

Message from the President

Commissioners

Regina L. Oldak
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The Commission for Women was very active this past year, informing policymakers, community leaders, and the public about issues of concern to women and advocating for the protection and progress of women at the county, state, and federal levels.

Last year's *2007 Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County* highlighted for us the disproportionately high rate of poverty among single mothers of young children. Female-headed households are only 15 percent of county families but are 47 percent of those living in poverty. And while the overall poverty rate in the county is less than three percent, the rate of poverty among single mothers of young children is nearly 30 percent – a stunning ten times as high! In response, the Commission made the issue of poverty among single mothers a priority in 2007-2008. This spring, the Commission's Mothers and Poverty Committee (MAP) organized and hosted a series of three public forums entitled *Dreams Deferred: Single Mothers and Poverty*. Expert panelists addressed some of the causes of poverty among single women and focused on effective strategies to increase economic security for single mothers. You can watch the May 21st program on county cable at http://montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/news/pressvideo/pv_detail.asp?Pvid=13. Of course, there is still much to do, and the MAP Committee is developing recommendations for further action stemming from the forums.

The Policy and Legislation Committee had a very successful year, with an over-subscribed Women's Legislative Briefing and passage of favorable legislation. We commend our County Council and County Executive for their courage in enacting legislation that will require employers of domestic workers to negotiate and offer written contracts specifying terms and conditions of employment. Montgomery County's Domestic Workers bill is believed to be the first legislation of its kind nationally and we hope that it will serve as a model for other jurisdictions to protect those who take care of our families and our homes. Please read more about this bill on page 4. On the state level, we are very pleased to report that the General Assembly passed and Governor O'Malley signed into law several of the bills we supported: legislation that allows certain employees to use their accumulated leave time to care for immediate family members; the "Kids First Act", increasing access to health care coverage for the nearly 90,000 children in Maryland who are eligible for public programs but are not now enrolled; and legislation that authorizes Maryland's Commissioner of Labor and Industry to collect employment data to study pay disparity, an outgrowth of the Pay Equity Commission that we worked with previously. On the federal level, we continue to join major national organizations in support of employment rights, health care reform, equity in education, and economic security for women and families.

The Commission also continued its work on behalf of immigrant women this year. Some of our signature brochures have been revised – read more on page 6 – and the IWin Committee is creating a "Divorce Handbook" to explain the legal process and basic procedures involved in separation and divorce. Divorce is a difficult time for any family, but new Americans especially may be unfamiliar with their rights and responsibilities during the process. The handbook will be published in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese and will include information specific to immigrant women.

The Commission bid farewell to several esteemed members who are leaving the Commission at the end of this fiscal year: Gloria Aparicio Blackwell, Patricia E. Cornish, Nelson A. Garcia, Anne S. Kasper, Lily Qi, and Yun Jung Yang. We thank them all for their dedication and service to the Commission. We wish them all the best and hope that they will stay in touch and continue to work with us. At the same time, the Commission for Women welcomed four new commissioners: Jane Hobdy, Chandra Walker Holloway, Ivonne C. Lindley, and Jocelyn Samuels. Each brings a new dimension, experience, and expertise to the Commission. Read more about these commissioners on page 2.

As we develop our work plan for 2008-2009 to address the pressing needs of women and their families in Montgomery County, we hope that you will stay in touch with us and be engaged as we enter into a new year with new commissioners and ideas. Watch for more information at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw.

Regina L. Oldak

New Commissioners

The County Executive Isiah Leggett has appointed four new commissioners and reappointed Martha Nguyen. Each commissioner will serve a 3-year term without compensation. The Commission for Women welcomes the following new commissioners.

Jane Hobdy: A resident of Rockville, Ms. Hobdy is the Director of Business Development in North America for Boldon James, Ltd., a software development company. She holds an Executive MBA from the University of Maryland University College, concentrating in International Business. She has just finished a term as President of the Board of Directors of Miriam's House, a shelter in Washington, D.C. for homeless women living with HIV. She is a former volunteer at My Sister's Place, a shelter for abused women and their children, and is a former board member of the Montgomery County Family Services Agency.

Chandra Holloway: Ms. Holloway is an attorney in solo practice specializing in family, employment and injury law, with offices in Silver Spring. She holds a law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center and is a resident of Burtonsville. She has represented her sorority on the planning committee for the annual Women's Legislative Briefing for three years. As a member of the Montgomery County Bar Association, she has volunteered at the organization's evening Pro Bono Legal Clinic and represented women on a pro bono basis in matters involving divorce, custody, and domestic violence. She also serves the community as a Girl Scout Brownie Troop Leader, a member of Takoma Park Elementary School PTA, and a member of the county's chapter of Jack and Jill of America.

Ivonne C. Lindley: Ms. Lindley, a resident of Kensington, is an attorney concentrating in personal injury and other civil litigation. She has been very active as a member of the Women's Bar Association, co-editing its monthly newsletter and planning and participating in its events. She is also an active member of the Bar Association of Montgomery County, serving on several of its committees as well. While in law school at George Washington University, she was an active member of the Hispanic Law Students Association, and is bilingual in Spanish and English.

Jocelyn F. Samuels: Ms. Jocelyn F. Samuels, a resident of Bethesda, is an attorney who works as the Vice President for Education and Employment at the National Women's Law Center. Prior to this position, which she has held for six and a half years, she was the Labor Counsel for Senator Edward Kennedy, and worked for ten years as the Senior Attorney-Advisor in the Office of Legal Counsel for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

New Family Justice Center

The County is working to establish a Family Justice Center with the goal of improving services to victims of domestic violence. The Family Justice Center will offer a more responsive, holistic approach to providing services to victims of domestic violence. The Family Justice Center concept, which has been used in other jurisdictions around the nation, was developed locally by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council with the support of the County Sheriff and members of the County Council. Located near the courts and providing a range of services for victims of domestic violence, the

Family Justice Center will provide an integrated, inter-agency approach to providing support and services.

The Family Justice Center is scheduled to open in the Fall 2008/Spring 2009 on the 5th floor of the 600 Jefferson Street, at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Route 28 near Richard Montgomery High School.

For more information on the Family Justice Center please contact the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council at 240-777-7000.

Women & Money: On the Path to Financial Security

Friday, September 26, 2008

9:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

FEE: \$50

Featuring Olivia Mellan, Keynote Speaker critically acclaimed author of "Money Shy to Money Sure: A Woman's Road Map to Financial Well Being."

9:30-10:00 am Registration & Continental Breakfast

10:00 am -noon Program Presentation by Olivia Mellan

noon-1:15 pm Lunch on Your Own

1:15- 3:15 pm Workshops on Financial Issues

Register Today: 240-777-8300 or at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw



August is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Source: www.ovariancancer.org and www.ovarian.org

Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer among women.

Ovarian cancer was once known as the “silent killer” because it was believed that there were no symptoms and when detection did occur it was in such a late stage that the chances of survival were low. Only a year ago the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation (GCF) announced the first national consensus on ovarian cancer symptoms. The following symptoms are much more likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer than women in the general population. These symptoms include:

- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

Women who have these symptoms almost daily for more than a few weeks should see their doctor, preferably a gynecologist.

No Routine Screening

Another reason ovarian cancer is difficult to detect early is that there is no routine screening test for it. Unlike the mammogram for breast cancer and the Pap test for cervical cancer, there is currently no test for ovarian cancer. Methods are being researched to monitor women at high risk for the disease but currently no test exists to screen all women in the general public.

If a woman is experiencing ovarian cancer symptoms, has a strong family history or has a genetic predisposition, doctors may monitor her with one or a combination of tests such as a pelvic exam, CA-125 blood test, and a transvaginal ultrasound.

Risk Factors

Knowing the factors that may increase the risk of ovarian cancer can empower individual women to take charge of their

health. Having one or more of these risks does not necessarily mean that ovarian cancer will develop, but the risk may be higher compared to the average woman:

- Genetic predisposition
- Personal or family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer
- Increasing age
- Infertility

The overwhelming majority of women with ovarian cancer have no known risk factors. Therefore it is important to pay attention to the subtle symptoms and consult with your doctor.

Talk With Your Doctor

Starting a conversation with your doctor is an excellent way to empower yourself on your health. Some tips to starting a conversation:

- Write out your questions ahead of time and bring them with you. Conducting online research in advance might help you prepare a more complete list of questions.
- Take notes during the appointment with your doctor to make sure you understand what you are hearing. Ask for clarification, if necessary.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask where you can find more information. You have a right to know.
- Be forthcoming and persistent about issues that concern you. Trust your instincts.

A few questions you may want to ask your doctor are:

- Given my family and medical history, am I at risk?
- Do you perform/should I have a rectovaginal exam on an annual basis?
- Are there any lifestyle modifications I could make, such as diet and exercise, that can help prevent ovarian cancer?

Ovarian Cancer Websites and Resources	
American Cancer Society www.cancer.org , 1-800-227-2345	CancerCare, Inc. www.cancercare.org , 1-800-813-HOPE (4673)
FORCE: Facing our Risk of Cancer Empowered www.facingourrisk.org , 1-954-255-8732	Gilda Radner Familial Ovarian Cancer Registry www.ovariancancer.com , 1-800-OVARIAN (1-800-682-7426)
Gilda's Club Worldwide (GCW) www.gildasclub.org , (1-888-GILDA 4 U), 1-888-445-3248	Gynecologic Cancer Foundation www.thegcf.org , 1-800-444-4441
National Cancer Institute www.cancer.gov , 1-800-4-CANCER, (1-800-422-6237)	National Ovarian Cancer Coalition www.ovarian.org , 1-888-OVARIAN, (1-888-682-7426)
Office of Women's Health www.4woman.gov , 1-800-994-WOMAN (1-800-994-9662) TDD: 1-888-220-5446	Ovarian Cancer National Alliance www.ovariancancer.org , 1-202-331-1332
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund www.ocrf.org , 1-800-873-9569	Women's Cancer Network www.wcn.org , 1-312-573-1439

Domestic Workers Bill

Source: Montgomery County Public Information Office and the Office of Consumer Protection

Legislation Puts County at National Forefront in Requiring Contracts Be Offered to Certain Home Employees

The Montgomery County Council on Tuesday, July 15, 2008 unanimously approved a bill that will require employers of certain domestic workers to negotiate and offer a written contract that specifies the terms and conditions of the employment. Bill 2-08, is believed to be the first legislation nationally regulate employers of domestic workers.

On July 22, 2008 the bill was signed by County Executive Isiah Leggett and will go into effect in 180 days.

This bill was the result of a three year campaign by domestic workers and advocacy groups to help improve the working conditions for domestic workers. The domestic workers bill was an outgrowth of a County Council Committee on Health and Human Services sponsored study of domestic workers that was released on May 10, 2006. The study found that domestic workers in the County have limited access to information about their rights under state and county law and very few have written employment contracts. Consequently, many domestic workers are paid less than the minimum wage required by state law and do not receive overtime pay for work in excess of 40 hours per week.

Domestic workers are already entitled to minimum wage, worker's compensation and overtime. However, most domestic workers are not covered by the federal National Labor Relations Act and therefore do not have the same protections to organize and bargain collectively concerning wages and terms and conditions of employment.

The bill will prohibit retaliation against a domestic worker who requests a written contract, attempts to enforce the

terms of a contract, files a complaint or participates in an investigation of a complaint.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the employer of a domestic worker?

If the worker is an employee of a company that contracts with the client to provide domestic service, then the company is the employer required to negotiate a written contract with the worker. If the worker performs at least 20 hours of domestic service at one residence during the week, and is not an employee of a company contracting with the person receiving the service, then the person receiving the service is the employer. A live-in domestic worker will generally be an employee of the person receiving the service. A worker who performs domestic service at different residences or who hires assistants to help perform the work will generally be an independent contractor. The Bill does not cover an independent contractor.

What does the Bill require an employer to do?

The Bill requires an employer to give the domestic worker written notice of her legal rights guaranteed under State law. The Bill also requires an employer to negotiate with the worker over the terms and conditions of employment and offer to sign a written contract specifying those terms and conditions of employment. An employer of a domestic worker must obtain either a written employment contract signed by both the employer and the domestic worker or a disclosure statement signed by the domestic worker.

Who is a domestic worker?

A domestic worker is an individual who cares for a child, provides housekeeping, cooking, cleaning, or laundry service in the home of the recipient of the service located in the County. The Bill also covers individuals employed by an agency who work as a companion to a disabled or elderly individual in the home of the recipient of the service. The Bill only covers those who work at least 20 hours each week for a period of 30 days or more.

Are there other exclusions in the Bill?

Yes. The Bill excludes an individual working as a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or a certified nursing assistant. The Bill also excludes a child, parent, spouse, or other member of the immediate family of the



County Executive Isiah Leggett's signing of the Domestic Workers Bill. Looking on are Council members George Leventhal (third from left) and Marc Elrich (fifth from left), along with CASA of Maryland officials and domestic workers. Photo from the Montgomery County Public Information Office.

recipient of the service and a person working as an au pair. Finally, the Bill excludes companion workers for disabled or elderly persons who are unable to care for themselves if they are not employed by an agency.

What living accommodations does the Bill require for live-in workers?

The Bill requires that a dwelling unit that includes living accommodations must meet the requirements of the County Housing Code. The Bill also requires a live-in worker to have a separate bedroom with a door that can be locked along with reasonable access to a kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facility.

Does the Bill apply to a person who is already employed as a domestic worker in the County?

Yes. However, the Bill will not be effective until 180 days after it becomes law.

Who will enforce the Bill?

The Office of Consumer Protection will enforce the Bill. A domestic worker can file a complaint against an employer with the Office of Consumer Protection. Complaints about living accommodations will be referred to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. A complaint alleging a breach of an employment contract will be handled by the Courts.

Does this Bill create new employment rights for undocumented workers?

No. Immigration laws are within the exclusive authority of the Federal government. The Bill does not authorize individuals to work in the County without proper immigration status.

Will the County provide help with drafting employment contracts?

Yes. The Office of Consumer Protection, after consulting with the Commission for Women, will draft and publish both a model employment contract and a model disclosure statement that employers and workers can use to comply with this law.

What is the penalty for a violation of this law?

The Director of the Office of Consumer Protection may refer a complaint of a violation to a hearing officer designated by the Chief Administrative Officer for an administrative hearing. The hearing officer may order relief, including a civil penalty of not more than \$1000 per violation.

For more information contact the Office of Consumer Protection at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ocp> or call 240-777-3636.

August 26th is Women's Equality Day

Celebrating the 88th Anniversary of Women in the United States Winning the Right to Vote

In 1920, women won a 72-year political campaign that began at Seneca Falls in 1848. Ratified on August 26th, the 19th Amendment, the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the United States Constitution secured full voting rights for women.

In 1971, Representative Bella Abzug succeeding in persuading Congress to pass a resolution designating August 26th as Women's Equality Day to commemorate the passage of the 19th Amendment, the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The 19th Amendment: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Did you know that the first state to grant women's suffrage was Wyoming in 1869?

Did you know that the most recent country to grant women's suffrage was Kuwait in 2005?

Did you know that women in the following countries have limited or no suffrage: Bhutan, Brunei, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates?

For more information visit the National Women's History Project: <http://www.nwhp.org/suffrage.php>

Computer Camp for Girls

In partnership with the Commission for Women, Montgomery County Business and Professional Women, and Passion for Learning, the Montgomery College Computer Camp for Girls had another successful year.

Every summer Montgomery College hosts computer camps specifically for middle school girls on each of its three campuses. These camps are designed to introduce the basics of web design or computer programming. For some of the campers this would be one of their early exposures to a college campus.

The Commission for Women, Montgomery County Business and Professional Women and Passion for Learning sponsored a total of 34 scholarships to enable girls from low-income families, and many for whom English is a second language, the opportunity for hands-on computer work.

As recently reported in the journal of *Science*, girls are just as capable as boys in the fields of math. This recent report illustrates that girls have the capability for the "difficult"

sciences; computer programming, and mathematics. One reason why capable girls do not enroll in those types of course is the social setting. Girls need extra encouragement to pursue courses and



fields of work typically considered "men's work". Some girls may feel uncomfortable as one of a few girls or only girl in a computer, math or science class full of boys. The Summer Computer Camp for Girls is a small program creating a setting for girls to envision and experience themselves on a college campus in hopes of helping to improve the gender balance in the fields of math, science, and technology.

New Brochures

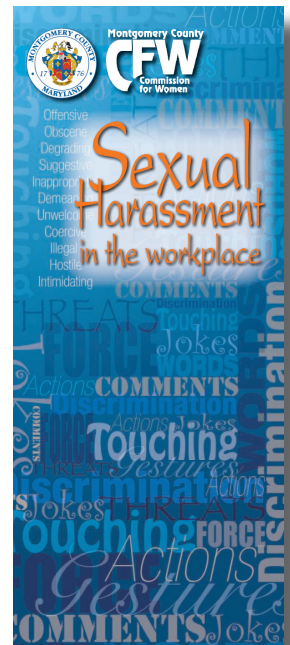
The Commission for Women is editing, updating, and redesigning some of its signature brochures.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Brochure

The information in this brochure was updated to include current laws and the cover was redesigned to better emphasize what sexual harassment is. If you look at the cover closely you see a horizontal line of words; "offensive, obscene, degrading, suggestive, inappropriate, demeaning, unwelcoming, coercive, illegal, hostile, and intimidating." When you partner these adjectives with the other words on the cover, "touching, comments, jokes, actions, words, and gestures" you can get a sense of what sexual harassment is in the workplace.

For example, while jokes are fine in the workplace, when the jokes are inappropriate, or the jokes are degrading or obscene, they may be considered harassment. If certain actions or gestures are made in an offensive, unwelcoming manner they may be considered harassment as well.

This brochure is to inform and empower individuals to know their rights in the workplace and to take action against such sexual harassment. Additional versions of the brochures using the new design will be printed in Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese at a later date.



Let's Talk About Violence in Relationships Brochure

Previously known as the "Talk to Your Daughter About Violence," this new brochure is geared to adolescents, women, men, and parents. It encourages them to discuss and know the facts about relationship violence. The cover was redesigned and the content was updated for a broader audience. The brochures will soon be printed in English, Spanish, French, Chinese Korean, and Vietnamese.

Please take the time to look at these new brochures on our website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

If you or your organization would like copies of these or any of the Commission's brochures please contact us at: cfw@montgomerycountymd.gov



Counseling and Career Center

Upcoming Workshops

The Verbally Abusive Relationship

Friday, September 5, 2008 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$30

Learn to recognize the many kinds of verbal abuse and the damage they do to relationships. Strategies for responding to verbal abuse will be included in this workshop.

Presented by Janet Akman, LCSW-C

LET'S TALK: (Extended Version)

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR COUPLES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$30 per person

Couples often get into conflicts because they do not hear each other. This workshop is designed to teach married couples and those in a committed relationship how to communicate effectively. Two experienced couples facilitators, Marian Horton, Counselor, and Clyde Horton, Personal Coach, will teach couples to:

- Speak for themselves, not the other person
- Take the "defensive posture" out of communicating
- Build goodwill in the relationship
- Practice using communication tools

This workshop is for COUPLES ONLY.
Participants must be interviewed before registration.

Presented by Marian Horton, MSW and Personal Coach and Clyde Horton, Personal Coach

In order to register, please contact Louise Hanson at 240-777-8300

Mind and Body Wisdom:

A Stress Management Program for Healthy Living

Wednesday, September 10, 2008 10:0 a.m. - noon
(1 session) FEE: \$20

This interactive workshop will focus on the connection between mind and body and ways to manage/reduce stressful situations. We will review and practice stress reducing techniques. An overview of ways to develop a balanced lifestyle will also be discussed.

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- understand triggers to stress responses
- understand the mind/body connection
- learn stress reducing techniques
- develop a personal stress management plan

Presented by Julieta Macias, Ph.D.

Problem Solving Techniques for the Workplace

Tuesday, September 16, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$20

Many people face difficulties at work that impact their job performance and career advancement:

In this workshop, we will address:

- our values and the values of our employer
- techniques to break through fear and negative belief barriers
- creative strategies to resolve workplace conflicts
- managing change at work

Presented by Melissa Fireman, M.S. and Susanne Maurer, M.A.

Legal Aspects of Starting a Small Business

Wednesday, September 24, 2008 7:00 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$20

Because laws and regulations affect every aspect of business strategy, understanding your legal rights and obligations and the laws which regulate and protect business is very important. Come to this seminar and start your business on the right track.

Presented by Kathy Gildai, Esq.

Make A Statement With Your Resume

Wednesday, September 24, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$20

Do you desire to be the candidate that every employer wants to hire?

Come and learn how to move your resume to the top of the pile. You will learn how to transform your listed duties into accomplishments. Designed for individuals actively seeking employment. Bring your resume to the workshop.

Presented by Cindy Jones, M.S.

Understanding Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Thursday, September 25, 2008 10:00 a.m. - noon
(1 session) FEE: \$20

Did you ever take so long to get ready for a party that you didn't wish to attend, that the party is nearly over by the time you arrive?

This is a simple example of how passive-aggressive behavior manifests. It is a defensive posture and can be partly conscious. This workshop will show you how to recognize passive-aggressive characteristics, how to understand the origins of this behavior, and how to provide the strategies for managing it

Presented by Eliane Herdani, M.S., LCPC.

ONLINE REGISTRATION & PAYMENT AVAILABLE FOR ALL WORKSHOPS!!

For the full calendar of workshops and seminars offered please visit us:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Montgomery County Commission for Women
401 N. Washington Street, Suite 100
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www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

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Call us at 240-777-8300 or visit our website to learn more about our Counseling & Career Center, workshops, programs and other services.

SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2009
WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

CONGRESSWOMAN DONNA EDWARDS
REPRESENTATIVE FOR MARYLAND'S 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

TIME: 12:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

NEW LOCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, SHADY GROVE CAMPUS, BLDG II,
9630 GUDELSKY DRIVE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

The Women's Legislative Briefing will conclude with a reception providing guests the opportunity to meet with county and state elected officials, and to network with advocates and representatives of other women's organizations.

W L B
2009

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 2008

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSISON FOR WOMEN AT 240-777-8330