As you will read in the following pages, this has been a year of action and accomplishment at the Center for Research on Women. Our work on issues such as sexual harassment and violence, poverty, and infant mortality brought into focus the need for reliable data and information that can be translated into sound public policy.

Our research team published the results of a year-long project on sexual harassment in Memphis area schools. Although the study’s findings of a pervasive atmosphere of harassment were dismaying, we were heartened by the responsiveness of some local school officials who took the alert seriously and began working to make changes in both policies and procedures. The ultimate result should be a better understanding of the issue and a safer school environment for our students.

The second year of CROW’s in-depth evaluation of Community Voice resulted in information that could help reduce the number of babies that die before their first birthdays. And with support from the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis, the Center began a systematic review of the ways in which Tennessee’s Families First program both helps and hinders poor women’s efforts to support themselves and their children.

In addition to direct research this year, CROW sponsored events that promoted women’s scholarship and celebrated women’s achievements. Partnering with a growing list of campus and community organizations, the Center facilitated a number of projects and programs that helped to both support women’s rights and ensure their well being.

On behalf of our staff and outstanding team of Faculty Affiliates, I want to thank each of you for your keen interest in our issues and, more importantly, for your continued support of our work. With your help we look forward to another year of investigation, discovery and activism on behalf of women’s quest for social equality.

With best regards,

Dr. Lynda Sagrestano, Director
Center for Research on Women
Our Mission

The Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis has investigated issues of gender, race, class, and social inequality for more than a quarter century.

Our mission is to conduct, promote, and disseminate scholarship on women and social inequality.

An interdisciplinary unit within the University’s College of Arts and Sciences, this thriving academic center is home to collaborative researchers committed to scholarly excellence and deep community involvement. The Center is regarded as a national leader in promoting an integrative approach to understanding and addressing inequities in our society.

The Center’s approach to research, theory, and programming emphasizes the structural relationships among race, class, gender, and sexuality, particularly in the U.S. South and among women of color.

This kind of action-oriented, community-based research strengthens the public's understanding of women's experiences and informs local, regional, and national public policy.

Staff

Lynda M. Sagrestano, Ph.D., Director
Rebecca L. Terrell, MPA, Assistant Director
Carrie A. Brooks, M.S., Project Coordinator, Community Voice Evaluation Project
Naketa Edney, M.A., Research Associate, Community Voice Evaluation Project
Lornette W. Stokes, Administrative Secretary
Brandon D. Riley, Student Assistant

2008-2009 Steering Committee

Phyllis Betts
Beverly Bond
Joy Clay
Leigh Anne Duck
Ruthbeth Finerman
Laura Harris
Sharon Horne
Heidi Levitt
Cynthia Pelak
Wanda Rushing
Lynda Sagrestano
Janann Sherman
Sexual Harassment in Memphis Area Schools

In 2008, Center researchers conducted an investigation of the frequency, types, and long-term impact of sexual harassment experienced by teenagers in Memphis area middle and high schools. With assistance from the Memphis Area Women’s Council and many local youth-related organizations, research staff surveyed 590 girls and boys ages 11 to 19 from public, private, and parochial schools throughout Memphis and Shelby County.

The study found that student-to-student sexual harassment, particularly gender harassment, is pervasive in Memphis area schools with over 90% of students in the study reporting being sexually harassed at least once while in their current school. And although over 90% reported experiencing harassment, only 16% said they had ever reported an incident of sexual harassment to school authorities.

The full report on this study was published in Spring 2009 entitled Nowhere to Hide: A Look at the Pervasive Atmosphere of Sexual Harassment in Memphis Area Middle and High Schools. Print copies are available by calling 901.678.2770. The report can also be downloaded at http://crow.memphis.edu.

Infant Mortality

Memphis has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation. In 2008, the Center for Research on Women began work on a comprehensive, four-year evaluation of Community Voice (CV), a grassroots educational program (administered locally by the Tennessee March of Dimes) which is designed to reduce and prevent infant mortality.

Since CV trainings began in March 2008, more than 400 people have become certified as Lay Health Advisors (LHAs). This means they have successfully completed the CV training and are ready to share information with friends and acquaintances about factors associated with infant mortality. Since the program began, LHAs have reported more than 7,000 contacts in their communities. CROW’s Evaluation Team members have observed nearly 200 Community Voice training sessions, administered pre- and post-training surveys and knowledge tests, and conducted focus groups with LHAs and interviews with administrators.

The evaluation team reports data and findings quarterly to the Governor’s Office for Child Care Coordination. The first annual program evaluation report was submitted in March 2009 and can be found at: http://www.memphis.edu/crow/infantmortality.htm.
Women’s Economic Security

In 2009 the Center began working with the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis on its national Women’s Economic Security Campaign. A collaboration between four major women’s funds across the country, the Campaign is designed to create, strengthen, and protect policies and practices that support the ability of women and their children to achieve economic security. CROW’s initial research for the Campaign focused on Families First, Tennessee’s program to provide assistance to families in poverty through federal funds from TANF (Temporary Funds for Needy Families).

A CROW policy brief looks at a number of specific policies to assess their potential responsiveness to the needs of women, particularly female heads of households. The brief provides preliminary recommendations for policy revisions and/or additional research to insure that the program effectively supports low-income women towards the goal of economic stability and ultimately towards self-sufficiency.

A copy of the full policy brief is available at http://crow.memphis.edu.

Violence Against Women on College Campuses

According to a 2005 report from the National Institute of Justice, a campus of 10,000 students can include as many as 350 women who are victims of sexual assault each year. This means that rape victimization rates could be as high as 20% - 25% of women over the course of an average (5-year) college career. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that fewer than 5% of completed and attempted rapes of college women are reported to law enforcement officials.

In an effort to contribute to the safety of women on our own campus, CROW researchers have surveyed hundreds of students at The University of Memphis regarding their experiences with relationship violence, stalking, and sexual assault. Results are expected to be published in the Fall of 2009.

Conclusions from Sexual Harassment Study

- Sexual harassment is pervasive in Memphis area middle and high schools.
- The schools’ climates are not conducive to students’ reporting harassment when it occurs.
- Rates of harassment are almost identical among middle and high school students, suggesting that harassment starts when students are still fairly young.
- Although both boys and girls suffer negative consequences from sexual harassment, girls are particularly at risk for psychological distress, poor body image, low self-esteem, and feelings of being unsafe at school.
- The more frequently sexual harassment occurs, the younger students are to initiate sexual activity, the more sexual partners they have, and the more sexual risk taking behaviors they engage in. This is true for both girls and boys.
Women’s Academic Network

Throughout the year the Center coordinated meetings of the University of Memphis Women's Academic Network, a campus-wide group that provides female faculty and administrators with an informal opportunity to meet new colleagues, socialize, and discuss topics of interest and relevance to women in academia including tenure and promotion, family friendly leave policies, child care and schools, partner hiring, and mentoring.

Women's Research Forum

**Dr. Alayne J. Ormerod**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, presented her research entitled *Critical Climate: Racial/Ethnic and Sexual Harassment in High School* on October 2, 2008 on the University of Memphis campus.

**Dr. Lynda Sagrestano** presented data on sexual harassment in Memphis area schools at CROW’s 2009 Community Issues Forum on April 22. Entitled *No Place to Hide* (see page 4 for information on full report), the public forum was attended by scholars, school administrators, teachers, parents and policy makers. The free event was held at The Urban Child Institute and was supported in part by Public Service funds from the University of Memphis.

Dr. Sagrestano also presented a talk at the Urban Child Institute in January 2009 entitled *Does Memphis Have Hostile Hallways? Sexual Harassment in Middle and High Schools*.

Women’s History Month

In celebration of Women’s History Month CROW presented an original production entitled *In Her Own Words: Inspirational Speeches from the Women’s Rights Movement* at the Ned R. McWherter Library in partnership with University of Memphis’ Friends of the Libraries. Students from UofM’s Department of Theatre and Dance performed dramatic readings of excerpts of speeches by Shirley Chisholm, Sojourner Truth, Eleanor Smeal, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others.
SnapShots at GPAC

The CROW photo exhibit SnapShots: Memphis Women at Work was on display in the visual art galleries at the Germantown Performing Arts Center (GPAC) during Women’s History Month (March) 2009.

The unique collection of 25 commissioned photographs by prominent Memphis women of women at work was created in 2007 to celebrate the Center’s 25th anniversary. A free public reception, co-sponsored by GPAC, was held on March 28 to honor the photographers, their subjects, and Germantown Mayor Sharon Goldsworthy.

Research Interest Groups

The Center brought together Faculty Affiliates from the university and community to form interdisciplinary Research Interest Groups (RIGs) in a variety of study areas. The results of these ongoing collaborations depend on each group’s focus and expertise, but typical activities include research projects, panel presentations, performances, exhibits or reading groups. The subjects of last year’s RIG’s were:

- Women’s Health, Dr. Joy Clay, Chair
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification, Dr. Sharon Horne, Chair
- Women in the Arts and Humanities, Dr. Leigh Anne Duck, Chair
- Women, Globalization, and the U.S. South, Dr. Wanda Rushing, Chair
- Women and Work, Dr. Phyllis Betts, Chair
- Women & Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)
Community Partnerships

Sexual Violence and Harassment

CROW’s Director was the keynote speaker for a public forum sponsored by the Shelby County Domestic Violence Council on September 12, 2008. Dr. Sagrestano presented information on the national data from the Association of American University Women regarding sexual harassment in middle and high schools. Dr. Sagrestano also spoke on the issue of sexual harassment as a guest on the June edition of the public service television show A Matter of Law hosted by Judge Kay Robilio.

Reproductive Rights

The Center Director participated in a panel discussion on reproductive health and rights following the January 22, 2009 screening of the film I Had an Abortion. The event was organized and presented by Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis Region. The Center also provided volunteers to assist PPGMR with Lunch, Laughs, and Liberty on April 29, 2009 featuring comedian, Seinfeld writer and pro-choice activist Carol Leifer. The luncheon event was designed to raise funds and awareness for reproductive rights.

Girl Power

The Center assisted in the planning and promotion of a special workshop for girls in grades 7&8 organized by the University of Memphis Herff College of Engineering at the University of Memphis. The one-day event entitled Expanding Your Horizons was held October 18, 2008 at the UofM and included workshops in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics for more than 150 middle school girls. A second event is planned for September 28, 2009.

Globalization

CROW’s Arts & Humanities RIG partnered with the UofM Marcus Orr Center for the Humanities to host a lunch-time reading group of Who Sings the Nation-State: Language, Politics and Belonging by noted feminist scholars Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on January 20, 2009. CROW Faculty Affiliate and Professor of Philosophy Mary Beth Mader led the discussion. CROW also co-sponsored a January 29 talk by Dr. Butler on the UofM Campus, and hosted a faculty dinner in her honor.
Women's Wages

CROW co-sponsored a screening of the film *Fast Food Women* in partnership with the **Memphis Reads** program on March 2, 2009. The film takes an inside look at the lives of the women who fry chicken, make pizzas, and flip burgers for minimum wage and no health care or other benefits. A panel discussion followed including Dr. Rebekah Jordan, director of **Workers Interfaith Network** (WIN), and others on the issues of wages and the impact of the fast food industry.

Numbers Talk

CROW partnered with the Nashville non-profit **All About Women** to collect data at women’s events in Chattanooga, Nashville, and Memphis. Thousands of attendees were asked their opinions on a variety of issues including barriers to success, sex education, abortion, pay equity, same sex marriage and government assistance programs. Survey results are expected to be released this fall.

Support for Women’s Organizations

The Center Director served as a co-host of the 2008 Grants Showcase for the **Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis**. The Center also provided volunteers to assist with the Foundation’s 11th Annual Tribute Luncheon on April 30, 2009 which raised funds for grants to support women’s programs throughout the community.

Community Boards and Committee Service

During the past year Center staff members were honored to represent CROW on the following community Boards of Directors and Committees:

- American Association of University Women, Memphis Chapter, Membership Chair
- Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, Advisory Board
- Governor’s Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative, Data Committee
- Memphis Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting Collaborative
- Memphis Area Women’s Council, Board of Directors
- Memphis City Schools Healthy Choices Week Advisory Committee
- Shelby County Domestic Violence Council, Board of Directors
- Shelby County Infant Mortality Initiative, Core Leadership Group
- Tennessee Economic Council for Women, Memphis Development District Advisory Committee
Please add CROW to your list of annual charitable gifts!

Our researchers are working on issues of vital importance to women and girls in Memphis, the region, and the nation, including:

**Sexual harassment in middle and high schools**
- $5,000 Anonymous
- $1,000 Roy & Virginia Ralston

**Infant mortality**
- $251 - $500 Wilma Dunaway
- $201 - $250 Linda Bennett

**Women and poverty**
- $201 - $250 Cathy Chapman
- $101 - $200 Rosie Bingham

**Teen pregnancy and sexual risk-taking**
- $101 - $200 Cynthia Ham
- $500 - $750 Mary Beth Mader (in-kind)

**Violence against women**
- $101 - $200 Susan Magun-Jackson
- $75 and under Sharon Horne & Heidi Levitt

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**Grants and Awards**

State of Tennessee, Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination – $195,000 to evaluate Community Voice program to reduce infant mortality rates in the African-American Community. Year two of a $780,000 four year allocation.

Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis—$20,000 to support research on women and poverty in Tennessee

University of Memphis Public Service Funds—$1,750 to support promotion of the 2009 Community Issues Forum on sexual harassment in Memphis area schools.

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**Sponsors & Supporters**

September 2008—August 2009

$5,000 Anonymous
- Deborah Binswanger
- Bert Bornblum
- Caroline Fruchtman
- Douglas Gamble & Nina Gregg

$1,000 Ruby Bright
- Joy Clay
- Letha Granberry
- Carol Irwin

$251 - $500 Jed & Jeanne Dreifus
- Deborah Hester
- Rhoda Linton
- Shirley Luper

$201 - $250 Nancy Kutner
- Larry Petersen
- Gloria Mattingly
- Audrey Jane May

$101 - $200 Elaine Sanford
- Bruce Williams
- Daphene McFerren
- Kenneth & Margaret McIntosh

$75 and under
- Arnold Adoff
- Wight Boggs
- Nancy Mele
- Regina Newman

$76 - $100
- Sharon Horne & Heidi Levitt
- Judy Card
- Chrysanthe Preza
- Gertrude Purdue

$50 - $75
- David & Carol Ciscel
- Dan & Virginia Dunaway
- Sally Ross
- Wanda Rushing

$25 - $50
- Veronica Coleman-Davis
- Anne Dean
- Rebecca L. Terrell
- Kathryn Whitted

$10 - $25
- Dan & Virginia Dunaway
- Yaschica Williams
- Wreatha Witte
- Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg

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University of Memphis
Faculty Affiliates 2009

Dr. Reece Luke Auguiste  
Department of Communication

Dr. Mariam Ayad  
Institute of Egyptian Art & Archeology, Department of Art

Dr. Vania Barraza-Toledo  
Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures

Dr. Gayle Beck  
Chair of Excellence  
Department of Psychology

Dr. Phyllis Betts  
Director, Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Action (CBANA)

Dr. Beverly Bond  
Department of History; Director, African and African American Studies Program

Dr. Anita Boykins  
Loewenberg School of Nursing

Dr. Keri Brondo  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Margaret M. Caffrey  
Department of History

Dr. Joy Clay  
Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; Professor, Division of Public and Nonprofit Administration

Dr. Amy de Jongh Curry  
Biomedical Engineering

Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt  
Department of Philosophy

Dr. Leigh Anne Duck  
Department of English

Dr. Ruthbeth D. Finerman  
Department of Anthropology

Dr. Sage Graham  
Department of English

Dr. Laura Ellen Harris  
Division of Public and Nonprofit Administration

Dr. Sharon Gayle Horne  
Department of Counseling, Education Psychology and Research

Dr. Carol Irwin  
Department of Health & Sport Sciences

Dr. Heidi Levitt  
Department of Psychology

Dr. Marian Levy  
Director, Masters Program in Public Health

Dr. Shu Li  
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Department of Philosophy

Daphne McFerren  
Director, Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change

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Dr. Sarah Potter  
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Dr. Leslie Robinson  
Department of Psychology

Dr. Sally Ross  
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Dr. Wanda S. Rushing  
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Dr. Lynda M. Sagrestano  
Department of Psychology; Director, Center for Research on Women

Dr. Deborah Tollefsen  
Department of Philosophy

Dr. Kathryn Whitted  
Division of Social Work

Dr. Yashica D. Williams  
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Dr. Amanda J. Young  
Department of Communication

CROW Director Lynda Sagrestano, with former Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder at the Tennessee Economic Council on Women’s conference in Nashville.
Center for Research on Women

Supporting scholarship on race, class, gender and social inequality since 1982

Visit us on the web at http://crow.memphis.edu