

Womenews

W o m e n ' s C e n t e r o f M o n t g o m e r y C o u n t y

Presidential Notes By Joyce Skobinsky



THE JENKINTOWN OFFICE IS MOVING!!!

The decision to move was made by the Board of Directors when it was determined that our current office space was barely habitable due to repeated flooding of the property. With no initiative by our landlord to repair the infrastructure to prevent the recurrence of the problem, we took the initiative to have the office environmentally tested by professionals. The report revealed that there were in fact irritants in the air, walls and carpets that could cause people vulnerable to such irritants to suffer health problems as a result of prolonged exposure. The environmental hazards to our volunteers, staff and visitors, could not be tolerated, and a coat of whitewash could simply not be a band aid for the problem. And so the decision was made.

Sometime in August we will be moving to Elkins Park Square, located at Church Road and Old York Road, into a lovely office space with lots of light and windows and parking. The office space located on the 2nd floor of this elevator building is currently being constructed to fit our needs. There will be a search for a new location for the thrift shop, which has to be in a spot which is visible and accessible to our volunteers and patrons. Our new office does not meet with the requirements needed for the thrift shop.

Moving is an emotional and difficult process to go through. I know since I'm experiencing that myself right now after being in my home for thirty years. There is lots of sentimentality, some fear as well as excitement that change brings. I think that some of us may experience those same feelings with respect to the Women's Centers' move. But once we close the door at the Colonnade and turn the key in our new office, we can take a deep breath of fresh air and I believe find some new energy for our work. An open house event will be in order as soon as we are ready to receive guests!

Speaking of new beginnings, WELCOME to our new board members, Renee Brock, Margie Cherry, Dot Enright, Nancy Mellon, Michael Owens, and Lillian Sulliman.. And returning members: Beth Brinly, Joyce Eisenberg, Risa Ferman, Bruce Freedman, Kathy Gallagher, Shira Goodman, Sandy Hyman, Susan Katz, Sandy Kravitz, Thom McGowans, Ann Miller, Maureen Rose, Jackie Schulman and Nomi Shapiro. They have a wealth of combined talent and expertise to offer us and I am so looking forward to working with these fine people to do our part in keeping the Women's Center as the strong and committed community organization it is.

Congratulations to the recipients of the Linda Collins award Betsy Galante, Jane Hill, Nikki Stansbury, Dorothy Yeh and Grace Miller for their dedication and service to The Women's Center. It was fabulous to see many "old" (no offense) and new friends gathered to celebrate our volunteers and to celebrate Linda for all of her great accomplishments, service to the community, her contributions to the Women's Center, Laurel House and for making a difference to women everywhere! And last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to Maria our devoted Executive Director, and to our volunteer coordinators for the beautiful, thoughtful and well-planned event.

continued on Page 2

continued from Page 1

Summer has arrived and the work at the Women's Center continues without missing a beat. Our legal advocates have been swamped with women needing PFA's, and as you may have noticed, there seems to be a surge of deaths due to domestic violence reported in the media. Many of you will be taking summer vacations for some well deserved and much needed R&R. When you return home, please consider sharing your renewed energy by taking an extra shift now and again to continue the service and to give all of our volunteers some R & R time. Take care of yourselves as much as you take care of others and have a wonderful summer!

Norristown Volunteer Update

WAP in-services will resume in September 2005. Guest speaker and date will be announced next month.

I had a wonderful time with all of you at the volunteer appreciation dinner. A special congrats to Jane Hill and all the volunteers for your time and dedication to the center! Inadvertently my special thanks to Barbara Bass did not make it to the volunteer book. I want to thank Barbara for being part of the Women's Center for 5 years now! Your devotion and hard work at Prothy on Wednesdays is amazing! You always go that extra mile!

SAVE THE DATE—October 23, 2005- Volunteer Brunch- 11-2pm at the William Penn Inn. More details to follow!

Well wishes to all my volunteers off for the summer for vacations, enjoy your time with family and friends! See you all soon!

Enjoy the sun,

Jenn

Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

Jenkintown In-service: Domestic Violence and the FBI

Date: Monday, July 18th

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: Jenkintown Office at 101 Washington Lane

Join us as we meet with a representative from the Philadelphia office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to discuss their role in our efforts to end domestic violence in our community.

Learn how they can be an effective partner, when it is appropriate to involve the F.B.I., and resources they can bring to work.

Please contact the Jenkintown office at 215-885-8440 to sign up for this session.

Spotlight on the Women's Center Outreach Program for Children:

"My Hands Are Not Hurting"

By Courtland Smith, volunteer in the Pottstown office

The mandate for Janine Kelly, Community Education Coordinator for nearly a year, is a simple one: Develop "as much outreach as possible," she says. "The more we touch people in the communities we serve, the greater the recognition of what we can do to combat domestic abuse, and the more successful we will be in raising funds to continue our efforts.

"I want us to grow to the point that we're sending the same information to the public, no matter where in the organization it is coming from. I want all of the offices to be on the same page with information they send out."

As a former teacher, she uses many tools to get the job done: telephones, fax machines, emails, and, of course, her voice. "Having been a teacher," she says, "I love to do this stuff. And once I got on board, I realized that it isn't just education; it's really more a marketing effort, with a spin on education."

When an event is scheduled, she notes, "depending on the area, I contact that office and that volunteer coordinator to schedule a volunteer to cover that presentation, table event, or speaking engagement. I tell the volunteers: the way to get the Women's Center involved is to get out there into the community and let people know who we are.

"The phones should be ringing in the offices, victims should know about us, and one way to do this is through outreach. Even if you distribute only a handful of pamphlets, you've reached that many more people who may decide to use our services."

Janine once taught in a Philadelphia junior high school, later started a family and had to put education aside. Today, one of her chief venues is the classroom, where she is as comfortable as an apple sitting on a teacher's desk. "I love it; I feel like I'm helping people. It's something I'm comfortable doing, from the educational standpoint. The thing that impresses me most is the people in this organization. I just love it."

One of her passions is music, "and I started to write children's music when I was a teacher. I found that taking some of the curriculum and putting it to rhythm, rhyme, whatever – that kids' test scores just soared," she says. "And with the preschool program I do – *Hands Are Not for Hurting*, I incorporate music into that as well. It's a great way to get kids engaged."

And children use their hands in a positive way, Janine adds – "they clap or roll, like the wheels on a bus. But what I'd like to see is for the volunteers to go out and do that as well. All they needs is a boom box and a CD with interactive songs specifically targeted for the program.

continued on Page 7

Women's Center Book Club Update

Sept 21 "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" by Harriet Jacobs.
Caren will lead discussion which will be held at her house.

Oct 19 "Heart is a Lonely Hunter" by Carson McCullers.
Discussion will be led by Ruth at Sunny's house.

Nov 16 "Bel Canto" by Ann Patchett.
Discussion will be led by Helen at Ruth's house.

Dec 21 "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien.
Discussion will be led by Ellen at Elaine'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.

The following is a follow-up on an article originally printed in the April '05 issue of Womenews.

Court tosses Colorado lawsuit over unenforced restraining order.

By Gina Holland, Philadelphia Inquirer

The Supreme Court ruled yesterday that police cannot be sued for how they enforce restraining orders, ending a lawsuit by a Colorado woman who alleged that police did not do enough to prevent her estranged husband from killing her three young daughters.

Jessica Gonzales did not have a constitutional right to police enforcement of the court order against her husband, the court said in a 7-2 opinion in *Castle Rock v. Gonzales*. City governments had feared that if the court ruled the other way, it would have unleashed a potentially devastating flood of cases that could bankrupt municipal governments.

Jessica Gonzales said police did not do enough to stop her estranged husband, Simon Gonzales, who took the daughters from the front yard of her home in June 1999 in violation of a restraining order. Hours later, Simon Gonzales died in a gunfight with officers outside a police station. The bodies of the three girls Rebecca, 10; Katheryn, 8; and Leslie, 7, were in his truck.

Jessica Gonzales said she was entitled to sue under the 14th Amendment and under a Colorado law that says officers shall use every reasonable means to enforce a restraining order. She contended that her restraining order should be considered property under the 14th Amendment and that it had been taken from her without due process when police failed to enforce it.

Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority, said: "The creation of a personal entitlement to something as vague and novel as enforcement of restraining orders cannot 'simply go without saying.' We conclude that Colorado has not created such an entitlement."

Scalia was joined by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Anthony M. Kennedy, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Clarence Thomas. Justice David H. Souter, joined by Justice Stephen G. Breyer, issued a concurring opinion. In a dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens, joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, said that the woman's "description of the police behavior in this case and the department's callous policy of failing to respond properly to reports of restraining order violation clearly alleges a due process violation."

Gonzales' attorney Brian Reichel said: "The restraining orders are not worth anything unless police officers are willing to enforce them." Castle Rock Colorado police contend they tried to help Jessica Gonzales. Police twice went to the estranged husband's apartment, kept an eye out for his truck, and called his cell phone and home phone.

Gonzales reached him on her cell, and he told her he had taken the girls to an amusement park in nearby Denver. Gonzales says police should have gone to the amusement park or contacted Denver police.

Access to the Supreme Court opinion via <http://go.philly.com/gonzales>

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.

Muslims Strike At Spouse Abuse

Philadelphia Program Will List and Shun Offenders
By Kristin Holmes, June 17, 2005, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

The veil shrouding spouse abuse in Muslim families is being torn away by local mosque leaders- putting them at the forefront of efforts by American Muslims to stem domestic violence.

The clergy council known as the Majlis Ash' Shura of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley has adopted a tough policy of public shunning of Muslims who abuse their spouses or abandon their families.

Under the initiative, adopted last month, offenders will go on a list circulated among area Muslims. They will be banned from future marriages in communities that adhere to the policy. Fellow Muslims will be discouraged from patronizing any businesses they own.

“We need to take a public stand,” said Imam Isa Abdul-Mateen, secretary of the Majlis Ash' Shura, an association of 30 imams. “We want people to know that this will not be tolerated.”

In coming months, the council will address issues such as the criteria for putting names on the list and safeguards to protect spouses who step forward. Domestic violence appears no more prevalent in Muslim communities than elsewhere, but Islamic advocacy groups and others have tried to push the problem into the open.

With the new policy Philadelphia leaps over other Muslim communities that are just starting to confront the issue, said Maha Alkhateeb, project manager of the Peaceful Families Project, a Virginia-based nonprofit that addresses domestic violence among Muslims.

A striking aspect of the initiative is that it was started not by women advocates but by the male leadership, said Amina Wadud, author of *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*. “This is setting a new precedent, globally.”

The Rev. Marie Fortune of the FaithTrust Institute in Seattle, a leading domestic violence policy center, said she knew of no other religious community in the country that had “so specific and rigorous” a policy.

Within Muslim families, domestic violence remains largely a taboo subject, Alkhateeb said. Some Muslims deny its existence in a faith in which men are supposed to be protectors of women and children. Some immigrant families are too focused on building a better life to deal with the issue. Activists also cite a widespread reluctance to air problems and expose fellow Muslims to public scandal.

Fundraising With a Conscience

If you're looking for an easy way to support the Women's Center, bring us your empty Inkjet Cartridges, empty Laser Cartridges, used cell phones, laptops **with** power cords, and PDA's (Palm Pilots).

We will be reimbursed for the items we collect by Cartridges for Kids, who will then recycle them in an ecologically friendly manner.

Please spread the word around and help us raise much needed funds.

continued from Page 5

As a consequence, there is little data on the extent of the problem. One study done in 2000, surveyed 500 Arab women in Dearborn, Mich., and found that 18 to 20 percent said they had experienced spousal abuse, a rate similar to the general population's. Approximately 98 percent of the sample were Muslim, said Anahid Kulwicki, a professor at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., who did the study. There are signs that Muslims are awakening to the problem. A group of imams signed a pledge to fight domestic violence at a recent Peaceful Families conference in Washington.

A turning point in Philadelphia may have come in 2001 when a city police officer killed his wife and then himself. Both were Muslims, and the incident shook the Muslim community, said Taalibah Kariem-White of Germantown, a domestic violence expert who lectures nationally on the issue. Had it not been for hearing the sound of barbeque lighting fluid hitting the floor of her home, Habeebah Ali of East Oak Lane might have met a similar fate. Ali, 48, endured years of an abusive marriage during which she was battered by her husband, a drug addict. She kept quiet for years. "I could have gone to the masjid (mosque), but I was ashamed and afraid to tell on him. I didn't want the community to know what was going on, out of fear and embarrassment."

She stayed with him because she believed her four children needed their father in the house. But when he hit her in front of them, Ali left. She took advantage of social services outside the Muslim community- a step Muslim women are reluctant to take because they often face insensitivity about dress, diet and religion, said Rashidah Abdul-Khabeer, deputy director of Circle of Care Family Planning, which helps HIV-positive women and their families.

Ali's now ex-husband was jailed in 1993 when he broke into her home and tried to set it on fire as she and her children slept inside. He was in prison for 11 months, then received 10 years' parole. She has no idea what has happened to him. "I am so grateful that leadership is willing to address these issues and put them on the front burner," said Ali, who believes the new policy would have helped her had it been in effect when she was being battered.

The policy applies to both men and women. Though there are few batterers, Mateen envisions the sanctions applying to women who make or threaten false claims to police or vindictively deny a man visitation with his children. As the imam council prepares to develop guidelines, area activists already have suggestions.

Khabeer hopes the imams will help provide safe haven and financial support for a fleeing spouse and her children as needed. She also suggests counseling for families, and procedures so that an offending spouse can reform and be forgiven and accepted back into the community.

The council should also consult lawyers about defamation-of-character complaints that could result from a public list, said attorney George Bochetto, an expert in defamation law. These issues and others will be discussed in a seminar August 28 run by Sista2Sista Inc., a local Muslim women's group. The program will focus on domestic violence issues including sensitizing social service providers to the particular concerns of Muslim women, said Nafisa Cooper, of Sista2Sista.

In the years since her abuse, Ali founded the Philadelphia-based Raise of Hope, a nonprofit association that provides housing for formerly homeless and low-income families. "We have to become more proactive," Ali said. "It's not like it's the 1980's. We're not ostriches with our heads in the sand."

Support the Women's Center Through your Genuardi's Purchases

Buy participating products at Genuardi's and earn 10% for the Women's Center of Montgomery County. Our group number is 2298334.

Program Dates: July 20th through September 6th

Please confirm that the Women's Center is your designated charity! You can sign up at your local store, at www.escrip.com (after July 1st), and in the upcoming eScrip Magazine!

“We call it a pre-school program, but it has been very well received by children up to and including 1st and sometimes 2nd grade. We encourage positive ways to use the hands. Many schools are having problems with things like unwanted or inappropriate physical contact as well as bullying. Wherever we have been invited, there has been unanimous positive feedback, because the teachers see the program for what it is – a positive way to instill awareness at a very young and impressionable age.”

The former educator likes to use what she calls the ‘backdoor’ approach to abuse. “We don’t directly talk about domestic violence. We help the kids to think positively about themselves, stay alert to their feelings and stress that they have the right to say no. We distribute stuffed animals to each child in the group, discuss ‘nice’ ways to handle their ‘new friend,’ and then we read the story out of the coloring book.”

At the end of the 20-minute presentation, Janine adds, “we give a coloring book to each child in the group. We encourage them to take the book home and have an adult read to them, and in the back of the book is the Women’s Center contact information. This is the marketing element I’m talking about.”

She ordinarily talks to 150 to 250 children a month during the school year. “When I go to the high schools, we have about 45 minutes to talk about healthy relationships, boiling down a 10-week workshop that several women at the Women’s Center developed. So, when we go into a high school room, we’ve taken a lot of information and condensed it into a presentation that lasts less than an hour.”

One of her recent tasks has been to update the table event display boards for all locations. “It would be nice for all of the offices to have the same information. This way it doesn’t matter which office is representing the Women’s Center at any given event. The information will be consistent along with our message and offer to help.”

Janine’s daughter was once involved in an abusive relationship. “That was extremely tough as a parent to watch,” she says. “And I know how hard it was to reach her. She didn’t want to talk about it; she didn’t want to admit it.

“So when I began my job about a year ago and I knew we would be going into the schools and in various places in the community, I wanted our presence to be a welcoming place to come to – not dwell on some of the harsher aspects of the DV experience. To make it warm and inviting – I wouldn’t say a happy place, but a promising place. In the schools, it’s about dating violence, but we don’t say that.”

Political correctness is an arena in which Janine operates a good deal of the time. “We are geared to make people think that everything is okay all the time,” Janine says. “Your world could be falling apart around you, but we feel that we have to act like everything is fine. We aren’t comfortable letting people know how we really feel, and that’s often true with women who suffer from abuse as well.

“We are here to let victims know that it’s OK, safe and empowering to talk about their feelings. We always say in every presentation, “Trust our feelings, allow yourself to feel your feelings. If it doesn’t feel right, it probably isn’t!”

Legal Back to Basics In-service

Jenkintown Office

Date: Wednesday, July 27th
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Our New Facility at Elkins Park Square Community Room
Old York Road, Elkins Park

Please take advantage of this opportunity to catch up on current events and reinforce your legal knowledge about the Protection from Abuse process.

Please note that the Legal Back to Basics training is a mandatory in-service for all hotline counselors. If you are not able to physically attend this session, we ask that you contact your volunteer coordinator to request a copy of the video taped session for your review.

Upcoming Events: Community Education

ALL VOLUNTEERS:
WELCOMED, NEEDED, AND WANTED!

MY HANDS ARE NOT FOR HURTING:

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM

July 26, 2005 – Girl Scouts of Southeastern PA – Miquon – 1:00 – 1:20 PM and 1:30 – 1:50 PM

August 16, 2005 – Girl Scouts of Southeastern PA – Miquon – 1:00 – 1:20 PM and 1:30 – 1:50 PM

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS:

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – Self Esteem Workshop – 12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

July 15, 2005 – Girl Scouts – Bensalem – Healthy Relationships – 1:20 PM – 2:10 PM

October 17, 2005 – Visiting Nurses Association – 7:00PM- 9:00 PM

January 9, 2005 – Visiting Nurses Association – 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Beginning July 14, 2005 – On-Going workshops on “Successful Aging” – 10:00AM – 11:00AM at the Ardmore Senior Center

Beginning July 26, 2005 – On-Going workshops at “A Woman’s Space” 10:00 – 11:00 in Ardmore

TABLE EVENTS:

August 1, 2005 – Abington Township “Pre-Night Out” 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Women's Center of Montgomery County

Jenkintown Office

215-885-8440

Korean: 215-886-8725

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

FAX: 215-885-8156

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**



DATED MATERIAL

**NONPROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
JENKINTOWN
PA
PERMIT NO. 5**