive Director position for the Commission for Women, and the inclusion of the office in the newly created Community Engagement Cluster (CEC), where it will share budget, offices, administrative support staff, equipment and supplies with other nine entities included in the CEC.

This meant that the staff spent much of the final quarter of the fiscal year closing down services, terminating counseling cases, accelerating service so that problems could be resolved before the closing. All client case records and financial records have been closed and stored in accordance with legal, regulatory and ethical requirements. The client and financial records have been sent to the county's confidential archive for storage until such time as they may be destroyed.

The Counseling Center closed its doors June 29, 2011.

Budget

The FY11 approved budget for the department was \$ 881,300. Fees were charged to individuals who participated in the group and individual services of the Counseling and Career Center, and the revenues produced were returned to the County's general fund to partially offset the expenses of the department.

The service fees charged in FY11 were \$50 per individual counseling session, \$20 per group or workshop session and \$55 for vocational interest and personality type testing. The Counseling and Career Center stopped taking new clients in April, 2011, and stopped offering classes at the end of May. Nonetheless, nearly \$110,000 was generated in fees.

The Commission at Work

Despite all the cutbacks and challenges, the Commission experienced a number of very successful initiatives in FY 11. With its tiny staff, and a lot of hard work, the Commission sponsored four events that served as the core of its work this year:

- The national conference of The National Association of Commissions for Women
- The Women's Legislative Briefing
- The Conference on Workplace Flexibility in the Restaurant, Hospitality in Tourism Industry, and
- A book reading and discussion by a Pulitzer Prize winning author, Isabelle Wilkerson

National Women's Advocacy and Leadership Conference
Rockville/DC Hilton Hotel and Business Conference Center
July 22 – 25, 2010

Planning Committee Chair: Leila Aridi Afas

Committee Members:

Vanessa Atterbeary, Jennifer Baldwin, Resa Levy, Ivonne Lindley, Larniece McKoy Moore,
Sanjay Rai, Jaclyn Lichter Vincent

Over 170 people from across the nation traveled to Montgomery County to participate in the 40th annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW): *Capital Opportunities for America's Women and Girls*, coordinated and hosted by the Montgomery County Commission for Women.

The conference offered a three-day content-rich curriculum of professional development, strategy building and leadership training for these advocates of America's women and families.

Forty Commissions for Women from 29 different states were represented. Over the course of the conference, there were four plenary sessions with keynote speakers, nine seminars featuring 24 panelists representing some of the nation's most prominent women's and human rights organizations, as well as briefings at the White House and the Capitol. In addition, a non-profit organization helping local immigrant and refugee women artisans develop small business skills offered a marketplace adjunct to the conference, highlighting the richness of the cultural diversity in Montgomery County.

The conference opened on Thursday, July 22, with a keynote address on health care reform by the esteemed Dr. Bernadette Loftus, Associate Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic States, Kaiser Permanente Medical Group, the lead financial sponsor of the conference.

On Friday, the conferees traveled, courtesy of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, to the White House Old Executive Office Building for a briefing from Executive Director Tina Tchen and other members of the White House Council on Women and Girls. The crowd then hurried off to the U.S. Capitol for a luncheon and briefing on Women's Issues in Congress, hosted by U.S. Congresswoman Donna Edwards. Among the

speakers were Congressman Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, and Congressional staff from the offices of Senator Benjamin Cardin, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Congresswoman Jan Schakowski, co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus.

Saturday offered the Women's Leadership Conference, open to the public and providing training and keynote speakers. The day began with a presentation by Heather Boushey, Senior Economist with the Center for American Progress, discussing the recently published research on "The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict."

The highlight of the day was a luncheon featuring Sara Manzano-Diaz, Director of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, discussing challenges facing women in the workplace and her vision for the work of the Women's Bureau.

The conference offered nine seminars in three tracks: **Women and the Economy** (Work and Family Policies; Women, Girls and Technology; Mothers and Poverty); **Women Facing Special Challenges** (Older Women's Issues; Immigrant Women in the U.S.; Women and Girls in Abusive Relationships); and **Strengthening Commissions for Women** (Survival Strategies for CFWs; Effective Advocacy Skills and Strategies; Strategies for More Engagement in Meetings). These seminars featured speakers from some of the nation's most effective and respected women's and human rights advocacy organizations including the National Women's Law Center, the Institute for Women's Policy Research, The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Feminist Majority, the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women, Wider Opportunities for Women, the National Council of La Raza, the African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation, the Center for American Progress, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, Break the Cycle and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

Activist-actress Mary McDonough, a child star on the popular TV series *The Waltons* who now has recurring roles on such shows as *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, discussed the effect of the media on women's and girls' sense of self as keynote speaker at the closing banquet.

The generosity of individual contributions, in addition to corporate and public sponsors, enabled the provision of excellent informational materials and resources, superior speakers and briefings with public officials whose expertise and experience will greatly enhance the skills and knowledge base of commissioners as they work in their communities. The MC CFW very much appreciates the support of the conference sponsors:

- Kaiser Permanente – *Lead Sponsor*
- MC CFW Commissioners
- U.S. D.O.L. Women's Bureau
- Delaware CFW
- Holy Cross Hospital
- Friedman French Foundation
- NACW
- Baltimore County CFW
- Maryland CFW
- Prince George's County CFW
- AARP Maryland

- Marilyn Massey-Ball
- North Miami Beach, FL CFW
- Zero to Three
- Corporate Systems Resources, Inc

Conferees repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the quality of the conference, the caliber of the speakers and seminars, the professional setting and the resources it provided. Many of the participants said it was the best conference they have ever attended.

Women's Legislative Briefing
Universities of Maryland at Shady Grove
January 30, 2011
 Planning Committee Chair: Vanessa Atterbeary
 Commissioner Committee Members:
 Noha Bakr, Miriam Carter, Chandra Walker Holloway, Wilma Holmes
 Ivonne Lindley, Jane Smith

Nearly 700 people from throughout the state attended the 2011 Women's Legislative Briefing, and more than 80 women's and community organizations worked with the Commission for Women to co-sponsor the event.

This year, for the first time, the Briefing was preceded by a special session for the leaders of the co-sponsoring organizations. More than 40 attended the pre-briefing event making important connections and establishing strategic relationships between their organizations.

U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau Director Sara Manzano-Diaz provided the opening keynote address for the Briefing. Elected officials brought greetings including Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett, Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, Montgomery County Council President Valerie Ervin, Senator Benjamin Cardin, Congressman Christopher Van Hollen, Congresswoman Donna Edwards and special guest Mara Mayor, Ph.D. of AARP Maryland.

The opening ceremonies were followed by seven workshops, each featuring state legislators and prominent advocates for women and families. The workshops included: Women in the Workplace; Women, Families, and Poverty; Older Women and Economic Security; Women and Girls, Safety and Justice; Women, Health Care and Reform; Women in Elective and Appointive Office; Effective Advocacy in the Legislature.

The afternoon concluded with a plenary session featuring the new President of Montgomery College, Dr. DeRionne Pollard. At the end of the day, the conferees gathered for a closing reception and networking event where the participants could meet with their elected officials to discuss the issues that they had learned about during the briefing.

Workplace Flexibility in the Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Industry
National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility
Silver Spring Civic Building
March 31, 2011

Planning Committee Chair: Manar Morales
Commissioner Committee Members:
Noha Bakr, Miriam Carter, Wilma Holmes, Jocelyn Samuels

Almost 100 people from around the six-state Region III gathered at the Silver Spring Civic Building to engage in the *National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility*, sponsored by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, and coordinated under a contract with the Montgomery County Commission for Women.

This was the sixth of ten dialogues held around the country, and the first of two focused on the restaurant, hospitality and tourism industry, all as part of the *National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility*.

Women's Bureau Director Sara Manzano-Diaz welcomed the audience and described the priorities of the Women's Bureau. She discussed the effort initiated by the White House and led by the Women's Bureau to engage the nation's employers and employees in dialogue concerning the implementation of flexible workplace policies that will meet the needs of America's changing workforce.

Keynote speaker Joan Williams, Director of the Center for WorkLife Law explored the challenges and opportunities of building a work-life culture, especially flexible labor policies, in this sector of the industry. She noted that this industry employs many low-wage and hourly workers. This segment of the workforce often has the most need for flexibility. She advised employers to look for places where stability can be built into workers' schedules, instead of the constantly changing "just in time" scheduling, which keeps workers guessing and unable to make reliable dependent care arrangements. In addition, she suggested building in paid time off to care for sick dependents, to avoid the necessity of discipline for employees who are just trying to be responsible. Finally, she recommended using technology to make flexible scheduling easier for the employer.

Her presentation was followed by a panel discussion on Key Trends and Best Practices moderated by Manar Morales, Workplace Flexibility Chair of the Montgomery County Commission for Women. The panelists were:

- Katie Corrigan, Director, Workplace Flexibility 2010 and Policy Director for the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, who discussed trends, policies and innovative approaches;
- Nikki Lewis, Coordinator for the Restaurant Opportunities Center of Washington, D.C., who discussed the perspective of employees;
- Betsy Kiss, Senior Director of Workplace Strategies at Marriott International, who discussed comprehensive approaches to work-life balance; and
- Pamela Pinnock, Marketing and Events Director of Busboys and Poets, who presented the business case for flexibility.

The conferees then broke into four dialogue groups joined by the panelists above along with additional subject matter experts, to discuss the following topics:

- How to Approach Flexibility: The Nuts and Bolts of Implementation
- Preparing for Change: The Role of Workplace Culture
- The Workers' Perspective, and
- The Business Case for Flexibility

The conference closed with a compelling keynote address by Saru Jayaraman, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC-United), who urged a comprehensive approach, noting that even if flexible workplace policies are put in place, paid sick leave is necessary to enable workers to stay home when they are sick or need to care for sick children.

Director Sara Manzano-Diaz closed the conference urging the conferees to search for ways to implement the policies discussed this day and to continue the dialogue.

The Warmth of Other Suns
Rockville Memorial Library
January 13, 2011

Planning Committee Co-Chairs: Vanessa Atterbeary and Wilma Holmes

At the request of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Commission for Women agreed, on a week's notice, to host a book discussion with world-renowned journalist and author, Isabel Wilkerson. Ms. Wilkerson is the first black woman in the history of American journalism to win a Pulitzer. She is also the first black American to win that award for individual reporting. She had just published her first book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* and was brought to this area by the EEOC. The EEOC asked if the CFW could arrange a venue and produce an audience for a book signing and discussion to be held just six days later. The staff and commissioners jumped at the opportunity to organize the event, inviting the Department of Public Libraries and the Office of Human Rights to co-sponsor the program.

An enthusiastic and enthralled audience of more than 100 people crowded the room to hear Ms. Wilkerson describe the nearly two decades of research and more than 1200 interviews that went into the development of her book, the lives of the people, the nation's history and the societal movement she chronicles. Books were available for sale and signing by the author after the program.

Computer Camps for Girls Montgomery College Summer, 2010

The Commission for Women, using donated funds, awarded scholarships for 10 middle school students to attend the 2010 summer computer camps offered on the campuses of Montgomery College. Girls continue to lag significantly behind boys in enrollment in technology development classes, effectively ruling themselves out of lucrative and expanding careers in science, engineering, technology and math (STEM). These camps were initiated over a dozen years ago by the Commission for Women in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College. They are designed to introduce girls in a non-threatening way to the world of information technology and software development.

FY 2011 will be the last year these scholarships are offered by the Commission for Women as staff and resource reductions will make the development and administration of funds impossible. In February, 2011, the last \$1800 remaining in the funds previously donated for the Commission's *Women and Girls in Technology* initiative was used to fund three one-time-only \$500 scholarships for female Montgomery College students studying one of the STEM fields. The recipients of the scholarships will be selected by the college.

Advocacy and Community Outreach

Throughout the year, the Commission for Women addressed other issues through its advocacy and advisory roles.

In September, Commissioner Holmes and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with representatives of Montgomery County NOW's Sexualization of Girls Task Force and the American Psychological Association to discuss inclusion of media literacy in MCPS curricula.

At the invitation of White House staff, President Jaclyn Lichter Vincent participated in a White House conference call to highlight Breast Cancer Awareness Month on October 15, 2010. The CFW submitted a nomination of the late Senator Jean Cryor for the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in October.

The CFW was an active participant in the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), with Commissioners Lichter Vincent and Atterbeary serving on the MLAW board of directors. Commissioners Lichter Vincent, Walker Holloway, and Legislative Specialist Marcelo attended the fall MLAW conference.

On November 10, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather participated in a statewide meeting, hosted by Congresswoman Donna Edwards, to discuss assistance to ex-offenders in their re-entry process.

On February 10, Commissioner President Lichter Vincent and Vice President Atterbeary presented testimony at a meeting of county boards, committees and commissions with the County Executive, urging his rejection of the recommendation of the Organizational Reform Commission, with regard to the CFW.

In March, the CFW received two briefings, one from the Alzheimer's Association Women's Initiative, and one from the Rockville Women's Business Center. In commemoration of Women's History Month, Commission staff created a display in the Rockville Memorial Library lobby exhibit case featuring information about women of historical significance. Also in March, the CFW voted to endorse the initiative led by School Girls Unite to establish September 22 as a national Day of the Girl.

Commissioners Aridi Afas, Carter and Morales met with members of the County Council in March to discuss the recommendations of the Organizational Reform Commission.

On April 5, CFW Executive Director Vaughan-Prather participated in a White House Conference Call on the new guidance for the implementation and enforcement of Title IX on college campuses, especially as it applies to sexual harassment and sexual assault. As a result, she was able to arrange for the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights to present a seminar on that topic at the July 2011 conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women in Phoenix, Arizona.

The CFW was a co-sponsor of the annual conference *Choose Respect Montgomery* designed to prevent teen dating violence. Commissioners Atterbeary and Walker Holloway served on the planning committee and helped develop sponsors and donors to support the conference, which was attended by close to 200 young women and their parents.

On June 13, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with the County Attorney, the State's Attorney, and staff from the Office of Child Support Enforcement to discuss policies regarding prosecution for egregious failures to pay court ordered support.

In July 2010, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather was appointed to the NACW Board of Directors as its Legislation and Policy Chair. Throughout the year, she developed and distributed to the NACW membership a total of 43 *Issue Alerts* on important national policy concerns, and signed the organization onto seven letters addressing federal legislation..

Community Outreach Activities

Over the course of the year, Commissioners and staff participated in a dozen speaking engagements on a range of subjects of concern to women and their families.

Activity	Date	Presenter	Topic	Attendance
U.S. D.O.T White House Council on Women & Girls	9.21.10	Vanessa Atterbeary	Mentoring High School Girls	
BPW MD State Conference	10.23.10	Jaclyn Lichter Vincent	Work and Women, Labor Policies	50
Inspiring Women Series at Montgomery College	11.3.10	Manar Morales Judith Vaughan-Prather	Single Mothers and Poverty	25
Montgomery Week in Review (TV Interview)		Nick Martinez	CFW and WLB	---
MLAW Conference	11.20.10	Jaclyn Lichter Vincent	Effective legislative advocacy	50
Islamic Information Center	4.9.11	Noha Bakr	Muslim Women and Civic Engagement	30
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues	5.24.11	Noha Bakr	Arab and Muslim Women: Dispelling Myths, Building Bridges	35
Arab & Muslim Women Cultural Festival	6.11.11	Noha Bakr	Voice of America Interview	---
Arab & Muslim Women Cultural Festival	6.11.11	Noha Bakr	"I Speak for Myself" session on Muslim Women	40
Muslim Community Center Seminar on Domestic Violence	6.12.11	Noha Bakr	CFW, Resources and Options for Victims of Domestic Violence	20
Muslim Public Affairs Council Capitol Briefing	6.20.11	Noha Bakr	"What is Sharia?" Panel Discussion	75
Voice of America Interview	6.22.11	Noha Bakr	"Women in Egyptian Politics"	---
Total Number of Events	12		Total Countable Audience Reached	

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN AND COUNSELING AND CAREER CENTER

FY 2011 At A Glance

Service Provided		Totals
Counseling		
Number of Clients		773
Number of Sessions		2121
Percent of Clients Reporting that Counseling Helped Resolve Problems		97%
Telephone Legal Consultations/Legal Call Back Program		115
Classes, Groups, Workshops, and CFW Programs	Participants	
Number of participants in Classes at Counseling Center	1,645	
Number of Classes at Counseling Center	221	
Percent of Clients Reporting that Groups Were Useful or Very Useful	99%	
NACW Conference	170	
Warmth of Other Suns	100	
Women's Legislative Briefing	700	
Workplace Flexibility Conference	100	
Attendance at All Group Activities		2715
Number of Vocational Tests Administered		117
Speakers Bureau & Community Outreach		
Number of Countable Participants		
Number of Activities		12
Computer Camp For Girls Scholarships Awarded		10
Volunteers, Commissioners, Interns and Externs		
Counseling Center Volunteers	102	
Number of Hours	8600	
Commissioners & Volunteers	16	
Number of Hours	3300	
Total Number of Volunteered Hours		11,900
Number of Work Years		6
Revenue Generated by Counseling Center Fees		\$109,633

Report of the Counseling and Career Center

Elma Rambo, Manager

During FY 11, the Commission for Women Counseling and Career Center fulfilled its mission to assist women who were experiencing legal and financial issues, emotional problems, career transitions, difficulty finding employment, family concerns and major life changes. A small professional staff with extensive experience in dealing with women's issues, assisted by dedicated volunteers, was available during both daytime and evening hours to work with women who came to the Center. After thirty five years of service to the community, the Counseling and Career Center closed on June 30, 2011 due to county budget cuts.

Counseling

Professional counseling for individuals and couples eighteen years of age and older was a mainstay of the services at the Center. In individual personal counseling sessions, problems such as separation and divorce adjustment, anxiety, decision making, self-esteem, transitions, relationship issues, anger and loss were addressed. Career counseling sessions dealt with finding employment, identifying skills and goals, career advancement, resolving problems in the workplace, career planning, and educational and training opportunities. Couples, in their counseling sessions, worked on communication skills, conflict resolution, setting goals and priorities, and improving mutual understanding.

All counseling was provided by licensed clinical social workers, advanced graduate student interns earning masters degrees in social work or counseling, and post-graduate externs working toward licensure. All had experience working with multi-cultural clients and two were bilingual, one in Spanish and one in Mandarin. Fees for counseling were moderate and a sliding scale, based on income and family size, was available to Montgomery County residents. During the fiscal year, 773 individuals and couples participated in 2121 counseling sessions. In confidential written evaluations, clients gave their counselors very high marks for understanding their needs and helping them to improve their ability to solve problems.

Classes

More than two hundred classes were provided by the Counseling and Career Center in FY 11. Of these, 175 were held at the Center and focused on the needs and interests of women. Twelve classes on career topics were provided for employees of Montgomery County Public Schools and were held at the Emory Grove Center. Twenty-seven workshops on career topics were co-sponsored with the Public Libraries and held at various branches throughout the county.

Workshops at the Counseling and Career Center focused on separation and divorce; financial security; business and professional development; personal growth and optimum living; and relationships in couples and families. Support groups for women were also offered focusing on verbal and emotional abuse and finding employment. All classes and groups were led by qualified professionals including staff counselors, attorneys from the Family Law Section of the Bar Association, and contractors and volunteers with particular areas of expertise.

All classes served as an important adjunct to counseling services and participants rated them highly in written evaluations, noting that the presenters were effective and the content helpful. In the fiscal year, enrollment in classes was 1,645.

Assessment Testing

Three well-known and highly reliable standardized assessment testing instruments were administered in group sessions: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Self-Directed Search, and the Strong Interest Inventory. The results of these tests help clients to learn more about their personality preferences and career interests so they may make better informed and effective choices in both career and relationships. During FY11, 117 standardized assessments were administered.

Information and Referral Services

Trained volunteers staffed the Counseling and Career Center's Information and Referral Desk. Working in four hour shifts they served as the first point of contact and the source of "triage" as they listened to callers describe their problems and needs, and determined which services would be most appropriate. These volunteers helped clients make appointments, register for classes, and check-in for counseling sessions and group activities. They also provided referrals to other community agencies for clients needing services not offered at the Center. All volunteers working at the Information and Referral Desk were trained in active listening, use of the Center's database, and strategies to assist clients both in person and on the telephone. Some volunteers were bi-lingual and all were trained to work with clients with limited English proficiency. Twenty-three volunteers staffed the Information and Referral Desk in FY11.

Legal Call Back Program

The Legal Call-Back Program, coordinated by an attorney volunteer coordinator, provided legal information by telephone to 115 individuals in FY11. Questions were submitted by clients to the Information and Referral Desk, screened by the coordinating attorney and forwarded to participating attorneys based on the legal information requested. Twenty-eight attorneys in the community agreed to respond to legal questions on behalf of the Center. This service was provided free of charge.

Graduate and Post-Graduate Internship and Externship Program

Four graduate and post-graduate interns and externs in counseling and social work augmented the counseling staff in FY11. Two graduate students completed the required two-semester advanced-placement internships prior to receiving their masters' degrees while two post-graduate externs worked toward licensure. All four interns and externs worked twenty hours a week under the supervision of the Center's counselors thus enabling the Center to greatly increase its counseling service capacity. The supervising staff counselors maintained close contact with the students' university advisors to ensure that all requirements for graduation were met, and monitored the work of the externs to assist them in meeting licensure requirements.

Volunteer Program

Volunteers have been an integral part of the work of the Counseling and Career Center since its inception. The time and expertise given by the many volunteers who work for the Center has been essential to the delivery of the Center's programs and services to women in our community. Volunteers worked as information and referral specialists, legal-call back attorneys, class instructors and office assistants. In addition, they provided technical support, community outreach, volunteer recruitment and graphic arts design. Undergraduate students who worked at

the Information and Referral Desk assisted with special projects while high school students meeting their student service requirement provided clerical assistance. During the fiscal year, 102 volunteers provided approximately 8600 hour of service or the equivalent of more than four full-time employees.

Continuing Education for Counselors and Social Workers

For many years the Counseling and Career Center has provided continuing education classes for licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, and other human service professionals from county and community agencies. These classes were taught by experts in their fields and each provided three hours of continuing education approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners and the National Board for Certified Counselors. In FY11, seven classes were presented. All were very well attended and participants gave each class excellent evaluations. The following topics were presented in FY11:

- At the Intersection of Mental Health and Career Issues: An Interactive Approach
- The Young Child's Experience of Abuse and Neglect: Implications for Clinicians Working with Children and Adults
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: A Cognitive Behavioral Approach to Conceptualization and Treatment
- Psychotherapy at the Edges: Self-Disclosure, Gifts and Touch
- Evidence, Ethics and Relationship Trends in Mental Health Supervision
- The Two Faces of Depression: The Impact of Gender on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression
- Social Phobia: Evidence-Based Practical Strategies for Treatment

A Snapshot of Counseling and Career Center Client Demographics:

In FY11, the following demographic information was supplied by 1775 clients who attended classes or received counseling at the Center:

Ethnic Origin – Clients of the Counseling and Career Center reflected the diverse population of Montgomery County. In responses compiled from demographic questionnaires, 44% of those responding identified themselves as belonging to ethnic minorities including 14% African-American, 18% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific, 1% American Indian and 4% other ethnicity; 56% identified themselves as Caucasians.

Annual Income – In FY11, the Counseling and Career Center served clients in both counseling and workshops with a wide range of incomes: 40% reported annual incomes under \$30,000, 16% between \$30,000 and \$50,000, 12% between \$50,000 and \$70,000, and 32% reported incomes at \$70,000 or above.

Marital Status – When responding to demographic questions on marital status in FY11, 55% of clients reported they were not currently married; 26% of clients indicated they had never been married; 29% responded they were separated or divorced; 1% said they were widowed; and 45% reported they were married.

Employment Status – Clients receiving services at the Counseling and Career Center in FY11 were evenly divided between those who were unemployed and those who were working either part-time or full-time. 50% reported being unemployed and 50% reported being employed.

Counseling and Career Center Volunteers FY11

Information and Referral Service

Rosario Lozano Basta	Trish Lehman	Martina Sestakova
Frances Christian	Ardi Martin	Wendy Sidlofsky
Simonetta D’Onofrio	Wanda Michael	Bev Thoms
Nicole Glassman	Mary Paull	Sandra Van Fossen
Rachel Goldfarb	Betty Penzner	Sally Wechsler
Gail Greenberg	Lyn Peters	Sue Woodruff
Donna Kanin	Eileen Polinger	Melissa Zissman
Colleen Kelly	Judy Rumerman	

Special Projects

Uzma Ahmad	Dory Halati	Marianne Lopiano
Lynn Barclay	Michal Hancoff	Stella O’Connell
Melanie Bodie	Taylor Laska	Gersenda Suarez- Varisco
June Carlough	Luz Lobo	

Legal Call Back Attorneys

Sharon Zissman, Attorney Volunteer Coordinator

Robert Baum	Heather Hostetter	Susan Oldham
Elena Carney	Sharon Johnson	Aimee Robbins
Kathleen Dolan	Lydia Lawless	Brian Sadur
Mindy Farber	Kathy Lee	Nancy Sachitano
Stephanie Fink	Nancy Long	Shelly Sheetz
Susan Friedman	Brendolyn McCarty-Jones	Martha Skinner
James Gross	Patricia Minikan	Alison Snowden
Hadrian Hatfield	Bonnie Montgomery	Amy Strent
Christine Hawewirth	Rebecca Nitkin	Scott Strickler

Counseling Interns and Externs

Cynthia Bloom
Charlotte Blutstein

Laurieann Duarte
Hawlin Jong

Lisa Smith

Workshop Presenters

Robert Baum
Bibi Berry
Cynthia Bloom
Charlotte Blutstein
Edouard Bouquet
Jill Breslau
Michael Callahan
Patricia Crew
Laurieann Duarte
Donna Duquette
Darryl Feldman

Carolyn Finney
Nelson Garcia
Kathy Goodwin
Jeff Greenblatt
Anne Grover
Eliane Herdani
Virginia Joehl
Jamie Lapin
Soraha Moghis
Brian Perlstein
Vance Redmon

Darin Rumer
Susan Samakow
Wendy Satin
John Spiegel
Marsha Stein
Scott Strickler
Heather Sweren
Eden Terenzini
Carol Tillson
Sandra Van Fossen
Casey Weinberg



Montgomery County
Commission for Women

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