

Women's VU

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

V A N D E R B I L T U N I V E R S I T Y

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Senior Citizens, Inc. keeps seniors independent, active

by **NANCY RANSOM, Ed.D.**

CHAIR OF THE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE FOR SCI



Senior Citizens

Do you have a special relationship with an older person? I mean a much older person, like a grandparent. If so, you are very lucky because both of you are richer for it. I speak from experience, because I am a "much older person" now and have experienced both sides of wonderful, inter-generational relationships. In my youth I was comforted by a grandmother and educated by a grandfather as well as neighbors who were of my grandparents' generation. Now that I am a grandmother I value the continuing friendships of former students as well as

my own grandchildren.

Since my retirement I have invested time in the premier agency in Middle Tennessee that addresses issues of older persons: Senior Citizens, Inc. I actually began my volunteer service with SCI before I retired. In 1996 I was asked to serve on the Program Resources Council, and there I learned about Senior Citizens' comprehensive programs in two counties. Within a year I eagerly joined the Board of Directors. While I am still learning about this remarkable organization, I have gained sufficient confidence to share my enthusiasm and seek recruits for volunteer service with SCI. Volunteers

serve in every one of the diverse programs and activities under the able guidance of a first-class professional staff. More than 2,000 of the volunteers are themselves "senior citizens" – men and women over fifty-five. An additional 1,000 persons under age 55 are involved with the agency as volunteers and staff. SCI offers wonderful opportunities for "junior citizens" who want to make a contribution to the community.

In explaining the organization of SCI to newcomers, I use an analogy: Senior Citizens, Inc. of Middle Tennessee is a federation of sorts, rather like our government. There is a central administration, ably led by the Executive Director, Janet Jernigan, and located at the Knowles Center, one of five buildings that provide



Ruby Currey gets help during a water exercise class at the Turner Center



Adult Day Services client Emma McAdoo helps a visiting preschooler with a craft project

space and staff for a variety of activities and programs. The Knowles Center is located between Broadway and Division Streets, near the Vanderbilt campus. Other centers are located in Madison, Donelson, Hadley Park, and College Grove. Each center serves a neighboring community, and city-wide activities operate from the Knowles Center.

In addition to the five centers, branches of SCI offer programs in Bellevue, Brentwood, Inglewood, at the St. Matthias Episcopal Church on Nolensville Road, and at St. Andrew United Methodist Church on the Clarksville Highway. Programs for seniors include more than 25 weekly classes in health and fitness and over 100 instructional classes that range from computer literacy to crafts, painting, creative writing, bridge, foreign lan-

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Senior Citizens Inc. *continued from page 1*

guages, and drama. Seniors can join a performing clown troupe or learn country-western line, tap, square, and ball-room dancing. For frail seniors an Adult Day Service Program provides a caring environment with social activities, a hot meal, transportation and needed social services. Information, referral and consultation about available services, governmental programs, housing, emergency assistance and transportation are offered in collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging, one of several governmental programs for older Americans.

Readers may be familiar with Meals-on-Wheels, a community-wide program that serves homebound seniors. Several not-for-profit agencies provide meals-on-wheels, which are prepared at the



"I look forward to getting up every morning and getting a hug from a special child" says Foster Grandparents volunteer Josephine Baker.

Knowles Center kitchen and picked up each day for delivery by volunteers. SCI is the only agency, however, that delivers meals-on-wheels over the weekends and on holidays. SCI staff and volunteers spend several hours on Thanksgiving and Christmas delivering meals. During an average year more than 20,000 meals are delivered by approximately 300 volunteers. It takes about an hour-and-a-half to pick up a meal, deliver it and spend a little while visiting with the recipient. The volunteer may be the only visitor that person has during the day. The visit is almost as important as the food.

A number of other activities for frail elderly persons and their families are offered by SCI. Dependent elderly parents are most likely to be cared for by their adult children. The care-givers usually work outside the home, and their responsibilities often include their own children as well as their parent. SCI's Respite Caregivers and Senior Companions assist those who are taking care of a senior. Volunteers receive training to give weekly in-home companionship so that the caregivers may have short periods of time for rest and renewal or to run errands or get to their

own appointments. SCI offers conservatorship as well: supervision of an individual's personal decisions and/or finances, when that is appropriate.

Mental health counseling is also provided by trained volunteers and professionals under a new program of senior support. Senior citizens assisted by this program have problems to be solved with help from a friendly listener and guide as they work through a temporary set-back. The peer counselors meet with the staff for weekly supervision. They learn to spot more serious needs should these arise so that appropriate referrals can be made to benefit the client.

Victory Over Crime is a program of support services to assist elderly persons who have been victimized by crime. Under this program a case manager assists seniors who are robbed, abused, or otherwise victimized, through legal and in-home services. Permanent solutions are also sought by finding safer housing for an elderly victim of crime.

CHOICE, Care in the Home Over Institutional Care for the Elderly, provides care management and support for low-income seniors who have difficulty with daily living but are capable of



"People in our neighborhood now know whom to call when they spot something suspicious. Crime is down and this program has helped," says Victory Over Crime volunteer Arlene Deal.

remaining in their own homes with a little help. This program has helped more than one hundred persons remain in their homes during the past two years, rather than having to move to a nursing home. Two years ago CHOICE was started with a grant from the Tennessee State Government as a pilot project. Today CHOICE is a model program for other communities to emulate.

Many persons who qualify as seniors in age are young at heart and young in mind and body. We live longer than ever and older

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Visit our web site at:
www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter/womenctr.htm

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adults remain active and youthful longer than their parents and grandparents. SCI has a menu of activities for these seniors, ranging from a variety of volunteer opportunities to full-time and part-time employment. Every month the SCI employment coordinator makes approximately 200 job referrals to local employers, many of whom will tell you that older workers are able and dependable employees. For seniors who like to go places, SCI and Fountain Tours provide opportunities to travel within the United States and abroad. Trips are expertly supervised and activities are geared to senior travelers.

Two thousand seniors in Middle Tennessee give more than 50,000 hours of their time each year. They teach classes; deliver meals-on-wheels; provide respite care and companionship; serve as peer counselors to home-bound seniors; act as Foster Grandparents with love and friendship to more than 1,000 children with special needs; serve as mentors and tutors in public school classrooms under the aegis of FLIP: Friends Learning in Pairs. Phone Friends are homebound adults and children who return to empty houses after school: they share a daily telephone conversation. RSVP - Retired Senior Volunteer Program - coordinates senior volunteers in Davidson and Williamson Counties. In 1999-2000, 450 seniors provided almost 43,500 hours of service through RSVP.

I hope that if you have read this far,

you are asking yourself what you can do. Opportunities abound through SCI for everyone who would like to get involved in any of the ways mentioned above. The coordinator of volunteer services is John Barner. Not only can he find the right slot for a willing volunteer, but he also welcomes new ideas for

or doing minor repairs. Many senior citizens need a ride and someone to accompany them to the doctor, the grocery store, or other appointments. Individuals and campus organizations could organize such a project to work with SCI.

Whenever we give in time and care for others in the community, we receive much in return. I learned compassion when I watched my beautiful, lively mother grow disoriented and dependent in her late years. I felt enormous gratitude to the dozens of persons who sent cards for my mother's birthday and on holidays: members of a local church that had "adopted" the nursing home. My mother never met these kind correspondents, but the cards made her feel as if she were much loved. My children and grandchildren learned how important their love was when they saw my mother's face light up during their visits to her nursing-home room. It is impossible to measure the value of the time spent with a lonely person who can't get out to see family and friends. A few hours a month can bring sunshine into the dark corners of a shut-in's home. If you want to make a difference, become a volunteer at Senior Citizens, Inc. It will prove to be one of the most rewarding experiences you will have.

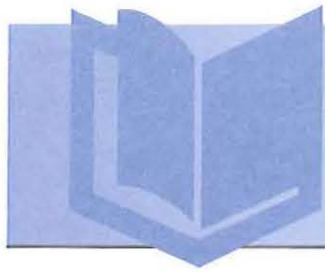


A preschooler takes a nap after a fun day with his friend.

volunteers who want to work with the senior population. For example, individuals can "Adopt a Grandparent" and connect with a homebound senior through visits, phone calls, delivery of meals-on-wheels, or by providing a service such as cleaning the house or yard

To find out more visit www.seniorcitizensinc.org. For more information about becoming a volunteer, call John Barner, Coordinator of Volunteer Services at 327-4551.





IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



Study focuses on hidden abuse among upper-class families Plus, TWO new books by bell hooks!

Domestic violence is rarely considered to be a problem among upper-class families, and social workers and psychologists who hear of such abuse tend to be much less sympathetic to well-heeled

victims than to other battered women. Susan Weitzman, a practicing psychotherapist and a lecturer at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, discusses this little-known problem in *"Not to People Like Us": Hidden Abuse in Upscale Marriages* (Basic Books, 2000).



The women in Weitzman's study were all well-educated and were married to high-income, sometimes prominent men; some of the women were professionals themselves while others were homemakers. As these women are infrequently seen in emergency rooms and are reluctant to report their abuse to anyone, they have largely been omitted from studies of violent families. Many people find it hard to believe that upscale men could threaten or batter their wives and harm their children.

The researcher illustrates why it is so hard for these women to report abuse and to seek help; many factors contribute to their silence. Few people understand why such women stay with abusive husbands when they appear to have the resources to leave. The pattern of domestic violence in upper-class families differs in a number of respects from that in middle- and low-income fami-

lies. Upscale victims can make choices in ways that other women cannot. Some of the women in the study carefully planned their escape from the abusive partner; they put aside money or waited until their children had completed school.

Weitzman describes the characteristics of the batterers, who do not fit existing stereotypes of abusive men. Most have a strong sense of entitlement, narcissistic tendencies and unrealistic expectations about how wives should act. Many are prominent, powerful and respected figures in their community. None of those in the study helped with housework or childcare, even when they employed no household help. Unlike less-affluent abusers, they rarely apologized or showed remorse after violent incidents.

As well as discussing the effects of violence on the children in these families the writer explains how therapists and others can assist battered upscale women to cope and to make the right choices for themselves and their children.

Noted black feminist writer and educator bell hooks has produced two short

where we stand:
CLASS MATTERS

bell hooks



new volumes. In *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (Routledge, 2000) she discusses the unfashionable but vital concept of class. She points out that while many people find this topic to be taboo, the influence and effects of class are everywhere.

While many Americans consider that they live in a class-free society, hooks feels that the nation is becoming increasingly segregated by class, with a growing gap between the poor and the rich. Women of all ethnic groups and black men are disproportionately joining the ranks of the very poorest. Greed has become pervasive among all classes, according to hooks.

For years hooks has been looking for a simple, concise volume that would explain the concepts of feminism. She

Feminism is for EVERYBODY

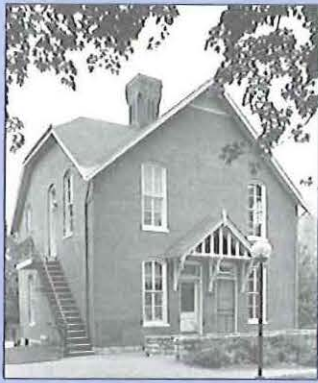


bell hooks

was particularly interested in a book suitable for men to read so that they would no longer fear feminism and might wish to fight sexism and to be freed from the bonds of patriarchy. When such a volume

was not forthcoming, hooks wrote *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (South End Press, 2000). She explains that "I had to write it because I kept waiting for it to appear, and it did not. And without it there was no way to address the hordes of people in this nation who are daily bombarded with anti-feminist backlash, who are being told to hate and resist a movement that they know very little about."

In 118 pages hooks discusses such topics as feminist politics; consciousness raising; women and work; global feminism; sexism and beauty; class and feminism; feminist parenting; peer marriage; and domestic violence.



**Margaret
Cunninggim
Women's Center**

**Calendar
of Events**

PLEASE SAVE AND POST.

Unless otherwise stated, all programs are held at the Cunningham Center, Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row. For more information on the events listed, call 322-4843.

JANUARY

Tuesday, January 2, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Creative Life Planning Group meets over lunch every Tuesday to share problem-solving information and provide support for life changes. New members are always welcome. *No meeting today, but will meet January 9, 16, 23 and 30.*

Monday, January 8, 5:15 pm

Book Group – Planning meeting for the 2001 year. Bring suggestions for books to read. If possible, bring a review of the book you are suggesting. Also, bring friends and co-workers who are interested in participating.

Wednesday, January 10, 5:15 pm

Women, Spirit and Poetry – Jan Rosemergy and Linda Manning will lead this discussion on "Owning Self" from *Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality*. This group is open to the public and the book is available in the VU Bookstore.

Thursday, January 11, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Dissertation Writers Group for Women – An organizational meeting – Dr. Darlene Panvini, Assistant Director of the Center for Teaching, will serve as facilitator. Those attending the meeting should bring a typed abstract of their dissertation, including names, school, department, address and phone.

Tuesday, January 16, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Creative Life Planning Group – A special celebration to make a wish come true for a dear CLP member.

Tuesday, January 16, 3:10 – 5:00 pm

MCWC Advisory Board Meeting - Sarratt 189

Tuesday, January 16, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Women Songwriters Support Group is holding an organizational meeting. Dianne Eberhard will serve as the group facilitator. Questions and comments go to Dianne at dianne.eberhard@memail.vanderbilt.edu.

Thursday, January 18, 12:00 noon - 1:00pm

Reading Sisters will discuss *By the Light of My Father's Smile: A Novel* by Alice Walker. Everyone is welcome to participate – students, staff, and faculty. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu with any questions.

Friday, January 19, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Living with Loss – lunch group. This idea grew from our program in the fall with Erika Callaway and Lauren Duncan who shared their personal stories about losing their mothers to cancer. All students (women/men/undergrad/grad) living with the loss of a parent or parents are welcome to this monthly lunch group. Take this time to share your thoughts, feelings, frustrations, and joys with other students. You are not alone. Lunch will be provided so please contact Hilary Forbes (2-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu) if you are interested in attending. *Cosponsored by the Psychological and Counseling Center:*

Friday, January 19, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Vandy on Ice - Meet at the Women's Center for an "Around the World" snack warm-up before we walk to Centennial Sportsplex for 2 hours of ice skating fun. Admission is \$6 and skate rental is \$1. *Cosponsored by International Student and Scholar Services.*

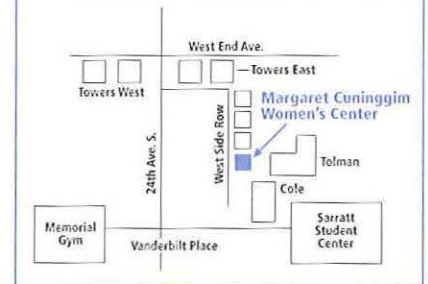
Monday, January 22, 5:30 pm

Roe v. Wade Anniversary – The Nashville chapter of NOW is hosting an event to commemorate women winning the right to choose and recognizing ownership of our bodies is still a political issue. *Congratulations Women!*

To Be Announced

Peri-menopause – Anne Moore, Professor of Nursing in the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Program at the School of Nursing, will talk to staff and faculty about peri-menopause and answer any questions they have. Snacks and drinks will be provided, so register with Hilary Forbes at 2-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

How to find us . . .



The Cunningham Center is located in the Franklin Building at 316 West Side Row.

Coming in February...

This February the Actors Bridge Ensemble will present "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler. The production, which will be co-sponsored by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, the Women's Studies Program and Students for Women's Concerns will be directed by Elizabeth Bell and Vali Forrister. "The Vagina Monologues" is part of the V-Day College Initiative to end violence against women. Eve Ensler, playwright and performance artist began this project on Valentine's Day 1998 with a celebrity benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues." That event launched a movement which has grown to include over 300 campuses nationwide, all of which will stage performances of "The Vagina Monologues" between February 8 and February 18, 2001. It is estimated that over 15 million people have been exposed to V-Day through the College Initiative. In addition, hundreds of organizations that work to end violence against women have been beneficiaries of funds from College Initiative productions. All proceeds of Vanderbilt's production will go to Nashville-based organizations.

In an effort to share women's and men's thoughts and feelings about this play, "Women's VU" will spotlight the observations of three different people, one in this issue, one in February and one in March. Our first guest writer is Leslie LaChance, Ph.D an instructor in English at UTK who performed in the play in February 1999. This fall I had the chance to ask her about it:

"As far as my own experience goes, it was incredibly empowering. Plus, cast members formed a really strong bond with each other. On the first day of rehearsal the director asked each cast member to say something about why she had decided to do the piece. Most of the cast were not professional actors, but all (including me) had experienced some form of violence (i.e. rape, assault) and terrible sexual discrimination. Several cast members worked as domestic violence counselors, and one woman was an emergency room nurse who saw rape victims on a regular basis. Every single one of us was invested in Ensler's vision to end violence



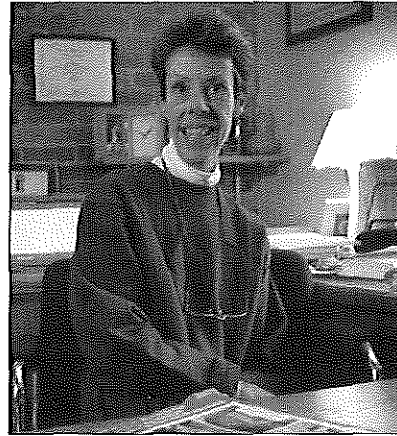
Leslie LaChance

against women. I think the audience really sensed that. We nearly filled Clarence Brown Theatre (we booked almost all 600 seats, something that rarely happens for any performance at UTK), and the audience was 50/50 men and women. I think because of the supposedly taboo subject matter, the audience was just as nervous as the cast was, but as soon as we got started, it felt like they were truly with us the whole way. As you know the play really gets intimate at times, and the language is pretty explicit and poetic, but it lends itself to inclusiveness, kind of like we were letting the audience in on our little slumber party where best girlfriends share their secrets. It didn't feel like we were just "putting on a show," though it was darn entertaining; rather, it felt like we were communicating about something incredibly important and that we were being understood. It was an immensely satisfying event and I was honored to be included."

See page 124 of the January issue of "O" magazine for an article about Eve Ensler. See also www.vday.org and www.vaginamonologues.com

Former director of Women's Studies Program dies at 58

Nancy A. Walker, who built Vanderbilt University's women's studies program from the ground up while doing widely regarded



Nancy Walker

research on women's humor in American literature, died December 12 of complications from lung cancer. She was 58.

Walker came to Vanderbilt in 1989 from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, to direct the women's studies program.

Walker won approval of a minor in women's studies after her first year in Nashville. By 1996, when she stepped down from the administrative

post to return to full-time teaching of English and women's studies, the program had grown from a single course with scattered acceptance at Vanderbilt to something that was "firmly rooted and grounded" on campus, said Cecelia Tichi, William R. Kenan Jr. professor of English at Vanderbilt.

Walker was known far and wide for her studies of 19th and 20th century female American writers like Eudora Welty and Toni Morrison, women's magazines of the mid-1900s and women and humor. She wrote or edited 12 books, including *A Very Serious Thing: Women's Humor and American Culture* (1988) and *Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines*, which was published in November of 2000.

Winner of the 1999 Mentoring Award given annually by the Women's Center for outstanding contributions to the professional and intellectual development of Vanderbilt women, Walker was widely regarded as an inspiring teacher, an invaluable resource and a willing listener. "Whenever I talked with her, I left feeling inspired and challenged, and I have yet to encounter a graduate student who didn't feel the same thing," said Amanda Kinard, a graduate student in English. "Nancy made herself available to her students, and the support she offered – especially at the lowest points in [my] dissertation writing process – was so crucial to me," commented Rory Dicker, a lecturer in English and women's studies who first worked with Walker as a graduate student.

In a typical semester, Walker would work with four or five students in a direct way, serving on their dissertation committees, and she would mentor other students more informally. In return for mentoring these students Walker said, "I get to see them grow; I get to see them succeed. Nothing is as rewarding as that."

Walker is survived by her husband, Burt Augst, a compliance analyst with Vanderbilt's Opportunity Development Center.

Portions of this article originally appeared in *The Tennessean* and in the May 1999 issue of *Women's VU*



View from the Karakoram Highway in Northeastern Pakistan.

"There is just no way to describe the beauty and power of the Karakoram Range. I have never seen such an incredible sight. It really puts humanity in perspective," writes Irvin.

"Photo Nomad" exhibit to open in January *part three of a three part series*

During the past two months, "Women's VU" has followed the travels of Hamblet award winner Stacey Irvin as she journeyed through Western China and Central Asia, fulfilling, in her words, "the beginning of a life's dream." In this final piece, "Women's VU" bids farewell to this courageous traveller who has so graciously shared her journal with our readers.

At one point near the end of her travels, Stacey asks in her journal, "What is it to travel? What end does this activity serve? All I really know is that I wish others could have the experiences that I am having. How can I take this travel and transform it?"

Stacey has worked hard to put together an exciting exhibition of her full-color photographs that will open to the Nashville community in January. Alongside her full-color photographs will be selections from her journal entries, most of which will be new material not already printed in "Women's VU." For this exhibit, Stacey has chosen to focus on three different regions and cultures within the borders of western

China: the Li River Valley in southern China, areas surrounding the Taklamakan desert in northwest China, and the high plateaus of Tibet and Quinhai Provinces.

Stacey has gone to great lengths to transform her travel experience simply by being open to the possibility of edu-

"I have a passion for new horizons and a personal mandate to challenge my own boundaries... The camera enables me to capture the rich contours of my dance with discovery."

cating others about her trip. Young children in the Nashville area have been transformed by having Stacey visit and see a slide show of her trip. They learned for example, that "not all Chinese people look alike," and are in fact, a very diverse group of people. For my mother and father who lived in Hong Kong for three years and visited China often, reading these journals has helped them deal with their homesickness for

that area and has helped them recall their own memories of visiting within China (even though their experiences were vastly different!)

While we say good-bye to this great travel series, for Stacey it is really just the beginning. In the future Stacey wants to travel to Antarctica and possibly attend graduate school. Whatever she does, however, we can expect great things from her, for she truly is, as Professor Joseph Mella states, "a young artist at the genesis of her career in the visual arts."

-Susan Hilderbrand, editor

"Photo Nomad: Following the Faces of Western China" opens Thursday, January 11, 2000 at the Fine Arts Gallery with a reception honoring the artist from 5 to 7 pm; and will continue through Thursday February 1, 2000. The Fine Arts Gallery is located on the first floor of the Fine Arts Building, also known as the Old Gym, at 23rd and West End Avenues, Nashville. Admission is free and the public is welcome! visit www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/finearts/gallery.html

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

• Looking for short-term, rewarding volunteer work? Women are needed for **BETTER DECISIONS**, an eight-week course which teaches decision-making and life-planning skills to inmates at the Tennessee Prison for Women. Volunteers work one-on-one with an inmate/partner for one-hour weekly sessions during the eight weeks, February 5-March 26. Volunteer training is scheduled for January 27-28. Please call Kathy Masulis at 832-8327 for more information.

• **The Violence Against Women Task Force**, established in May of 1999 wants to work with you to make Vanderbilt a healthier and safer campus for all. They invite undergraduates, graduate/professional students, staff and faculty to serve on one or more of the following committees: Policies and Protocol (contact Linda Manning at 322-4843), Programming and Training (contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518), Publicity (contact Becky Spires at

343-0538), Community Relationships (contact Brenda Shinabarger-Howe at 322-3774), and Peer Education (contact Sandra Harrell at 322-1333). Contact Sandra Harrell, Coordinator of Project Safe at 322-1333 if you have any additional questions. *Your input can have a lasting effect at Vanderbilt!*

• The Women's Center is seeking nominations for two awards given annually to recognize achievements by and in support of women on campus.

– **The Mentoring Award** honors a member of the university community who has fostered achievement by Vanderbilt women.

– **The Muliebrity Prize** is given to an undergraduate student who demonstrates leadership in activities that contribute to the achievements, interests and goals of women and girls, or that promote gender equity.

If you know someone who is deserving in either of these categories, please submit your nomination as soon as possible. Nomination forms are available at the Sarratt desk or at the Women's Center. A curriculum vitae of the nominee is also welcomed. *The deadline for submitting nominations for both awards is Jan. 30.*

• **Hand In Hand Training January 26 - 28.** This 16 hour training teaches you how to help women experiencing dating/ domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Open to all students, staff and faculty. To learn more and register contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.



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