

“La Mujer Saludable”
“The Healthy Woman”

Capstone Class of 2005:

Nisha Bavalia
Kathleen Brock
Mediha Kosovrasti
Danielle Ravaioli
Marileny Valera
Marlene Valera

Our Goal:

To educate low-income women about their mental, physical and emotional well-being by providing workshops on nutrition and domestic violence. Our goal is also to make these women aware of the governmental aid options available in New Jersey.

Project Outline

- 1. Event Planning**
 - a. Flyers/Advertisements**
 - b. Transportation**
 - c. Catering/Food**
 - d. Incentives to Participate**
 - e. Workshops**
 - i. Nutrition and Health**
 - ii. Domestic Violence**
 - iii. Special Services**
- 2. Campus Awareness**
- 3. Legislative Action**

EVENT PLANNING: Flyers/Advertisements

- Task Managers: Marlene Valera and Marileny Valera
- Advertisements will be posted at El Centro, Children's Futures, and Latinas Unidas, which are all agencies located in Trenton that specialize in assisting low-income families.
- Flyers should be in English and Spanish. The large posters that we will place in the entrance to the agencies will be written only in Spanish, while the fliers will be double-sided (English and Spanish).
- There will also be a contact name and number at the bottom of all posters and fliers so that interested women can call and sign up. This is necessary to ensure that there is enough food/goody bags/information.
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Make fliers and poster advertisement
 - Distribute fliers and posters to three locations

EVENT PLANNING: Transportation

- Assign Task Managers one for Children's Futures and Latinas Unidas
- Transportation will need to be provided to El Centro, which is where our program is being held.
- Contact Children's Futures and Latinas Unidas and ask them about the anticipated interest in our program by women who attend their facility, as well as transportation options that they provide.
- When it gets closer to the event, the task managers will check to see how many participants signed up as interested in attending the event and address any remaining concerns
- Since the event begins at 9am and ends at about 12:30pm, the details about transportation should be definite and confirmed in advance to avoid inconveniencing participants.
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Make preliminary contact to Latinas Unidas and Children's Futures
 - Check to see how many women signed up
 - Finalize transportation and confirm details

EVENT PLANNING: Catering/Food

- Assign Task Manager
- The exact amount of food needed for the event cannot be determined until there is a rough estimate of the expected number of attendants.
- Call La Caribeña Grocery/ Sub store to find out approximate cost for lunch for 20-30 people and how long in advance the order must be placed.
- Place order for food for date of event. Order may have to be picked up from the store.
However, since it is located on Center Street, time could be allotted for this.
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Place preliminary call to Caterer
 - Place order one day before event

EVENT PLANNING: Incentives to Participate

- Assign several Task Managers
- In order to get women to attend our event, we have decided to provide incentives that we can use in our advertisements that may entice our target group (low-income women) to make time in their busy lives for our event.
- Incentives will be distributed in the form of “goody bags” that will contain items pertaining to the goals of our program. Examples include:
 - Toothbrushes, Toothpaste
 - Gift certificates to local grocery stores
- Items will be purchased/donated prior to the event and therefore, it is necessary to have an idea of how many women will attend
- Letters will be written to campus organizations as well as to local community businesses asking for either monetary donations that can be used to buy gift certificates, or supplies from their own businesses that would be useful to low-income women.
- A list of community businesses that we would like to ask for support will need to be compiled before letters can be mailed out
- After money and supplies have been collected, the entire group will get together to buy any additional items needed and to put together the goody bags. However, this can only be done after an estimate of the number of participants is available.
- Deadlines and Task Assignments-
 - Write and copy letters to campus organization and to community businesses
 - Distribute letters in campus organization mailboxes
 - Make list of community businesses to contact

- Mail letters to Trenton area businesses
- Shop for additional supplies
- Assemble goody bags

March 31, 2005

Dear Student Organization Members,

We are writing to you as members of a senior capstone course (WGS496) for the Women in Learning and Leadership (W.I.L.L.) organization. The aim of our course is to choose a women's issue of local, national, or transnational importance and conduct research that will allow us to end the year with an activism project that will directly affect the community.

This year, we have given our focus to women in poverty, specifically in the Trenton/Mercer area. We are hosting an event at the end of April at a poverty agency in Trenton that primarily assists Spanish-speaking families. We have also contacted two other agencies to attend our program, at which they will be given informative workshops on health and nutrition and domestic violence, as well as literature in Spanish on how to obtain food stamps, adequate childcare, and health insurance. All of our materials and information will be focused on how to make services accessible to low-income women that need it.

In addition to providing these workshops, we are also looking to put together a few incentives that are more likely to bring women to our event, despite their busy schedules. Although, we have a small budget provided to us through the Women and Gender Studies Department, this money cannot be used to purchase such things as gift certificates to a grocery store, etc. Therefore, we are reaching out to our campus community, not only to raise awareness on this issue, but to ask for your assistance with our program. If your organization is able to provide any monetary donation that can be used towards this event, please call Nisha Bavalia at (201)264-9135 or Marileny Valera at (848)203-4683. The women whom we are trying to help do not enjoy the luxuries that we take for granted everyday. Therefore, your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated and your contribution will not go unrecognized.

Sincerely,

Nisha Bavalia
Kathleen Brock
Mediha
Danielle
Marileny Valera
Marlene Valera

EVENT PLANNING: WORKSHOPS: Nutrition and Health

- Task Managers: Mediha Kosovrasti and Marileny Valera
- Find a Speaker
 - We would like to find a healthcare professional who can speak Spanish.
 - Possible speakers include: Healthcare representative from Planned Parenthood, Healthcare rep. from Health Services on Campus, a Nursing or Biology professor, or a Nursing or Biology senior student.
 - Our last resort would be for us to actually do the workshop with research we have compiled on our own.
- Research
 - Conduct research on what we would like to cover in our workshop. Although we know the presenter is an expert in this field, we would like them to cover certain subjects so that we may be able to fulfill our goal.
 - Research will be done on the following: nutritional guidelines for women, at home/no cost physical activity exercises, local free/ low cost clinics, self-tests (breast exams), low cost vitamins/nutritional items.
- Write Workshop Outline
 - Again, although the speaker we get will be planning their own workshop, we would also like to have a say in the workshop to achieve our specific goals. Also, if we end up not getting a speaker, we need to have something we can personally work with.
 - Create a simple guideline for the speaker on what we would like them to include in their workshop.
 - Workshop outline will be based on the specific research compiled.

- Interactive Component
 - Create an interactive component so that the women may feel inclined to be physically active.
 - This may include a short exercise routine. (i.e. breathing exercise, yoga, etc.)
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Find a speaker
 - Complete workshop
 - Create workshop outline

EVENT PLANNING: WORKSHOP: Domestic Violence

- Assign Task Managers
- Contact Women's Space to see if professionals (Spanish speakers) can present a 20-30 minute workshop
- Create list of topics we would like addressed in her workshop
 - Laws
 - How to get a restraining order
 - Overview of laws that protect women against domestic abuse
 - Myths
 - Exposing common misconceptions about abuse
 - Emphasizing domestic violence truths
 - Definitions and examples of abuse
 - Define what constitutes abuse
 - Offer situational examples
 - Depression and its link to domestic violence
 - Domestic violence leads to depression to poverty (cycle)
 - Where can low-income women get treatment?
 - Available help (resources: www.nj.gov)
 - List of book titles centered on abuse and survival
 - Table with literature?
 - Handout with titles?
 - Think of activity to involve women
 - Ask T/F "is this domestic abuse?"

- Question and Answer period (10 minutes)
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Contact Women's Space
 - Create list of topics to cover in workshop

EVENT PLANNING: WORKSHOPS: Special Services

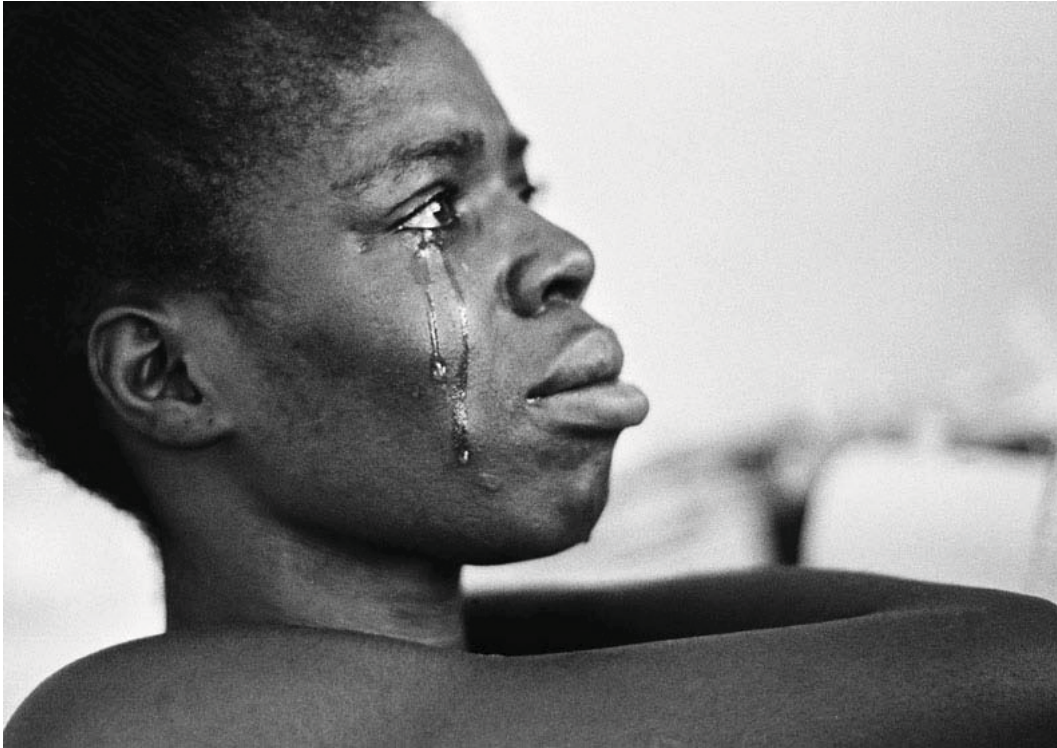
- Assign Task Managers
- Organizations
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
 - Free or Low Cost Legal Services
 - New Jersey Department of Human Services (Family Development)
- Services Provided
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
 - Getting Green Cards
 - Change of Address
 - Employer Info
 - Naturalization
 - Free or Low Cost Legal Services
 - Legal Advice
 - Immigration trial advice
 - New Jersey Department of Human Services (Family Development)
 - Child Care
 - Food Stamps
 - NJ family care (healthcare)
- Participation in Workshop
 - Materials will be provided at the workshop
 - The students in charge of Special Services will provide sample handouts in the appropriate language

- These organizations do not need to be contacted before hand
- Will show workshop participants how to access the internet and forms on their own (if participants wish to choose this option)
- If option D is not chosen students will supply an adequate amount of pre-printed forms.
- All materials will be in Spanish so as to make it easy for these Spanish-speaking women to read and understand.
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Gather information about Immigration and Legal Services
 - Gather information from NJ Dept of Human Services
 - Make sure that there are sufficient copies of all publications and organize for table setups

CAMPUS AWARENESS

- Assign Task Manager
- Three different flyers will be created
 - Demographics Flier
 - Photograph of majority in poverty (women of color and children)
 - Statistic about number of women living in poverty in New Jersey
 - Domestic Violence Flier
 - Photograph of woman
 - Shocking statistic, such as percentage of American women who don't know what constitutes abuse
 - Depression Flier
 - Photograph of melancholy woman
 - Statistic linking poverty to depression in women
- Ask Campus Life how many fliers I can hang and where
- Submit fliers to Campus Life
- Make copies and distribute to WILL volunteers
- Hang fliers (in dorms, academic buildings and back of bathroom stall doors)
- Deadlines and Task Assignments:
 - Create flyers
 - Get flyers approved by Campus Life
 - Make copies of fliers
 - Hang posters all over campus

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, high levels of depressive symptoms exist in 25 to 57 % of women who rely on governmental aid.



DID YOU KNOW?

According to New Jersey State Police, there were **79,844 domestic violence offenses and 52 murders** related to domestic violence in 2002.



DID YOU KNOW?

A U.S. Census Bureau report in 2001 revealed that 18.1% of all female-headed households in NJ and 26.4% in the United States were living below the poverty level.



DID YOU KNOW?

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

- Assign Task Manager
- Research
 - See if a bill exists that deals with low-income women's issues.
- Speak to Staff Representative
 - Speak to the staff member for the Assembly Family, Women and Children Services Committee, Jessica Perl.
- Ask for help
 - Ask other organizations for help in creating awareness.
 - Write an e-mail explaining our project, and send it to the heads of women's organizations, Hispanic organizations, and anyone else we think would be willing to help.
 - Hold a meeting with all of those organizations who have responded to explain the plan of action.
- Taking Action
 - Write letter to accompany the bill we have selected. Letter should explain why this bill should be passed.
 - Reserve tables in Student Center for specific dates. Those organizations who wished to participate will be sitting at the tables getting people to sign the petition. Also, some sort of artwork (ie. a poster board) shall be created to generate interest in our table.
- Final steps

- Compile the list of names and put it into all of the mailboxes of the Assembly members. This will show the interest that our college has in this particular issue.
- Hand petition to Assemblywomen Mary Previtie who is the chair of the Family, Women and Children Services Committee.
- **Deadlines and Task Assignments:**
 - Contact Staff Member
 - Write email to other organizations
 - Meet with interested organizations
 - Write letter to accompany bill/petition
 - Student center tables reserved

LETTER SAMPLE:

Dear Assembly Member,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Women of the Women in Learning and Leadership Program at The College of New Jersey. I am writing to urge you to support of Assembly Bill A3837, which creates the "New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act" to assist victims of domestic violence.

According to the Commonwealth Health Survey of 1998, nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. In New Jersey, this can mean that up to 1,342,776 women report being physically or sexually abused. Because this issue does not gain the attention it deserves, A3837 will make sure that all domestic violence victims can gain the physical and mental care they need without having to worry about the financial losses of leaving work for a temporary period of time.

Our organization has continuously worked to help end violence against women. We have had countless programs regarding the need for change in the way we view sexual assault, domestic violence, and violence in general. Violence against women is a growing problem in our nation and in our state. By supporting this bill, you will be acknowledging that the problem needs attention. I urge you to support A2512 by requesting it be posted for a full Assembly vote and send a message that New Jersey supports helping victims of domestic violence.

Sincerely,

Women in Learning and Leadership

Tips

1. Always have a Plan B.

2. Consider the project's target population and demographics when planning the workshops. (ex. single mothers may need childcare or transportation for event)
3. Offer incentives (lunch and goody bag) to participants to elicit greater attendance.
3. Manage time efficiently.
4. Keep in mind that Nothing ever goes as planned and trust that everything will be okay.
5. Develop a list of agencies since many of them may not get back to you. We suggest that next year's target agencies are WomanSpace (Counseling and Support) and Children's Future/Healthy Families (contact Julie).
6. Contact community agencies early.
7. Secure a location for the event early in the semester.
8. Contact speakers as soon as you have a location for the event. Isabel from WomanSpace Counseling and Support was the speaker for the Domestic Violence Workshop and was very helpful. You may want to contact her for speaking at a workshop even if it is not on domestic violence.
9. Maintain contact with agencies and speakers.
10. Send donation letters as early as possible.
11. Remember to use on-campus resources. Many professors and students can be helpful.



WILL helps Hispanic women of Trenton

By Paige Nestel
Staff Writer

Here on campus, most women, whether they are students, staff, or faculty members, are well aware of the services that are offered to them by the College and surrounding communities. They know where to turn to for health advice, information on sexual violence and counseling for their personal problems.

However, in neighborhoods as close as downtown Trenton, such assistance is not always readily available — and even when it is, certain populations are either unaware of it or unable to take advantage of it.

On April 27, six senior Women in Leadership and Learning (WILL) students will reach out to a specific population of women in Trenton: low-income Hispanics. Their program, entitled “La Mujer Saludable,” which means the healthy woman, will take place from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at El Centro, a local community center, and will seek to address some of these issues.

The six women — Danielle Ravaoli, English major; Nisha Bavalia, biology major; Mediha Kosovrasti, political science major; Kathleen Brock, women’s and gender studies major; Marlene Valera, psychology major; and Marileny Valera, elementary education major — comprise the WILL Capstone course, which is a requirement of the government funded program.

To complete the course, the

women must apply the feminist theory that they have learned through their work in the WILL curriculum to a community service project.

“We were given free reign and a small budget to come up with an activism project,” Ravaoli said.

After reaching out to various women’s agencies in Trenton, the

live below the poverty level,” Ravaoli said. “Living so close to Trenton, we thought this would be the most effective way to put what we have learned into practice.”

“We are really focused on taking activism to the community and raising awareness on campus,” Bavalia added.

In addition, the women noted

review that would compensate women who need to leave work due to domestic violence for up to 20 days.

“Whether they need to leave due to physical injury or even emotional reasons, this bill would provide them with the same protection given to, for example, someone who is ill or breaks a bone,” Kosovrasti said.

Members of the WILL Capstone course have drafted a letter for students and campus organizations to sign in support of the bill, which will be decided upon in June. The letter will then be sent to state legislators.

Although the WILL Capstone class is small by comparison to most at the College, it is clear that the women involved intend to make a big difference.

For more information on current and prospective New Jersey legislation pertaining to domestic violence, students can visit njleg.state.nj.us.

Students interested in donating to “La Mujer Saludable” can e-mail valera3@tcnj.edu or bavalia2@tcnj.edu.

We want people on campus to realize that there are a large number of female-headed households that live below the poverty level.

— Danielle Ravaoli,
member of WILL

class decided to focus on the city’s Spanish-speaking population. Thus, the idea for “La Mujer Saludable” was born.

The program will feature two distinctive workshops. The first will teach the women how to maintain a nutritional diet on a budget. The second will focus on issues of domestic violence.

In addition, each participant of the program will receive a folder with pamphlets printed in Spanish, including advice on how to receive special services and government aid such as food stamps, information on immigration services and contact information for local Planned Parenthood agencies.

“We want people on campus to realize that there are a large number of female-headed households that

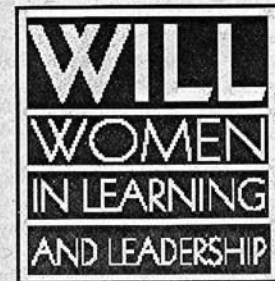
that this is a sustainable project that can be carried on by future WILL Capstone classes.

“If they are interested, this is definitely a project that can be done again year after year,” Bavalia said.

Since the budget provided by WILL can only cover the cost of pamphlets and pertinent materials for the program, the class is seeking donations.

“These donations will serve as incentives for the women to come and participate in our program, and will include things like gift certificates to local grocery stores,” Ravaoli said.

In addition to “La Mujer Saludable,” the members of the WILL Capstone course also support a New Jersey bill under



Logo from tcnj.edu/~will