



Io Woman

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ICSW Holds Public Hearing

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women held its annual Public Hearing on October 26 at the Urbandale Public Library.

Twenty-two people/organizations presented to the Commission, 17 of which gave oral testimony. Topics discussed included women's health, direct care workers, housing trust fund, abusive lending practices, safe schools, adding sexual orientation to the Iowa Civil Rights Code, legal aid appropriation, violence against women, women and girls in the penal system, divorce reform, human trafficking, perinatal mental health, Medicaid, child care, PROMISE Jobs and TANF.

The ICSW is currently developing its 2006 Proposals to the Governor and General Assembly, which will be finalized at the November 29, 2005 meeting of the ICSW. Priorities will also be decided upon. The priorities and proposals will be published in the January/February 2006 issue of the *Io Woman*.

In addition, the ICSW will hold a ICSW Priorities Lunch and Learn on January 6, 2006 at a location to be determined from 12 noon - 1 p.m. Speakers will be invited to discuss the legislative priorities and Charlotte Nelson, executive director of the ICSW, will moderate the panel.

During the legislative session, the ICSW will track bills that impact women and girls. Bookmark our legislative page, <www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/legislation/index.html> for legislative reports and details on the Lunch and Learn.

Women: Builders of Communities & Dreams



To give students a deeper and more relevant appreciation of women's role in history, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, the Iowa Department of Education, and the State Historical Society of Iowa are sponsoring the 22nd annual statewide essay contest, *Write Women Back Into History*, for students in grades 6 – 9. The 2006 theme is "Women; Builders of Communities & Dreams."

Whether you are a student, family member, teacher, or interested citizen, we ask all *IoWoman* readers to encourage their schools to participate in this contest.

This year's theme honors and recognizes the role of women in transforming communities and the dreams of its citizens. The theme incorporates both women from history, who led and won struggles for equality and civil rights, created and advanced educational and professional opportunities, and made great contributions to the arts, sciences, and humanistic causes, and innovative women of today who further these efforts and continue to expand the possibility for generations to come. Students are encouraged to choose a woman, preferably from Iowa, from any historical period including the present and write about the accomplishments of her life and how she has made a difference to the student and to society. Although Iowa women are preferred and encouraged, the subject of the essay may be a woman from another state or another country. A student's own thoughts on the significance of the woman's contributions are important. Essays should identify 1) why the woman should be written into history (i.e., what meaningful contributions has she made to her community, the state, nation, or world?), and 2) why she is important to the student. Students should consider what people would learn about us from this essay 50 years from now. A successful essay will discuss why the student researched, read about or interviewed, and found the subject to be a role model; it should not merely be a biographical sketch.

Prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winner in each of the 6-7th Grade and 8-9th Grade divisions. Winners will be honored in a ceremony at the State Capitol in March 2006. Teachers who sponsor the winning students' essays will receive classroom resources. All winners and finalists will receive a certificate of participation signed the Governor.

In addition, prizes will be given to the Best Essays on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Women have always made significant contributions to the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, but historically those contributions have not been valued as highly as those of men.

Guidelines can be found on the Women's History Page of the ICSW website, <http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/wom_history/index.html>. With questions, contact Lori SchraderBachar at ICSW, 515/281-4470 or 800/558-4427 or by e-mail, lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov.

ICSW Joins Forces

This fall the ICSW has joined several organizations in order to aid in working towards the full participation of women in the economic, political, and social life of the state. The organizations include Afterschool for All, GLTB Youth In Iowa Schools Task Force, and Network Against Human Trafficking.

Afterschool for All: Project 2010 was created to harness the diverse voices that support the importance of quality, affordable afterschool programs in the lives of children, families and communities. In the U.S. today, 1 in 3 children in working families (31%) are unsupervised in the afternoon. Nine Iowa individuals and entities are partners. To learn more, go to <www.afterschool2010.org/index.cfm>.

GLBT Youth in Iowa Schools Task Force presents on the issue of school safety at numerous education conferences in Iowa, hosts public forums throughout the state on "Making Our Schools Safe for GLBT Students," and provides resource packets on safer school environments to educators, policy makers, parents, and other community members. To learn more, go to <www.iowasafeschools.org/index.htm>.

Network Against Human Trafficking is an Iowa-based organization, which recognizes that the problem of human trafficking is a manifestation of modern day slavery where vulnerable people are forced or coerced into involuntary servitude for the purpose of financial profit for traffickers. The NAHT works to end human trafficking in all of its forms through the use of collaborative strategies, partnerships and services. To learn more, go to <www.iowaht.org>.

Elder Abuse

Federal definitions of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation appeared for the first time in the 1987 Amendments to the Older Americans Act. These definitions were provided in the law only as guidelines for identifying the problems and not for enforcement purposes. Definitions in state law vary considerably in terms of what constitutes abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the elderly. The Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, under the Older Americans Act, is charged with developing and enhancing programs and policies for the prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

According to the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, elder abuse is the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of individuals age 60 or older.

Abuse: In Iowa, the following types of abuse are recognized under Chapter 235B of the Iowa Code: Physical Abuse (including unreasonable confinement and assault), Sexual Abuse, Financial Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation, Denial of Critical Care and Self Denial of Critical Care.

Neglect: The deprivation of the minimum food, shelter, clothing, supervision, physical or mental health care, or other care necessary to maintain a dependent adult's life or health. Within this definition is "self neglect".

Exploitation: The act or process of taking unfair advantage of an individual or taking assets or resources for your own profit or gain. This includes the use of undue influence, harassment, duress, deception or false representation.

If you suspect abuse in the community, contact the Iowa Department of Human Services at 800-362-2178 AND your local law enforcement. For abuse in a facility, contact the Iowa Department of Inspections & Appeals at 1-877-686-0027 AND your local law enforcement.

To learn more about elder abuse, visit the National Center on Elder Abuse <www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm> and the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs <www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/advocacy/elderabuse.html>.

Rights for Work Leave

Chapter 216 of the *Iowa Code* prohibits discrimination in employment due to pregnancy and applies to employers with four or more employees. When other leave is not available, an employer shall not refuse to grant a pregnant employee an unpaid leave of absence for up to eight weeks, as required by doctor's orders.

Discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII of the U. S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 and applies to employers with 15 or more employees. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid family and medical leaves of absence when the employer has more than 50 employees. An eligible employee, female or male, may take FMLA for the birth or adoption of a child or children, accepting a foster child, taking care of a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition, or for the employee's own serious illness.

For more information concerning maternity leave or pregnancy discrimination, see <www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/publications/files/Preg_Fact_Sheet.pdf>.

Medical Records

The most important factor in receiving good health care is to give specific medical information to your health care provider and staff. To assist Iowans with their medical records, the ICSW has released *My Medical Records Manager*, a form to help compile a permanent record of one's medical history to help facilitate better communication between the patient and the health care provider.

The forms are free and available on-line at <www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/publications/index.html>. For a hard copy, please contact the ICSW office by calling 515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427, or e-mailing <dhr.icsw@iowa.gov>.

Calendar of Events

November

- 1-2 USDA Midwest Regional Outreach Conference: Success Strategies for Small & Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers.** Holiday Inn Airport Hotel, Des Moines. Fee varies. For registration information, call 800/726-2256.
- 2 Women at the Grassroots: Getting Out the Vote in Eastern Iowa.** 12 noon - 1:30 p.m., Green Assembly Hall, University of Iowa. \$10. To learn more, contact <uichr@uiowa.edu> or 319/335-3900.
- 4 Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.** 10 a.m.-12 noon, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale. Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or <kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov>.
- 4-5 Campaign for Justice: National Catholic Rural Life Conference.** Des Moines. For more information or to register, call 515/270-2634 or visit <www.ncrlc.com>.
- 5 Democracy Under Siege: Challenge Corporate Power, Assert People's Rights, Reclaim Democracy Conference.** 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines. \$15. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Des Moines Branch. For more information, contact Judy at 515/255-6587 or <jlonning@aol.com>.
- 7-8 2005 Elder Rights Conference: Our Community Cares.** Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines. Fee varies. Iowa Department of Elder Affairs. For information, contact Shirley Taylor 515/242-3304 or 800/532-3213.
- 8 Vote!**
- 10 Iowa Civil Rights Commission and Fort Dodge Human Rights Commission Meeting.** 4 - 6 p.m., Fort Dodge Area Senior Citizens Center, Fort Dodge. For more information or to sign up to speak, contact Jamie Anderson at 515/576-2201 or <janderson@fortdodgeiowa.org>.
- 10 Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa Luncheon featuring Christine Todd Whitman.** 12 noon - 1:30 p.m., Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines. \$40. 515/235-0406.
- 11 Veteran's Day. ICSW office closed.**
- 11-13 6th Annual Fall Harvest Gathering for Women in Sustainable Agriculture.** Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN. Fee varies. Stacy, Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, 515/233-4409 or <staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com>.
- 12 Science of a Nation: 90th Annual NAACP Des Moines Branch Freedom Fund Banquet.**

5:30 p.m., Des Moines Downtown Marriott, Des Moines. \$40. For more information contact Cedric Windley, 515/224-2136 or Mary Mc Cracken, 515/252-8996.

- 12 Speak Up, Speak Out: Basic Public Communication Skills for Activists.** 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Old Brick Community Room, Iowa City. \$10. Women's Resource and Action Center, 319/335-1486, <wrac@uiowa.edu>, or <www.uiowa.edu/~WRAC>.
- 29 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Meeting.** 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Location TBA. Free and open to the public. Call or write for special accommodations, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or <dhr.icsw@iowa.gov>.

December

- 1 Iowa Capital Chapter American Society for Public Administration.** 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., State Historical Building, Des Moines. \$12. Topic: Building a User-Driven Health Management System at the Department of Corrections.
- 1 World AIDS Day.**
- 2 Adolescence and the Family.** 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines. Fee varies. For information, contact Dr. David Drake at 515/288-8000 or <ddrakedo1@qwest.net>.
- 6 Teen Parents and the Law.** 10 a.m. - 12 noon, Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa Training Room, Des Moines. \$10. To register or for more information, contact Rhonda Chittenden, 515/883-1863.
- 15-16 Youth End the Cycle of Violence with Knowledge & Respect: Different Colors of Violence Conference VI.** 8 a.m. - 2:15 p.m., Grand View College, Des Moines. Thursday's session is for high school students. Friday's session is for middle school students. Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 515/244.7424 or <community_resource@iowacasa.org>.

March is fast approaching. Is your organization planning an event to celebrate Women's History Month? Please send information about events of your group or in your area that you would like to have included on the calendar. Send the information (date, time, short description, contact name/info) to Lori SchraderBachar at Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319 or lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov.

Bits and Pieces

The ICSW welcomes our new commissioner, Carla R. Espinoza. Espinoza, from Ames, was appointed by Governor Vilsack in September. She works in administration for Iowa State University. She is responsible for EEOC and diversity issues. Espinoza replaces Angelica Chaisson-Cardenas, of Des Moines, who resigned in August.

USDA's **Farm Service Agency** may have jobs available in your area. Federal employment with this agency and other USDA organizations are available throughout Iowa. To find out what is available, visit <www.usdajobs.opm.gov>.

National Family Caregivers Month (NFC Month) - observed every November - is an opportunity to draw attention to the many challenges facing family caregivers, advocate for stronger public policy to address family caregiving

issues, and raise awareness about community programs that support family caregivers. This November, the theme for NFC Month is "Caring Every Day." For more information, visit <www.thefamilycaregiver.org/empowerment/nfcmonth.cfm>.

mobileWOMEN.org is an on-line magazine for women in wheelchairs. Created by women in wheelchairs who were having difficulty finding answers to their health, fashion, and other questions, mobileWOMEN.org provides a dedicated link to an interactive forum specifically for disabled women allowing participants to ask questions and share information with nurses, knowledgeable people in fields of special interest, and other disabled women. A wide range of topics are explored including: health & wellness sexuality & relationships, reproductive health & pregnancy,

parenting, beauty & fashion, finances & insurance.

The White House Project released the results of an eight-month study of the guest appearances by women on the Sunday political talk shows. Women represent 14% of guests in terms of total guest appearances on the top five most influential Sunday talk shows. **SheSource.org**, a new on-line resource database of women experts, works to close the gender gap in all media venues, including newspapers, television and radio. To learn more, visit <www.shesource.org>.

Nancy Dunkel has been elected chairwoman of the Iowa Bankers Association — the first woman to lead the trade group since its founding in 1887. She is the vice president of Fidelity Bank & Trust in Dubuque.

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this newsletter, please write or
call the ICSW office. You may also
send your e-mail address. Thank you!

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