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News from Mabel (Fall 2009)

Mabel Wadworth Health Center Staff

Mabel Wadworth Health Center

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Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center

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Grant Funding Helps Launch Education & Outreach Efforts

Lalor, Cattawamteak and PVHA Funds support plans for Aroostook, Washington and Penobscot Counties

Recent foundation support has enabled the Center's Education and Outreach Program to provide information and resources that will help women make their own choices. Offering educational services in both traditional and web-based formats creates a new twist to our long-held belief that informed decision-making is the key to good decision-making.

In February, we welcomed our first full-time Education and Outreach Coordinator, Jessica Carter. Funding for Jessica's role was originally provided by the Thomas H. Maren Foundation in 2008. More recently, the Center has secured funding for needs assessment and educational programming in Maine's most rural areas. The first grant in 2009 of \$23,000 came from the Anna Lalor Burdick Program to be used to expand reproductive and sexual health programming for young women in Aroostook and Washington Counties. The purpose of the Lalor funding is ambitious: to reverse the eight-year upward trend in unintended pregnancies, with a special focus on outreach education for women under the age of 25.

Mabel Wadsworth Center proposed similar plans for Penobscot County to the Maine Community Foundation (MCF). Two separate grants received from MCF will help launch our education and outreach efforts, including \$11,820 from the Penobscot Valley Health Association (PVHA) and \$7,190 from the Catawamteak Fund of Maine. PVHA has been especially helpful in the creation of Mabel's Back-Up Pack®, a birth control and information kit inside an attractive and fun "SafeSax" clutch. (To get your Back Up Pack®, please see related story on page 2.)

The Catawamteak Fund of Maine is a MCF donor-advised fund whose gift will help build membership of Mabel's Maine Frame. Mabel's Maine Frame is free and open to anyone interested in learning more about reproductive rights and other issues affecting women's health. The Maine Frame is based online via



Jessica Carter (left), Mabel's Education and Outreach Coordinator visits Aroostook County with the Abortion Access Project's Nancy Foss. Together, we will address the barriers to and misinformation around abortion care and birth control options in northern Maine.

the Center's website, Facebook and (coming soon!) Twitter.

Why does education make up one-third of Mabel Wadsworth Center's mission? Because without accurate information, there simply is no choice. Access to birth control options, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, cervical cancer screening and pregnancy prevention information is essential to ensure young women are able to determine their own futures. Healthy women, fully in charge of their health care and lives, lead to healthier communities and a healthier nation.

Join us online: Mabel's Maine Frame Information, invites and advocacy opportunities are just a click away...

You are invited to join Mabel's Maine Frame, an online community of people who support our mission to educate and advocate for women's reproductive rights in Maine.

To join, simply send us an email at info@mabelwadsworth.org, with a subject line that says "Mabel's Maine Frame." In your email, please provide a first and last name and tell us that you would like to be added to the email list.

Q: What does a sex toy party have to do with Mabel's mission?

A: A lot! The Center held its very first sex toy party fundraiser in June, and the event was a success on several fronts. Invitations were sent via email and posted online, through Mabel's new Facebook page and Mabel's Maine Frame. The results were more than we hoped for: we welcomed many new faces as well as familiar friends in the crowd of attendees.

Mabel's Sex Toy Party featured a lot of laughter, education and fun. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, including a number of requests for another party before the holidays. (See sidebar).

As part of celebrating 25 years of caring and advocating for Maine women, 25% of the retail sales from the event came back to Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. Many thanks to our Athena's "Goddess," Jessica; the evening of fun and information garnered a \$750 donation to the Center!

The party raised a lot of interest and funds but also raised questions about why Mabel Wadsworth Center would host a sex toy party. The short answer: a sex toy party is a mission-based educational event. "Knowledge about our bodies and our sexuality" is the first line in the vision statement of Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. A woman's comfort level in talking and learning about sexuality and sexual health has a huge impact on her ability to take control of her sexual and reproductive life.

So, why a sex toy party? To share accurate information about sex and sex toys and provide a safe, welcoming atmosphere to talk about our sexual lives. Not to mention, this sex toy party was nothing near groundbreaking or new! Vibrators are now "nearly as common an appliance in American households as the drip coffee maker or toaster oven" according to an article in the *New York Times* published on June 28, 2009. A national study completed by Indiana University and recently published in the academic, peer-reviewed *Journal of Sexual Medicine* states that 46.3 percent of women ages 45-60 report having used a vibrator at some point in their lives, compared to 59.5 percent of women between the ages of 23 to 44 and 32.7 percent of women who are 18-22 years old. This same study found that women who had used a vibrator in the last month scored higher on sexual pleasure scales that measured arousal, orgasm and lubrication function than those who had never used one. Another interesting finding from this study was that the more educated a woman is, the more likely she is to use a vibrator. Lesson learned? Women are using sex toys and having better sexual experiences as a result!

Creating an open, safe and fun space for women to talk about sex was the primary goal for Mabel's first sex toy party. Education about safe sex and anatomy was also included in the Center's recipe for a proper sex toy party, along with chocolate, wine and good laughs!

In addition to the written evaluations, the verbal testimony about the impact of this event was inspiring. The fact the we hosted a sex toy party opened up a conversation in many lunchrooms, kitchens, coffee shops and bedrooms, regardless of whether women attended or not. Opening those communication lines and helping women to take charge of their sexual and reproductive lives is exactly what Mabel Wadsworth Center is all about. We hope you'll join us at our next party on November 19th – make sure you are a part of Mabel's Maine Frame or our fan on Facebook to get your invitation and more details!

46.3 percent of women ages 45-60 report having used a vibrator at some point in their lives, compared to 59.5 percent of women between the ages of 23 to 44

Back by popular demand: Mabel's 2nd Sex Toy Party November 19, 2009

WHEN? November 19, 2009 at 7 o'clock
WHERE? Mabel Wadsworth Center
WHO? Women only, ages 18+

Enjoy an evening of laughter and enlightenment. You will be able to view, sample and purchase products in a safe, confidential and fun environment.

Our very own Athena's "Goddess" will bring lots of products to show, talk about and check out. The best part? Twenty-five percent of your purchase will go directly to Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. Bring your girlfriends; invite your sister, mother or grandmother! **RSVP is required for all attendees:**

Call: (207) 947-5337, ext. 114
Email: educate@mabelwadsworth.org

Mabel's Back-Up Pack® Unzip this.



Looking for that one-of-a-kind gift for the smart, sexy women in your life? Want to send a care package to your kid at college? Mabel's new Back-Up Pack® is filled with information about birth control, emergency contraception and safer sex. Contents include: "Protect your pucker" lip balm, condoms of all colors and flavors, lube, a dental dam, Mabel's Maine Frame mirror and other goodies! Get yours today – and one for a friend – by visiting www.mabelwadsworth.org.

Keepin' it **smart, sexy**
and **safe.**

Mabel Wadsworth Center Welcomes Amber Merrill, FNP, OT

Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center welcomes Amber Merrill, FNP, OT to its clinical staff. Amber is one of two Nurse Practitioners at Mabel Wadsworth Center and adds a depth of clinical experience that complements the Center's woman-centered philosophy of care.

During her Master of Science studies at the University of Southern Maine's Family Nurse Practitioner program, Amber completed a clinical rotation at Mabel Wadsworth Center. That experience cemented her desire to work in women's health and made for an easy transition to a full-time position at the Center. In addition to Mabel Wadsworth Center, Amber's clinical rotations included family practice, pediatrics, surgery and internal medicine.

Prior to studying nursing, Amber worked for ten years as an occupational therapist, treating adults in hospital and home settings. She also served as a member of the Adjunct Faculty at the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Maine, teaching undergraduate nursing courses in fulfillment of her passion for teaching and learning. Amber maintains memberships in both Maine-based and national associations for nursing and occupational therapy.

Amber is excited about her new role at Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, as it allows her to utilize nursing skills along with the client-centered approach that is integral to occupational therapy. She is originally from Hodgdon, Maine and now lives in Bangor with her spouse, Matt.



Amber Merrill, Mabel's new
Family Nurse Practitioner



From our Facebook fan page:
**Mabel Wadsworth Center
Recognized for Nonprofit
Excellence with 2009 Dirigo Award**

Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center was honored for its outstanding achievement by the Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP) at the Annual Leadership Conference at Colby College on April 17. Present at the awards ceremony was Governor John Baldacci, pictured at left with the Center's Executive Director, Ruth L. Lockhart.

The Dirigo Awards for Nonprofit Excellence are given to one large, medium and small nonprofit that has achieved significant results by utilizing ingenuity combined with sound management practices. Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center received the first place honor in the medium nonprofit division. The application highlighted the Center's work toward providing colposcopy care to Maine's under- and uninsured women and fundraising success with the Presidents' Day Appeal.

Champagne toast to our campaign success



Capital campaign
leaders (L to R)
Frank Bragg,
Sharon Barker
and Stephanie
Cotsirilos
toast Mabel's
volunteers

A recent "Toast to Success" at the Center officially closed the books on the capital campaign. The event welcomed dozens of our supporters to tour the Center and see their names permanently displayed on the new donor wall. Smaller plaques were placed in the waiting room and Lab in recognition of major gifts from Carol and Elaine Epstein, the Cotsirilos Family Foundation and the Mimi Foundation.



Mabel Wadsworth Center staff celebrate: pictured left to right are Anne, Heather, Kate and Jessica, four of the twelve incredible women who work at the Center.

The capital campaign began with a feasibility study in late 2005, and officially got underway in 2006. In June of last year, the Center declared victory, over goal and under the deadline for purchasing its new home in Evergreen Woods. In total, the capital campaign garnered \$1,333,249 from 337 donors, making it possible for the Center to own its own facility and realize a cost savings of \$60,000 per year!

Thank you to all who donated time, talent and treasure to the capital campaign. We could not have come so far without the help and support of so many.



Mabel Wadsworth
Women's Health Center
P.O. Box 918
Bangor, ME 04402-0918

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Bangor, ME 04401



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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
FOGLER LIBRARY

SEP 24 2009

Sign me up!

Talking with Your Kids about S-E-X on October 8

- ♀ Yes! I would like to reserve a seat for Mabel's discussion "How to Talk with Your Kids About Sex."
- ♀ No, I am unable to attend, but would like to make a charitable contribution to help Mabel's Education and Outreach efforts. My gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

This educational offering is FREE to all attendees. RSVP requested by October 5, 2009. To RSVP, call 947-5337, ext. 114 or return this form to the Center.

Join us for...

Mabel's Movie Nights 2009

Watch the films. Discuss the issues.

Join Mabel Wadsworth Center as we host a series of Movie Nights at the UMaine Women's Resource Center.

Wednesday, October 21st

The Education of Shelby Knox

A young activist on a mission to bring comprehensive sexuality education to her conservative Texas high school.

Wednesday, October 28th

Crisis Pregnancy Centers: A Special Report

An examination of crisis pregnancy centers.

Wednesday, November 4th

The Coat Hanger Project

Abortion and the current state of the pro-choice movement 35 years after Roe v. Wade.

All Movie Nights to be held at 7:00 PM at the Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine in Orono. Movie nights are **free**, and RSVP is **not** required.

For more information, please call 947-5337, ext. 114 or email educate@mabelwadsworth.org. **We welcome your suggestions** for the next series of Mabel's Movie Nights or other educational opportunities.

If you would like to host an educational workshop in your classroom, workplace or other location, Mabel's Education and Outreach Coordinator would be happy to help! Please email educate@mabelwadsworth.org.

Talking with Your Kids about S-E-X October 8, 2009 at 6:00 PM

You raised your voices and we heard you loud and clear! In response to your expressed interest in learning more, Mabel Wadsworth Center is pleased to present:

Talking with your kids about S-E-X

Thursday, October 8th, 2009 at 6:00 PM

at Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center

In recognition of *Let's Talk Month*, a national campaign coordinated to encourage parent/child communication about sexuality, this interactive workshop is open to all parents, grandparents, teachers, care givers and anyone interested in increasing your comfort level when talking with kids about sex and sexuality.

This event will emphasize the importance of conversations about sexuality between young people and the adults they trust. Children want and need accurate information from their parents and/or caregivers. Parents want to be good sexuality educators, but may need information, support and encouragement to do so. Providing children and adolescents with accurate, reliable sex education is your responsibility; learn more and help them to grow into healthy and responsible adults!

Workshop participants will learn about sexuality; why it is important and what your kids need to know. We will discuss steps to overcome obstacles in teaching our children as well as information about age-appropriate information, development and behavior. Parents and caregivers will leave with skills to help them feel more comfortable, capable and confident when communicating with their children.

RSVP is required for this event, and seating is limited. Please call 947-5337, ext. 114, return the registration form (above), or email educate@mabelwadsworth.org to reserve your space today.