

# Healing Circle deals with abuse

## Event aims to help women, men and children

By Jenny House  
Staff Reporter

People who have been touched by abuse can come together in a circle of healing during an event this evening in the UNL Culture Center.

During the Healing Circle, rituals involving the four elements — air, earth, fire and rain — will be performed as a way for individuals to purge anger, vindication and other emotions, said Judith Kriss, director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Women's Center.

"The Healing Circle is a time for anyone who has been touched by abuse to come together," she said.

Counselors will be available, and refreshments will be served at the second annual event, which is sponsored by the Women's Center and Cornerstone. It begins at 6:30 p.m.

"Being in this environment helps," said Women's Center volunteer Dawn Nahhas, one of the Healing Circle coordinators. "Seeing other women going through the same experience helps."

Dr. Karen Lyons, president of the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center and another coordinator of the event, said the Healing Circle reached people at different stages of dealing with abuse and claiming power for themselves.

She said becoming empowered was the first step in the healing process.

Lyons emphasized that abuse — domestic violence, sexual assault, rape or battery — affected everyone.

Women's Center volunteer Billy Aplin, another Healing Circle coordinator, said physical abuse could cause

*"For many women who are abused, their souls are wounded, and this personal, understanding spirit connects to one's source of being."*

**THE REV. MELISSA DRAPER**  
Cornerstone

emotional and spiritual damage.

Family members, friends and children often struggle with their role or with the helplessness of watching a victim suffer.

"Abuse affects on many different levels, all of a lifetime," he said.

And healing is not an end product, Aplin said — it's a continuous process. Family and friends of victims must understand a victim's first step, which is finding the courage to initiate a healing process and building self-esteem.

And that victim isn't necessarily female, he said.

"Although women are always seen as the ones being abused, so are men, just to lesser extents most of the time," Aplin said.

There needs to be leeway for feeling hurt, too, Aplin said, which is what the Healing Circle is all about.

"Men have a problem being honest about their role and how abuse affects them," he said. This happens because

they deal with problems with actions instead of words, he said.

"When men are feeling, it is considered a weakness to them," he said. "Men need to realize there is a strength necessary to deal with abuse issues."

Men cannot take the easy way out by closing their emotions, he said.

Aplin suggested redefining masculinity by eliminating confusing myths and generalizations about men abusing women. This will help men feel less insecure, he said.

And children, too, must be considered in this cycle, Aplin said. Children who are abused or who witness abuse eventually will treat people based on how they have been treated.

This cycle can be remedied only through education, facts and positive role models, Aplin said.

"Healing requires being honest, focusing anger on the right people, loving in spite of anger, resolving issues by being reflective and using experience in a pro-active way," he said.

The Rev. Melissa Draper from Cornerstone said abuse also was not female or male, but a human problem resulting from a lack of respect and a desire for control.

"For many women who are abused, their souls are wounded, and this personal, understanding spirit connects to one's source of being," Draper said.

The Healing Circle will honor different beliefs — for some individuals God is important to healing, she said, but not for everyone.

"It is my hope through the Healing Circle there is a real catalyst for healing," Draper said.

# Phi Mu commemorates 75 years of service

By Erin Schulte  
Staff Reporter

Although members of UNL's Phi Mu sorority have moved from house to house over time, the friendships have remained a constant for 75 years.

Teresa Priefert, chapter adviser and an alumna who graduated in 1985, is helping the sorority members plan 75th anniversary events this week.

"Phi Mu is not something that's just four years — it's a lifetime commitment," Priefert said.

Alumnae will be returning this week during the anniversary celebration to meet old friends, she said. The sorority has planned a banquet and formal dance for Saturday, and expects alumnae as old as 90.

The banquet will provide a chance for older alumnae to see old friends, standards chairwoman Amy Schubbach said.

"People that graduated in the '50s and '60s still keep in touch," Schubbach said. "It's unique among greek houses — the bond you can make and keep between generations."

The Phi Mu national president, Frances Mitchell, will be the keynote speaker at the banquet, said Angie Watts, UNL Phi Mu chapter president. Mitchell has never visited UNL before, Watts said.

But Phi Mu isn't just about friendship.

Members agreed the sorority contributed a lot to the community.

The Phi Mu national organization is the largest among greek houses contributing to the Children's Miracle Network, which grants terminally ill children their wishes. It is also the largest contributor to Project Hope, which benefits hospital volunteers, Watts said.

Sorority members also volunteer at local levels.

Before Easter, Phi Mu held an Easter egg hunt for Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteers and kids, philanthropy chairwoman Cynthe Oliver said.

"It just took two hours out of our Sunday, but it made a lot of kids happy," Watts said.

Through the years, the sorority has called three different houses around town "home," said Brooke Fleck, house manager.

When Phi Mu was founded at UNL in April 1921, Fleck said, it was located by the Capitol. During World War I, greek houses for the most part went "underground" and operated off campus, she said.

After World War II, the greek system came back on campus and Phi Mu was located where the Wick Alumni Center now sits, Fleck said. The house, however, was falling apart and was eventually torn down.

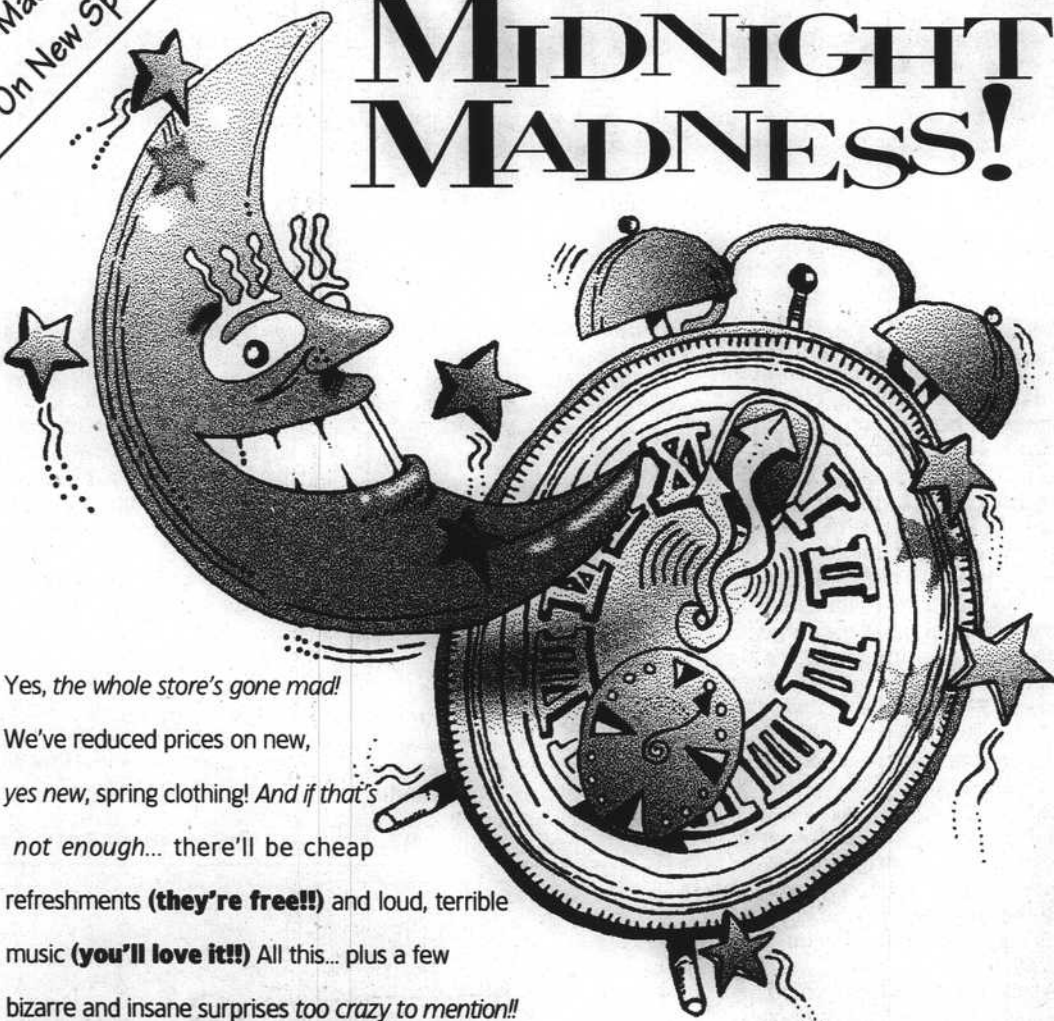
Members have since lived at 1125 N. 16th St., in houses built by the university.

Priefert said not much had changed since she lived in the house, and she enjoyed being chapter adviser.

"I think they're a lovely bunch of young women."

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