

The Women's Center News

Fall 2011

Check out the Women's Center at: <http://www.louisville.edu/womenscenter>

Volume 19, Issue 1

Award Nominations Sought for 9th Annual Elizabeth Cady Stanton Luncheon

by Mary Karen Powers, Director

"The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls."

— Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Since 2003, the Women's Center has been celebrating Elizabeth Cady Stanton's legacy at the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Awards Luncheon. The event is designed to honor her love of education and commitment to activism. During the luncheon two annual awards are presented.

The Dr. Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau Gender Equity Award is presented to a member of the UofL community, broadly defined to include all of those, past and present, who have some affiliation with the University of Louisville, whose work has directly furthered gender equity. The award is intended to honor the memory of Dr. Mary K. Tachau, "a women's rights activist, nationally recognized constitutional historian and member of the [UofL] history department [who] became the first female chair of the [UofL] history department, and the [UofL] faculty senate." Past recipients of the Tachau Award include:

- MFA Graduate **Kathi Ellis**, who is a founder of the feminist Pleiades Theater Company.
- Professor Emeritus **Dr. Lucy Freibert**, who taught the first UofL Women's Studies Class.
- Former Interim Dean of the Medical School, **Dr. Laura Schweitzer**, who created a mentoring program for women faculty on the Health Sciences campus.
- Brandeis School of Law graduate, the **Hon. Janice Martin**, who is the first African American woman to serve on the Judiciary in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
- UofL donor, **Dr. Mary Craik**, who used the proceeds of her successful sex discrimination suit to found a scholarship for women students at UofL.
- UofL Senior Associate Athletic Director, **Julie Hermann**, "who played in the first NCAA Championship for women in 1981"and has developed a "comprehensive, state of the art

student development program" resulting in one of the highest graduation rates for women athletes in UofL's history.

- Librarian **Dr. Eliza Atkins Gleason**. In 1931, Louisville Municipal College for Negroes was the segregated branch of the University of Louisville where Dr. Atkins Gleason served for four years as librarian. She went on to become the first African American in the United States to earn a Ph.D. in Library Sciences. Dr. Atkins Gleason received the Tachau Award one month before her 100th birthday!
- A&S graduate, business owner, and advocate for Kentucky women, **Bonnie Manning**. She has been president of

the local and state chapters of Business and Professional Women; and a member of the BPW National Committee. In 2004, she organized the Equal Pay Coalition to begin lobbying legislators in the Commonwealth for passage of a comparable worth bill. She also testified on behalf of the bill in the General Assembly.

The Tachau Award is presented jointly by the Women's Center and the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Look for nomination forms for the Tachau Award on the Center's website at <http://louisville.edu/womenscenter>, and consider nominating a UofL woman who does not hesitate "to tell the truth that is in" her.

The Dr. M. Celeste Nichols Professional Development Award for graduate students supports academic and professional enrichment beyond normal graduate program expenses. The award honors Dr. Nichols' achievement

as the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Louisville English Department. Dr. Nichols received her degree in 1992. Recipients of the award have presented papers at professional conferences, attended national meetings, purchased professional journals, and paid expenses related to completion of their Ph.D. projects. Awards range from \$300 to \$500. Look for application forms for the Nichols Award at <http://louisville.edu/womenscenter>.

The 2011 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Luncheon will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 16 in the University Club. Check the Women's Center web site for the keynote announcement and to purchase luncheon tickets.

About Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born November 12, 1815, in Johnstown, N.Y., to Daniel Cady and Margaret Livingston Cady. Unlike many women of her era, Elizabeth was formally educated — graduating from Johnstown Academy and Troy Female Seminary in New York. In 1840 she married journalist and anti-slavery orator, Daniel Stanton. On their honeymoon the couple were delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England. In London, Elizabeth was denied a seat — and thus the right to speak on the convention floor — because she was a woman. Radicalized by this experience, she became a life-long activist for woman's suffrage.

Succeeding generations of white and African American suffragists struggled for the next seventy-two years to secure passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. When it passed on August 26, 1920 women in the United States won the right to vote.

For African American women, however, the right to vote was short-lived. In the South, whites quickly introduced "discriminatory literacy tests" into the voter registration process. These effectively negated both the 15th Amendment (passed in 1870) — guaranteeing men the right to vote regardless of "race, color, or prior history as a slave" — and the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women — regardless of race — the right to vote. Thus, voting rights established under the Constitution were not restored to African American citizens until passage of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965. The National Multicultural Women's History Project identifies this as the date on which "suffrage is finally fully extended to African American women."



Farewell and on to the Next Leg

One of my graduate school mentors, Marge Tuite, once said, “The river of concern for justice is deep and wide, and it really doesn’t matter what well you use to get to the river. Just get into the water and look around to see who your colleagues are.” She also exhorted her students: “Never stop making the connections between sexism, racism, militarism, nationalism and all forms of violence.”

As I prepare to leave the University of Louisville on the next leg of my life’s journey, I’ve been thinking about “the well” which brought me here 12 years ago in August of 1999. It is the desire to participate in what feminist theologian Beverley Wilding Harrison calls “the longest revolution – a world in which each and every female child has the same range of opportunity as every male child.” Obviously this revolution involves work on all of the “isms” – from racism to classism to heterosexism to unchecked nationalism – and yet the well which unlocks my own deepest passion continues to be the struggle against sexism. My passion is re-ignited when I remember the 2005 Statement of the United Nations on International Women’s Day: “Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours, produce half of the world’s food—and yet earn only 10 percent of the world’s income and own less than 1 percent of the world’s property [so that] 70 percent of the people, worldwide, who live in absolute poverty are female.” In other words, the “poorest of the poor” internationally are women.

This pattern of gender disparity is also echoed locally. At the University of Louisville, we have consistently awarded more overall degrees – in aggregate numbers – to women than to men, since at least 2003. However, UofL has also pretty consistently awarded more first professional degrees to men than to women. In addition, in 2007, women were disproportionately clustered in degree programs in the schools of education, social work, and nursing and significantly underrepresented in the university’s schools of business and engineering. Obviously, then, there continue to be significant enrollment patterns, based on gender, in the student body. This suggests to me that hidden barriers to access based on gender continue to operate culturally in the Commonwealth of Kentucky just as they do in the larger world. The upshot of this these cultural patterns directly impacts Kentucky women. That is, since traditionally female professions such as teaching, social work, and nursing consistently pay less than do traditionally male professions such as science and engineering, Kentucky men continue to earn more on average than do Kentucky women.

A similar pattern of gender disparity in employment was documented by the UofL President’s Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) in 2009 when COSW updated the 1994 Task Force Report on the Status of Women at UofL. COSW’s goal in undertaking the update was “to assess progress in hiring during the past 15 years (<http://louisville.edu/cosw/task-force-report/task-force-report.html>). [However] results showed that although the number of women employed at UofL has increased, the ratio of women to men employed has not improved.”

Thus, whether I think about the world’s longest revolution globally or locally, we have “a ways to go” as my mother would have said. During my tenure in the Women’s Center, we



*Mary Karen Powers
Director, Women's Center*

have worked consistently to provide educational programs and services to “promote women’s equality, increase women’s self-reliance, and highlight women’s contributions to culture and society.” Significant achievements have included:

- Securing funding from the USDOJ in 1999 to establish the **Prevention, Education, and Advocacy on Campus and in the Community (PEACC) Program** which provides educational programs about – and services for – victims of gender based violence in the student community. PEACC has since become an integral part of the university’s outreach to the student community and is now funded through Student Health.
- Establishing the annual **Elizabeth Cady Stanton Awards Luncheon** during which the **Dr. Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau Gender Equity Award** is presented to a member of the university community who has taken work toward gender equity as a significant part of their professional life.
- Establishing the annual **Dr. Celeste Nichols Professional Development Award** for graduate students by providing support for “academic and professional enrichment beyond normal graduate program expenses.” The award honors the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition at UofL.
- Creating the **Kentucky Women’s Book Festival** which “endeavors to foster a deeper interest in Kentucky women writers and encourage beginning writers to continue their work and strive to grow with each new venture.”
- Establishing the **Modern Outlook on Motherhood (MOM’s) Group** to support student parents in their pursuit of higher education.
- Working with student leaders to establish the **W4W Student Chapter** at UofL in order to provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for women students.

We have also hosted stimulating speakers, sponsored cultural performances celebrating the rich diversity in the women’s community, provided an internship site for graduate students, and worked with talented university and community allies. I have enjoyed this job immensely. I have been lucky to work with talented staff and wonderful colleagues many of whom have become friends; to say nothing of the rich reward of being involved with the lives of undergraduate students as they grow into competent, accomplished young people.

I am leaving the University of Louisville and moving to Northeast Pennsylvania in order to pursue another dream. My partner – a medical educator and family physician – has the opportunity to work with medical students in a community based model of medical student education which hopes to promote deeper awareness in young physicians of the needs of medically underserved people. As I wind up my last days in the office, I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to “further the world’s longest revolution” locally over the past decade. It has been a rich and rewarding adventure!!

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE®



WOMEN’S CENTER

An Interview with Professor Brenda G. Hart, J.B. Speed School of Engineering

by Phyllis M. Webb, Women's Center

In between her job as Director of Student Affairs in the University of Louisville's Speed School, current work on the Commission on the Status of Women (COSW), University's Student Grievance Officer, and conducting the Brown-Forman summer INSPIRE Program which targets minority high school students interested in engineering, I had a chance to catch up with Brenda G. Hart last month to talk about women's issues, gender equity and equality.

Founded in 1995, COSW exists to promote gender equity and to advise the U of L president on issues related to women. COSW seeks to improve recruitment, development and retention of women. It includes various subcommittees, such as Campus Climate, Communications, Integration of Work & Family; Representation, Recruitment and Retention; and Women & Global Issues. Prof. Hart was appointed to COSW in 2008 by President James Ramsey. She served as the Chair of the Campus Climate subcommittee and thus was also on the Executive Committee. The Campus Climate committee "monitors the University's provisions of a safe and secure environment for all members of the campus community and will play an active role in maintaining this environment through direct participation in program and services." This committee partners with the Department of Public Safety, the Prevention Education Advocacy on Campus and in the Community (PEACC) Program and the Women's Center.

As a long-time employee at U of L (38 years this October), Prof. Hart was asked about some of the accomplishments she has witnessed which pertain to issues of diversity and gender. She mentioned establishment of the Early Learning Campus (ELC) and the Cultural Center, the hiring of Dr. Mordean Taylor-Archer as Vice Provost for Diversity and International Affairs, the creation of the Ali Institute on campus, and the Office for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Services. She indicated that COSW is working on the increasing the number of women faculty moving from associate to full professor as well as increasing the percentage of women faculty overall. Prof. Hart also served as Vice-Chair of the Commission on Diversity & Racial Equality (CODRE) a few years ago. That committee was formed in 1998 under the leadership of then-President John W. Shumaker. It continues to serve as the President's Chief Policy Advisor on issues of diversity at U of L. Those committees include Diversity Programming, Faculty Affairs, Staff Concerns, Student Engagement, Bylaws Committee and Student Research Grants & Grant Proposals. When she was on CODRE, Prof. Hart served on the Student Engagement and Faculty Affairs committees.

When asked about barriers African American women and women of color face at U of L, she indicated that often these women believe they lack opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Prof. Hart also pointed out how critical it is for new female faculty members to feel welcome in their units. She stressed that it was vital that their colleagues provide a supportive and positive environment along with collaboration on research.

Each summer Prof. Hart serves as Director of INSPIRE (Increasing Student Preparedness and Interest in the Requisites for Engineering). Now funded by the Brown-Forman Corporation, INSPIRE is a three-week summer program designed to provide high school students with the opportunity to participate in studies related to basic engineering skills in a college

environment. Since African American, Hispanic, Native Americans, and female students are under-represented in the engineering profession, Prof. Hart makes special efforts to recruit those students to the program. However, it is open to all students interested in math and science. Prof. Hart is proud of the program which started in 1981. To date the program has served approximately 800 students and, of those 800, 500 have enrolled at U of L and currently half of the 500 have graduated or are currently enrolled.



Brenda G. Hart

In 2009 Hart received The DuPont Minorities in Engineering Award for exceptional achievement in increasing participation and retention of minorities and women in engineering. She was presented with the award at the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)'s Annual Conference which was held in Austin, Texas. Endowed by the DuPont Company, this award is intended to recognize the importance of student diversity by ethnicity and gender in science, engineering, and technology.

As Director of Student Affairs, Department of Engineering Fundamentals, she has taught classes in Engineering Communications to first-year engineering students. Recently she also taught sections of Speed's Campus Culture classes to first-year engineering students. Currently she, along with colleague Linda Wilson, Ed.D., of the College of Arts & Sciences, teaches sessions on diversity and sexual harassment to students in Speed's ENGR 100 course each fall semester.

As she looks ahead to the next 10 years, Prof. Hart is optimistic that the University will continue to make progress in eliminating gender-based inequities. She is confident that the percentage of women faculty will gradually increase and hopes that more females will join the ranks of full professors. She envisions sexual harassment and diversity training for all employees and she anticipates that more women will serve in upper-level executive positions at U of L. Such positive steps will take time, but given the improvements she has envisioned over her many years at U of L, Hart is confident that U of L will continue being "A Great Place to Work."

Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) Appointments and Selections 2011

Valerie M. Casey (Women's Center) was named new COSW Chair by President James Ramsey in June 2011. She will fill a two-year term.

Ann E. Lawson, Ph.D. (Education) was selected by the Commission on the Status of Women to be Vice Chair. Her term will also expire in two years.

New members appointed in June 2011 to serve 3-year terms are:

- Laurie Ballew, Ph.D. (Psych.-Chair Office & Administration)
- Sherry L. Duffy, UBM (Education)
- Melissa L. Shuter, Asst. to V.P. for Administration (V.P. Business Affairs)
- Melissa S. Moutardier, Admn. Spelst., (COB-Equine)

HERS Bryn Mawr Summer Institute: Summer Camp at Its Best!

by Bridgette Pregliasco, Ed.D.

At the end of the academic year, most of us hope for a slower pace – a time to clear our heads, refresh our bodies and feed our souls. Ok, that might just be a dream but it is one that I still have! This year as the academic year was winding down, final grades were being posted and commencement plans were being made, I was also preparing for what would be an opportunity of a lifetime, attending the HERS Summer Institute at Bryn Mawr College.

HERS Summer Institute is a two-week residential leadership development program for women who work in higher education settings. The purpose of the Institute is to prepare women for leadership roles in colleges and universities. I had the honor of being selected to participate through a sponsorship provided by University of Louisville's Commission on the Status of Women (COSW).

If you can imagine living for two weeks in a traditional residence hall, sharing meals and sessions with 65 women from around the country while studying topics such as financial



Bridgette Pregliasco

ratios, managing and leading change, legal issues in higher education, higher education technology issues, the new political environment for accreditation, etc.....you might say – “not for me or at least not in the summer!” In fact, when I saw the syllabus for what would consume two weeks of my life, I had those thoughts. Fortunately, I didn't pass on the opportunity and what an opportunity it was!

The sessions were thought-provoking and stimulating. Days were long – often 10+ hours and we worked on weekends. We also explored our leadership styles and were coached on strategies for making the move to the next level of leadership. Often our best conversations were during meals, breaks or in the evenings when the day was done. We did what women do especially well – encouraged and nurtured each other, all while we worried about our loved ones back home. Even our “graduation ceremony” won't surprise you – we had poetry readings, creative dancing and singing, all celebrating this shared experience among and between women.

Hearing the perspectives of women from different functional areas of higher education and at different types of institutions reminded us all of the important roles women have historically had and currently have in higher education. As experts and external forces call for higher education to re-invent itself to address significant challenges in our communities and changes in the academy, I believe women will be uniquely prepared to lead these inevitable changes. Thank you HERS, COSW and U of L.

Bridgette Pregliasco, Ed.D., is Acting Chairperson of Leadership, Foundations, and Human Resource Education (ELFH) Department in the College of Education & Human Development, University of Louisville.

Featured Event in “Week without Violence”

Take Back the Night Set for September 27

by Sharon Larue, PEACC Director

PEACC excitedly announces that Take Back the Night (TBTN) will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m., UofL Red Barn. This year, TBTN will be the feature event in the Week without Violence, during which the goal is to raise awareness, promote attitude change, and enable individuals and organizations to begin positive actions toward ending violence against women in their communities.

It promises to be an empowering evening, with speakers such as Center for Women and Families CEO Marta Miranda; Lt. Col. Tinagay Riddle, a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator with the Kentucky National Guard; University of Louisville President James Ramsey; and more. Several women community leaders will be honored as Green Dot SHE-roes for their numerous contributions.

Moving musical and drama acts will be featured, including a dramatic performance from actress Triza Cox, and student athletes and football coach Charlie Strong will be featured in a video which focuses on ending violence.

The night promises to be an incredibly powerful and inspiring experience, and is definitely not to be missed. Come and connect to the experiences of some very strong women, and share the energy of people coming together for a common purpose.

For more information on TBTN, or if you would like to nominate a SHE-roe, please contact PEACC at peacc@louisville.edu.

Future Leaders

By Ashley Wimsett, President, Women 4 Women,
U of L Student Chapter

In a society where a limited number of women participate in politics or have higher positions in the workforce, a 2012 statewide leadership conference for college age women hopes to really create a “fire” in the next generation to effect a change. I am blessed to be a part of the planning committee for something that can be so beneficial to college-age women getting ready to go into their careers. In a world where it can be difficult to balance home and work life, I want this conference to allow women to learn at a young age not only how to lead others, but to also be able to lead their own lives. To help accomplish this goal we will have numerous workshops and speakers discussing the topics of leadership, networking, organization, etiquette, financial literacy, and how to keep a balanced life. In working with the Women's Center and the Office of Engagement, Leadership, and Service, I envision a conference that will allow the women of tomorrow to begin taking charge of their life, growing passionate about their goals, and begin leading other men and women to success. On behalf of the Women 4 Women Student Chapter we are excited to be a part of an effort to educate and create leadership throughout the state of Kentucky. The conference will occur May 31-June 2, 2012.

Save the Dates

by Phyllis M. Webb, Women's Center

UofL Campus Happenings

MOMS Support Group/Student-Parent Association

The U of L's MOM Support Group/Student-Parent Association will sponsor its annual Child Identification Program and Clothing Exchange Project this semester. For specific dates, times and locations, in addition to meeting dates and other events, contact the Women's Center at 852-8976. Leave your name and email address.

Women4Women Student Chapter Events

The U of L's Women's Center student group, Women 4 Women student chapter, is sponsoring and/or participating in the following events during the fall semester:

- Aug. 25: "Finance for You" series, Red Barn, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Sept. 8: "Blogging Workshop" with Jeff Rushton, Ekstrom Library #104, 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Sept. 16: "Roll on to Leadership" discussion, Women's Center conference room, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Oct. 6: Cyber Security Speech, Ekstrom Library #104, 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
- Oct. 25: Cyber Security Workshop, Ekstrom Library, Chao Auditorium, 4 p.m.-5 p.m.
- Nov. 12: Wayside Event, Wayside Christian Mission (Time to be announced.)
- Nov. 15: "Birthdays Around the World" event, Student Activities Center (SAC), 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
- Nov. 30: "Make a Card for the Elderly", Red Barn, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Dec. 3: Group visits nursing home (Location and time to be announced.)

For more details, visit the U of L W4W Facebook page or contact president Ashley Wimsett or Valerie Casey, advisor, 852-8976, for updates.

August 26: Women's Equality Day. Student Activities Center (SAC), ML Lobby, 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. August 26 of each year is designated in the United States as Women's Equality Day. Instituted by former U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug and first established in 1971, the date commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave U.S. women full voting rights in 1920. Look for event signs. Call the Women's Center at 852-8976 for more information.

Sept. 19-27: Week without Violence, a worldwide campaign that encourages communities to think and act toward a world without violence. Events will include Mentors in Violence Prevention, International Day of Peace, Holocaust Exhibit, World Car-Free Day, Prayers for Peace, Postcard Project, Green DOT Pledge Week, The Pinwheel Project, Department of Public Safety (DPS) Cookout; Queen of Sheba, "Why Haven't You Arrested Him?" film; and the annual "Take Back the Night" event. (See the Take Back the Night article on page 4). For more details on the "Week without Violence" visit: <http://www.louisville.edu/peace/>.

Sept.-Oct.: First Year Initiatives: Book in Common. "The Other Wes Moore: One Name: Two Fates" by Wes Moore has been chosen as the 2011-12 Book-In-Common (BinC). The program's goal is to enhance classroom learning and discussion, and develop partnerships with campus and local community members to provide a year-long series of co-curricular activities revolving around the themes and issues raised in the book. Café discussions will be held at various locations on campus, and an author lecture and reception will be held on October 18 at

the Speed Art Museum, 6 p.m. For more information about the Book-In-Common events and this year's book, visit <http://www.louisville.edu/firstyear/book-in-common>.



Walks in the Community

This fall many will gather at various locations in the Louisville, Ky., area on weekends to walk in support of women's health initiatives (fundraising and awareness). Follow the links at each web site to join an on-campus or community team..

Below are some of the walks:

September 10: 2011 Walk to End Alzheimer's.

Waterfront Park/Great Lawn, 8:30 a.m. According to the Alzheimer's Association, this disease is the nation's sixth leading cause of death with more than 5 million living with the disease and nearly 11 million more serving as caregivers. Contact Devin Roos, devin.roos@alz.org or visit <http://www.walktoendalz2011.kintera.org> for more details.

September 17: 2011 Arthritis Walk. Slugger Field, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. According to the Arthritis Foundation, about 50 million Americans are living with arthritis, the nation's most common cause of disability. Walkers will become a part of the "Let's Move Together," an endeavor that encourages people to move to prevent and treat arthritis. For more information, visit <http://www.2011louisvillearthritiswalk.kintera.org>

September 18: 2011 Hunger Walk/5K. Festival Plaza, Waterfront Park; registration 12:30 p.m.; walk begins at 2:15 p.m. Founded in 1971, Dare to Care's goal is to attack real problems of hunger in the area, servicing 13 counties in Kentucky and five in Southern Indiana. Visit <http://www.thehungerwalk.org/> for more details.

September 24: 2011 Kentuckiana Heart Walk.

Waterfront Park/Great Lawn/Southern Indiana; registration, 7:30 a.m.; walk starts at 8:30 a.m. Heart disease is the leading cause of death of American women, killing more than a third, according to the American Heart Association. For more details, contact Erika Ross, Erika.ross@heart.org or <http://www.heart.org>.

September 24: Walk for Lupus. EP "Tom Sawyer" Park; registration starts at 8 a.m.; walk at 9 a.m. Lupus, an autoimmune disease that causes inflammation and tissue damage to body organs, affects over 24,000 Kentucky residents and 1.5 million Americans. For additional details, visit <http://walkforlupusnowlouisville.kintera.org>.

September 25: 19th Annual Louisville AIDS Walk.

Belvedere, 1 p.m. Supports those affected and infected; honors the memory of those lost and renews commitment to fight against HIV/AIDS. Visit <http://www.louisvilleaidswalk.org/about.html> for additional details.

October 8: Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure®.

Waterfront Park/Great Lawn, 8 a.m. Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer in the world today with about 1.3 million people (men and women of all ages and races) diagnosed annually, according to its web site. For additional information, visit: info@komen/louisville.org.

Other Local Community Happenings

August 26: Women's Equality Day Summit, 8:30 a.m., Louisville, Ky. Discussions will include economic well-being, violence against women, improving women's health, immigration/refugee issues, etc. Registration fee (which includes a lunch buffet) is \$20. Event details available upon receipt of registration. Register on-line at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/equality-day-summit> or call the Louisville Metro Office for Women, 574-5134.

55,000 Degrees – Creating a College-going Culture in Greater Louisville

by Rae B. Helton, Office of Community Engagement

A college-going culture builds the expectation that all students can go to college – an expectation that's not limited to the smartest students or those who can afford it. It provides encouragement and inspiration so that students can achieve their goal of going to college. As the first person in my family to attend college, I experienced first-hand the positive impact that mentoring, encouragement and college experiences can have on a young person's desire to go to college.

Louisville needs a college-going culture because education is a powerful indicator of well-being. It is a key driver of economic growth and personal gain in our community. An effort was begun last year to increase the number of Louisville residents with college degrees and those efforts formed the creation of 55,000 Degrees. The 55,000 Degrees initiative brings together Metro government, education, business and civic leaders to address one of Louisville's most glaring needs. Compared with competitor cities, Louisville is under-educated. The goal of 55,000 is to increase the number of adults with bachelor's degrees by 40,000 and the number of adults with associate's degrees by 15,000. Raising educational attainment levels is important for

numerous reasons. From an economic development standpoint, it is difficult to attract new businesses and get existing ones to expand if they don't have access to the kind of talent needed to grow. From a personal gain standpoint, education creates lifelong learners. Mike Rose, UCLA professor and author of *Why School?* cites the idea of intellectual growth — “not just learning things to make a living, but also learning things to enable you to do things with your life, to enable you to find interests and pursuits that may in some way or another expand the way we see things.”

Gender and race education disparities must also be addressed. Educational attainment for African Americans in Greater Louisville is distressing. A 2010 Greater Louisville Project study of attainment among African Americans puts Louisville last among peer cities with only 14% of African Americans of working age holding a bachelor's degree. African American civic, faith and business leaders reacted by claiming the statistic as a call to action. A goal of 15,000 degrees was established for Louisville's African American community. A 15K Degrees action team was then formed to create a college going culture in support of 55,000 Degrees.

There is some good news to share. Young women have made gains in educational attainment. The 2011 Competitive City Report released by the Greater Louisville Project showed that 39% of young women ages 25-34 hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The data indicates that young women are likely to reach the community goal of 40%. Young men lag behind, with only 33% holding a degree. While the gains are notable, there is still much work to do if we are to achieve our community goal of 55,000 degrees.

Last month I began a new role at the university as Special Assistant for Educational Attainment in the Office of Community Engagement. My work will support the university's role in 55,000 Degrees and especially 15K. The university will continue to play a key role in shaping Louisville's college-going culture through with programs, resources and by providing college experiences. 55,000 Degrees is Louisville's bold goal for the next decade. It is ambitious but it can be achieved. It is an opportunity for everyone to get involved. To learn more visit www.55,000degrees.com.



Rae B. Helton

Women Center Welcomes New Editorial Board Member

The Women Center welcomes Prafula P. Sheth, Ed.D., to the Editorial Board of the Women's Center News, a quarterly publication of the Women's Center. Dr. Sheth is the university's Student Advocate in the Office of the Provost. Her services extend to all students at U of L—from first semester freshmen to graduate doctoral students or professional degree students at both Belknap and Health Sciences campuses.



Prafula P. Sheth

Together the Editorial Board comes up with a consensus opinion on topics that are published in the Women Center News. Members also write articles for various issues. Be on the lookout for one of her timely and informative articles in future issues.

The Women's Center News

A publication of the Women's Center at the University of Louisville

Editorial Board: Valerie Casey, Brenda D. Gunn, Robin Harris, Prafula P. Sheth, and Phyllis Webb.

The Women's Center News is a free, quarterly newsletter. It is available on-line at www.louisville.edu/womenscenter.

To receive a hard copy of the newsletter or to sign up for email announcements, contact us at:

Women's Center, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292; 502-852-8976; or womenctr@louisville.edu.

The University of Louisville is an equal opportunity institution.

This publication was prepared by the University of Louisville.

Special Community Sessions on Education: the 15K/55K Initiative

The Saturday Academy of the University of Louisville's College of Arts & Sciences is providing two special sessions on education.

Aug. 27: The first session will help explain the 15k/55k initiative as well as give the community an opportunity to provide input. Free and open to parents, concerned adults, educators, faith communities, and high school and college students, Nia Center, 2900 West Broadway, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Sept. 24: This session is specifically designed for 15k/55k partner organizations and members. DuValle Education Center, 3610 Bohne Ave., 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Each session will be led by Dr. J. Blaine Hudson, A&S Dean and Director of the Academy.

RSVP to LyShanna Cunningham, lcunningham@louisville.edu or call 852-2658.