

# THE VILLAGE VOICE

**“People don’t always remember what you SAY, People don’t always remember what you DO, People Always Remember. . . How you make them feel’**

Author unknown

## What is The Women's Village?

I’m sure that by this point and time every female here has heard someone talking about “The Village”, but still many still don’t know what The Women's Village is all about. I’ve randomly asked people how they perceive The Village, asking: “How is The Women's Village significant or real to you?” “How have you seen this program make an actual difference here at WCCW?” I was overwhelmed by the feedback I received.

I spoke at length with a lady who has been here for many years, but due to the length of her sentence, was removed from the GED classes -- but where there is a will there is a way. She now has a tutor from The Women's Village who works with her. “It really means a lot to me that people take time out of their day to come work with me when they don’t have to. It’s nice to have someone who actually wants you to succeed,” she told me.

Another lady I spoke with told me that she saw The Women's Village as a safe haven. “Our differences don’t matter. Everyone’s treated equal and you’re comfortable enough to speak your own opinion.”

Most of the people I talked to agreed that it is nice to finally see The Village “coming to life.” People are serious about recycling, and about trying to make this a place where you can grow with positive support. The Women's Village has recognized some of the unmet needs at WCCW and fills them, such as: violence reduction, health and wellness, raising the morale of our living units, and the emotional support that we need at times from one another.

The Women's Village recognizes that, due to our budget cuts we have lost several self-help classes; however, The Village can be an avenue to provide services and tools needed to help those who are looking for a change. There are more than a few living here who know what it is to feel lost and alone. Many of us know what it is like to be sitting in CCU because we can’t stay out of trouble. Please understand that we can relate to you, and like you, we are looking to better ourselves.

This is only the beginning; I can’t wait to see the impact The Women's Village will have on WCCW in 5 years. For those of you who want to know more about The Women's Village, kite box #7 and ask to sign up for the next orientation. There really is something for everyone!

Gail



## *American Heart Month*



How many of us stop during our day to think about the impact our daily habits have on our heart? Maybe it is something we should begin to think about more. Did you know that the leading cause of death in women is heart disease? One way you can lower your risk of developing heart disease is through regular exercise. It sounds like such a simple solution, so why don’t more of us exercise regularly?

The heart is a muscle, and just like our other muscles, without regular physical activity it becomes weak and unable to meet everyday demands. Any exercise that raises the heart rate challenges the heart in a positive way. Aerobic exercise-- exercise that requires oxygen-- is especially beneficial in preventing heart disease. During aerobic exercises such as running, brisk walking, and bicycling, the heart is strengthened as it works harder to deliver blood and oxygen to body tissues. The more you work your heart, the stronger it becomes.

Overcoming common obstacles to exercise, such as lack of motivation, pain, fatigue, and scheduling conflicts, may seem challenging; however, the results are well worth it. Everyone should be encouraged to maintain some sort of physical activity due to its amazing benefits for heart health; start by walking in the yard 30 minutes a day! In addition to physical inactivity, poor diet, drinking, smoking and obesity are also major risk factors for heart disease and cardiovascular problems such as heart attacks, strokes, aneurysms, hypertension and atherosclerosis.

We should all try to be a little more conscious of how our daily habits such as diet and exercise impact our heart health.

## Health and Wellness

# Depression.

A very powerful and yet potentially fatal thing. Most of us go through some type of depression at some point in our lives, but some just classify it as merely an "off day". There are many afraid to use the word depression, because we associate it with mental illness. The truth is that we all have had something in our lives that prevents us from being happy; experiencing allergies, migraines, arthritis, diabetes, obesity or even just having a little social anxiety can cause unhappiness or discomfort. Does that mean that one can't or won't ever be able to do things that other people enjoy? No, it doesn't. We all have different activities that we enjoy doing because we are all different. If it makes you happy and gets you out of that feeling of hopelessness, then it is worth doing. Truly, you are the only one that can make the choice to be healthy or to be miserable. So why not choose to be healthy? If you are feeling down, find something you enjoy doing. If your problems persist, kite the women's village Peer Support Group or Health and Wellness Group at box #7 and they will gladly help you in anyway they can. Until then, try to keep smiling because we are all in the same boat, no matter how you look at it.

DH

## PASS -Prison Assistance Scholastic Service

PASS is a program that provides educational materials to prisoners. It is assisted by lawyers, educators, and mental health experts who will help you earn a degree in Personal Psychology Development which can be used to help when you go before the parole board or try for clemency. If you would like to know more please write...

PASS

PO Box 2009

San Francisco, CA. 94126

*What if you slept  
And what if...  
In your sleep  
You dreamed?  
And what if...  
You went to Heaven  
And there you  
plucked  
A strange and  
Beautiful flower...  
And what if...  
When you awoke  
You had the flower  
In your hand?*

*-Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge*

## Attention

We will now be offering a lecture series every third Thursday of the month. This coming lecture held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:15 pm in the visit room will be centered on Gendered Environment in Namibia. If you're interested in attending please kite box #7. We are also interested in hearing what you would like to read about in the Village Voice and ideas you have on upcoming lectures.

## Who Is...

Leroy Eldridge Cleaver.

African American writer. Former Californian Prisoner. Political Activist.

February is Black History Month, as such we will be featuring an African American who made an impression in history, and who was interesting and motivational.

Meet Mr. Leroy Cleaver. He was born in 1935 and grew up in Wabbaseka, Arkansas and Los Angeles, California. Cleaver's life of incarceration began when he was only 12 years old; for the next 15 years he was in and out of reform schools for youthful offenders due to involvement with drugs and violence. In 1956 Cleaver was sent to Folsom prison in California for a 14 year sentence. While incarcerated Cleaver underwent a profound personal transformation and decided to use his time to educate himself and immersed himself in the teachings of Malcolm X along with various other social critics. He began to piece together what he described as a "concept of what it meant to black in white America." Instead of allowing his inner rage to dictate his life the way it had been, he channeled his energy into writing.

In 1966 Cleaver was finally paroled from Folsom and went directly to work as editor and writer for the *Ramparts* magazine. Soon after, he was introduced to the cofounders of the Black Panther Party and joined as the organization's minister of information. Cleaver became deeply involved in the political aims of the party; he was instrumental in unifying its efforts to affect greater social justice. He traveled around the world, ran for the presidential candidate for the Peace and Freedom party, and was nominated for the California's seat for Senate.

As the years progressed, he once again went through another dramatic transformation: he turned towards religion, becoming a born-again Christian and recasting himself as a conservative, working with the communities and public at large. During the last years of his life he was employed as a diversity consultant at the University of La Verne in Ca.

There is so much more that I could tell you about this motivated man, but let me take a quick moment to tell you *WHY* I chose to tell you about him to begin with. I feel that we all could relate to this man on some level. By his example we learn that though we have spent our years struggling with the law or addiction, it does not mean that we aren't someone of importance. **WE ARE SOMEBODY!!!** Cleaver grew up in the prison system, and through hard work and determination he was able to grow and change. He started his life as an angry man who hated the government and grew into someone who was able to actually help make a change for the greater good. No one can stop us from doing the same thing; no one but us. Maybe we could stop and ask ourselves what it is that we are passionate about or would like to do with our lives. This is just something to think about.

Gail