

Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES



By Joyce Skobinsky

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As we begin the year 2006, I hope your acts of kindness and generosity to others continue to be rewarding, and that you are blessed with the gifts of good health and happiness.

As I look right now at the future of the Women's Center I see a dedicated staff and volunteers striving to keep up with the business of helping others in changing world of volunteerism. In recognizing these changes, we as an organization may have to change some of the formerly successful techniques of recruiting volunteers, and of raising funds. People today have less time, less money and greater needs. That is not to say that the desire to help others is less; I don't believe it is. What we need, is to find a way for volunteers to serve within the context of their busy lives. The demands on our young working parents and the many activities offered to our retired population create a challenge for committing time to volunteering. However we must replenish our number of volunteers if we are to remain a volunteer organization.

This will take creative thinking and planning to figure out how we can recruit and utilize new volunteers with the limited number of hours they can allocate for service and still offer the coverage for our hot line twenty four hours, seven days a week. A combined meeting ("retreat") of the Planning, Finance and Personnel committees has been scheduled for Sunday January 29th to discuss these and other overlapping issues. Board member Beth Brinly, will facilitate the discussion. What we are hoping to get from this meeting is a more clear and direct way to handle the problems and a plan for the future that will also include new and interesting programs.

We are constantly looking for funding from new and various sources. Funding from private corporations is essential. The Development Committee is continuing to identify companies that would be a source of sponsorship and partnership with the Women's Center. PLEASE, if you have any contacts simply contact Maria or any board member with a name; we will do the ask. We need you to work with us by lending your endorsement of our work to people who are in a financial position to help.

Internally, we need the continued support of our membership for our special events fundraising projects. Most of our funding is directed to be used on programs and direct service. This does not allow for maintaining our offices, buying supplies and offering salary raises for our employees or well deserved "thank you" perks for our volunteers. So please participate and attend special events when possible. Our major fund raiser "The Champagne Lunch and Silent Auction" is being held on Sunday, April 2nd at the Meadowlands Country Club. This is a very lovely event to invite spouses and friends to support the center and be inspired by the work that we do. It is truly a celebration and this year, we celebrate THIRTY YEARS!! Our honorees this year are: Jennifer Weiner, journalist and best selling author of several books including "In Her Shoes"; Ellen Toplin founder and president of Toplin & Associates public relations, marketing and advertising firm. Pennsylvania Senator Leanne Washington and radio talk show host Michael Smerconish. Other events to celebrate our birthday are in the planning stages and will be announced as soon as the details are known.

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Our Thrift shop has relocated to 703 West Avenue in Jenkintown and is off to a good start. The merchandise has been seriously up-graded with many more household items of excellent quality, unusual interest and beauty. New items are added every day, so please stop in and take a look. You might just find a very special item that you didn't know you needed.

The Nominating Committee is currently looking for community leaders and talented individuals to serve on the Board of Directors. If you or anyone you know that you would like to recommend, desires to serve in this capacity, please contact Lillian Sullivan chair of our nominating committee or myself with your suggestions. Board service is an important and crucial element of the Women's Center, so please give some thought to volunteering in this capacity.

Volunteers delivering direct services are doing a superb job in counseling and with legal advocacy. It is a constant learning process which requires up to date information, and skills review. Your dedication and commitment are admirable, however attendance at in-services is equally essential for keeping up to date with the information you must have for the people you serve, as well as a requirement of the center for direct service volunteers. Attending in-services are also excellent opportunities to share ideas and problems you encounter in your counseling sessions and meeting other volunteers who you might not normally get to know. There are various options on how to obtain in-service hours if you cannot attend in person, so please don't ignore this important requirement!

To our new members and counselors, I welcome you to the center and hope that you find your work and association with us satisfying and rewarding. TO ALL OF US: GOOD LUCK FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS IN 2006.

Congratulations

The Board and staff of the Women's Center would like to wish the happiest of birthday celebrations to long-time member Leah Blumenthal. Leah is celebrating her 75th birthday, and we wanted her to know how much we admire and care for her and how deeply we appreciate all that she does for our Center. Happy 75th Birthday Leah!!

Condolences

We would like to extend our sincere condolences to Belinda Glijansky, a long-time Women's Center member, her husband, Alex, and her family on the loss of her father in December. Our thoughts are with our friends, the Glijansky's, through this difficult time.

We would like to extend our condolences to our dear friends, Norma Jarrett, Robin Jarrett, and Donna and Larry Kane, as well as their family, on the loss of Norma's husband, Irvin Jarrett, on December 16th, following a lengthy illness. Our thoughts are with the Jarrett and Kane families, and we offer them our sincerest sympathies and support.

Mission Statement of the Women's Center of Montgomery County

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is a volunteer, community organization with a primary focus on freedom from domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Our programs, policies and procedures reflect our strong commitment to empowering women.

Norristown Volunteer Update

Thanks to all the volunteers and staff who shared their delicious recipes and fun times at the holiday party! We had another fun-filled celebration. We hope you all had a wonderful holiday with family and friends.

Our next WAP in-service will be January 10th, 2005 from 1-3pm. This will be the first of two in-services scheduled to review the assessments sent back in June. We will be discussing the first section—administration/counseling information at this in-service. See you all there!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

A Domestic Violence volunteer training will be scheduled in the near future in the Colledgeville area. If you have anyone that is interested in becoming a volunteer and wants to take part in the training, please contact me at the Norristown office (610)-279-1548.

Volunteers interested in becoming facilitators are still needed to help with volunteer trainings, if you have an interest in shadowing our current trainers, you can contact me in the Norristown office.

Have a happy and healthy New Year,
Jenn B., Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

Legal Remedies for January 17, 2006 will feature attorney **Ellen Fischer, Esq.** who will answer questions related to family and civil law. **Time: 5-7 p.m.** at the Norristown office located at 18 W. Airy Street, 4th floor.

In-Service Training for Hotline Volunteers

As you may remember, back in June we sent you an assessment/questionnaire to help each of you individually and the Counseling Services Committee as a team identify areas in which our volunteers might benefit from in-services and refresher courses. Since many of our volunteers requested the opportunity to meet and review answers, we have scheduled several in-service dates to review and discuss the responses to the assessment as a group.

To make the review sessions more manageable, we have divided the assessment into two sections. Section I includes counseling and administrative information. Section II covers legal material. In an effort to accommodate varying schedules, we are offering weekday, weeknight and weekend review session in both the Norristown and Elkins Park offices. You will be required to attend **one** of the Section I reviews in **January**, and **one** of the Section II reviews in **February**. These hours will be included in your annual 8 hours of required in-service time.

This is a not-to-miss opportunity. Mark your calendars. Please bring your resource manuals and assessment questions to the in-service. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator in the office nearest you if you have any questions, and to register for your sessions.

Section I – Assessment Review In-Service Opportunities:

January 10, 2006	Norristown	1-3pm
January 12, 2006	Elkins Park	1-3pm
January 18, 2006	Elkins Park	6:30-8:30pm
January 28, 2006	Elkins Park	10-12noon

Section II – Assessment Review In-service Opportunities:

February 7, 2006	Norristown	1-3pm
February 9, 2006	Elkins Park	1-3pm
February 15, 2006	Elkins Park	6:30-8:30pm
February 25, 2006	Elkins Park	10-12pm

Hotline Volunteer Update

We recently received a memo from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence , sent to all of their funded-programs, about policies that some programs – particularly shelters – may have in place that restrict services to victims of domestic violence. The purpose of the memo was to educate programs that these policies may work against the individuals we serve and therefore may need to be revised. Since many of you on the hotline may receive calls from victims turned away from shelter because of these reasons, I wanted to clarify PCADV's rules and regulations so that you can help those callers advocate more effectively for themselves when they attempt to access services as any domestic violence program in the area:

1. **Non-discrimination:** persons applying for and receiving services may not be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or disability. Specifically, programs may not deny services to adult males or male children over the age of 12.
2. **Residency:** The only residency requirement is that the primary recipient must be resident of PA to receive service. No requirement as to citizenship or length of residence in the state or the county may be imposed as a condition of eligibility. Temporary absences with subsequent returns or with a plan to return when the purpose of the absence such as a trip or a visit has been accomplished does not interrupt residence.
3. Generally, programs may not impose any eligibility conditions including priorities or categories of need. Arbitrary requirements such as the abuse must have occurred within the past 48 hours, 2 weeks, etc. are not permissible. The same applies to refusing service because the individual resides in another county.
4. Programs may not impose acceptance of any particular service or combination of services as a condition of eligibility. This means you cannot require someone to accept one service in order to be provided another. For example, emergency shelter cannot be withheld contingent upon attending a support group. While counselors should help victims identify services and evaluate options, survivors should ultimately be empowered to make their own decisions.
5. Residence in the shelter *can* be denied to someone requiring special treatment for the following reasons:
 - acute psychiatric disturbances resulting in acting out behaviors;
 - drug and/or alcohol abuse;
 - behavior resulting in a criminal charge; or
 - misuse of services or failure to follow through with the agreed service plan activities, which are admitted and not contested by the primary recipients.

The Women's Center of Montgomery County
Presents
Our 30th Anniversary Champagne Brunch Celebration
Celebrating 30 Years of Service to the Community

With our Honorees:
Jennifer Weiner, State Senator LeAnna Washington,
Ellen Toplin, and Michael Smerconish

Sunday, April 2, 2006

It's that time of year again when the flurry begins in the planning process for our annual Spring fundraiser. On the heels of three consecutive successful annual fundraisers, we are eagerly looking forward to yet another elegant and entertaining social event!

Each year we rely on the community to participate in our annual event which honors extraordinary individuals for their direct contributions and inspirational examples of empowerment. This year, as we celebrate 30 years of service to the community, we will honor four amazing individuals in our community: Jennifer Weiner, author of "Good In Bed", "In Her Shoes," "Little Earthquakes" and "Goodnight Nobody;" attorney/columnist/radio host Michael Smerconish; State Senator LeAnna Washington; and Ellen Toplin, founder and president of Toplin & Associates, Inc., a marketing, public relations and advertising firm.

We are asking you now to save the date and prepare for an elegant afternoon out—complete with delicious food, delightful music, an exciting auction AND an opportunity to help raise funds for the Women's Center. This year's event will be champagne brunch held on **Sunday, April 2nd** at the Meadowlands Country Club.

Music, champagne and hors d'oeuvres will accompany a Silent Auction followed by a lavish brunch and a tribute to our honorees. All funds raised from this day will help us continue our programs to empower women and combat domestic violence.

*Please show your support by placing an advertisement in our program book and/or donating goods or services to our silent auction. With this caring act, **you join our effective and growing campaign against domestic violence.*** Your tax-deductible donation in the form of an ad, a silent auction item, greeting or anonymous gift enables us to continue serving our friends, employees our neighbors and loved ones. For your convenience, we have enclosed an ad book request form and a silent auction request form in this issue.

Thank you in advance for helping us to continue to serve our community! We look forward to hearing from you.

New Protection From Abuse Law Passes in Pennsylvania

As enacted, the legislation – now known as Act 66 of 2005 – strengthens the effectiveness and enforcement of protection orders and enhances the safety of domestic violence victims and their children. Specifically, the legislation amends the Protection From Abuse Act to do the following:

- Give the Court discretion to order a PFA defendant to relinquish all firearms, not to exceed the duration of a PFA order;
- Offer accountability measures for defendants who fail to abide by the PFA order;
- Provide defendants with the option of relinquishing firearms to a third party of his/her choosing for safekeeping and provide accountability measures for those parties safekeeping firearms;
- Standardize the process for the return of firearms at the conclusion of a PFA order;
- Expand the duration of PFA orders from 18 to 36 months;
- Give judges the discretion to order supervised probation of not more than six months to a defendant who violated the terms and conditions of a PFA order;
- Remove victim fees associated with PFA proceedings;
- Refine provisions associated with authority and jurisdiction, giving law enforcement officers greater authority to follow through with the arrest of domestic violence offenders; and
- Directs the court to consider any risk posed by the defendant to the children, as well as risk to the plaintiff, when awarding temporary custody or temporary visitation rights with regard to minor children.

These amendments have been nine long years in the making and have come only after painstaking negotiations with advocacy groups and stakeholders at both the state and national levels. But all of this hard work has brought Pennsylvanians unprecedented protections for themselves and their children who find themselves victims of violence perpetrated by a family member or intimate partner.

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence recognizes that without the unwavering leadership of Governor Edward G. Rendell, Representatives Katie True (R-Lancaster) and Kathy Manderino (D-Philadelphia) and Senators Jane Earll (R-Erie) and Michael O’Pake (D-Berks), these lifesaving measures would not have been enacted at this time. PCADV commends Governor Rendell and the Legislature for taking action to make Pennsylvania safer for its citizens.

Book Club Updates

- January 18th **“The curious incident of the dog in the night-time”** by Mark Haddon
Discussion will be led held Sandy B’s condo.
- March 15th “The things they carried” by Tim O’Brien
Discussion will be led by Ellen B. at Selma’s house.
- April 19th “Straight Man” by Richard Russo
Discussion will be led by Dorothy at Ellen’s house.
- May 17th “Crow Lake” By Mary Lawson
Discussion will be led by Sunny at Sue’s house.
- June 21st **“The Known World”** by Edmond P. Jones
Discussion will be led by Sue at Helen’s house

All book club meeting start at 7:30 for socializing and 8:00 the discussion begins. Any questions call Dorothy at 215-782-2259.

Benefit the Women’s Center When You Shop On-Line! Website Shopping Links

The Women’s Center of Montgomery County will earn a percentage of each purchase you make with our online vendors if you link to their site through the Women’s Center website at www.wcmontco.org:

Staples.com
Boscovs.com
Barnes&Noble.com
IBM.com
PetSmart.com
Priceline.com
MusiciansFriend.com
Kmart.com
Amazon.com
OldNavy.com
Modell’s Sporting Goods
Verizon Wireless
Proflowers.com
Entertainment Book

Seeking Volunteers for Our Community Education Work

Hopefully many of you have seen the announcements in our recent newsletters informing you about upcoming community education events around the county. Much of this impressive work in getting our name out there has been coordinated and conducted by our Community Educator, Janine Kelly. Janine has done an amazing job in establishing contacts and getting us on the speaking schedules for many local organization and civic groups, as well as our inclusion in informational tabling events and health fairs, but she needs help. This is a large county to cover, and we really need your help to ensure that these events have adequate representation, in all parts of the county.

We realize that many of you may feel ill-prepared or uncomfortable doing community outreach, but we'd like to assure you that there are many ways that you can support this effort in a most meaningful way, even if you haven't been through the 45-hour counseling training. Volunteers are always needed to help staff information tables, deliver brochures and posters, designing table displays, and administrative functions such as contacting organizations to schedule events. Many of these activities can be done in your local community or at your nearest Women's Center office, and require minimal travel.

If you are interested in joining this growing effort, please contact Janine Kelly in our Bryn Mawr office at 610-525-1428!

Women's Center of Montgomery County

Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

FAX: 215-635-7347

Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

FAX: 610-970-0705

Lansdale Office

215-853-8060

FAX: 215-853-8065

Bryn Mawr Office

610-525-1427

FAX: 610-525-1429

www.wcmontco.org

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