

Commission for Women

In its first three years of existence as an advisory body on issues concerning women, the Commission for Women has focused its energies on Child Care, National Women's History Week, analysis of legislation affecting women, publication of a newsletter, and an annual banquet honoring local women and their accomplishments. As these tasks have proceeded, we have questioned and discussed what projects to recommend to the Board of Supervisors as priority issues impacting significant numbers of women in our county. Our discussions have resulted in a conviction that the most effective way to discover such priorities is to conduct a study or survey in which we receive information about themselves directly from the women of the county.

The essential problem which we are experiencing is lack of specific information about the women of Ventura County. There is a temptation to simply list "issues" which commissioners may be personally interested in or concerned about, and develop projects to deal with some or all of these. We want to resist this temptation, however, and gain direct knowledge of the needs and strengths of our female population.

The goals of the Needs Assessment Survey are to determine who the women of Ventura County are; what the issues are which confront them daily; which of these issues seem most oppressive, insurmountable, or difficult to solve; what services are already available through public and private agencies and groups to deal with these issues; what services are unavailable or inadequate to felt needs of the community; and what are priorities for the Commission for Women and Commission on Human Concerns to work on for the remainder of this decade.

Four simultaneous studies will be conducted, one of which is a series of public hearings at several locations around the county to collect oral testimony directly from women. You may participate in these public hearings by providing information in person or in writing. If you would like to participate in the hearings, which are expected to take place in March, contact the Commission for Women office, ext. 6411.

Another happening taking place in March is National Women's History Week, March 3-9. National Women's History Week sets aside a special time each March for schools, communities and workplaces to recognize and celebrate the lives of countless women of all races, ages, cultures, ethnic traditions and ways of life.

National Women's History Week always includes International Women's Day, March 8, a day proclaimed at the turn of this century to recognize the tremendous work of women in the organized labor movement. This date was chosen as a focal point for National Women's History Week for three reasons: to stress the international connections between and among all women; to emphasize a multi-cultural approach to women's history; and to celebrate women as workers world-wide.