

Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County

Executive Director's Notes



Submitted by Maria Macaluso

It is my great pleasure this month to bring you information about our upcoming Spring Champagne Brunch, which is beginning to take exciting shape as details are finalized! As we have previously reported, this year's brunch will be held on Sunday, March 25th, 2007 from 11:00a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Meadowlands Country Club in Blue Bell. Our Special Events Committee is planning a Jazz Brunch theme, with a live jazz trio and a fun, festive and 'jazzy' décor that includes our annual silent auction and raffle!

The selection of our honorees this year has inspired much of our energy, enthusiasm and creativity as we plan this event. The three individuals who have so graciously accepted our invitation are a diverse yet passionate trio of individuals who have dedicated much of their professional work to empowering women to fight against oppression and abuse. What I love about this blending of honorees is that while they represent such different disciplines – the arts, the law and social advocacy - their accomplishments and their leadership collectively have truly done so much to enrich the lives of others and to create social reform and justice for women that they embody our mission and inspire our work! It is therefore with great pleasure that I announce the following honorees for our March 25, 2007 Jazz Brunch:

Jean Sasson: As an accomplished author, Jean has written a series of books about the lives of women living in the Middle East. Through her books she hopes to educate men in power so that they may ensure that change will come to the social customs within the Muslim world. As an author and advocate, her writing reflects her desire that women worldwide gain the recognition and status that they deserve.

Hopefully you all had a chance to read our Board President Joyce Skobinsky's article in the December Womenews which was a great introduction to Jean's work and her passion for empowering women. Working with Jean in coordinate this event has been a sincere pleasure. She is as gracious and compassionate as her writings indicate, and her enthusiasm for joining the Center in this celebration has been both humbling and stimulating. Despite the fact that she has a new book coming out on March 20th, she has, amazingly, cleared her scheduled and realigned her book tour to accommodate our request because she admires the work of our Women's Center and shares our goal and mission!

Since Jean's next book, "Love in a Torn Land" (see insert in newsletter) will be coming out at the same time as our brunch, we hope to be able to offer our members the opportunity to pre-order the book and to obtain an autographed copy at the brunch. In the mean time, I would like to encourage you all to read her earlier publications and learn more about this dynamic and most personable author!

Our second honoree, **District Attorney Bruce Castor**, was selected because of his passionate commitment to victims' rights, his dedication ensuring that the system is responsive to their needs, and his work to prevent systemic re-victimization caused by insensitivity or ignorance. During his tenure as our District Attorney he has championed this cause, broadly enhancing access to justice and services for victims and fiercely advocating in their interests. What has most impressed me about District Attorney Castor is his initiative and his willingness to learn about the issues and problems that confront women as victims of violence and to be a responsive partner in our fight to stop violence against women. As a member of

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our collaborative community of advocates and law enforcement officials, District Attorney Castor has been both a leader and a dedicated guardian of the community trust as he works to educate himself and others to affect social justice for victims of crime. The legacy of his tenure, from my perspective at least, has been his role as a catalyst for positive change in the way in which we treat victims of violence and abuse. We are thrilled for this opportunity to thank him for all that he has done to further victims' rights and to promote social reform!

When I think of our final honoree, I cannot help but think of the expression 'the stuff legends are made of.' This individual is the epitome of all to which we as domestic violence advocates aspire. Through her long career of community service as the Executive Director of the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence, **Susan Kelly-Dreiss** has set standard of excellence that has made our state a leader in domestic violence programming. For more than 30 years, Susan Kelly-Dreiss has worked to enact legal protections, implement innovative services and heighten public awareness on behalf of battered women and their children. Having grown up in a violent home, Ms. Kelly-Dreiss began her career in victim advocacy by helping to start a shelter for battered women in her hometown of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1976, she joined with a handful of other women, including our founding members of the Women's Center of Montgomery County, to successfully lobby for passage of Pennsylvania's first domestic violence law. She also helped to develop a legislative strategy and lay the foundation for the nation's first domestic violence coalition, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV). As the Executive Director of PCADV since its founding, Ms. Kelly-Dreiss has overseen the growth of the network from nine community-based programs to 62 programs now operating throughout the state. In 1993, she was instrumental in securing federal funding to help PCADV establish the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and to manage the National STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Technical Assistance Project. She has served in leadership positions on family violence task forces under two Pennsylvania attorneys general and was appointed by Governor Tom Ridge to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

We were somewhat saddened to hear in June 2006 that Susan was announced her much-deserved retirement, tentatively planned for 2008. Susan has been such a visionary that it is challenging to imagine where this movement will go without her at the helm. As one of the founding members of the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence, however, it is our great joy to be able to recognize and honor Susan for all that she has done throughout the years as our guiding leader, mentor and spokesperson. Our thanks and good wishes for Susan are indeed most heartfelt, and to have the opportunity to express that at our brunch is truly meaningful.

With these three remarkable individuals as our honorees – not to mention some entertaining jazz music as a backdrop – we hope that you will join us for what promises to be an enjoyable landmark day of celebration for the Women's Center of Montgomery County.

Women's Center of Montgomery County Events

MY HANDS ARE NOT FOR HURTING

January 15, 2007 – Pottstown Library – 10:00

January 16, 2007 – NIA Head Start Center – 10:00-10:30 and 10:30-11:00

January 19, 2007 – Jenkintown Day Care – 10:00-11:30

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS And SPEAKING EVENTS

January 9, 2007 – Parent/Teen Taskforce – 9:30

January 17, 2007 – Ambler Day School – Time TBA

January 19, 2006 – Jenkintown Day Care – 10:00 – 3 groups @ 20 minutes

TABLE EVENTS

January 15, 2007 – Pottstown Library – 11:00-3:00

Contact Janine Kelly, Community Education Coordinator 610-525-1428 jkelly1@dca.net

Norristown Volunteer Update

A Happy New Year to all! I hope time spent with family and friends brought joy to you all! The holiday party was entertaining as always! Thank you for all your delicious recipes and wonderful company!

IN-SERVICE:

Our first active listening in-service will be held **January 16th, 2007** from 1-3pm in the Norristown office. This in-service will count for 2 hours of the 8 required in-service hours for this coming year. I will arrange an active listening in-service in the spring for those unable to attend in January. Please let me know which in-service you will attend!

LEGAL REMEDIES:

The next Legal Remedies Workshop will be **Tuesday, January 16, 2007**, from 5-7pm, facilitator to be announced. The information sessions are held at our Norristown office at 18 West Airy Street, 4th floor from 5-7p.m. Please call 610-279-7474 to register to attend. Also, please refer a family member or friend to this valuable program!

Happy New Year!

Jenn B.

Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

The Women's Center Wednesday Evening Book Club January 2007

<u>Date</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Hostess</u>
January 17th	<u>The Glass Castle</u> <i>by Jennifer Wells</i>	Ruth	Sandy

Reading enthusiasts please call Sunny at 215-576-6215 to join our lively and interesting book discussions. New members are always welcome!

A reminder from the Women's Center: If you are interested in buying any of these books online, we encourage you to use the shopping link on our site (www.wcmontco.org) to visit Amazon.com or Barnes&Noble.com. Both vendors donate approximately 5% of the sale price back to the Women's Center to support our efforts to empower women in our community.

Elkins Park Office Volunteer Updates

Please note that in each month's newsletter there will be monthly calendars with the schedule of events from all offices. These can be put on your bulletin boards (or refrigerators) at home. In Elkins Park there will be active listening in-services as well as informational ones each month. Check the calendar for dates and topics and call me to RSVP. Two training sessions for new volunteers will start the end of January, both a day and evening time in the Elkins Park office. If anyone is interested, please contact me immediately by email at dlinn@dca.net or by telephone at 215-635-7340, ext. 11.

Deanna L.

Director of Volunteers

POWER

The Partnership on Work Enrichment and Readiness

an innovative program of the human services program &
department of workforce development & continuing education
at Montgomery County Community College for
consumers of mental health services

What's this new program all about?

The Partnership on Work Enrichment and Readiness ~ POWER ~ is a program at Montgomery County Community College. In the spirit of the mental health recovery model, POWER will introduce consumers to college campus community life, develop vocational potential, and assist in exploring potential educational and career paths. The program and classes will be held at MCCC's Blue Bell campus between January and May 2007. Both day and evening sessions will be offered during this 14-week program.

What will students in the program experience and do?

Twice a week, students will attend a variety of classes. With the assistance of POWER's Student Advisor, they will also design their own individualized career and educational plan. Students will be evaluated on their work and receive feedback from their instructors. The POWER Advisor will assist students in tracking their progress, modifying their educational and career plans, and troubleshooting any issues that might arise.

What classes will be offered?

Some of the classes will include (but are not limited to):

Becoming a Professional ~~~ The College Experience ~~~ Job Search Skills
Effective Communication ~~~ Team Building ~~~ Negotiating Workplace Culture
Balancing School, Work & Life ~~~ Computer Skills for the Workplace

What will be the outcome at the end of the 14 weeks?

In addition to the classes and education, students will have their own career and educational plan to help focus their future activities in regards to work and college. The classes also have the potential to provide a transition for interested students to go on to credit coursework at community college. All students will receive CEU credits and certificates for the courses they complete. The CEU credits can be converted into academic credits for those students who decide to matriculate into the Human Services Program at MCCC.

What is the cost for a student to participate in POWER?

There is no cost to students. The Montgomery County Community College Foundation and the Montgomery County Office of Mental Health are generously providing a grant to support the program.

I know someone who might be interested. How do they enroll?

There is a brief Eligibility Checklist for case managers and mental health professionals to complete. Please contact **Lori Schreiber**, POWER's Professional Liaison, at **215.517.7502** or lschreib@mc3.edu for more information.

Young Boy Beats Kmart to Solution, More Organizations Protest T-Shirt

A 9-year-old boy named David Mallow has created an alternative to the Problem Solved t-shirt available in Kmart stores that depicts a male stick figure physically assaulting a female. David's shirt shows stick figures similar to the Route 66 Attitude shirt Kmart refuses to pull from its shelves.

The difference is that the David's shows the figures talking through their problem and holding hands in the last panel. Underneath the graphic it reads, "Problem solved. Hurting someone (sic.) just makes the conflict worse." "Maybe Kmart should hire him to design its shirts," said Megan Williams, executive director of Hardy Girls Healthy Women.

Hardy Girls Healthy Women, a Maine-based nonprofit that works for equality and safety for all women and girls, has protested the shirts and asked Kmart to pull them from the shelves. Sears Holdings Corporation spokespeople have said the shirts will remain. "Sears indicated that it hasn't heard from many customers about the shirts, so we're partnering with a number of national organizations to see if we can change that," said Williams.

Nationally recognized Dads and Daughters and the Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood have agreed to help spread the message that violence against women and girls is not a lighthearted matter. List serves around the country will be encouraging people who find the t-shirt offensive to call on Kmart to adhere to the high ethical standards they profess to hold and pull the shirts.

Hardy Girls Healthy Women invites visitors to www.hghw.org to learn how they can help.

In this effort, Hardy Girls is partnering with Boys to Men, an organization in Portland, Maine that conducts statewide programs to prevent violence by supporting the healthy development of adolescent boys.

Pottstown Office Update

Staff member Brenda Poe will be out on leave for several months, beginning in December. I wanted to express our thanks to volunteers Niki S. and Kristine W. who have agreed to accept temporary part-time positions with the Center during Brenda's absence so that we can provide uninterrupted services throughout each weekday. Thanks, also, to all of our Pottstown volunteers who continue to pitch in to make this an effortless transition!

For hotline counselors directing callers to Pottstown, coverage in the office through March should minimally be:

Monday and Friday 9:00 am to 11:00 am (plus some Friday afternoons)
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 am to 3:30 p.m.

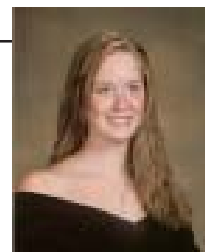
The support group on Tuesday nights will resume in January, with the exact start day as yet undetermined.

Pottstown Support Group Update

Just a reminder to our hotline counselors that we offer a Support Group in the Pottstown Office of the Women's Center, every Tuesday evening from 5:30pm - 7:30pm. If you need more information or direct clients to please call: 610-970-7364.

A Mount Saint Joseph Student Helps to Wash Away Domestic Violence

Article submitted by Janine Kelly, Community Educator



Cara Lombard, a senior at Mount. Saint Joseph Academy in Flourtown, PA, planned and organized a November 4th car wash at the Mount as a project for her Women's Seminar class. The goal was to raise money for The Women's Center of Montgomery County along with raising awareness about abuse. On the day of the car wash Cara had the support of many of her fellow classmates from her Women's Seminar class along with an Archbishop Carroll High School student.

The Women's Seminar class at The Mount is an AP weighted class and is a combination of history and English studies of Women's history in the United States and their fight toward gaining more rights. There is only one class per year and it is comprised of only 18-20 girls. Cara said, "As a class, we love to show our support for each other by helping one another in any way possible with projects. Many girls supported me and helped me run my car wash and that is how I came to raise the money for the Center."

Well, the car wash was a success! Cara delivered the \$309.00 donation to the Elkins Park Office with the hopes of making a difference in some special way in the lives of women. She believes that abuse against women is a very serious issue that needs more awareness and support.

Cara is a wonderful, strong, and talented woman who will go far in her life due to her drive, determination, intelligence, and her sensitivity to others.

She feels that is a great privilege and experience to be in the Women's Seminar class. We feel that it is a great privilege and honor to have met and worked with Cara Lombard! Everyone at The Women's Center of Montgomery County sends huge thanks and kudos to Cara!!

Holiday Spirit for the Lower Merion Community

The Bryn Mawr Office was sprinkled with holiday spirit once again this holiday season from the "Wish List Elves". Children living in the Lower Merion area experienced a "Magical Christmas Morning" and their moms were able put a real Christmas dinner on the table, thanks to the unsolicited generosity of these wonderful and thoughtful men and women. Without them.... there would have been no Holiday Magic on December 25th.

There are many synonyms for the word thoughtful. Each of these synonyms is an accurate description of the thoughts and acts of our magnificent donors. By their generous natures and wonderful support,

- v They were Thoughtful to other's needs
- v They were Considerate of their adopted families' privacy and our requirements for confidentiality.
- v They were Kind by giving their time, energy, and monetary gifts
- v They were Caring about the holiday wishes as well as the holiday needs
- v They were Unselfish by providing for others' needs before their own.
- v They were Selfless by giving up things that they may have wished for in order to "gift" to someone else.
- v They were Attentive by checking in for additions/deletions/changes to wish list items
- v They were Sympathetic to the needs of those who they didn't know nor would ever meet.
- v They were Solicitous by going above and beyond the wishes and needs of their adopted families. They threw in a "many little extras" from the bottom of their hearts.
- v They were Helpful Heroes who handed out holiday happiness to families in need.

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The Board, Staff, and Volunteers from The Women's Center of Montgomery County would like to extend our deepest and sincere thanks to the following individuals. Please support each and every one of them in their efforts! They were all so instrumental in supporting us and the individuals we serve!

The wonderful Bryn Mawr Hospital Surgi Center once again provided an entire North Pole for a Lower Merion family.

Bryn Mawr Hospital Surgicenter
130 South Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Judy Donnelly, Holly Gioquindo and their families teamed together to complete wish lists for a family with three children as well as giving Mom some wonderful gifts! But they didn't stop there. They also provided a complete Christmas dinner from soup to nuts! We're certain that not even Santa ate as well on Christmas Day!



Krista and Ellen from Lindamood-Bell Learning Process in Bryn Mawr headed up a drive to collect "comfort items" and food from the staff of Lindamood-Bell. All of the soaps, lotions, shampoos, powders, handbags, socks, and extra goodies will certainly provide much needed comfort to many victims of domestic violence!

Lindamood-Bell
780 West Lancaster Avenue, Suite 101
Bryn Mawr, PA. 19010

Reverend Jonathan Malone from the Lower Merion Baptist Church "saved the day" for us. We put out a call to the church (at the 11th hour!) and Rev. Malone went out and purchased 2 brand new King James Bibles for a woman who wished to give them to her twin daughters for Christmas.

Lower Merion Baptist Church
911 New Gulph Road
Bryn Mawr, PA. 19010

We cannot put into words how appreciative we are!

The Women Center of Montgomery County Announces a \$7,500 Grant from Verizon Foundation and Verizon Wireless to continue its gifts of Hope, Strength, and Education

The Women Center of Montgomery County is proud to announce a grant in the amount of \$7,500 from Verizon Foundation and Verizon Wireless. This funding will allow the Center to continue its mission and meet the changing demands of those in need. In the 30 years since the Center was first established, we have found two things remain constant. First, the demand for our services continues to grow. Second, our ability to attract, train and retain volunteers long-term has been impacted by the changing demands, expectations and availability of the volunteer community.

The Verizon Foundation offered a competitive grant opportunity earlier this year to community-based nonprofit organizations in the PCADV. The foundation and Verizon Wireless sought programs that would bolster efforts to combat domestic violence through awareness, prevention and recovery, especially through the use of technology.

“Thanks to Verizon Foundation & Verizon Wireless, we are able to empower people: women, men, young, old, wealthy, and those who are financially or physically challenged. This is because domestic violence knows no barriers”, said Maria Macaluso, Executive Director of the Women’s Center of Montgomery County. “This grant will enable us to continue as a volunteer-driven organization. Some of our volunteers are, in a word, success stories.”

“On behalf of Verizon Foundation and Verizon Wireless, we are happy to support the Women’s Center of Montgomery County to share information to help improve the safety of families and break the cycle of violence, said Daniel J. Reavy, Director-External Affairs, Verizon Pennsylvania. “These organizations work behind the scenes and do not look for acknowledgement. Through this partnership, we hope to raise awareness of domestic violence and make a positive difference in the lives of those in need.

For more than a decade, Verizon Wireless has been a leader in ensuring the safety of battered women. The HopeLine® Program, introduced by Verizon Wireless in 1995, collects wireless phone and accessories from any wireless service provider and the refurbishes the phones or recycles them in an environmentally safe way.

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

1-800-773-2424



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