

# Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women

May 7, 2014

## Commission Meeting - Minutes

### Upcoming Events

May 6 and 7– Promtacular

3-4:30pm – Cambridge Main Library, Curious George Room

May 21 – Women’s History Walk

12pm – DPW Buidling

May 21 – Women in Prison: A Cambridge Conversation

6:15pm – Cambridge Senior Center

Screening of *The Grey Area*, circle discussion, speakers and Q+A

June 3 – Girls Sports Day

Danehy Park

9am

June 4 – Women’s History Walk

12pm – 344 Broadway

June 4 – June CCSW Meeting

6pm Dinner 6:30pm Meeting

June 5 – Women and Words: Women Powered Transportation

7-8:30pm – City Hall Annex Community Room

June 18 – Women’s History Walk

12pm – City Hall

Commissioners: Susan, Phyllis, Marjorie, Pauline, Golnaz, Laura, Johanne, Addie

Staff: Kimberly, Emily

### Agenda

#### Promtacular

This year’s Promtacular sessions’ focus was on dance and movement and also included a conversation on relationships, alcohol use and healthy choices surrounding prom. Both instructors, Kara Fili (Dance) and Rashmi Tiwari (conversation facilitator) reported that the sessions were a success and the girls were very into the dance and the discussion. We had 15 girls represented at the sessions.

#### Women in Prison: A Cambridge Conversation - film screening, speakers and circle discussion

On May 21, the Women’s Commission, along with the Restorative Justice Working Group, the YWCA and On The Rise, are hosting an event at the Cambridge Senior Center about women in prison. We will be screening *The Grey Area*, a movie about Grinnell Students teaching inmates

at an Iowa prison about feminism. The film takes a deep look at the unique plights of female offenders compared to their male counterparts. We will also have facilitated circle discussions after the film and two speakers, Andrea Goode-James and Charyti Reiter to talk about prison's impact on women and families and the how women in the criminal justice system in Cambridge are being affected.

### Girls Sports Day

This year is the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Sports Day in Cambridge. Thus far, the program has not had the funding or resources through our budget to review or evaluate the program. Every year, the School Department is under greater and greater time constraints in their calendars and they report that it is becoming harder and harder for them to fund. It was decided this year that we might want to consider requesting line item funding for Girls Sports Day in the CPSD's budget so that it's not a scramble every year. And consider what, if any, increase to our budget would be necessary if we were to continue with the program.

However, before thinking that we may have to ask for increases to our budget for the program, we want to thoroughly look at the program, its history, its goals and ask ourselves: Have we met the original goals of GSD that were set out 18 yrs ago?

Anecdotally, girls report loving the day and there are many girls who are now adults who have said they fondly remember their 5<sup>th</sup> Grade GSD. However, we have never had a more "official" evaluation of the program and survey a sampling of CRLS girls about their experiences with GSD. What city resources would be available to CCSW for this evaluation? What departments are able to help with evaluations or what consultants are available? We recognize this would be costly to measure.

The brainstorming question to the commission now is, "If we had all the Cambridge 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls for one morning, what would we want to teach them? What would be the most beneficial for them?" Is it even sports?

(Joanne) Cultural differences and immigration. Joanne mentioned the "double life" and differing social expectations that many children of immigrants feel living in the United States. She mentioned the "thick vs. thin" divide in Haitian vs. American standards of beauty.

(Golnaz) Social acceptance. Teaching kids, boys and girls, to be kind.

(Pauline) Body awareness. Entrepreneurship. Teaching girls to follow their heart and not the expectations from classmates, especially surrounding fashion.

(Susan) Violence prevention. *Rights* of girls and people. Many girls don't know their rights, or that they have any at all.

(Laura) Pay inequity. Also, women in different careers – acrobats, physicians, moms, plumbers, etc.

Other things mentioned: self-defense, sex ed, violence prevention, body image. Would a *Girls Health Day* be a better offering instead?