

Summer 2012 Newsletter

Looking for a Way to Show Support for Reproductive Health?...*Make it a Party!*

Frustrated by the escalating “war on women”? Wondering how to get involved in efforts to protect women’s reproductive health? We’ve got an idea for you: **Consider hosting an Our Bodies Ourselves house party!**

We can provide engaging and informative speakers (including OBOS Executive Director and co-Founder, Judy Norsigian), plus party favors with an educational twist: “Our Bodies, Our Votes” bumper stickers and informational hand-outs that will keep you and your friends up-to-date on fast-moving health policy issues.

We can also make inscribed copies of the new edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* available to your guests for a donation of \$150 or more (these make great gifts). It’s a fun and easy way to support OBOS, and introduce your friends to a cause you’re passionate about. All you need to do is arrange refreshments, work with us to approve an invitation that meets your needs, and provide a list of invitees. We’ll even send the e-vites, if you’d like.

Want to learn more? Contact Anne Keliher, our Development Coordinator, to discuss hosting a house party or other fundraising ideas. We’d love to hear your suggestions! You can reach Anne at Keliher@bwhbc.org.



Left: OBOS Executive Director Judy Norsigian (second from left) with Mark Sloan, Eve Benson and Elisabeth Chicoine at a recent Santa Rosa house party. Mark, a physician, and his wife, Elisabeth (a leader in public health nursing), are OBOS collaborators.

Our Bodies Our Votes

OurBodiesOurVotes.com

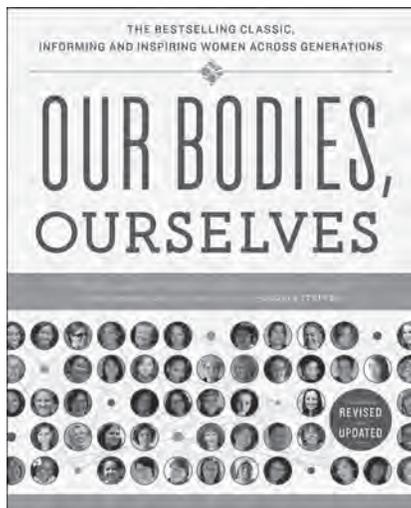
Get Your Sticker Today! \$10 = 3 stickers!

Women’s rights that have long been taken for granted are now the target of vicious political debate. All across the country, legislators are shaming women and rolling back the clock by advocating in favor of:

- **“Personhood” amendments** that aim to ban abortion AND most forms of hormonal contraception. Seriously. These bills could make the Pill *illegal*.
- **Mandating medically unnecessary procedures** such as vaginal probe ultrasounds for women seeking abortions. Some of these laws do not even have exemptions for women pregnant from rape and incest.
- **Allowing employers to deny insurance coverage for care they disagree with** – such as refusing to cover birth control prescriptions. Imagine having to ask your boss for permission to use the Pill.
- **Permitting doctors to withhold vital medical information** – like the health status of a fetus – from pregnant women and their partners if that doctor suspects a woman may choose to terminate her pregnancy. And the woman would have no legal recourse.

Continued on Page 2.

Help Send *Our Bodies, Ourselves* to College!



The new edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* continues to draw rave reviews, but the publishing world has changed, and reaching audiences is a complex endeavor. As a result, many younger women are not familiar with the book or the depth of resources it provides – unless they're enrolled in gender studies classes, where *Our Bodies,*

Ourselves is a mainstay. Young women would greatly benefit from the latest information on contraception, safer sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, and the politics of women's health.

In the coming weeks, OBOS will distribute a letter, co-signed by nationally known educators and women's health advocates, to hundreds of colleges and universities in order to identify institutions interested in making *Our Bodies, Ourselves* available to their students. OBOS will offer assistance with obtaining the necessary funding, sometimes with the support of alumnae promoting this initiative at their alma mater.

Our Bodies, Ourselves is the perfect antidote to the widespread sexualization of girls and the pervasive and misleading messages that bombard us all, especially with respect to sexuality. College-age students increasingly use online sources to learn about sexual and reproductive health, yet they are often unable to distinguish between accurate and incorrect or biased information. The resulting practices and risk-taking often compromise students' health and well-being and also add more burden to our health service resources.

If you would like to help put this critically acclaimed, evidence-based text into the hands of more students, please contact us and let us know which colleges and universities you would like to work with. You can reach us at office@bwhbc.org. 🌸

Our Bodies Our Votes

Our Bodies Ourselves launches new *Our Bodies, Our Votes* campaign (continued from page 1)

Outraged? These are just some of the worst examples of the current debate over women's health and rights raging in the United States. And new legislation is written and introduced every day.

What can YOU do to fight back?

- **Get your bumper sticker!** Donate at least \$10 to *Our Bodies Ourselves* and we'll send you three **Our Bodies, Our Votes** bumper stickers. Larger quantities are also available for your friends, family, and favorite activists.
- **Stick it and click it!** Stick your bumper sticker in a visible and creative place. Take a picture, and submit it to OurBodiesOurVotes.tumblr.com.
- **Show your support online!** Show your support with a virtual bumper sticker. Copy images from OurBodiesOurVotes.com for your website or blog, or use an *Our Bodies, Our Votes* graphic as your photo on social media.
- **Get informed!** View reproductive health resources adapted from the new *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, and check out the list of news sources and organizations that will keep you up to date on efforts to restrict access to contraception and abortion – all at OurBodiesOurVotes.com!

Visit OurBodiesOurVotes.com for more information, and please spread the word about this campaign! 🌸



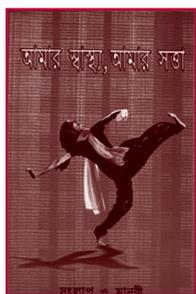
Now Available Online! Resources Based on *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in 3 New Languages

The **Our Bodies Ourselves Global Initiative** is proud to showcase three new cultural adaptations of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* developed by our global partners. Visit our website to view the complete booklets, learn more about the Global Initiative, and read how our intrepid partners are using these materials as tools for action and change in their communities.

Arabic - *Al Mara wa Kayanaha* (Women and Their Bodies)

The first book of its kind in Israel and a unique resource in the wider Arabic-speaking world, *Al Mara wa Kayanaha* boldly addresses issues often taboo and silenced in Arab society. In a courageous outreach initiative, Palestinian communities are using its content in workshops across the country.

The book and related online materials were produced by Women and Their Bodies, a collaboration of Jewish and Palestinian women living in Israel. (It is also the name of the book translated to English.) Shortly, we hope to announce online access to excerpts from the new **Hebrew** edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.



Bengali - *Aamaar Shastha, Aamaar Satta* (My Health, My Self)

This booklet, developed in collaboration by Sanlaap in India and Manavi in the United States, focuses on sexual health and self-care. Coordinators are using the booklet as part of their outreach to 20,000 women and girls, drawing upon an extensive grassroots and institutional network of NGOs, school libraries, village councils, and women health providers and educators.

Nepali - *Hamro Sharir, Hamro Ho* (Our Body, Ourselves)

Our partner in Nepal, the Women's Health Rehabilitation Centre, is adapting content from its five-booklet series for community programs — from ongoing trainings and health camps in Nepal's remote districts, to a nationwide "Feminist Capacity Building" project to train young women leaders.



Visit OurBodiesOurselves.org/programs/network for an international women's health tour and for more details about global resources based on *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in Russian, Albanian, Polish, and French (for sub-Saharan Africa). ❀

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Meet the Newest Members of OBOS

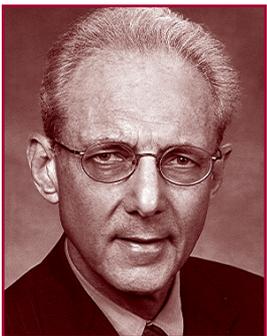
OBOS kicked off spring with some new growth of its own. We are so pleased to welcome three new Board members and a part-time Development Coordinator. We hope you enjoy meeting them here:



Susan Ruderman, EdM, is a seasoned and versatile development professional with more than two decades of experience in fundraising and institutional advancement for education, human services and animal welfare organizations. Susan's interest in OBOS stems from her passion for protecting and

advancing women's reproductive health and safety, issues especially important to her as the mother of a 14-year-old girl. She looks forward to drawing on her deep development experience and expertise to help OBOS better connect with its many loyal friends and supporters.

Susan is also excited to bring OBOS's trusted, woman-focused health information to a new generation of women, working together with all of you to advance and protect women's reproductive health in the United States and globally. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Graduate School of Education, Susan is serving as the Chair of our Fundraising Committee.



Daniel M. Fox, PhD and President Emeritus of the Milbank Memorial Fund, joined the Board due to his long-time admiration for the work of OBOS and its Executive Director, Judy Norsigian. Dan is a well known and trusted healthcare policy adviser, author and public health professor. He appreciates that

OBOS effectively carries out an ongoing theme of his career – the importance of using the best available evidence to guide healthcare policy and practice.

Dan is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, and he also shares his expertise as a Board member of several organizations, including the ECRI Institute, The Health Quality Council of Saskatchewan, and Village Care of New York. Dan earned his degrees from Harvard University and has been publishing regularly for half a century. His most recent book is *The Convergence of Science and Governance: Research, Health Policy and American States* (University of California Press, 2010).

Gina Wingood, MPH, ScD, is a professor at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. Gina's entire academic life has been focused on women's sexual and reproductive health. She has an MPH with a concentration on Maternal and Child Health, and her doctoral studies focused on HIV prevention among African American women.



Up to this point, Gina has been primarily involved with research and service, including several years as a volunteer for HIV/AIDS clinics in the San Francisco area, and as a Board member at AID Atlanta. Gina's desire to expand on her research and service work to encompass advocacy led her to OBOS. She looks forward to using her grant writing expertise, with great success in securing federal funding, to help OBOS work toward new sources of support for its advocacy work both in the United States and internationally.

Anne Keliher, OBOS's new Development Coordinator, was drawn to OBOS out of her passion for championing programs that build women's strength and well-being. She has played a key role in creating and funding a number of national initiatives that tackle behavioral health issues such as alcohol abuse, eating disorders and suicide prevention.



Anne has a Master's degree in Management of Human Services from Brandeis University's Heller School and is a 2011 graduate of the Metrowest Health Foundation Leadership program. She currently serves as a Leadership Coach and Fundraising Committee member for Strong Women, Strong Girls.

Welcome aboard! 

Speaking, Writing and Tweeting on Women's Health Issues Around the Globe



Above: Judy Norsigian (far right) and OBOS colleague Carol Ciancutti-Leyva (second from left), were speakers at a women's health event organized by Kezia Ellison (second from right), a contributor to the 2011 *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the founder and president of Educating Teens about HIV/AIDS, Inc., in Pittsburgh.

OBOS's Public Voice and Action program uses the high quality information resources we develop, often in collaboration with others, to advocate for public policies that enhance reproductive health and justice for women and girls.

Since we are a small, well-respected organization, we identify a select number of policy initiatives each year and offer sustained, in-depth engagement and leadership. We are lucky to have a large circle of OBOS colleagues who work closely with us to substantially expand our impact.

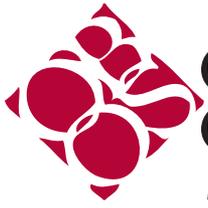
OBOS's books, website, blog, newsletters, media outreach, public speaking, and use of social media all provide direct avenues for educating the public and for engaging more activists committed to sexual and reproductive health. Our domestic and international partnerships continue to grow as we seek greater reproductive justice and improved policies on both local and global levels.

Recent radio and TV interviews (ranging from Fox Television to Al-Jazeera) have focused on sexuality and body image, access to contraception and abortion, expanding access to midwifery care, the damaging effects of direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs, assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), and conflicts of interest in education, research and clinical practice.

Specific examples of our current activities include:

- **Highlighting the ongoing sexual violence crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo** by disseminating a statement developed in collaboration with our global partners and other reproductive health leaders. The idea for this statement, directed at both the DRC government and the media, emerged from our 40th anniversary global symposium in October.
- **Encouraging infertility clinics and centers across the country to promote awareness of the Infertility Family Research Registry at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.** Given how much more we need to learn about many ART practices - including the risks of multiple egg extraction practices that attract many college-age women needing to support their education - participation in this NIH-funded volunteer registry is vital.
- **Blogging about the current "war on women," including in-depth coverage of the short-lived Komen decision to defund Planned Parenthood and the role of online activism.** In addition, OBOS staff member June Tsang spoke at the Unite Women Against the War on Women rally at Boston City Hall Plaza in April, and Ayesha Chatterjee and Judy Norsigian contributed an article to *On The Issues* magazine titled, "Can We Choose to Move Forward on Reproductive Justice? And How?"
- **Developing more effective responses to the growing global reproductive "tourism" industry,** especially the engagement of low-income women in commercial surrogacy.

We also continue to be involved with issues related to breast cancer and contraception. OBOS is one of only two women's health groups serving as co-plaintiffs in the ACLU lawsuit against Myriad Genetics. This suit, which is challenging the patenting of human genes (as opposed to the patenting of a novel invention), will likely be heard by the Supreme Court later this year. OBOS also raised awareness of the evidence of harm posed by drospirenone-containing oral contraceptives such as Yaz, especially when compared with other oral contraceptives, and raised concerns about a problematic process that led to the FDA's decision to keep Yaz on the market. ❁



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5 Upland Road #3
Cambridge, MA 02140

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PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No. 54162

Phone: 617.245.0200
Fax: 617.245.0201
E-mail: office@bwhbc.org
www.ourbodiesourselves.org

Support OBOS Stick Up for Reproductive Rights!

Help us protect women's hard-earned reproductive rights by donating to OBOS. Your contribution is critical this election year when so many of our basic rights are under attack. Join us in advocating for safe and effective contraception and abortion services for all women – **GIVE TO OBOS TODAY!** 
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