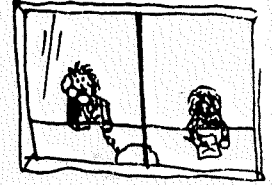


Annual General

REFUGE



Report 1983-84



BERYL CANBERRA

WOMENS REFUGE



S T A F F I N G

Permanent Paid Workers

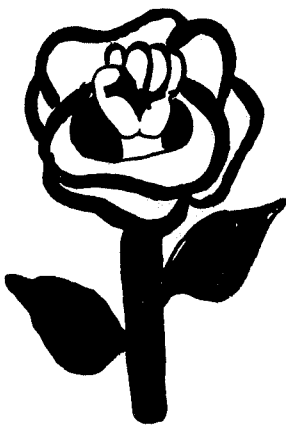
Sue Sheridan
Sarah Whitley
Kay Wells
Karla Ries
Joan Reid
Bluse Waddellwood
Gaby Gottselig
Annie Mac
Jo Morgan
Luna
Loretta Chion
Cleo
Jane Dury
Affrica Taylor
Rosaleen Corrigan
Vicki Beetle
Georgia McKenzie
Judith McPherson
Geraldine Johnson
Magret Eaton
Jane Dwyer
Annie Vickers
Helen Kelloway
Metta Young

Casual Paid Workers

Luna
K. Smith
C. Gardiner
M. Neill
J. Crame
K. Wilde
L. Sexton
R. Burke
C. Adams
U. Thomas
T. Bieshewal
C. Edwards
J. Winters
J. Ashton
P. Wilkins

Unpaid Workers

Margret Neill
Karin Lee
Evy Hanser
Colleen Freeman
Cynthia



One of our unpaid workers deserves a special mention; Margaret Neil. For the last seven or eight years she has been part of all the collectives that have run the refuge. Margaret is often able to give our new ideas perspective; "Yes we've had this problem before" or "We tried that a few years ago".....

To have Margaret around is good and important for us; she gives the collective a feeling of continuity which often lacks because of the high turnover in workers.

We want to thank Margaret for not only supplying us with this sense of herstory, but also for being an invaluable worker especially in times of need.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

The administration changes implemented last year i.e. sharing administration tasks, is working very well, with all workers appreciating the chance to take on and learn these tasks.

The policy changes implemented, such as three monthly 'paid workers evaluation' have proved to be extremely successful from the point of view of self-evaluation as well as constructive feedback from co-workers. Refuge workers now receive the national wage increase. However, there is still no set award for refuge workers in the A.C.T. This year we intend to liaise with the Australian Social Workers Union regarding the setting of an award.

The policy of limiting numbers in the refuge to eight women and their children, to accept only women who are escaping from "intolerable domestic situations" has proved to be a successful one. We are able to give these women and their children the support, as well as the practical help, they need.

Within that practical help, considerable time and energy is spent in liaising with Housing Branch regarding application and allocation of priority housing. We recently changed our mode of communicating with Housing Branch to fortnightly meetings with the newly appointed District Housing Officer. This has proved to be a far more satisfactory system of liaison for both sides.

Over the past twelve months seven workers have resigned as their contracts expired. This has resulted in an almost complete turnover of staff. At first, this resulted in quite a few 'interesting' situations. However, most of the teething problems of a new collective were overcome by open and honest discussions at workers' meetings and the quarterly evaluations.

The policy of the residents running the house, in terms of decision-making as to how the house functions on a day-to-day basis, is working well, with the women and the children making very valuable contributions to the collective and, at the same time, increasing their own sense of self-esteem and power. House meetings, which happen twice weekly and which all residents are expected to attend, have often turned into very worthwhile and informative sessions for both residents and workers. The worker's role at these meetings has been to aid facilitation. At some of these meetings residents have expressed a desire to attend workshops on such topics as assertiveness training, parenting, sexuality, budgeting etc and these workshops have been set up and run by workers. They have been a fulfilling and worthwhile experience for workers, residents and ex-residents. It is hoped that these groups will continue as the needs are expressed. Working at the refuge for the past year has been both rewarding and educational.

As a result of our policy change to accept only women escaping domestic violence, we have become increasingly aware of the need for change in legislation dealing with domestic violence, especially in areas of continued protection for women and children escaping this situation. The legislation as it now stands offers very little real protection, even in the event of a woman having obtained a restraining order through the courts. It is hoped that, as a result of the Domestic Violence Inquiry presently being compiled, and to which this Refuge has made a comprehensive submission, that constructive legislation changes will be made arising out of the Inquiry's recommendations.

Annual Statistics

1st July 1983-
30th June 1984

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESIDENTS

Women.....169
Children.....208

TOTAL BED OCCUPANCY.....9333

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS PER NIGHT

1st Quarter.....20.5%; Women: 9.2%, Children: 11.3%

2nd Quarter.....34.7%; Women: 14.5%, Children: 20.2%

3rd Quarter.....16.7%; Women: 6.8%, Children: 9.9%

4th Quarter.....17.9%; Women: 7.5%, Children: 10.4%

TOTAL AVERAGE.....22.4%; Women: 9.5%, Children: 12.9%

GREATEST NUMBER ON ANY ONE NIGHT.....45
(18 Women and 27 Children)

LEAST NUMBER ON ANY ONE NIGHT.....10
(6 Women and 4 Children)

LENGTH OF STAY AT REFUGE

	%
1 night.....	25.57
Less than 1 week.....	31.83
1-2 weeks.....	10.85
2-3 weeks.....	5.55
3-4 weeks.....	4.51
4-6 weeks.....	2.74
6-8 weeks.....	4.32
8-10 weeks.....	5.51
10+ weeks.....	9.12

REASON FOR SEEKING REFUGE

	%
Intolerable domestic situation.....	40.83
Desertion/Rejection by partner.....	2.90
Fleeing harrassment from former partner.....	6.31
Fleeing parent's home.....	4.79
Eviction.....	1.72
Escaping non-family situation.....	5.38
Homeless.....	19.07
Travelling.....	5.30
Unable to cope after hospital.....	1.72
Unable to cope after drug rehabilitation.....	2.70
Wanting time to rest, time to think.....	12.55
Sexual harrassment to self.....	9.52
Sexual harrassment to children.....	4.72
Violence to self.....	31.01
Violence to children.....	5.29
Mental cruelty to self.....	23.22
Mental cruelty to children.....	9.88
Partner's Alcohol problem.....	5.64
Family financial problems.....	5.21

DURATION OF PROBLEM

	%
Recent.....	13.91
Developed over past few months.....	26.84
More than a year.....	39.11
Unknown/Not applicalbe.....	20.14

ANNUAL STATISTICS - 1st July 1983 to 30th June 1984 (contd)

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ACCOMPANYING WOMEN TO REFUGE	%
No children.....	19.52
1 child.....	42.12
2 children.....	30.93
3 children.....	7.06
4 children.....	0.37

WHETHER WOMAN HAS LEFT BEFORE	%
Yes.....	40.42
No.....	33.16
Not applicable.....	22.32
Unknown.....	4.10

OCCUPATION OF WOMAN ON ENTRY TO REFUGE	%
Professional/managerial.....	3.52
White collar.....	7.46
Skilled.....	5.39
Semi-skilled.....	2.76
Unemployed.....	17.95
Unskilled.....	4.76
Home Duties.....	43.06
Student.....	0.00
Unknown.....	15.10

OCCUPATION OF MEN WOMEN WERE LIVING WITH	%
Professional/managerial.....	7.35
White collar.....	6.40
Skilled.....	16.98
Semi-skilled.....	3.61
Unskilled.....	4.94
Unemployed.....	13.71
Armed Forces.....	4.31
Not Applicable.....	11.34
Unknown.....	31.36

FINANCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN ON ENTERING REFUGE	%
No money.....	40.44
Part-time job.....	2.16
Full-time job.....	3.51
Social Security Pension or Benefit.....	44.22
Other.....	9.67

REFERRED TO REFUGE BY:	%
Another refuge.....	3.76
Media.....	0.37
Previously resident.....	21.08
Police.....	8.68
Friend/relative.....	15.82
Welfare/social worker.....	14.96
Telephone Book.....	9.78
Housing Dept.....	4.38
Life Line.....	4.78
Taxi.....	1.43
Drug Rehabilitation.....	0.72
Hospital.....	0.18
Solicitor/Legal Aid.....	2.03
YWCA.....	0.18
Salvation Army.....	1.23
Unknown.....	10.66

ANNUAL STATISTICS - 1st July 1983 to 30th June 1984 (contd)

DESTINATION ON LEAVING THE REFUGE	%
Returned home.....	16.50
Returned home + partner moved out.....	1.46
Government housing.....	15.91
Private accomodation.....	0.74
Staying with friends/relatives.....	15.82
Hostel.....	1.84
Other refuge.....	4.71
Hospital.....	0.37
Interstate.....	6.43
Group House.....	0.74
Unknown.....	25.04
Other.....	10.44

NATIONALITY OF RESIDENTS	%
Aboriginal.....	4.20
White Australian.....	71.92
Yugoslavian.....	7.11
Italian.....	1.25
Spanish.....	1.35
British.....	3.26
Finnish.....	1.09
Maltese.....	0.72
Filipino.....	0.72
New Zealand.....	4.28
Danish.....	0.37
Japanese.....	0.37
Malaysian.....	0.37
German.....	0.59
Fijian.....	1.25
Indonesian.....	1.25

.. Financial Report ..

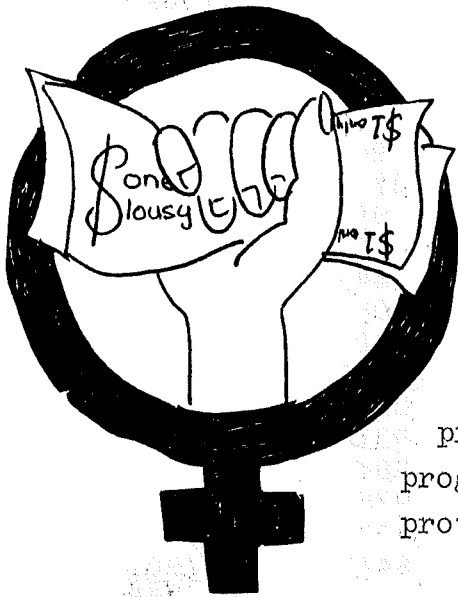
Financially, the Refuge managed to scrape through the 1983/84 financial year with a deficit of \$2,584. Total money received for the year was \$176,443 which included \$98,108 from the Community Development Fund; \$36,575 from the Office of Child Care; \$25,200 from the Women's Emergency Service Program; \$6,524 from donations.

The Women's Emergency Services Program (WESP) was introduced by the Federal Government in the 1983 budget with an allocation of \$4 million divided amongst all women's refuges throughout Australia. \$9,000 of our WESP money was used to establish the Incest Centre which provides information and support to women and children who have experienced sexual abuse within their family. We were disappointed that we did not receive WESP money for an additional salary for the Refuge so we continue to be understaffed with workers working much unpaid overtime. We have still not received any increase in our childcare funding since it was last determined eighteen months ago.

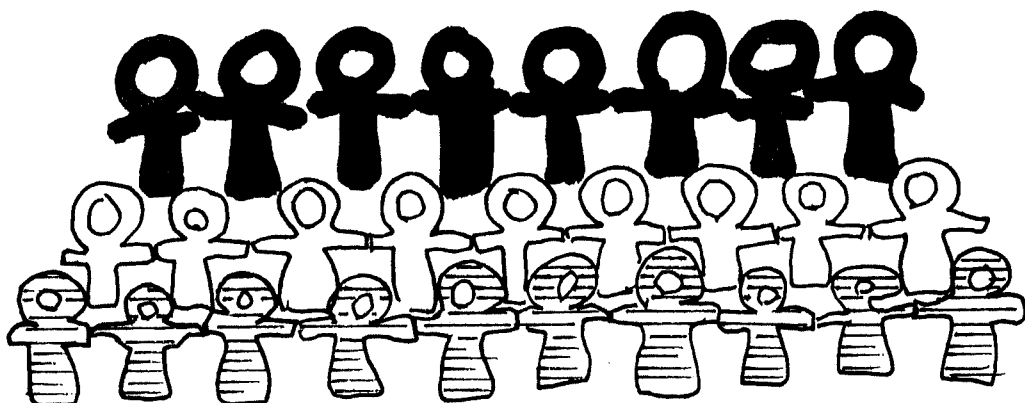
Funding

In March 1984 representatives from all women's services in Australia met for a Conference in Canberra. Services represented included refuges, rape crisis centres, abortion services, incest centres, health centres, housing co-ops, legal services and information centres. The major recommendation from this Conference was that there should be a review of all women's services and that present funding arrangements should continue until the Review was completed. Recommendations from the review could then be used as a basis to determine future funding. It was hoped that the review would develop a set of guidelines about funding whereby the needs of women could be met by services that were adequately provided for.

Under the present ad hoc arrangements there is little financial stability for those services that are funded, some services are not funded at all and, in general, service providers are faced with the decision of providing an adequate service without getting paid, or providing an inadequate service.



However the Federal Government has refused to fund such a review and is proceeding on a program that will fund only Refuges, under The Supported Accomodation Assistance Program. We object to being funded under an accomodation program as we think that it doesn't give adequate recognition to the services provided by women's refuges. We don't want to accept any new funding program until after a review is held and we want a program that recognises all the services that are provided for women throughout Australia.



CANBERRA WOMENS REFUGE INCORPORATED
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1984

Receipts

Grants	
- Community Development Fund	93000
- Dept of Social Security (see attached for specific grants)	60050
- Capital and Equipment Grant	4108
Donations	6524
Food money	7047
Telephone money	608
Reimbursements	3163
Bank interest	443
Sale of Minibus	500
	<u>\$175443</u>

Less expenditure

Bank fees	1
Childcare consumables	1408
Cleaning and domestic services	962
Electricity	3972
Emergency assistance	925
Food	13080
Industrial services	444
Insurance	1069
Postage, printing and stationery	2402
Purchases - capital items	15062
Repairs and maintenance	2583
Rent	9318
Salaries	106840
Sundry expenses	9782
Telephone	3731
Travel and transport	6448
DEFICIT FOR YEAR	<u>178027</u>
	<u>\$ 2584</u>

CANBERRA WOMENS REFUGE INCORPORATED
ACCUMULATED FUNDS
AS AT 30 JUNE 1984

<u>Accumulated funds</u>	
Balance 1.7.83	1122
Less deficit for year	<u>2584</u> (\$1462)
Represented by	
<u>Current asset</u>	
Savings Investment Account	2638
<u>Less current liability</u>	
Bank overdraft	<u>4100</u> (\$1462)

AUDITORS REPORT

We have examined the books and records of the Canberra Womens Refuge Incorporated for the year ended 30th June 1984 and have received all the information and explanations required.

In our opinion the attached Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 30th June 1984 presents fairly the financial transactions for the Refuge for the year. We are also of the opinion that the rules relating to the administration of the funds of the collective have been observed.


TURNER & MEDLEY

FOLLOW-UP

The Refuge's follow-up program aims to provide women and children who have left the Refuge with support and practical assistance. Earlier this year the collective decided on a policy of doing three follow-up visits with each ex-resident who wanted this ongoing contact. Also, when women and children leave the refuge they know they can always come back to visit and many of them do call in regularly just to say hello to friends they've made whilst staying here, and to let us know how they're getting on in their new homes. Sometimes we are also called upon by ex-residents to assist them with, for example, their children's schooling, legal information, financial worries and other matters involved in setting up a new environment for themselves and their children.

It often happens that several women, who have met each other at the refuge, end up living close to each other in their new flats or houses and they are able to continue their relationship and help each other out, especially with child-minding.

Our three follow-up visits usually cover the first four to six weeks after a woman has moved out and further contact is usually on an ad-hoc basis such as telephone calls and the women coming to the refuge to keep in contact with us, to obtain information about a particular concern, to help out....





Sometimes I sit here and wonder what I'm doing here. So many mixed emotions go through my mind. When I first arrived I felt lost and alone. My kids kept me busy but there still was something missing. That cuddle, someone to tell me I was great or to feel loved. Would I ever be happy, I wondered that. My kids were constantly sick, guilt trips were going through my mind. My eldest child was finding it hard to settle in, she was missing her father. Should I go back? I don't know. Then I think again. What about me? I was stagnating there, I felt like a nothing, looked like a nothing, lost all of my confidence, constantly told how hopeless how terrible I was and how I had driven him to treat me like that. I wish I could work myself out. Soon my flat will be coming up and then I will be on my own, then I can start a life for my kids and me. I hope I make it.

Dear Sisters,

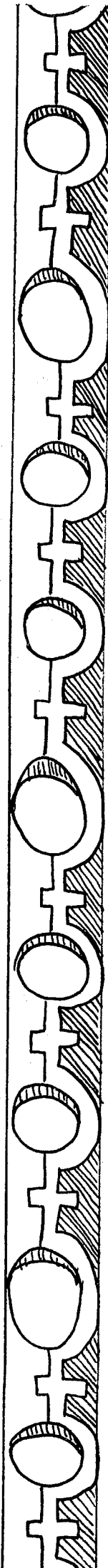
I came to the C.Q.R upset and confused by what had been happening to me and my life. And I found so much sharing and caring from all of the workers who are very special people in there own right and I have made a lot of friends, as well they accept everyone for what they are no matter what type of person they are, which isn't always easy as everyone is so different and the workers accept that everyone has different problems and needs, and try to help fulfil these needs to the best of their ability, which is why they are special people.

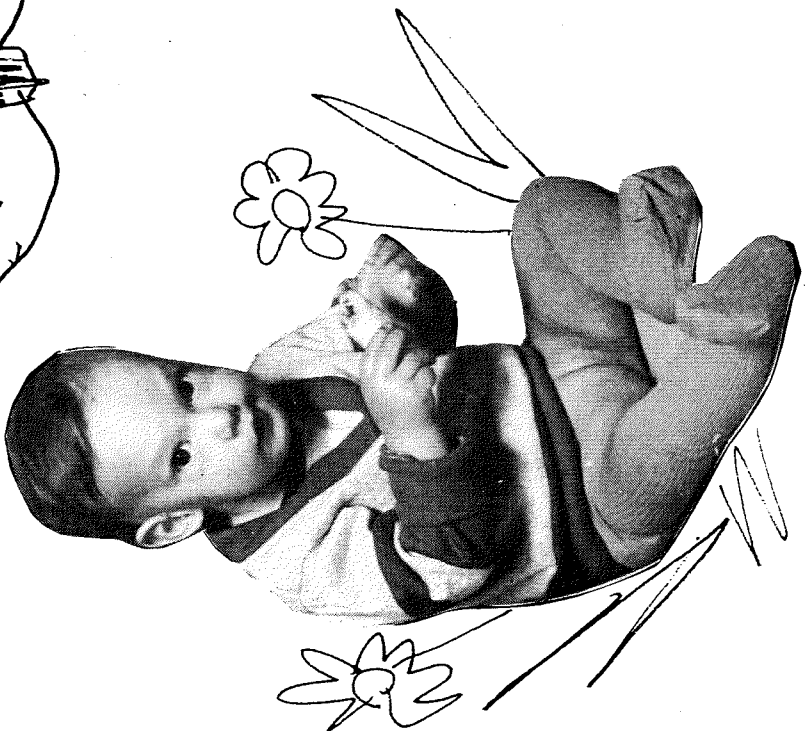
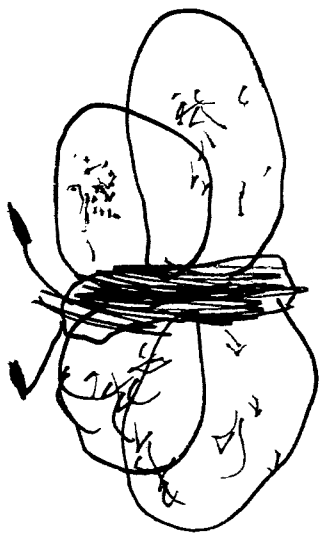
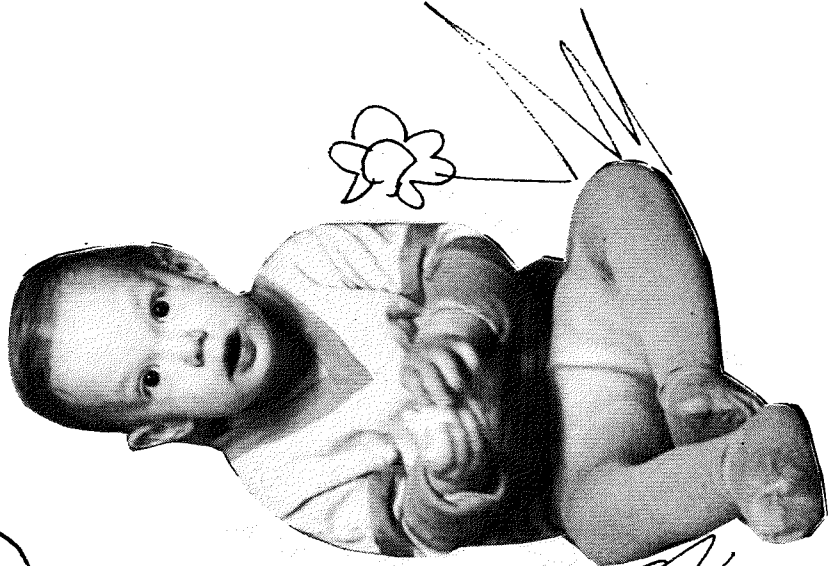
I have seen many wimmin come and go and we have shared with each other, which has helped each womin and has in it's own way made each of us a little stron er to cope on leaving the Refuge.

It has not always been easy living in the refuge with so many different wimmin with different ideas and at times we don't always get on like a house on fire but we do end up working everything out and we end up with a better understanding of each other and ourselves as well.

As it is almost time for me to leave I would like to give a very special thankyou to all the workers without all of whose help and support I would still be in one hell of a mess. I feel that I owe them a lot and I love them all and I am finding it very hard to leave as it will be leaving a great big hole in my heart and whre I'm going seems such a long way away, I love each and every one of you so very much, thankyou all very much

CHRIS





Who else would let you in at 11.30?
When you are from another state
And it's cold and late

The refuge, that's who!

Who else would give support
When you thought you were all alone
And had to go it on your own

The refuge, that's who!

Who else would offer a cuppa?
And a homely base
Away from the man that's on your case

The refuge, that's who!

Who else would understand
It's hard to leave with kid's
And the home you tried to build

The refuge, that's who!



Who else would give a damn
About the fights, drugs and beer
And the way that we may appear

The refuge, that's who!

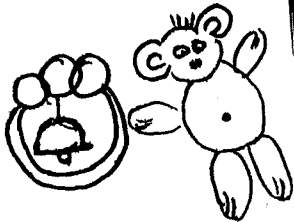
Who else can we call friend
When our world falls away
And things get worse day by day

The refuge, that's who!

MADONNA

P.S. Who else would know how you feel
When you've got no-one to talk to
And you're miserable and blue

The workers, that's who!



Isn't she
a
cutie!?!

CHILDRENS' REPORT

Policy Changes

During the past twelve months we have implemented a number of policy changes regarding the operational side of the Refuge. Perhaps one that is most relevant to this report is that we now take only women with children, not single women. In terms of day to day life in the refuge, there are now more children in relation to the number of adults; in fact, at least half of the people living here at any one time are children.



We made this particular policy change because of problems that arose due to the different needs of different groups. Single women and women with children living in the same house often meant that the needs of either group were not satisfactorily met. A lot of these problems have now dissipated due to the fact that everyone living in the house is in a similar family situation. The collective has also changed because of this new policy, in terms of attitudes toward children within the refuge. There has always been concern about fulfilling the needs of the children, but because they are now an integral part of the household, a lot of discussion has been created about this issue. The challenge of providing a supportive and stable environment for the children is constant and is coupled with a new perception of their rights as residents in the house.



Kids' Meetings:

For many years the Refuge has encouraged the attendance by women of two house meetings each week. They are seen as a time and place where women can try and sort out any tensions in the house and discuss suggestions about improving facilities etc. These meetings also provide an exchange of information about things that are happening such as workshops, films.

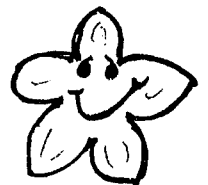
A further effort to recognize, and act on, the rights of the children has been the introduction of kids' meetings. We try to set time aside for them regularly in the afternoons and incorporate them with afternoon tea. This means that there is now an established venue where the children can put forward ideas and complaints, discuss any worries that they may have at school or in the house, swap thoughts on equipment they think the refuge should purchase etc.

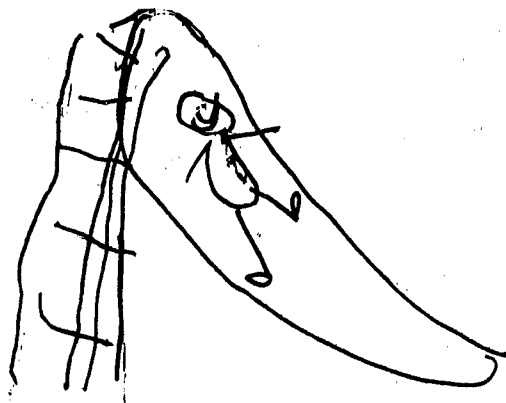
To date, these meetings have been very successful and afternoon tea together is very popular. The children have created their own set of rules for the Kid's House and have taken on more responsibility for making and keeping it a pleasant place to be. In ways such as this we hope to make what can frequently be a chaotic environment, a more stable one for these children and to open up the lines of communication between the children and adults (their mothers and the workers) who try to co-exist within the refuge.



After School Program:

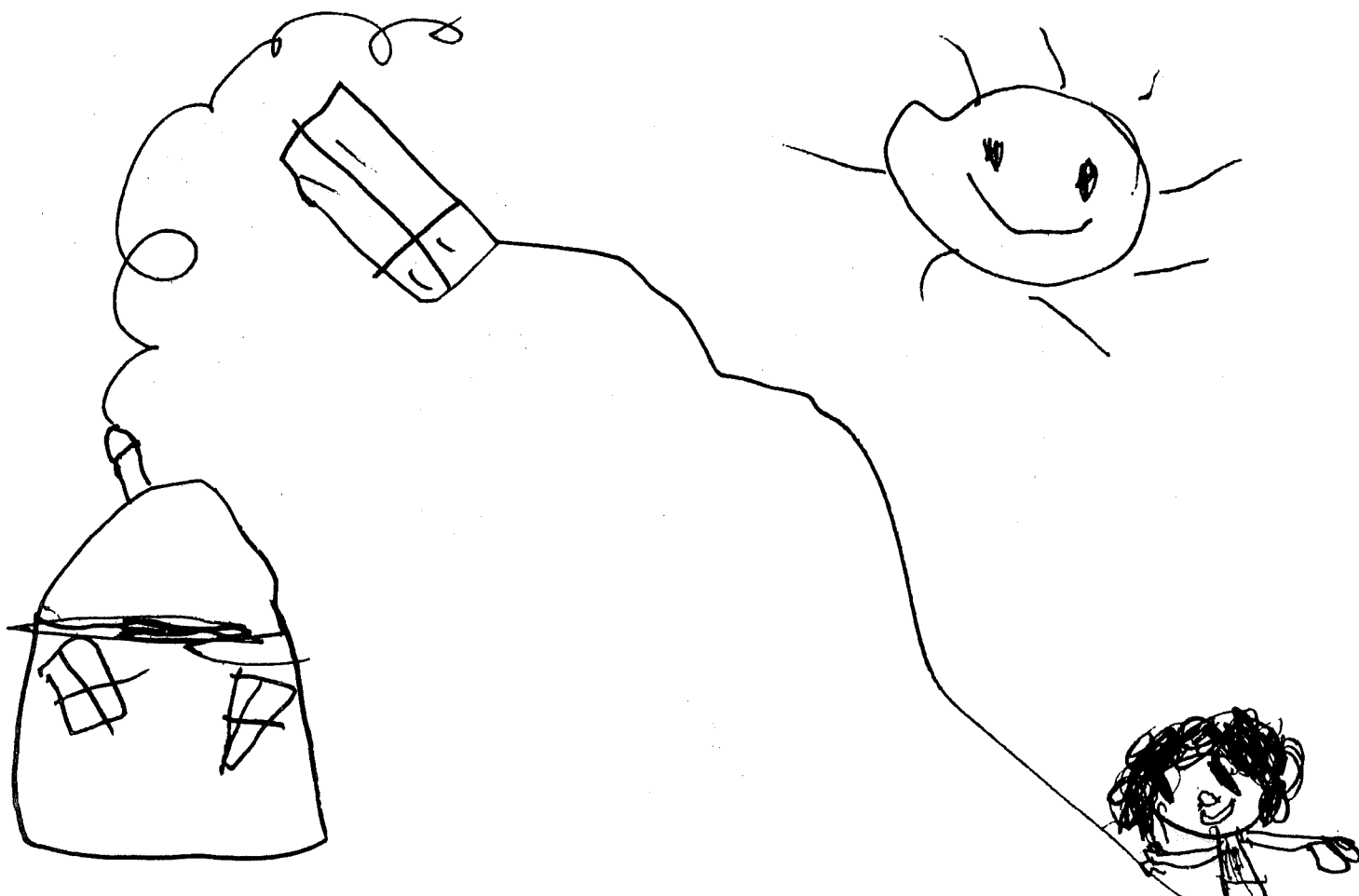
Since the introduction of kids' meetings the after school program has adopted a certain flexibility. The children often like to stay around the refuge, in the Kid's House or the garden, instead of going out. We have also introduced a library system, whereby the children can borrow toys or books from the Kid's House for a few days at a time. The implications of this library system are that the children now have more options to choose from, regarding activities, geared more realistically to the time restrictions on workers. Because there are only a few hours after school during which the workers can be with the children, we brought in the library system so the kids can play in a more independent way, in and out of normal working hours.

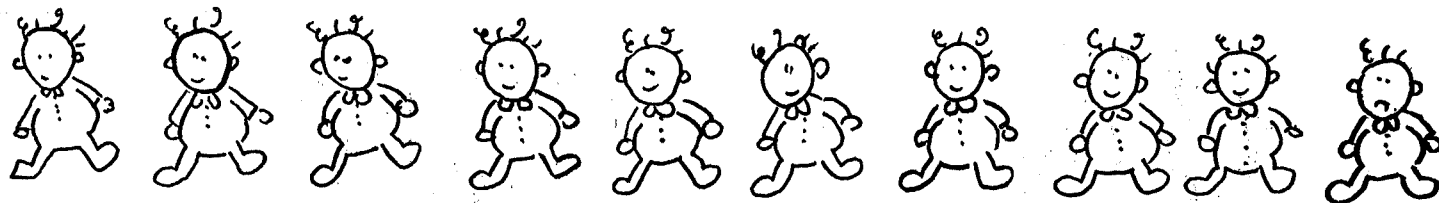




School Holiday Programs:

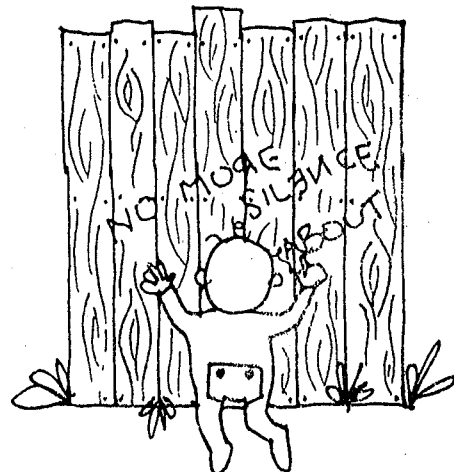
As school holiday time comes around again it's panic time at the refuge. Last May about thirty resident and ex-resident kids squealed, moaned and fought their way through a daily whirlwind of exciting activities. The favorites were Questacon and horseriding for the older ones; a walk along the Murrumbidgee and a visit to Cockington Green for the younger ones, with all ages enjoying roller skating and eating. It was an up and down two weeks, a good time for the largely new bunch of childrens' workers to find their feet (and their voices), and discover the best (and not so best) ways of being with the kids. For the next school holiday period coming up in August/September we'll be trying something different with week long camps down the south coast. We're hoping this will give the kids a chance to really relax and get into living skills such as cooking and wood chopping, as well as the usual games and adventures.





Kid's House:

The Kid's House needed some organisation. Well, that's how it started anyway and before we knew it we were painting, cleaning, sewing cushions, throwing out old and broken toys and going out to buy some new usable ones, setting up the kitchen, establishing a toy and book library, craft cupboard etc. We now have a warm, inviting, tidy and pleasant kid's house which is nice to use for both children and adults. The work is by no means finished but is progressing steadily.



Follow-Up:

After living at the refuge for up to three months and having experienced a stimulating, bustling environment which is full of kids and always someone to play with, children leaving the refuge can find it lonely, boring and often devastating to be moved into an isolated house or block of flats. We try to give the kids as much follow-up as is possible in the form of visits, outings, encouraging them to visit the refuge as often as they like and are allowed and including them, whenever numbers permit, in our school holiday programs. We also try to channel them into activities and organizations in their areas. We are also available for these kids if they need us to talk things over with them, if they are experiencing difficulties at their new schools we sometimes go and visit the school and discuss any problems, usually with the mother present. We keep in contact with these kids as much as possible in an attempt to make their often confused lives a bit less confused.



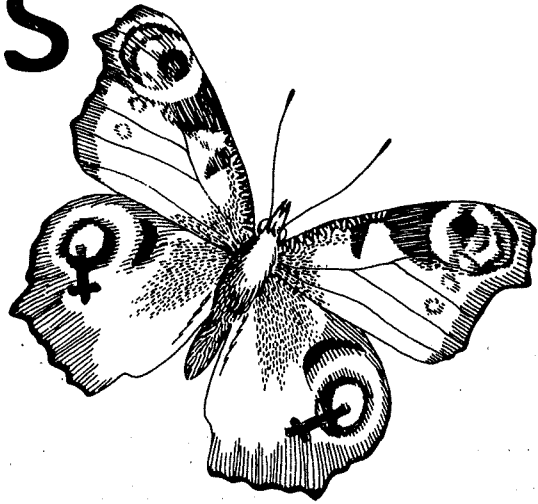
To anybody who reads this,

I hate this place sometimes, it really gets on my nerves. I don't know what it is or why I feel like this sometimes. Maybe it's because I don't really have any real friends to talk to or because I'm lonely. I may talk to everybody and seem happy but I really feel lonely inside as if I'm crying inside of me instead of outside. I have this picture inside my brain that describes what I feel. Would you like to know? OK, then this is it. You know icicles, the things that hang from the top of a cave, they are inside of me dripping, which are my tears. And I wish they would go away but they seem to stay with me all the time no matter where I go or who I'm with. I'm really unhappy here but where I want to go I don't know if I'll be happy there either. I have read the other stuff that women wrote in this book and I have noticed that no kids have written in this book. Well, I am one. All mothers come here to be protected and given support, well I think that's great but what about us!!! At the moment I have tears in my eyes and I can hardly see what I'm writing. You may have a good laugh but I don't see anything funny when someone is down. But I'm not putting down any of the workers I'm just putting down what I feel. I just hope that when I become an adult and if I get married that this will never happen to me what has happened to my mother and that when I have children nothing like this will happen to them.

ANONYMOUS



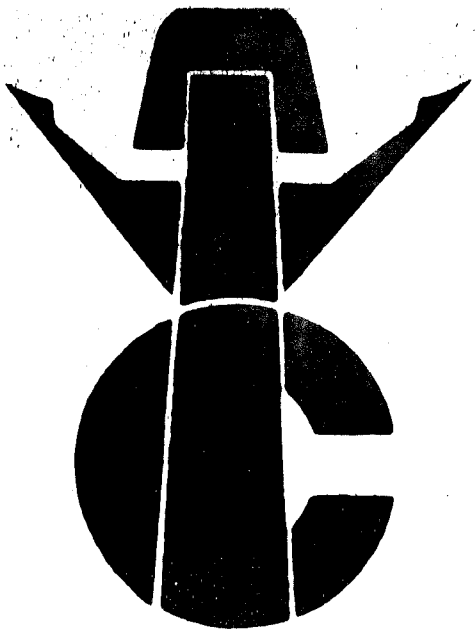
THANKS



Oskar Spate
Kingston Newsagency
Dr. Barnados
Verdon Staines
Beryl Henderson
Mary Sexton
Paint & Paper, Fyshwick
Peter & Leila Bailey
John Guy

St. Aiden's Church
Fyshwick Lion's Club
Coralee Clarke
Stonehenge Sand & Gravel
Narrabundah Children's Cottage
ACT Variety Wholesale
Toy Warehouse
Old Mill Restaurant
Women from Mitchell Laundry
City Uniting Church
Trefoil Guild
Kerry Nicks
Judith Gibson
Creperie Kingston
Inner Wheel
Dr. A. J. Buchanan
R. Cawley
Lion & Lion's Ladies
Ann Wentworth
Barry Reid
K. Lee
Wendy Whitlam
Ann Godfrey - Smith
Ros Kelley
H. Jeffcoat
Margaret Reid
Barbara Guthrie
R. Walmsley
M. Coleman
R. Nairn
M. Neill

Marshall's Butchery
Romero's
Parallel
Soroptimist
Melrose High School
Pupils of CCEGGS
Australian Federation of
University Women
Joyce McConnell
Bill Banks Sports & Toys
Causeway Preschool
Narrabundah Primary School
Manuka Occasional Care
Buttercup Bakeries
Tip Top Bakeries
Tillman's Butchery
ASWU
ACTCOSS
Staff of Narrabundah Health Centre
Toora Single Women's Refuge
Rape Crisis
YWCA
2XX
Jobless Action
Jobline
Louisa Queanbeyan Women's Refuge
Smith Family
St. Vincent de Paul
Salvation Army
Some ACT Police
Domestic Assistance Program



Incest Centre

PHONE 95 0103

81 KENNEDY STREET, KINGSTON, ACT

For free, confidential support and information about child sexual abuse within the family . . .

Naming and talking about child sexual abuse — incest — is the first step in the process of prevention — helping to 'break the silence', facilitate the disclosure for many who have experienced child sexual abuse, and dispel myths that are widely held in our community.



**OPEN 9 TO 5
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

Funded through the Department of Social Security.
The Incest Centre operates as a free welfare service for the A.C.T. community.

The Incest Centre provides the following services

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN
who have experienced incest

GROUP WORK FOR SUPPORT
and development of specific skills, e.g. assertiveness.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
through talks to community organisations, students and workers, production and distribution of material aids for education and information.

Co-ordination of **INTER-AGENCY WORKER TRAINING PROGRAMS**
running workshops on working skills, attitudes . . .

Provision of a public access **REFERENCE LIBRARY**
with literature on incest, child sexual abuse, sexuality, sociology of the family . . .

P.O. BOX 534 · KINGSTON · ACT 2604

THE INCEST CENTRE

Setting-Up.

The Incest Centre was established, funded, and providing a service in April 1984, and was officially opened in July. The establishment of this specialised service was relatively rapid. Work on the submissions for funding began December 1983, in April 1984 we received funding for one full time salary, operating costs and the establishment of a reference library, and in July 1984 an additional full time salary and operating costs. The funding bodies are- Department of Social Security, Womens Emergency Services Program; and Department of Territories and Local Government, Community Development Fund. We expect this funding to be ongoing past 1984/5.

Although the funding is adequate and was relatively quickly obtained, much groundwork has been done over the past few years by various workers at the Canberra Womens Refuge. It has been impossible to ignore the alarmingly high percentage of women and children coming to the Refuge over the years, who have had experiences of child sexual abuse in their families. Somewhere between 1/2 and 1/3 of these people have been the victims of incest. With the sharing of the stories a gradual understanding developed, not only about the incidence and effects of such experiences, but also about the political function of the silenced abuse of overwhelmingly girl children within our families. We are so aware of the way we learn to develop an understanding of ourselves as women - passive and pleasing, from such an early age. Sexual abuse is perhaps the harshest and most effective tactic which quiets us.

In July 1979, from the recognition by some Refuge workers of the need to do more work to confront this abuse, a group was formed to develop understanding of incest through self awareness. This group continued for two years, and the spin off was broadly felt, as women from the group moved into different fields of work, with their knowledge and courage to continue to explode the myths about incest.

Several articles were written and published, and finally this year Womens Press published Father Daughter Rape which was written by one of the women from the group, Elizabeth Ward. Other women continued to talk and share stories in a range of different government and community welfare agencies into which they moved after working at the Refuge. These women all contributed to the process of breaking down the fears and defying the taboos to see, listen to, and talk about the prevalence and significance of child sexual abuse in the family. The Incest Centre has been established as a continuing part of this process.

During the period of lobbying and submission writing, practical help, encouragement, and support were offered by many. In particular I would like to thank Gill Shaw, Jane Durie, Annie Vickers, Kay Ransome, Raylee Wilson, Melanie Hoad, Josie Bryant, Robbie Walmsley, Barry Reid, Jean Albright, and the women at the Canberra Womens Refuge.

Management.

The Incest Centre is a subsidiary agency of the Canberra Womens Refuge, the Refuge collective being the employing parent body. The Centre has its own advisory and policy collective which meets regularly to review and direct work done by the two workers- myself and Mieke van Doeland. This collective comprises the two Incest Centre workers, two Refuge workers, and people working in a variety of agencies in the community arts and welfare areas.

Both workers are employed full time and are members of the Australian Social Welfare Union. The Centre has a policy not to use volunteer workers, but does provide for a small amount of required paid casual work. At present the funding of the Centre comes through the legal body of the Refuge. We are hoping that with changes in the funding procedures and guidelines of the Womens Emergency Services Program we will be soon able to be directly funded and become incorporated.

Affrica Taylor.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INCEST CENTRE

- * To break the silence about the prevalence of incest within the community and stimulate discussion and understanding of the causes of child sexual abuse within the family.
- * To challenge myths about incest held in the community.
- * To stimulate individual, community and government action to prevent the occurrence of child sexual abuse within the family and to deal with the harmful consequences.
- * To provide a safe environment for individuals who have experienced incest to talk about the situation, identify personal issues related to incest and gain a sense of control over their lives.
- * To promote positive sexuality.
- * To establish contact with other incest centers in Australia; and to set up communication networks between community and government agencies dealing with incest to enable co-ordination of approach and response to incest.
- * To improve the skills of workers in the field.
- * To gather data on the prevalence of incest within the community.

USE OF INCEST CENTRE SERVICE - APRIL-AUGUST 1984

24	Counselling telephone
57	Counselling individual sessions
11	Group sessions
35	Requests for Community Education
91	Visits to centre for information re service
36	Use of reference material
25	Meetings/workshops attended for in-service training
23	Talks/workshops given community education
10	Consultations
62	Telephone inquiries re service
3	Training workshops; co-ordinated inter-agency worker training

AGENCIES/ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED THROUGH USE OF SERVICE

social workers, general practitioners, community nurses, childcare workers, (school) counsellors, youth workers, teachers, children's services, police, parents organisations, government health and welfare agencies, other community welfare agencies.

I came over from Wagga feeling very depressed and confused, unwanted and deserted. I had been having a lot of support from the Wimmins Health and Support Centre and they had helped me a lot. However, due to the last contact I had from my father which really upset me and threw me into a turmoil and the wimmin at Wagga felt that they had covered all avenues and were not really sure on the next step that they should take; so they had heard of the Canberra Incest Centre and decided to advise me to come to Canberra and see if the Incest Centre could help me.

So I arrived in a very bad state and I was welcomed with open arms and I felt at home almost straight away and the support that I have received so far has been wonderful. We have done a lot of work and I have been helped every step of the way. It is because of the warmth and understanding of the two workers in the Centre I have regained a lot of confidence and self esteem. I have come a long way from where I was when I first arrived and I am feeling a lot better within myself. Even though we have covered a lot I feel as if I am halfway towards the end of the tunnel. I do not think it will take much longer before I will be able to leave feeling more confident to be able to handle things a lot better. I can not thank Mieke and Affrica enough for the help and friendship they have given to me since I have been at the Incest Centre. It is very important to me to be able to trust someone and I have found that trust at this Centre. Mieke has been the main person in gaining my trust as she has been so understanding to my needs and honest. These have been the things I have been looking for, and she has been able to talk to me without judgement which is also very important.

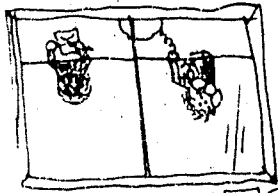
I will admit I had feelings that I was different from other wimmin and I now know that*it is O.K. to talk about it and that it is a safe place to do so. And also, it is never too late to speak out about incest. And hopefully that if enough wimmin do start to speak out about it we may be able to protect our own daughters more or their daughters. So it may be worthwhile in the future to be more aware of the fact that anyone could be a victim at any time. It is centres like this that are the basis for trying to help stop or prevent incest from ever happening again or at least fewer victims. And I would like to see more of these Centres set up throughout Australia.

(* it happens to a lot of wimmin and)

Chris

Living through the memory
Pain, fear guilt,
Frightened little girl child
Sits in bed,
Waiting.
Again and yet again
The confusing act occurs.
Again and yet again,
She feels that the badness
Which is happening to her,
Is only because of the badness
Which must be in her.

But in the living through the memory,
The pictures are altered.
Now there is a new face,
Eyes looking at her,
Caring, concerned,
Urging the frightened girl-child,
Reassuring her
That the badness is not in her,
But in the man who creeps to her bed.
And in the concern
The child becomes strong.
In the calling for help,
The child learns that she can escape
From the disordered, confusing patterns of fear
To a new confidence.



REFUGE

