

# WAGON

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## WAGON Editorial

The Women and Gender Studies Student Organization (WAGON) is a student group affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. WAGON is thoroughly committed to bringing positive social change to our community, both on the CU Boulder campus and within the greater Boulder community. Each year, WAGON coordinates academic, activist and philanthropic events to promote feminist thought at CU. The newsletter was created last year to help further facilitate the reach of the feminist voice on campus through student writing. With the publication of this newsletter, WAGON intends to bring awareness to persisting feminist concerns such as sexism, racism and classism.

In contrast to our first publication, which focused on sexual violence, this volume is not limited to a specific theme, but rather focuses on an array of issues affecting women. Using a gendered lens in order to determine root causes of gender inequality, WAGON actively engages current issues to understand the unique challenges women face and the way in which institutions systematically limit women's mobility and choice. In this edition, we talk about topical issues such as increased voter apathy and the necessity for women to run for office, seemingly gender-neutral U.S. disaster policy and how to spot a misleading or fake crisis pregnancy center. With this publication, WAGON hopes to further engage you in critical thought concerning important issues and challenges present in today's society.



WAGON members: (top) Brittany Burton and Sarah Lavorgna; (middle) Meg Staires, Natalie Tsantes, Erin Kane, and Hannah Chatelain; (bottom) Jenny Koenig, Manaslu Bista, and Sarah McCullar; Not pictured – Lindsey Tagen

## Sexism in the Classroom

Erin Kane

Next time you're in class, pay attention to:

- Who is called on
- Praise or positive feedback
- Criticism, explicitly stating that the student is incorrect
- Simple acknowledgement
- Eye contact
- Looks of impatience when a student is speaking

When doing so, pay particular attention to whether or not the professor's actions differ for female and male students. Is more time given to the comments of a man versus those of a woman? The answer is often "YES!" But not many people seem to notice. Although women have made gigantic advances in achieving gender equity in education, sexist teaching practices and hostile classroom environments are not a thing of the past. Sexism in educational settings is often motivated by an underlying belief that women and men differ in mental and intellectual capacities. Despite the strong academic achievements of women, the assumption that women are intellectual inferiority persists; this belief has been institutionalized through the long history of educational gender segregation and normative gender roles in the domestic sphere.

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## The "He-cession"

Jenny Koenig

A recent interview on NPR regaled a personal story of a father who has become the main caretaker of his family. Because he was laid off during the recession, his wife went back to work to a higher paying job. "It's great, though," he says, delightedly chuckling to himself, "it allows me an opportunity to spend more time with my family and be more of a father than just a breadwinner. So I love it...I'm proud of her for what she's done." This story has become more common within families. The recession has hit male-dominated fields particularly hard, while women's presence and performance in school and in the workplace continues to increase. As notions of masculinity change, men are redefining themselves as well.

Earlier this year, women became the majority of the workforce for the first time in U.S. history. Of the 8 million jobs lost in the recession, three-quarters were held by men. According to Hannah Rosin, author of "The End of Men," the industries most affected by the recession were overwhelmingly male dominated and thoroughly associated with the masculine: manufacturing, high-finance and construction. Of the 15 jobs categories expected to grow over the next decade, men dominate just two of those fields: janitorial workers and computer engineers. The recession has revealed a profound economic shift that Rosin believes is eroding the historical preference of males in the workforce, worldwide.

In 2006, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development devised a database in which economic and political power of women in 162 countries is being measured. The organization has found that the greater the power and influence of women in society, the greater the country's economic success. Many countries have pushed to establish political quotas in about 100 countries in an effort to improve countries' economic status. In 2004, Norway, deemed one of the greatest places to be a woman, instituted a 40 percent quota for women board members. Despite the fact that the measure was originally met with great hostility, it is now widely accepted and has helped the balance of Norway's economy.

"As thinking and communicating have come to eclipse physical strength and stamina as keys to economic success," Rosin writes, "those societies that take advantage of the talents of all their adults, not just half of them, have pulled away from the rest [of the societies]." What if, she asks, "the economics of the new era are better suited to women?" Though women have made great improvement in society, the U.S. still has a wage gap easily explained by discrimination. Women still do most of the childcare while the upper reaches of society and politics are still dominated by men. It may be happening slowly, but it is unmistakable that the modern economy is becoming a place where women hold the cards.

## Quit Complaining and Do Something Already

Sarah McCullar

As the American public's interest turns from the 2010 midterm elections, I am dismayed to discover that many people have promptly forgotten about their role as political citizens, if they voted at all. Political apathy is in style and it's catching on like slap bracelets and big hair in the 90s. Now, more than ever, we as feminist activists have to consider what it means to be politically engaged.

During this past campaign season, if I asked my acquaintances what they thought about the elections, I got one of two common responses: the "I'm too cool for voting and supporting a system where no candidate will represent my interests" reaction or the "I'm voting for whichever candidate doesn't call me while I'm eating dinner" preference. Both of these responses are worrisome. While I understand the frustration that comes with the failure of the two main political parties to tackle meaningful policy change, or with the elite cooption of the electoral process, inaction just maintains the status quo responsible for the apathy in the first place.

There are plenty of well-informed citizens who choose not become engaged in politics by voting, but by other forms of activism. I accept this as a legitimate alternative to voting, but I want to focus on the attitudes espoused by people who believe that nothing they do will change our political system for the better, so they use an ostensibly intellectual response to justify inaction. The truth is that there are plenty of ways to change the course of politics for the better, and to be frank, voting is probably the least work-intensive way to cause change to happen. Using this justification for not voting is a bad excuse at best and dangerous at worst.

So if you don't think voting is enough, what alternative is there? What about running for office? On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the Women's Resource Center hosted a talk with Marie Wilson, founder and president of the White House Project. She told us that if more women run for office, it will change politics as we know it. It is absolutely a feminist project to get more women elected and we can only elect more women if more women run for office. So if you're reading this now, this is your invitation to run for any public office. You're invited because you're qualified and we need smart, dedicated, and enthusiastic women leaders.

Perhaps running for office isn't something you want to consider, and maybe you're burnt out on politics for the time being, but now is not the time to let someone else take control over issues that affect you. I am just as burnt out on 30 second commercials masquerading as legitimate discussion of important issues as the next person, but just because the election is done, does not mean that our work is. Regardless of your outlook on the results of the election, it is clear that feminists and like-minded folks need to look ahead to what's around the corner. If we allow ourselves to become complacent we might find that we cannot place all the blame on the candidates with whom we disagreed, but

ultimately it is our own sense of cynical detachment that is the real cause of our problems.

Believing that politics are too complex, too boring, or too divisive is a legitimate outlook; however, we must overcome those perceptions in order to make an impact. Being apolitical does not make you mysteriously aloof; it just makes you part of the problem. Unless you're committed to changing the political system in other effective ways, the least you can do is sign up for a mail-in ballot, read the blue book and send it back when election season rolls around again. Political action is part of being a feminist and being a feminist means making a commitment for a better future. The best part is that we can start today.

## Gender and Disaster

Lindsey Tagen

Many policy issues today are seen as gender neutral, but this ignores the ways in which seemingly "neutral" policy has a disparate impact on women and that much policy is derived from gendered understandings of the world. One example of this is how the U.S. prepares for and responds to disasters. Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, FEMA became subsumed into the Department of Homeland security, resulting in disaster policy becoming highly militarized. Within this framework, an understanding of disasters as social events is absent, ignoring the ways in which existing social inequalities render certain groups, especially women, more vulnerable.

One way this plays out is that women's relegation to the private sphere and normative gender roles can lead to political and economic disenfranchisement, leaving them with fewer resources to recover from a disaster. Social and structural barriers disadvantage women in acquiring stable and well-paid employment, produce differences in pay between the sexes, and create a system in which skills and activities associated with women's traditional work are underpaid. Further, women are disproportionately responsible for domestic labor that is unpaid, often preventing economic autonomy from their male partners. Additionally, economic disenfranchisement often leads women to live in more structurally vulnerable homes and higher risk areas. Consequently, gender norms and structural constraints that create unequal distributions of economic stability between men and women within society render women as a social group more vulnerable than men when a disaster hits because they often have fewer resources with which to rebuild their lives.

Disasters are social and political events that reflect how societies are structured and how members are positioned within that society. Effective disaster policy needs to include the social and political factors at work that deeply structure individual's lives and affect their preparedness, response to, and recovery from a disaster.

## Sexism (continued from page 1)

Gendered teaching practices and sexist course material may account for the gender gap in self-evaluated intellectual confidence. Women have relatively low self-concept and a corresponding high level of stress compared to their male colleagues. There exists a disconnection between the female performance and personal assessment of performance. According to a recent study by Linda Sax, "first-year college women rate themselves lower than men on nearly every self-rating related to academic or intellectual confidence." Women, especially those with high academic capabilities, learn to underestimate their ability and more often attribute their intelligence to hard work rather than innate ability. A stronger sense of self-confidence needs to be instilled in female college students, because earning good grades does not guarantee a favorable intellectual self-assessment. Lower self-confidence, especially in traditionally masculine disciplines, may account for female students' preferences towards traditionally feminine occupations that earn lower salaries.

What is CU doing to address these issues? The Office of Discrimination and Harassment helps to manage some of the more blatant forms of sexism, but CU does not have a mechanism for dealing with these less overt forms of discrimination. In order to file a complaint of discrimination, the individual must suffer an "adverse consequence, such as failure to be hire or promoted, denial of admission to an academic program etc., on the basis of her/his protected class." Sexist teaching practices that lead to a lower quality of education do not qualify as "adverse consequences," because more tangible proof is necessary. The harassment policy gets closer to addressing the problem of sexism in the classroom, but still misses the mark. Harassment is "verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating or hostile work environment." Sexist teaching practices do affect academic performance; however, it does not constitute a hostile environment according to CU. "Simple teasing, offhand comments and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) will not amount to hostile environment harassment." Thus, Regent Law relegates subtle forms of sexism and harassment to "simple teasing."

All students are placed on the subordinate end of the hierarchy of those who produce and disseminate knowledge versus those who receive that knowledge; however, female students are further down the chain of power than male students. Female students are less likely to become the future professors and creators of knowledge, which perpetuates a system that canonizes male voices and silences women. Unless the rigid power dynamics in the classroom are disrupted, women will continue to be placed in a relative position of subordination to men, and the ideal of progress held by liberal institutions cannot be fulfilled. Progress for humanity requires a diverse array of voices to contribute and by stunting the education of women, progress and the liberal ideal cannot be achieved.



## The Power of the Paw

Natalie Tsantes

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, a four-year-old girl became a selective mute. She shut down completely, refusing to speak back to anyone who tried. As the girl sat on the floor of the local women's shelter, Carolyn retrieved a brush from her bag and gently encouraged the young girl to brush Caitee, an 8-year-old therapy golden retriever trained in victim assistance. The young girl brushed Caitee slowly for quite some time. "Can you tell me the color of the brush in your hands?" Carolyn asked while the girl stroked Caitee. The girl said nothing. Carolyn waited. "Can you tell me what shape the brush is?" Glancing down at the brush in her hands, the girl softly muttered the word, "Heart." In that moment, Caitee helped to break a long and excruciating two-week silence.

Carolyn Corbett is the founder of K9C.A.R.E.S. (Canine Assisted Reduction of Eventful Stress), a non-profit organization which uses advanced therapy dogs as a prescribed part of rehab for survivors of traumatic events. Her dog, Caitee, is one of a kind. Her responsibilities range from working with victim witnesses in court to helping patients find the strength and motivation for physical rehabilitation. For example, the golden retriever might lend an ear as to allow a victim to safely confess. She is also trained to help in physical therapy; Caitee will wear a specialized vest with hooks encouraging patients to strengthen back muscles by bending down to place hoops on the hooks. Caitee serves as a support team, allowing the ability to heal with laughter and tender compassion. Caitee can offer you a tissue when needed, and, holding a pompom in her mouth, promises to be your best cheerleader on the road to recovery.

Carolyn built the organization on the premises of victim advocacy. She has worked closely with the police force for many years. After being first on call to the 1999 Columbine School shooting, Carolyn was determined to find additional ways to ease the pain of trauma. A true believer in the healing powers of animals, Carolyn created an organization unlike any other. While there is not currently a category for an advanced therapy dog like Caitee, Carolyn is working to create a group of advocate-canine teams in which the dog holds a Professional Therapy Dog Certification. Such a title would allow the therapy dogs to enter private establishments and, potentially, the courtroom itself. Trained advocates and their specialized therapy dogs work closely in tandem to further the field of victim recovery by discovering progressive means of meeting victims' needs. K9C.A.R.E.S. is in the early stages of development, making Carolyn a pioneer in her field. Her dedication to victim advocacy is evident in the work she does; she and Caitee are on call 24/7, allowing Caitee to touch over 2,000 lives a year.

It is estimated that between 3.3 million and 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually in the United States. Advocate-dog duos like Carolyn and Caitee can help to ease the recovery of traumatic events such as these and are greatly needed in the community.

To learn more or to get involved, check out:  
[www.k9cares.org](http://www.k9cares.org)

Photo credit: Julie G Photography

## The Abortion Paradox

Sarah Lavorgna

Universal health care is something that both Republicans and Tea Party activists have disproved of since it first came up during the 2008 presidential election. These groups claim that healthcare reform is a bill that increases taxes on the rich (especially for those making over \$250,000 a year), subsidizes the poor with "hard-working" Americans' money, and decreases the quality of health care for those that can afford it. These are the same people that have argued against welfare for decades claiming that welfare gives people an incentive to avoid work. According to them, all a welfare mother does is sit around and have children while the federal government gives her taxpayer money. While the Republicans and Tea Party activists are against universal health care as a whole, there is a particular part of the bill that sparks major controversy; abortion.

It is not a secret that most Republicans and Tea Party activists are anti-abortion. Thus, it should not be surprising that these groups are also against federal money that would fund abortions. Republicans and Tea Party activists, however, seem to have a major contradiction in their political thought process. They are against abortion being covered under universal health care, which would help the middle and lower class women afford abortions. They are also against social programs such as welfare, which provide federal financial assistance for economically marginalized families (such as child support, the child nutrition program,

and the food stamp program). Most welfare recipients are single mothers with children. In fact there are no federal programs for adults without children. Pairing anti-abortion beliefs with an anti-welfare stance creates an abortion paradox.

Many women do not have the financial means, social support, or stable partner to help them raise children yet they also cannot afford the medical costs of an abortion. By not including abortion under universal healthcare women are being forced to have children they cannot support. The same people that are anti-abortion and claim that they are fighting for the life of the potential child are turning their backs on supporting programs such as welfare and education, which would help the baby after it is born. Without the means to get an abortion or government aid, an abortion paradox is created. A marginalized woman has a baby. The baby grows up in poverty and most likely stays in poverty because of the lack of governmental aid programs. If this baby is female she might get pregnant at a young age (because of lack of education, control, finances, etc), not be able to afford an abortion because it is not covered under universal healthcare and be forced to have a child she cannot afford. And then the cycle repeats.

One can be pro-life or be against welfare. Most Republicans and Tea Party activists, however, are both anti-abortion and anti-welfare, which is a flaw in their political thought processing. Something within the political thought processes of these groups must change, because one cannot claim they are pro-life when he or she only cares about children as fetuses. How is voting against healthcare, welfare, and education spending pro-life? That sounds like anything but.

## **CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS**

By Brittany Burton

**“PREGNANT? NEED HELP? YOU HAVE OPTIONS!”  
“PREGNANT? SCARED? WE CAN HELP! CALL  
“FREE PREGNANCY TESTS!”**

IF YOU HAVE SEEN THE ABOVE ADVERTISEMENTS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, YOU MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE WORK OF A FAKE CLINIC OR CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTER.

**What are fake clinics?** Fake Clinics are often referred to as Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) and advertise themselves under the umbrella of “abortion” or “family planning” services but in reality do not offer services such as abortion, access to birth control or referrals to places that do offer these needed services.

**Who do CPCs target?** CPCs often target college campuses and according to a 2008 study done by the Feminist Majority Foundation, “48% of responding Campus Health Centers include CPCs on their referral lists for students facing unintended pregnancies” (Feminist Majority Foundation)

**How prevalent are fake Clinics?** According to the Feminist Majority Foundation, roughly 3,500 fake clinics exist across the United States, outnumbering of “comprehensive women’s health clinics” (FMF). Also the FMF reveals that in the decade leading up to 2009, the federal government funded over 1.1 billion dollars towards abstinence only programs and crisis pregnancy centers (FMF).

**What kind of information do CPCs provide to women?** Fake clinics often provide false and/or misleading information regarding abortion, birth control, the effectiveness of condoms and more. According to the Feminist Majority Foundation, “a Congressional investigation of CPCs revealed that 87% provided false or misleading information about the health effects of abortion. The Congressional report found many of these federally funded centers grossly misrepresent the medical risks of abortion by telling women that having an abortion could increase the risk of breast cancer, result in sterility and lead to suicide and ‘post-abortion syndrome.’” (FMF).

**Do we have anything like this on CU’s campus?** The UMC has a “pregnancy care center” called Real Choices. Although it is not clear whether Real Choices is a CPC, its title is somewhat misleading. Real Choices is not a medical facility but claims to offers “real choices” and “free testing.” The “choices” involve choosing to be abstinent and, if getting pregnant, “choosing” adoption. In one of their pamphlets it reads: “*At Real Choices we offer education about sex and the consequences and risks involved with sex outside of a committed, lifetime relationship. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unexpected pregnancies, ruined reputations and broken hearts are just a few of the negative consequences that can result from sex outside a committed, lifetime relationship*” (Real Choices).

**What are my alternatives?** In contrast to Real choices, the Women’s Resource Center (WRC), also located in the UMC, provides more comprehensive information regarding birth control, pregnancy and other sexual reproductive issues. Planned Parenthood is an example of a comprehensive women’s health care *clinic*. While not located on campus, the closest Planned Parenthood to CU is located on Folsom and Arapahoe, and there are also locations close by in Arvada and Longmont.

\*\*To find out more information on Crisis Pregnancy Centers go to: <http://www.feministcampus.org/act/cpc/default.asp>

\*\*To find out what you can do to prevent CPCs from existing on your campus go to: <http://www.feministcampus.org/act/cpc/TruthinAdvert.pdf>

## The Choice to Be Pro-Choice

By Meg Staires

I believe that being Pro-choice is not just about supporting a woman's right to have control over her body and choices; it is about having compassion in general for all of the components that comprise a person's belief system, and respecting *everyone's* right to make their own choices. I've had to learn that this freedom to choose extends even to people I disagree with, and often my parents fall into that category.

My parents always encouraged me to be compassionate, caring, and respectful of others, and as I was growing up it never occurred to me that I would have to apply those lessons to my relationship with them; I assumed that we would always be on the same side and that mutual support would be a non-issue. As I have become an adult, expanded my worldview and changed some of my views, I have wanted my parents to support me and be on my side, and for the most part, they have. However, they have made it clear that they do not support my decision to be Pro-choice; in fact, they flat-out think it's wrong. How do I talk to my mom and dad about being Pro-choice when they equate that term with "baby-killer"? In developing my own views and beliefs, one of my biggest challenges has been maintaining a loving and respectful relationship with my parents while staying true to my own convictions.

This struggle has caused me to reevaluate what it means for me to be Pro-choice. While I would love for my parents to agree with me on the issue of reproductive rights, I have to appreciate that their opinions are strongly rooted in their own convictions. If I want to make change in the world (and I do!), I cannot achieve that by trying to force people like my parents to believe what I believe. I have to focus on living by my own conviction and being a good example, rather than focusing on forcing people to change. I have to understand that I will not always agree with the people I love, and they will not always agree with me; if I am truly Pro-choice, I have to allow space for disagreement in my relationships.

For me, this means choosing my battles with my parents. I sometimes choose not to engage my parents on issues like abortion, and instead ask to hear their side. Being willing to listen, instead of coming to a situation ready for a fight, has made a big difference in the way that I relate to my parents, and I think it has made all of us a lot less defensive. Stepping back and listening to them has also reminded me of a fundamental lesson: if you want people to listen to you and be willing to even consider changing their minds, you have to approach them with respect, not with scorn. It is human nature to become defensive when you feel that someone is attacking your ideas or beliefs, and I cannot hope to change my parents' minds or anyone else's if my approach is to start the conversation by insisting that they are wrong. The other side of this is that using this approach with my parents has made them a lot more receptive to listening to me, and now I know that if they change their belief to be more like mine, it will be because they *chose* to, not because they were forced to. And this concept of being free to choose is what being Pro-choice is all about.

## What Feminism Means to Me

By Hannah Chatelain

Growing up I never would have identified myself or the women who raised me as feminist. My mother raised my brother, sister and me without much help and while working full time as an elementary school teacher. As I grew up she became my role model and shaped my path to becoming a strong woman, a woman capable of fighting for my own as well as other women's rights. My grandmother, who would laugh out loud at the thought of being called a feminist, was also a strong female role model. She was one of the first women to work with medical teams on an EMT crew and at the ripe age of 78 she went on a mission trip in Africa to help build homes and teach about the prevention of AIDS and HIV. When I took my first women and gender studies class, I learned that feminism can have many different definitions. To me, feminism is about becoming a stronger woman, helping out other women, and finding a voice that is not afraid to discuss important societal problems as women's issues. While my mother and grandmother certainly had the first two down, I still ask myself why they are so reluctant to use the word feminism or speak about women's rights on another level.

In retrospect, I have been a feminist for most of my life, but I was unable to acknowledge it until I came to college my freshmen year. I come from the south where feminist ideas are not encouraged and women power is not embraced. My freshmen year of high school I wanted to make an all-female football team, and upon trying to do so was laughed at by the coaches and told "listen here little lady, we don't have girls play football here." Apparently, "don't tread on me" only applies to men in the state of Virginia.

Now as a women and gender study minor in my junior year of college, I can easily recognize that yes I am a feminist and no that does not mean I hate men. My goals are aimed towards helping women soldiers gain more rights, as there are many branches still legally unavailable to females, and to making the physical fitness standards equal across the board for women and men within the military. As an army ROTC cadet and as a women and gender studies minor, I get to live in two very different worlds; however, my confidence in helping the women that serve with me has only grown stronger with every year. I have no doubt that these women can rise to the challenge of truly equal opportunity and therefore this is my center of focus as a feminist. All of these goals I have been able to focus on through a feminist lens and with the help of women and gender studies classes.

When asking people if they are feminists, I am surprised to find over and over again intelligent and strong women and men denying and avoiding the label feminist. Straying away from the term when you don't truly understand what it means and represents only contributes further to the common misconceptions and stereotypes placed on the feminists. Feminism can take on different definitions to many different people; however, if you generally believe that humanity as a whole (not limited to women) deserve equal rights then you may want to rethink warding off the word feminism completely.

## What can you do with a Women and Gender Studies Degree?

Manaslu Bista

When I first decided to major in Women's Studies, it was solely because of my personal interest for this subject. I knew that racism, sexism and other forms of biasness existed everywhere in our society but I wasn't quite sure how I was to address these issues. So, I turned to Women and Gender Studies. The major has provided me with an academic foundation to view the injustices that persists in the society in many forms.

Now that I am about to graduate, I often times encounter with the question, 'So, what are you going to do Women's Studies degree?' At first, this question raised a lot of panic; however, once I started doing a lot of research on this degree, I became more enthusiastic about the possibilities. Consequently, I learned to transform the very question, 'What can you do with a Women's Studies degree to, "what can you not do with a Women's Studies degree?' I realized that the training I received from this degree, has encouraged me to think critically about different forms of inequalities present in all social institution. This aspect can therefore be applied to any form of profession. Below is an incomplete list of jobs held by Women and Gender Studies graduates compiled from different a brief survey of program websites. Some of these are general categories, while others represent specific and high profile positions taken by majors.

**Are you interest in politics, law or policy?** WGST graduates can become policy analysts, lawyers, paralegals, legal assistant, judges and politicians. Some specific examples include staff attorney for Battered Women's Justice Project, assistant prosecuting attorney, and Democratic Counsel to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary

**Are you interested in social services or human rights:** WGST majors often work in nonprofits or in other programs (local, national, or international) that provide assistance to people in need. This includes positions as social workers or victims advocates. Some specific positions taken by WGST graduates include: director of HIV services at a community healthcare center, director of a women's center, director of a city's housing and neighborhood development office, program director for a non-profit organization, assistant director of a university alumni association, battered women's center administrator, development director at a non-profit environmental organization, homeless shelter coordinator, community educator & trainer for abused women's advocacy, counselor for domestic violence shelter, crisis advocate, director of Harriet Tubman Center.

### **Do you want to work in the medical field?**

WGST majors become medical researchers, doctors, physician assistants, nurses, physical therapists, mental

health professionals, clinic and hospital administrators. Others become doulas, midwives, and childbirth educators. WGST majors can become important advocates for women's health issues.

### **Are you more artistically inclined?**

Feminist activism can be powerfully expressed through the arts and media. WGST work in dance and the theater, are artists are photographers. They are also graphic designers and involved in arts fundraising. Others work in journalist, raising public awareness about important social justice issues.

**Interested in business and technology:** WGST majors are also a part of the business and technology world. They are business systems analysts and small business owners. They are in web design and web development. They are managers and executives. They are in real estate, insurance, and pharmaceuticals. Being a part of the business world is a way of reforming the system from the inside.

So, if you are a major or minor, or are just considering the degree, do not worry about the naysayers. Instead, see the potential of a degree in Women and Gender Studies. It will provide you with a well-rounded education will help you to face the world in all diversity. What can you do with a Women and Gender Studies Degree? Anything you set your mind to.

## What Type of Activities Can You Get Involved in Now?

Women and Gender Studies students tend to be busy. With a shared commitment to social justice and a desire to make a positive change, they are among some of the most involved students on campus. Below we have included just a few of the different activities that WAGON students have been involved in during the Fall 2010 semester.

### **Volunteering for Safehouse**

Sarah Lavorgna

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, also know as SPAN, is a human rights organization whose mission it is to end violence against women and children through support, advocacy and community support. Three times a year SPAN offers an intensive 42-hour volunteer training program for anyone who is interested in committing at least a year of volunteer work at this amazing organization. I had the opportunity to go through the October training session and was simply blown away. The training session gave me the fundamental knowledge to overcome oppression, the support I needed to become an advocate to end domestic violence and the strong community I never knew I was lacking. The next training program starts in February and I highly recommend looking into it if you are someone who wants to build a stronger community through working to end domestic violence.

## **Tabling on Reproductive Rights**

Lindsey Tagen and Erin Kane

The week before the midterm elections WAGON tabled in the UMC to educate students about the relationship of reproductive freedom and gender equity, and as a get out the vote event. Pamphlets were passed out that contained information on current legislation regarding women's reproductive rights, important statistics, and ways to let your voice be heard.

Tabling for political causes in particular is often difficult and discouraging. When setting up for "No on 62", some of us had low expectations about the impact tabling would have. Thankfully, this was not how we felt when packing up the materials for the day. We maintained a positive attitude while using an aggressive approach to disseminating flyers, which proved to be effective. We were able to get the majority of people walking by information and/or stickers and buttons. Numerous women and men approached the table after reading the material we had given them to speak with us about the consequences of the amendment. Others thanked us for our work. The interest and support shown by many male students and the defeat of ballot measures that would restrict women's reproductive rights served to make this event a satisfying personal experience.

## **Supply Drive**

Brittany Burton

Each semester WAGON picks an organization to run a supply drive for and donate to. The last two semesters we worked with The Gathering Place of Denver to help collect needed items for their women's shelter. This semester we have chosen to donate to the Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley in Longmont. WAGON has chosen to donate to this shelter because it became apparent to us that women's shelters in cities such as Longmont do not get the same level of attention support as those in Boulder or Denver. The shelter asked for items such as: dishes, silverware, cups, sheets, adult and children's pain relievers, women or children's pajamas, lotion, shampoo, and conditioner.

## **Cookie Social**

Meg Staires

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, WAGON hosted a cookie social at the Cottage. It was a great success! A number of people stopped by to sample our homemade cookies. WAGON members had a great time talking to people about majoring in Women/Gender Studies, as well as generating interest in Women/Gender Studies classes in general. It was also a great opportunity for WAGON members and other students to mingle with Women/Gender Studies professors and connect with other students both in and out of the department!

## **NWSA Conference**

Sarah McCullar

The students of WAGON and the CU Women's and Gender Studies department as well as staff and volunteers from the Women's Resource Center had an exciting opportunity this November. The National Women's Studies Association held its annual conference at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Denver, welcoming some of the most prominent women's studies scholars from around the world. Our department hosted a reception on Saturday evening of the conference where the faculty, staff, and students got the opportunity to mingle with other conference-goers.

Also in attendance were undergraduates from other universities like Colorado State University in Fort Collins who wanted to know more about CU's Women's and Gender Studies department. They were enthusiastic about working on getting a major/minor program established at their institution, so our networking reception was very useful. It was truly an excellent opportunity for our department to welcome our colleagues, friends, and allies from many different places and professions and we are very grateful for the opportunity to have participated in such a prestigious gathering. A special thanks to our very own Alicia Turchette who organized this lovely event.

## **Self Defense**

Hannah Chatelain

This semester WAGON got to participate in a quick overview of the self defense class that Dennis Phelps teaches at the CU recreation center. In this self defense class women are put into hypothetical situations where they might get raped and taught how to fight their way out of them. This class is about learning how to defend yourself and teaches you awareness techniques that may help prevent a rape from occurring. The next class will be held January 26<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30, they meet every Wednesday from that time and you will get 9 hours total of training including a graduation ceremony where you get to actually put your practice into action with guys that 'attack' you with padding on. Ultimately, sexual violence is only the fault of those that choose to assault others; however, learning to protect yourself is empowering and could even save your life. Self defense should be a priority for every woman on campus.

## **Things to Look for Next Semester**

WAGON has big plans for the Spring 2011 semester. We have all been concerned about the recent rise in hate crimes nationwide as well as in Colorado. We plan on dedicating the spring edition of the newsletter to this issue, as well as hosting a panel/roundtable discussion, and organizing an activist event. We are also working on a panel/roundtable discussion to address women in the armed forces. We also plan to commemorate International Women's Day, which is on March 8th.