

# Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County



## Press Release

### The Women Center of Montgomery County Announces Stalking Prevention and Outreach Initiatives to Educate Students on Local County's College Campuses

Elkins Park, PA- The Women's Center of Montgomery County, a community based volunteer organization providing services to more than 3500 victims of domestic violence annually, is proud to announce a \$5,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. This funding will help to expand the Center's Stalking Prevention and Outreach Initiatives on our county's college campuses. The goal of this project is to work with colleges located in Montgomery County to help them develop policies and procedures that prevent stalking and generate awareness of the crime.



This grant to the Women's Center of Montgomery County will fund strategies tailored to meet the unique needs of each campus, including establishing volunteer counseling services, developing internal adjudication processes, and training law enforcement, resident advisors, faculty and staff.

"Thanks to Verizon Foundation & the ongoing support from Verizon Wireless' HopeLine® phone recycling program, we are able to bring services to a venue where many young women, experiencing independent living for the first time in their lives, can feel vulnerable and unsupported", said Maria Macaluso, Executive Director of the Women's Center of Montgomery County. "For many reasons, stalking on college campuses can be an underreported crime. We hope this funding will address these problems by educating and empowering students to take action to protect themselves. Additionally, we hope this grant will help to develop a model program that could be used by other colleges and universities in Pennsylvania."

"Verizon is proud to improve the quality of life for youth and families in Montgomery County by empowering the community with innovative tools and resources," said Daniel J. Reavy, Director of External Affairs for Verizon Pennsylvania. "We're investing in programs, such as our partnership with The Women's Center of Montgomery County to educate and empower students and teachers to enjoy a safe experience while on college campuses. We are confident that working together, we can all make a much larger impact on health and family safety in the 21st century." To learn more, visit [www.verizonfoundation.org](http://www.verizonfoundation.org).

The Women's Center of Montgomery County was established in 1976 as a community-based organization dedicated to the empowerment of women. Services provided include: a 24-hour domestic violence hotline; peer and group domestic violence counseling; elder abuse counseling and advocacy; court and hospital accompaniment; financial literacy workshops; dating violence and stalking prevention; training for law enforcement and the courts; and community education programs. Programs are administered by more than 175 trained volunteers in the Center's six offices located in Elkins Park, Norristown, Colmar, Lansdale, Pottstown and Bryn Mawr.

## Norristown Volunteer Update

### LEGAL REMEDIES

There will not be a Legal Remedies workshop in December. The next Legal Remedies Workshop will be on Tuesday, January 19th, 2010 from 4:30-6:30pm in the Norristown office, attorney will be Ellen Fischer. The discussion will be open to civil and family law. The information sessions are held at our Norristown office at 18 West Airy Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Please call 610-279-7474 to register to attend. Also, please refer a family member or friend to this valuable program!

### A NEW KIND OF SUPPORT GROUP

Time for Healing Spiritual Based Support Group. New Sessions to begin in January 2010!  
Healing from domestic violence hurts and other life issues that have left one broken and scarred. Fridays from 6-7:30pm at the Norristown office: 18 West Airy Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. Contact Denise at the Women's Center at 610-279-7474

Happy Holidays!  
Jenn B.

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### Women's Center Evening Book Club Schedule 2009-2010

December	The All of It Discussion Leader: Group	Author: Jeannette Haien Hostess: Jasmine Rest
<i>January &amp; February</i>	<i>Nothing scheduled at this time</i>	
March	Away Discussion Leader: Dorothy	Author: Ann Bloom Hostess: Sunny
April	Madonnas of Leningrad Discussion Leader: Elaine	Author: Debra Dean Hostess:
May	Netherland Discussion Leader: Linda	Author: Joseph O'Neil Hostess: Elaine
June	Sarah's Key Discussion Leader: Suzanne	Author: Tatiana di Rosnay Hostess: Linda

Meetings are held on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Wednesday of every month.  
Time: 7:30 p.m. social/8:00 p.m. discussion  
Regrets only to hostess appreciated.

New members welcome! For more information, contact Sue at 215-887-7246

## Half Of 14- To 24-Year Olds Have Experienced Digitally Abusive Behavior, Survey Finds

MTV has unveiled a new multi-year initiative that will use shows, contests and online tools to try to stop the spread of sexting and cyberbullying. To coincide with the initiative's launch, MTV and the *Associated Press* released a new online survey which finds that 50 percent of 14- to 24-year-olds have been the target of some form of digital abuse, and nearly one in three (30 percent) have sent or received nude photos of other young people on their cell phones or online.

MTV's "[A THIN LINE](#)" campaign will address digital abuse issues through a series of on-air, online and real world initiatives including integration in MTV's top-rated programming, an MTV News special focused on sexting, a special episode of the documentary series "True Life: I Have Digital Drama," public service announcements, innovative online and mobile tools, and a "Redraw the Line Challenge" which calls on young people to submit innovative digital antidotes to digital abuse. Young people can access information, resources and support on issues related to digital abuse at [www.athinline.org](http://www.athinline.org).

### New Survey

Research from MTV and the *Associated Press* finds that 30 percent of young people have sent or received nude pictures of other young people on their cell phones or online. Three in five people in that group (61% of them) report being pressured to do so at least once.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents who have shared naked images of themselves with someone other than a significant other did so with someone they knew only online and had never met in person, and 24% shared the images with someone they were interested in dating or hooking up with. Seventeen percent of sext recipients report that they have passed the images along to someone else, and more than half of them (55%) say they shared them with more than one person.

Nearly a quarter of young people who say they are in some sort of a romantic relationship report that their boyfriend or girlfriend checks up on them multiple times a day, either online or on a cell phone to see where they are, who they're with, or what they're doing. Twenty-two percent of those young people say they feel like their significant other checks up on them too often, and 15 percent say that their significant other complains that they check up too often. More than one in four says their boyfriend or girlfriend has checked the text messages on their phone without permission.

When it comes to online behavior, about half of young people (51%) think their actions could come back to haunt them, and one in four believe that their digital actions could have legal consequences.

The survey found that some of the more extreme forms of digital abuse, such as impersonation, blackmail or pressure to sext, occur less frequently but still affect a number of young people.

### Developing the Campaign

"Our audience lives online, and while every generation deals with their own set of abuse issues, the digital sphere exponentially increases opportunities for misuse," said Stephen Friedman, General Manager of MTV. "There is a very thin line between private and public, this moment and forever, love and abuse, and words and wounds. '[A THIN LINE](#)' is built to empower our audience to draw their own line between digital use and digital abuse."

The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) was one of MTV's partners in developing the campaign. "We are very proud to collaborate with MTV on this important work to help stop digital abuse," said FVPPF President Esta Soler. "By raising awareness of digital abuse in an innovative and relevant way, '[A THIN LINE](#)' will shine a spotlight on a problem that is affecting our young people in countless schools and communities across the country."

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Leading experts in cyber-crime, teen dating violence, adolescent psychology, and other teen issues formed an advisory board to help shape the campaign. In addition to Soler, the board includes Parry Aftab, Executive Director of Wired Safety and StopCyberbullying.org; Casi Lumbra, a teen online security expert who has addressed audiences at the United Nations and Harvard Law School; Dr. Jill Murray, psychologist and internationally-recognized expert on teen dating abuse; Jane Randel, Vice President of Corporate Communications, Liz Claiborne Inc.; Cindy Southworth, Founder and Director of the Safety Net Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence; and Virginia Witt, Director of Public Affairs and Policy at Blue Shield of California Foundation. Other partners that helped develop the campaign include: Facebook, MySpace, Anti-Defamation League, loveisrespect.org, The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, DoSomething.org, Break the Cycle, Ruder Finn, Teenangels and PBS' FRONTLINE.

Over the next few years, MTV plans to address digital abuse with a 30-minute MTV News Special Report on sexting. The special will examine how this trend is affecting youth culture and relationships, the legal and emotional stakes involved and how sexting is becoming a new frontier for teen dating abuse. It is set to premiere around Valentine's Day 2010. Another special, "True Life: I Have Digital Drama," from MTV's Emmy-Award winning documentary series will take a close look at how digital platforms are creating trust, privacy and harassment issues for two young couples.

MTV is also issuing the "Redraw the Line Challenge" to young people. With support from Blue Shield of California Foundation, MTV is asking America's youth to imagine digital antidotes – such as new mobile or web-based services, social games or viral content – that help stop the spread of digital abuse. The winning individual or team will be rewarded with \$10,000, plus a chance to work with MTV – and a development budget of up to \$75,000 – to see their idea actualized. *For more details, click [here](#).*

MTV kicked off "[A THIN LINE](#)" on December 3 in tandem with Liz Claiborne Inc.'s *It's Time To Talk Day*, an annual day dedicated to ensuring that Americans speak-up and raise national attention around domestic violence including teen dating violence and intimate partner abuse.

Knowledge Networks conducted the survey for MTV and the *Associated Press*, interviewing 600 teens and 647 adults from September 11-22, 2009. The sampling margin of error for a 50 percent statistic with 95 percent confidence is +/- 2.8 percent for all interviews.

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## **MAKING THE INVESTMENT**

*Submitted by Denise Flynn, Women's Advocacy Project Program Director*

The investment we make in spending the time and energy in helping and empowering battered individuals pays off in a rewarding way. We have received many comments that these services are helping and they don't know where they would be without us. We have committed volunteers and staff who go the extra mile. I have made a personal investment in working with individuals to get them past the hump and forward into their next step.

When you invest your time, your energy, your resources, your self into helping someone else get beyond being "stuck" in an unhealthy relation and/or situation, when you just listen to what they have to say, they feel valued, respected, esteemed, and can pull themselves up out of being stuck and they do the work necessary to ameliorate their lives.

I have been working with a particular individual who came to our doorsteps as a walk-in, almost by accident. Over the course of a year, I invested time to listen, give options, validate, give constructive feed-back, and

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The following article is an excerpt from *Speaking Up Magazine*, a project of the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

## House Health Reform Bill Contains Key Domestic Violence Provisions

The Family Violence Prevention Fund is praising the U.S. House of Representatives for including in its health reform bill a key prevention initiative that will advance the health care system's response to domestic violence and curb the tremendous health costs that result from it.

Passed on November 7, the legislation would require private insurers and the new Health Insurance Exchange to reimburse health care providers who assess patients for domestic violence and provide brief counseling and referrals. Health care providers can play a critical role in helping patients recognize the dangers associated with abuse, and connecting them to experts who can help them take steps to protect themselves and their children – if providers are given the time, training and supports to do so.

The reform bill also contains an important measure to prohibit insurers from treating domestic violence as a pre-existing condition and discriminating against victims. The House health reform bill would put the prohibition into effect immediately. This protection is based on language in the *Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act* introduced for several years by Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA).

“Doctors and other health care providers are in a unique position to identify when their patients are experiencing domestic violence, and connect them with local service providers who can save their lives,” said Family Violence Prevention Fund President Esta Soler. “We are absolutely delighted that the health insurance reform bill the House passed today contains these important provisions, and especially grateful to Representatives Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Roybal-Allard for ensuring that the insurance non-discrimination provision can take effect immediately. We hope Congress will soon advance laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of domestic violence in home-owner and other forms of insurance as well.”

Violence can have lifelong consequences; one study found that women who have experienced domestic violence are 80 percent more likely to have a stroke, 70 percent more likely to have heart disease, 60 percent more likely to have asthma, and 70 percent more likely to drink heavily than women who have not experienced intimate partner violence. A 2003 study found that 44 percent of victims of domestic violence talked to someone about the abuse, with 37 percent of women talking to their health care provider.

In June, the Family Violence Prevention Fund organized a letter to congressional leaders requesting the inclusion of these and other provisions in health reform legislation.

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she kept coming back. Each time, she left more empowered and validated than when she came. She joined the Time For Healing Spiritual Support Group and came faithfully until she got a job that conflicted with her coming. Nonetheless, she kept coming and calling and getting what she needed to move forward in her life. When trials and tribulations arose, she knew she could get what she needed, like the commercial with the gigantic umbrella giving unseen but steady support. One year later, she has a job, moving into her own place, literally stopped and continues to stop the abuse being inflicted on her and can advocate for herself. I am proud of her and for us being there. It was hard some days, but I tell you this, she is proud of herself, that made the investment worthwhile. She is now able and wants to help someone else going through the same or similar circumstances. As I stand back and look at her accomplishments, I am glad to have made that investment.

*The following article is an excerpt from Speaking Up Magazine, a project of the Family Violence Prevention Fund.*

## **A Door Opens For Battered Asylum-Seekers**

In late October, the Obama Administration's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) signaled that the government is open to considering asylum claims from women fleeing severe domestic violence when it recommended that a San Francisco immigration court grant asylum to Rody Alvarado Peña, whose case has been in and out of United States immigration courts for 14 years.

While the action applies only to Alvarado Peña's case, experts are calling it a major step toward defining the legal grounds on which battered and sexually abused women from foreign countries can seek protection in the United States. The Family Violence Prevention Fund, Center for Gender and Refugees Studies, and other advocates for victims of violence have long advocated for this recommendation.

An immigration judge must now formally rule on the case, but Alvarado Peña's lawyer, Karen Musalo, who directs the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies at Hastings College of Law at the University of California, says that since the government itself is in favor of a grant of asylum, it is likely that a judge will approve her claim.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Alvarado Peña said she hoped the resolution of her case will mean that other abused women receive quicker, favorable decisions from the immigration courts.

"The Department of Homeland Security should follow up its brief in the Alvarado case by issuing something more lasting and useful: a firm, clear set of regulations spelling out the conditions under which battered women could be granted asylum here," the *New York Times* recommended in a November 9 editorial. "Such regulations would give invaluable guidance to asylum officials and immigration judges and prevent the years of delays and uncertainty that so worsened Ms. Alvarado's ordeal."

Family Violence Prevention Fund President Esta Soler agreed. "We intend to press vigorously for strong regulations or laws that will ensure that victims of domestic and sexual violence do not spend decades in limbo, fighting deportation in our immigration courts," she said. "We cannot put the fate of women whose lives are in grave danger at the mercy of whatever Administration holds office."

## **Domestic Violence Volunteer Counselor/Advocate Winter Training Schedule**

Domestic violence counselor training sessions for new Women's Center volunteers will be starting in January. Classes meet once a week for 8 weeks, 3 hours each week. Starting on January 13<sup>th</sup> in the Elkins Park office, there will be a session on Wednesdays from 10am-1pm and another group also on Wednesdays evenings from 6pm-9pm. Starting January 19<sup>th</sup>, a third training group will take place in the Bryn Mawr office, on Tuesday evenings, from 6pm-9pm. Please contact Deanna Linn, Director of Volunteers, for more information about the trainings and volunteer applications, 215-635-7340 or [dlinn@womenscentermc.org](mailto:dlinn@womenscentermc.org)

Please note that all participants must pre-register for the training. Trainings are limited to staff, volunteers and members of the Women's Center of Montgomery County.

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**With Special Thanks to our Friends at the  
Clemens Family Corporation and Hatfield Quality Meats  
Sharing the Goodness the Christmas Season**

With so much of our news lately filled with stories of economic hardship and sadness, it was a great surprise to receive a call in early December from a representative from the Clemens Family Corporation with an offer of 50 hams to be distributed to families in need for the holiday season.

Happily, we were able to share this gift with our friends at the Senior Adult Activities Center of Montgomery County. As a result, we were able to bring much appreciated relief and joy to many households served by our domestic violence programs. To these individuals and families living in crisis, the unexpected generosity and kindness brought yet another gift, beyond the donation of ham. For these families, it brought hope and happiness, displacing, if only for the holidays, the sense of despair and need

In a longstanding tradition, the Clemens family and Hatfield employees have done a lot to Share the Goodness with local families over this Christmas Season. This year more than 40 members of the Clemens Family donated over 500 hams to various community service organizations for distribution.

On behalf of all of us here at the center and the families that we serve, we are very thankful to our friends at Clemens, Hatfield Quality Meats and the Clemens family network.

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**Support the Women's Center of Montgomery County  
Through eScrip**

Buy participating products at Genuardi's/Safeway and earn up to 10% for the  
**Women's Center of Montgomery County.**

Women's Center of Montgomery County eScrip **Group ID – 2298334**

Please confirm that the Women's Center is your designated charity! You can sign up at your local store, at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and in the upcoming eScrip Magazine!

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The Women's Center of Montgomery County  
Please make us your highest priority

**United Way Donor Option  
Number 00433**

## Seeking Interested, Committed and Qualified Candidates to Join the Women's Center of Montgomery County Board of Directors

Once again it is that time of year when we are in search of prospective nominees for Board candidacy. If you or someone you know would consider serving our Center at this level, please feel free to discuss with a Committee member or our executive director at our Elkins Park Office (215-635-7340). We are at present seeking persons with expertise/interest in the areas of finance, development and/or strategic planning.

Please remember this is YOUR board and its composition and service reflects your interests and concerns. Your input is of great value to those of us currently on Board as we, like you, are volunteers with the common goal of serving Women in Crises at any and all levels.

We appreciate and honor each of you for all that you do. We look forward to hearing from you.

### WCMC BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Beth Rubin, Chairperson

Larry Pauker

Beth Brinly

Lillian Sulliman

### Women's Center of Montgomery County

#### Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

FAX: 215-635-7347

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

#### Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

#### Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

FAX: 610-970-0705

#### Bryn Mawr Office

610-525-1427

FAX: 610-525-1429

#### Colmar Office

215-996-0721

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[www.wcmontco.org](http://www.wcmontco.org)

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