

WE CAN

Strength. Assistance.

Opportunity.



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www.wecancenter.org

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WE CAN's New Executive Director on the Link Among Hope, Confidence and Achievement

One day, before I had officially started my job as executive director, I had what has become a regular "WE CAN encounter."

A woman in WE CAN's divorce support group said, "I could not have made it though this without this group."

I have now heard versions of that many times. Lawyers who donate their time and legal expertise wrote about how much working at WE CAN meant to *them*. Women in a very basic computer class started having the confidence to help each other in class. I talked to countless women calling in with a serious crisis who were unfailingly polite and patient with our schedule and part-time staff.

Welcome to WE CAN:

the organization whose clients grapple with survival daily and yet who teach those of us lucky enough to meet them about optimism and hope.

Helen Keller said, "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

If you doubt that, visit our office on a day that a single client or a group of clients is there. You'll see, for example, the group's leader - whether teaching basic computer skills or how to find a career or how to get through a divorce - optimistically believing that the women in the group will be better off for having come, and then wildly succeeding in helping them. And you'll see cli-

ents trying to improve their lives (and their children's) by coming to WE CAN and, in the process of gaining concrete skills, rediscovering hope and confidence.

So I come to my new office each day infused with my mission to help local women raise the children, grow the food, type the letters, become companions, create art, and fill the world with love, ideas, and spirituality instead of waking each morning overwhelmed by how to get food, where to sleep that night, how to make ends meet, and how to stay safe.

If you seek more optimism and hope in your own life, come join our team at WE CAN. There's lots to go around.
- Arlene Kirsch

A Message of Thanks

"The WE CAN Divorce Support group was a godsend for me. At the most difficult time in my life, Joyce St. Pierre, the facilitator, provided

a warm, non-threatening environment in which I felt less isolated, loved, and able to express myself. Being a member of this group

has restored my self-confidence and helped me move forward."
~ Anonymous

"They [WE CAN] have helped me stay on track and find strength in myself."

~M

**"It's never too late to be what you might have been."
George Eliot**

Program Highlight: Pathmakers

In this issue, we want to share our news about Pathmakers, WE CAN's innovative mentorship program for women on a path to change the direction of their lives.

WE CAN clients who have set career goals for themselves with WE CAN's help, are paired with a successful woman who is volunteering her time to help our clients

meet their goals. WE CAN offers our clients in this program workshops to help build specific survival skills such as conflict resolution, assertiveness training, building self-esteem and increasing financial intelligence.

Pathmakers, funded through a generous grant from the Cape & Islands United Way, is one of those special programs

that give something special back to the volunteers who are giving back to women in their communities.

To become a short-term or longer-term mentor, or to offer a special workshop, please contact Peggy at 508-430-8111 or peggy@wecancenter.org.

What people are saying about WE CAN....

"I would like to thank the wonderful people who make WE CAN the incredible organization that it is. With the help of Peggy and the staff and the Mentor Program I have received kindly and wise counseling and support while I have been going through difficult transitions.... They helped me stay on track and find

strength in myself. WE CAN is there for women and it is greatly appreciated." ~M.

* * *

"The attorney that I met with - I just cannot say enough good things about him - was insightful and provided me with clear answers to my questions.

He perused my paperwork and made suggestions that I later put into practice. ... I left feeling confident that I was armed with sufficient information specific to my upcoming case. He also went one step further by being truly interested in the outcome of my hearing." ~J.

From the Board Members: New member Debbie Todd

I have always attributed the success I had in my career to my hard work. My early achievements, though small, served to motivate me to work even harder. Upon reflection, I now realize that I did have certain advantages: strong role models, emotional support and the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time.

Many women today do not have the basic tools they need to be productive, valuable members of

our work force, despite their desire and need to do so.

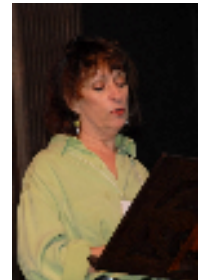
When I entered the work force there was no lack of available jobs, nor was I burdened with bringing up children as a single parent. Here on the Cape, we enjoy a 'paradise' of beaches and natural beauty. But this isn't paradise for many women; it's a harsh, unfriendly place where it's difficult to find a job that can support a family.

I became involved with WE CAN because I feel that by giving women the tools to get a job and do it well benefits *all* of us. We do focus on women because in most cases, the future--in the form of children--rests on their shoulders. I want to live in a community where the potential for success exists for everyone. If WE CAN can help Cape Cod women enjoy some small successes then I believe the larger successes will follow. ~Debbie Todd

WE CAN works!

WE CAN's services improve the quality of life for low-income women and their children. WE CAN helps low income women on Cape Cod break the cycle of dead-end jobs by encouraging them to get more training in areas of demand with livable salaries. Our clients are typically single mothers who have suffered through a divorce, an abusive relationship, or job loss and are struggling to support their families. They often have low self-esteem and no self-confidence, and they are isolated.

The 2007 Workforce Survey of Barnstable County found 40% of working households with children on Cape Cod faced barriers in getting more education and training. WE CAN has served over 1300 women since 2004. When they enter the program, 74% of WE CAN Options clients and their families make less than \$20,000, yet the most recent self-sufficiency salary for a Barnstable County mother with one preschooler and one school-age child is \$50,706. Options offers a progression of mentored steps: career information and assessment, one-on-one counseling, guidance choosing an educational program and applying for scholarships and service referrals. WE CAN works: about 50% of our 2008 clients are now in the workforce and about 30% are in training.



**2008 Woman of the Year:
Former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala**

Dr. Donna Shalala was honored at WE CAN's annual fundraiser, "A Day of Women's Words, Wit and Wisdom" in June.

She was quoted in the *Cape Cod Times* as saying, "The health of this country is determined as much by how neighbors help their neighbors as by government programs."

"At the end of the day," she continued, "people are helped by groups like (WE CAN) in their communities by people of good will stepping up and taking care of their friends and neighbors," she said.

"In many ways, community organizations are the glue that gets people to

the right government programs, but also supplements it in a way that makes the (government) help work," she said.

Donna Shalala:
"Community is the glue."



WE CAN's 2009 Woman of the Year will be the incomparable Anne Meara. Save the date of June 4, 2009 for this anticipated event at the West Dennis Yacht Club!

Visit us on the web at www.wecancenter.org

"It's our sisters, mothers, daughters, neighbors and friends who need our help; it's not THEM, it's US."
Chatham author and WE CAN Board member, Anne LeClaire

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Arlene Kirsch, MS, MPA

Newsletter Staff:
Debbie Todd
Arlene Kirsch



WE CAN is a nonprofit organization that helps women on Cape Cod develop personally and professionally. We offer individual career assessment and guidance, mentoring programs, legal and financial workshops, and support groups.

WE CAN Relies on Your Support

Try to imagine, for a moment, looking for a job with a sustainable wage if you have never used a computer, or if you are trying to survive a divorce, can no longer afford your home, or have had a severe illness and lack your former capabilities.

Life can throw any one of us a curve ball at any time, and these days it has become harder and harder to pick yourself up and get back on track. For single mothers, that challenge goes double. But local women don't want a handout. They want a way to help themselves.

For women on Cape Cod, there is a place to get a helping hand: where you can learn basic computer skills to get a good job, you can get free legal advice offered by 18 generous Cape Cod attorneys year after year, and you can set realistic career goals with a counselor and get paired with a mentor to help guide you towards meeting your goals.

WE CAN offers all these programs and more. Yes, WE CAN provides a safety net for Cape women. But we also steer them onto a realistic career path into the workforce to provide a more permanent solution to many of their troubles. While WE CAN currently provides the only **comprehensive** service to women in transition, over the next two years, we plan to expand our innovative mentorship program to reach older, isolated women, and to add a **prevention track** for young women that will offer skills and guidance early on to prevent them from ever needing a safety net.

We know this has been a difficult year in some ways for everyone. **But we promise you that a generous gift to WE CAN to help our clients — your sisters and daughters, your mothers and neighbors, your friends — will lift**

your spirits as you help turn someone's life around.

Every dollar builds another rung on a woman's ladder towards success. Every dollar is a gift of light at the end of her dark passageway.

Please join us in building ladders, lighting dark passages, and helping our family, our neighbors and our friends to remain here on Cape Cod. Please return the enclosed card with a generous gift.

On behalf of Cape women, your neighbors, thank you. With deep appreciation,

Ro Morrissey,
President, WE CAN

P.S.: We have just lost nearly 10% of our budget in the recent cut in State funding, so please be as generous as possible. Thank you.