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## Community Action



Summer 2013



### **WE CAN Expands and Thrives in New Location**

by Ginger Kimler

WE CAN's move less than 1.5 miles down Route 28 in Harwich Port has created the kind of positive change the non-profit is well-known for providing to Cape Cod women. Its former office - a 20'X30' room above a bakery with a small conference room that lacked windows - abutted other offices and forced meetings and programs to off-site locations.

Its new office space is full of light, boasts a small conference center, and houses 3 private offices and a reception area. Adjacent to the reception area is a waiting room, which has the option of privacy via a sliding door, and 2 private consultation rooms.



**The new reception area**

With the exception of the PathMakers Mentoring Program, which is held at the Harwich Community Center, WE CAN is now able to hold many of its services, programs, and meetings on-site.

Of particular importance is WE CAN's ability to provide services simultaneously and in a more comfortable setting. For example, a financial empowerment or work support session could be held in Consult Room 1 while a legal consult is being held in Consult Room 2.

A participant waiting for her scheduled appointment can have some coffee, tea, or water and browse WE CAN's lending library or brochure wall, which features local agencies and services.



**The new spacious waiting area**

"We are thrilled with the new office and how the community supported us every step of the way," said WE CAN's Executive Director, Andi Genser.

The important focus is not so much on the building itself but on how it allows us to provide improved, more accessible, and increased services for the women and families of Cape Cod."

Participants, volunteers, and staff also enjoy more privacy in the new space. Mary Jaynes, WE CAN's Program Director, believes that the new office's increased confidentiality conveys a sense of comfort and respect that is at the heart of the non-profit's philosophy of treating others as they would like to be treated.

"This life is like musical chairs," Jaynes mused. "Where we are sitting now may be very different from where we will sit when the music stops again. Although some of us have more privileges and others have more challenges, we are all the same."



**The new home of WE CAN is located at 783 Route 28, in Harwichport**

An added benefit of WE CAN's new location is improved roadside visibility. Kara Kennedy Duff, WE CAN's Program and Administrative Coordinator, estimates that four new people walk into the office without an appointment every week. "It's not just participants," Duff said. "People who want to volunteer, people who want to learn more, and people who work for other organizations walk in."

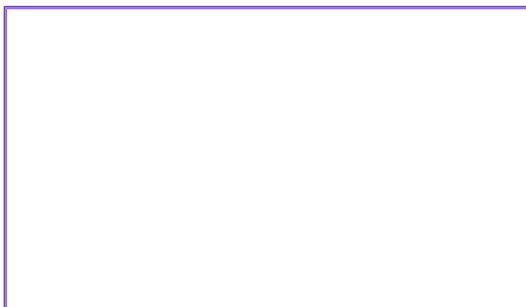
WE CAN is also now able to host field trips. In February, the last senior class of Provincetown High School visited WE CAN's campus to be educated about the organization. "It was so neat to see them interested and thinking about who WE CAN helps," Duff recalled.

An increase in active weekly volunteers is another positive change that WE CAN's move has created. While there were 12 active weekly volunteers in the former office, there are now 23 in the new office.



**Stephanie Boosahda**

Stephanie Boosahda, WE CAN's Data and Technology Coordinator, trains many volunteers on the organization's database, and she and the staff created a system in which volunteers can confidently assist the staff by allowing them to work with fewer interruptions while also serving more participants.





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For example, Kara Kennedy Duff is now able to devote more time to communicating with participants and coordinating schedules for one-on-one financial empowerment, work support sessions, and legal consultations.

She reported that financial empowerment sessions in particular are "gaining ground in popularity," going from 4 or 5 sessions per month to 7, which allows at least 16 women to speak with professionals about their financial needs.

Mary Jaynes noted that many women tell her that working with WE CAN is a special experience. When women participate in its services and programs or volunteer for the organization, they often feel that they have "joined" WE CAN.

"We are like family; we build lasting relationships with people. They come back and bring others with them or come back and volunteer," Jaynes stated.

At the rate that its "family" is growing, one thing is certain: WE CAN is maximizing its space and energy in a time of transformative growth.

For more information, please visit WE CAN's website: <http://www.wecancenter.org>.

#### **Photographs Courtesy of WE CAN**



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