

NEWSLETTER #2

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

As promised in our last newsletter, we'll be letting you know the status of the project from time to time. At our last writing we had stopped taking new women into the program in order to evaluate how effective we had been and to get in touch with women we had lost contact with. This moratorium served its purpose fairly well, and we began operations again with a better idea of how to help the women who call us. There are now about 90 women in transition participating in the program to various degrees, about 80 women who have volunteered as sisters (some of whom entered the program as women in transition), and five small groups which are still functioning. The role of sisters has expanded from one-to-one counseling to working with the small groups, working with therapists on screening and evaluation, doing follow-up, and speaking about the program to outside groups.

The course on separation and divorce law procedures which we taught in conjunction with the National Lawyers Guild worked out well. About 20 women stayed with the course, and 8 of these are now serving as paralegal counselors for the program. They are receiving phone calls from women who call Women in Transition with legal questions, and are serving as volunteers with Community Legal Services, helping to process the backlog of divorce cases of 400 CLS clients, almost all of whom are women.

## FUNDING

At this moment the picture looks bleak, although we will make it through the summer (we received an additional \$3000 from the Fels Fund last week.) Our current funds run out in the fall, and although we have submitted our refunding proposal to many private foundations, as yet we have received no positive responses (but many negative ones.) If any of you have contacts with funding sources (large or small) and the energy to follow through on them (with help from the staff), we would be happy to hear from you.

## SURVIVAL MANUAL

If the project folds, we will certainly go out in a blaze of glory with a BEAUTIFUL, REVISED, PRINTED SURVIVAL MANUAL! Kathy Jennings, a sister in the program, has been hired part-time to revise the first draft, which is nearly done. We are currently looking for creative contributions -- art work, poems, short articles, or stories about women's lives, etc. If any of you have done something like this and would be willing to contribute it to the Manual, we would appreciate it very much. We are also trying to compile a bibliography of literature which would be helpful to women going through separation and divorce. Suggestions are welcome. Reach Kathy through this office (SA 4-9511).

## SUMMER PLANS

Since many women participating in the program will be on vacation, we are planning to cut back somewhat during the summer. Beginning in June we have decided

not to pair women in transition and sisters or to try to form new small groups. This decision was made because those two activities take up most of the staff time, and we simply won't be able to handle the current volume of calls with our reduced summer staff. Instead, it has been suggested that once a month we hold a general meeting where women in transition, sisters, legal counselors, and therapists can get together and rap about whatever problems the women in transition bring to these meetings. If sister pairings occur naturally at these meetings this will be fine, and the legal counselors and therapists will be there to provide back-up help. You will all be notified of these meetings. We will still try to handle emergency calls and provide help for those of you who have already been paired, and the survival manual will be mailed to women who call during this period. In the fall we plan to resume the regular program.

Since staff time will be limited this summer, the office will only be covered a few days a week. Please bear with us and leave messages with the answering service. A word about the answering service: we had a choice between a standard answering service which employs (and possibly exploits) a large number of women operators, or the more personal service we chose which is a husband and wife team. So if you hear a man's voice, don't hang up!

#### OTHER NEWS

...We have been getting more and more speaking requests lately, and a number of women in the program have volunteered to handle them. If we get a request from a group in your neighborhood, we will be in touch with you to see if you (along with one or two other women) would like to speak to the group about the program.

...The planning group is still in need of several women to help with overall planning for the program. Since demands on women's time is always high, we can be flexible about the time you would have to put in. We need you!

...There was a possibility that the Women's Center and Women in Transition would have to move out of the building at 4634 Chester Avenue, but at the moment the plans are for us to stay. Drop in some time!

HAVE A HAPPY SUMMER!