

Principles

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members- adults, youth, and children.
3. Families are resources to their own members to other families, to programs, and to communities
4. Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community building process
6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
7. Staff work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.
9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

Mission

The Mission of the Walnut Avenue Women's Center is to provide support and services so women, children and families have the opportunity and skills to thrive.

Contact Information

Domestic Violence Services

426-3062 ext 215

Family Literacy Services

426-3062 ext 210

Early Childhood Education

426-3062 ext 206

Youth Development Services

426-3062 ext 221

ABC/ African-American Community Health Group

426-3062 ext 223

Community & Resource Development

426-3062 ext 204

Volunteer Coordinator

426-3062 ext 201



24-hr hotline: 1-866-2MY ALLY

*Walnut Avenue
Women's Center*

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Website: www.wawc.org

Walnut Avenue Women's Center

A Strength-Based Family Resource Center



Early Childhood Education

Family Literacy Services

Domestic Violence Services

Youth Development Services

African American Community Health

Community & Resource Development

Expansion & Renovation



*Providing support and services so
women, children and families have
the opportunities and skills to thrive.*

History

For over 75 years, the Walnut Avenue Women's Center has helped women, children, and families lead healthy, happy and productive lives. Our interactive programs aim to improve the economic, physical, and emotional well-being of women, children and teens. Founded as the YWCA in 1933, the Women's Center was renamed in 1994 to better reflect the programs offered and our community's needs. The Women's Center serves over 3,000 women, children, and families each year.

Vision

The Walnut Avenue Women's Center encourages women and their families to take control of their lives through personal action and leadership. Our Circle of Caring philosophy means participants receive nurturing and support and, in turn, provide leadership and assume responsibility throughout the organization. The sharing of resources on all levels creates a caring atmosphere which supports and inspires women in transition to take risks, make change, and move forward.

The Walnut Avenue Women's Center is dedicated to being a safe place for all individuals, groups and communities. We respect the value of each human being and are active in protecting and promoting diversity. Behaviors that perpetuate hate will not be tolerated.
We will not know peace until each person is respected.

Early Childhood Education

Our Early Education centers provide a child-centered emergent curriculum with a focus on learning through play and exploration. Parental involvement is crucial to the child's success. We believe that parents are the child's first and most influential teacher. In conjunction with our Family Literacy Program, our primary focus is literacy & math skills and kindergarten readiness. It is our goal that every child will enter kindergarten prepared for academic and social success. We provide a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of each child so they reach their full potential. Our 3 programs serve children birth to 5 years old and their families. **TAPP Infant Center (Teen Age Parent Program)** serves infants of teen parents who are students in the Santa Cruz City School District. **Infant/Toddler Center** serves ages 2 months to two years. **Downtown Children's Center** serves children ages 2 to entering kindergarten. All three are currently located at 120 Weeks while we await the construction of the new Downtown Children's Center.

Family Literacy Services

Our Family Literacy Program is a community partnership that helps break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by integrating early childhood education, home visiting, parent/child interactive literacy activities, adult education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. Our programs help children and families achieve academic and social success by enriching language development, extend learning, and supporting high levels of educational success for children and their parents. Through parental involvement, parents learn to be their child's teacher and advocate. Our programs are based on scientifically-based research and integrated so children and parents learn together to develop habits of life-long learning. Families can participate in the program from the birth of the child until age 7 which provides the opportunity for sustainable change and progress to occur within the family.

Domestic Violence Services

Our approach to domestic violence services is a social-educational mode that necessitates integrating change on a personal, social, cultural and institutional level addressing attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values, conditions and environments that condone violence.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person with whom an intimate relationship is or has been shared through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or use of violence. Domestic Violence occurs when one person believes that they are entitled to control another.

An open-ended interview begins our initial meeting with a battered woman. This process provides a safe space for her to talk about her needs, concerns, and fears. Intervention options will be offered to deal with immediate crisis while the long-range planning process begins. Advocates are available to provide support and services to victims of domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence can also participate in our one-on-one counseling and support groups.

We encourage the women who come to the Women's Center to have a voice in their healing and to actively participate in the services we provide. Program participants will often become advocates and activists for others here at the center and within the community. We believe in a comprehensive program for battered women and their children that addresses the myriad of issues facing many of our families.

Youth Development Services

The mission of Youth Development Services is to revolutionize the role of youth in society and raise their expectations of respect and safety through role modeling, advocacy and education. In one-on-one settings, support groups, facilitating, or participating in classroom workshops, our programs are designed to empower youth by providing a space for their voices to be heard.

One-on-one Mentoring: Trained youth advocates meet one-on-one with youth to form a rich mentoring relationship. Advocates offer a safe, supportive space for youth to talk about challenging situations and support problem solving.

Support Groups Young Warriors and Wise Guys are drop-in groups that assist youth in building self esteem and foster a creative outlet for self expression Youth are taught problem solving, non-violent conflict resolution and are connected with other positive healthy role models.

Education Programs: "I Decide": Is a comprehensive sex education program focusing on pregnancy prevention, healthy decision making, and healthy relationships. **"Healthy Relationships":** promotes healthy relationships through the exploration of power, assertive communication and gender dynamics **"Rape Awareness":** A one day workshop that fosters critical thinking and deconstructs myths about rape. **"Live In Your Skin" :** Promotes healthy self esteem through challenging and deconstructing media and body image ideals.

Youth Empowerment Programs "The Youth Adventures Club": Offers a variety of youth development activities that build self esteem, leadership skills and a sense of community. **"She Rocks":** Through self exploration and identity development, girls are taught to think critically about contemporary social issues that affect their daily lives.

We believe all youth deserve respect regardless of religion, sexual orientation, race, class, age, or gender.

African American Community Health Program (ABC)

ABC was created in response to the need for culturally appropriate breast cancer education and outreach to African-American women. We have expanded the program to include many health risks and diseases that impact the African-American community. Our goals are to create a healthier African-American community through Education, Support, Advocacy and Leadership. Our mission is to empower African-Americans to be active and informed health consumers and survivors through self-help activities and health education. We work to create a dialogue with the community at large about racial disparities in health and the need for cultural and racial sensitivity

Community & Resource Development

We are responsible for the daily and long term resources of the Women's Center. Our mission is to ensure that everyone who enters our doors feels welcomed, respected and cared for regardless of the reason they are here. Our activities include fundraising, marketing, special events, daily operations, information systems, facilities, corporate and community relations, volunteer recruitment and training, and producing the Center's brochures, newsletters and other promotional materials. We also provide the basic needs services for participants such as groceries, clothing, diapers and household items.

Expansion & Renovation

We have moved home to our newly renovated historic building at 303 Walnut Avenue! The project created new space for domestic violence, youth development services and ABC and an elevator! Although construction is complete, we are still raising funds to pay the construction loan so we can begin building the new Early Education Center and low-income housing.