

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

Executive Director's Report



By Maria Macaluso

Last month I wrote my article about how hard it is to say good bye to volunteer Board members whose terms of service come to an end here at the Center. Little did I know when I wrote that article that June would also mean saying goodbye to our very special friend and devoted volunteer, Gloria Rosenberg, who passed away on Saturday, June 17th from complications related to myoplastic anemia. My extreme sorrow at the loss of this dynamic, dedicated and exceptional human being is one that I share with the many volunteers and members of the Center for whom Gloria was a constant and daily life force – an engaging, interesting, vocal, frank and humorous individual who gave endlessly to the Center of her time, wit, knowledge and skill.

Gloria Rosenberg was an active member of the Women's Center since 1978. She served in a variety of roles, including hotline counselor, Hotline Chair on the Counseling Services Committee, and group facilitator. For many years – even through her recent diagnosis and treatment - Gloria was responsible for scheduling all of the in-office Elkins Park volunteer shifts, and volunteered on the hotline at least two afternoons each week. Since coming to the Center, she initiated some very well-attended enrichment activities, including Yoga and Consciousness Raising, further expanding her already broad involvement and dedication to the Center. To new volunteers, Gloria frequently became a mentor and guide, helping new trainees to learn about the Center and the role we play in helping people in crisis.

My memories of Gloria date back almost to the moment I first walked in the doors of the Women's Center in January 1998. When I think of Gloria, I envision her calm and serenity of expression, her smiling encouragement, her words of support and comfort, and her willingness to share with refreshing candor her views on the Center, its history and its prospects for the future. In addition to being a well-informed friend with whom one could discuss world news, politics and the latest crime drama on television, Gloria was someone who cared enough to be willing to state her mind in a way that allowed for disagreement, but also encouraged lively debate. She was, in many ways, my moral compass for the Center's direction. She was a voice of our past, but she also managed to be open to contemplating change and, once she embraced that change, to be a staunch advocate for growth and for securing the Center's future. In conflict or confusion, Gloria was a voice of counsel whom I regularly sought because of her wisdom, honesty and our shared love for the Center.

Despite all of the activity in her life – Gloria was not one to stay still! – Gloria also was someone who remembered things that mattered to others and found time to 'check-in' on those little personal travails or accomplishments that so many of us allow to slip by unnoticed. Her attention to these things was amazing, and she could always be counted on to remember, to comment or to inquire upon a birthday, an event or a concern that touched our lives. She was, quite simply, a very special and remarkable person whose presence in our lives will be forever felt.

The service for Gloria was held on Monday, June 19th. Since it was impossible to reach all of our volunteers and members in time for them to join us at the service, we wanted to host our own memorial for Gloria here in the office that she loved so much on **Thursday, July 13th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** We hope that this will be an opportunity for many of us to come together to share our wonderful memories of this vital, funny, caring person and to remember all that she has meant to us over the years!

Please contact Deanna or Maria at the Elkins Park office for more information about this memorial service,

The Women's Center at the Keswick Theater!

Join Us at the November 4th Performance of CAPITOL STEPS 2006 PRE-ELECTION SHOW

The Women's Center is selling tickets to the Saturday, November 4th 8:00 p.m. production of "CAPITAL STEPS" at the Keswick Theater in Glenside. The ticket price will be announced in July, but will include the opportunity to attend a reception following the production with the performers.

The all-new CAPITOL STEPS 2006 PRE-ELECTION SHOW – America's favorite musical political satirists take shots at everyone – regardless of what side of the aisle they're on! These seven former (& current) congressional aides cover both national & local news, and are so up-to-the-minute that they're literally writing material backstage as they wait to perform. CNN's Larry King says, "They're the best!" These shows are so wildly funny that they always sell out, so act now!

Please contact Maria or Deanna at the Elkins Park office (215-635-7340) to reserve your tickets.

Direct Service Statistics for the Eleven Month Period July 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006 Excludes Victims Served through our Abington Medical Advocacy Project

Although we will be bringing you a complete report in September of our program activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, we thought we would share with you some of the numbers for our domestic violence program for the first eleven months of our 2005-2006 program year.

From July 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006 we served 3117 new victims of domestic violence, and provided services to 3832 continuing service recipients. We provided 1,415.6 hours of telephone counseling (4,302 telephone contacts), 1,732.8 hours of in-person counseling (2,444 contacts), and 385 hours of domestic violence support group counseling (203 participants). In addition, we provided court accompaniment services to 563 victims and legal advocacy support to 916 unduplicated victims.

While these numbers do not include non-domestic violence hotline calls and referrals, community education and outreach efforts, or activities performed by our Medical Advocate at Abington Memorial Hospital, we wanted to share with you some of the wonderful work being performed by our staff and volunteer counselors, without whom we would not continue to meet our mission!

News from the Elkins Park Office

Submitted by Deanna Linn, Volunteer Coordinator

Sherry R will be starting an Eating Disorders support group in July. The meetings are planned for Mondays at 1 pm in this office. The group is open to everyone. Hotline counselors — please have interested members leave their name and phone number at the office for Sherry.

Thank you to the Elkins Park office counselors. We will all miss Gloria — Tuesdays and Thursdays will never be the same. Although no one can take her place, we do need more counselors in the office.

Thank you to the weekend and weeknight hotline counselors. There were 114 hotline calls in May, 112 in April. There is always a need of counselors, so please call.

Welcome to the May training class, the new volunteers have started in the different offices.

Norristown Volunteer Update

Legal Remedies Workshops:

Since starting our Legal Remedies Information Sessions in July 2004 we have served 77 women in our Norristown office with 23 attorneys giving time and service to this project. Also, 10 women were served in Pottstown and 2 attorneys gave time and service.

For the first six months of 2006 (January to June), we served 19 women so far and 4 attorneys participated. In 2005, we served 20 women and 8 attorneys participated. And in the last six months of 2004 (July to December) we served 38 women and 11 attorneys participated.

Legal Remedies Workshop will resume in September, facilitator to be announced. The workshops are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month, nine months out of the year. 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!

Save the Date!

October 15, 2006- Our annual Volunteer Appreciation brunch will be held at the William Penn Inn from 11:00am-2:00pm. Come join us for a celebration of 30 years and a look into the future!

October 28, 2006- 2nd Annual "Unmask the Abuse" Walk-a-thon will be held at Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell campus from 10-12pm. Come join in the fun again this year!

Enjoy your summer!

Jenn B.

Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

SAVE THE DATE — The **Women's Center Volunteer Appreciation Brunch** is scheduled for **Sunday, October 15**, 11 am-2 pm, at the William Penn Inn. The theme for this year will be *Looking to the Future*. All active volunteers, (those with more than 52 hrs of service this past year), will be honored in recognition of the time and energy that you have been providing and of course, as the honorees, there is no cost for the brunch.

Looking to the future and looking to bring *future* new members of the Women's Center, we are asking current volunteers to invite friends or family members who might be interested in joining the WCMC to the brunch. These *future* members, for a \$25 donation, would be part of the brunch celebration and would receive a *future* 6 month membership to the WCMC.

Looking to the Future, we are requesting your predictions, your thoughts, your hopes for the next 30 years for the Women's Center and the world. Please write or e-mail with these ideas that will be compiled and presented at the brunch. And as part of the *past*, we are requesting you send us a baby picture of you (or a Xerox copy), please identify yourself on the back of the picture.

Come join us for a celebration of 30 years of the Women's Center and a look into the future. See you in the *future* on **Sunday, October 15**.

Volunteer coordinators – Jenn, Anya, Deanna

PCADV Program Standards Revised

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence has recently adopted new program standards for their funded domestic violence organizations which will be effective July 1, 2006. While many of these new policies are simply a formalization of procedures the Women's Center already has in place, some of them will require the creation or revision of our existing policies. As a result, our Personnel Committee will be working on revisions to our current policies, and a copy of these changes will be sent out to our active volunteers once they are approved by our Board of Directors.

For the most part, these changes will help us better define services and resources, providing clarity, accountability and boundaries that will improve the internal structure of the participating domestic violence organizations and ensure compliance through policies which seek to enhance the provision of services to victims of domestic violence. As we review these changes, however, we are seeking input from interested volunteers and members as we will develop policy language that is responsive to PCADV's requirements while remaining true to our own organizational mission and philosophy.

Two of the required changes relate to confidentiality and volunteer qualifications. The first policy relates to inter-program communications between two domestic violence programs. Pennsylvania is one of the few states in the country that provides an absolute confidentiality privilege for communications between a program's trained domestic violence counselor and a victim. We are extremely fortunate to enjoy this privilege in our state, a privilege which is only provided in relationships between patient/physician, patient/licensed psychotherapist, client/attorney; husband/wife, parishioner/clergy, and victim of domestic violence or sexual assault/trained counselor.

Protecting this privilege, however, requires that we adhere to the strictest interpretation of the confidentiality laws which prohibit inter-agency communications about a specific victim unless there is prior written consent from the victim. What this means to our counselors is that, *absent prior written permission from the victim*, we cannot make calls to another domestic violence program, such as Laurel House, which disclose the name of the victim, even if our the purpose is to inquire about the availability of shelter or services or to confirm information for the victim.

For the most part, this policy will not limit our ability to serve victims once they have given us their written permissions to make contact on their behalf. This will, however, affect hotline counselors who attempt to assist victims by making calls seeking shelter on their behalf. Although it is our general practice to encourage and empower the caller to make these calls for themselves, on rare occasions their circumstance do not allow them to make the calls for themselves. As hotline counselors, we ask that you be aware of the confidentiality protections that would prohibit you from revealing the victims name when making any inquiries on their behalf.

The more direct problem we face is with volunteers who provide services to more than one domestic violence program. The DART program, for example, in which we partner with Laurel House has been deemed by PCADV representatives to present a conflict to confidentiality. Under the DART program, a volunteer from the Women's Center may be dispatch to a hospital or police department to provide emergency crisis counseling; however, at the time of the call, they would be operating under the auspices of a Laurel House program, so information about a victim could be perceived as being shared by two programs without prior written consent from the victims.

We are still working with PCADV to clarify this issue, but their initial advice was to limit volunteers and staff from working for more than one domestic violence program at a time. Since we are eager to collaborate with programs if it will result in more effective and beneficial services for victims of domestic violence, we will be exploring this situation further and letting you know the outcome.

The second policy included in the PCADV newly revised standards would require criminal background checks, including domestic violence related charges, on volunteers. While we have no issue with such background checks for paid staff,

both Board and staff members are concerned that criminal background checks for volunteers would be philosophically at odds with our non-judgmental counseling approach and with our interest in attracting survivors to the Center as volunteers. Moreover, this additional demand might be seen as invasive by volunteers upon whom there are already increasing demands as a prerequisite to volunteerism.

Although the policy would not require us to refuse volunteers who do have a criminal background, we do realize that some people might be offended simply by the inquiry. Additionally, we recognize that some survivors may have been the subject of arrest because of activities involving their former abuse and/or abuser, and the inquiry may represent a renewed victimization for them. We are joined in this concern by other domestic violence programs who worry that employers who have a policy of “no prior domestic violence” may be excluding battered women who were wrongly arrested/convicted, and yet we also see obvious red flags for agencies who want to both be informed and who would not want to hire abusers with records

At this point, our Board of Directors has not made any decision about the direction we will take in meeting this PCADV requirement, but they are extremely interested in your opinions. We would therefore eagerly welcome hearing from you about your views on either of these issues. The Board has proposed that, should there be sufficient interest from our members and volunteers, that we could request a meeting with PCADV to present our position and our concerns about the possible harmful impact these policies may have on victims of domestic violence.

In the event that you have opinions and feelings on these matters that you wish to share, please contact Maria at the Elkins Park office, preferably in writing so that your views can be accurately shared with our Personnel Committee.

Upcoming Events for Community Education

MY HANDS ARE NOT FOR HURTING

September 20, 2006 – Carmel Nursery School – 10:00-11:00AM

September 21, 2006 – Carmel Nursery School – 10:00-11:00

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS And SPEAKING EVENTS

July 6, 2006 – Vision Quest – 1:00-2:00

July 20, 2006 – Vision Quest – 1:00-2:00

August 3, 2006 – Vision Quest 1:00-2:00

August 17, 2006- Vision Quest 1:00-2:00

November 1, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Adult Education - Evening

November 7, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Sisterhood – 10:00-11:30AM

November 8, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Adult Education – Evening

November 6, 2006 – Western Center for Technical Studies – 9:30-10:45

November 13, 2006 – Western Center for Technical Studies – 9:30-10:45

November 14, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Sisterhood – 10:00-11:30AM

November 15, 2005 – HarZion School Staff Training 12:00 – 12:45 1:00-1:45

November 15, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Adult Education – Panel Discussion with teens and Parents

November 21, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Sisterhood – 10:00-11:30AM

November 28, 2006 – HarZion Synagogue Sisterhood – 10:00-11:30AM

TABLE EVENTS

July 22, 2006 – Pottstown 3rd Annual Summer Fest – 10:00-4:00

July 31, 2006 – Pre-National Night Out – Upper Dublin Township – 6:00-9:00PM

October 14, 2006- Community Harvest Festival '06 – Whitpain Township -11:00AM-5:00PM

October 28, 2006 – Walk-A-Thon

One Day in May: A National Census of Domestic Violence Programs Pilot Survey

On one day in May 2006, 255 local domestic violence programs in seven states participated in a pilot initiative to test the process and instruments that will be used to collect a national count of domestic violence services. Those seven states were: Georgia, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Dakota, Washington, Utah and Pennsylvania. Of these states, Pennsylvania had the highest rate of participation, with 94% (58 out of 62 domestic violence programs) responding. The Women's Center of Montgomery County was one of those participating programs, and we thought it would be informative to share those results with our members so that you can get a sense of how many people are served by programs on an 'average' day!

Summary of Data from 255 Local Programs in the Seven Pilot States:

Number of Victims Served in 7 Pilot States: Nearly 10,000 adults and children were served by local domestic violence service programs in seven states during the 24-hour survey period in May.

2,632 were in emergency shelter
1,924 were in transitional housing
5,067 were served through non-residential advocacy

For non-residential advocacy, which includes the services provided by the Women's Center of Montgomery County, 45% of services were provided in the form of individual advocacy, which includes court accompaniment and peer counseling. Eight percent of the services were provided through support group activities.

In addition to these individual advocacy services, local domestic violence programs provided support through their emergency 24-hour hotline to over 3,285 domestic violence victims. These hotline contacts helped individuals in crisis, individuals seeking support for themselves or loved ones, and individuals seeking information about domestic violence.

On this day in May, local domestic violence programs also reported on community education and outreach efforts. In the 24-hour survey period, 3,397 individuals were trained by the 255 local domestic violence programs reporting.

This advocacy and training would be impossible without dedicated staff and volunteers available on a 24-hour basis. Based on the survey responses, it is estimated that paid staff provided nearly 21,000 hours of labor, and volunteers provided nearly 3,000 additional hours of service time.

While this report was helpful in providing an unduplicated count of the victims served in pilot states, it also illustrated the level of unmet needs for which local programs lacked sufficient resources to supply services to all of those who requested assistance. At least 548 requests for shelter, 586 requests for transitional housing, and 261 requests for non-residential services went unmet because of a lack of resources.

This pilot project is a promising start toward developing a uniform method for collecting data nationally which accurately captures the demand for domestic violence services, the pervasiveness of the problem, and unmet needs. We at the Center were pleased to be a participant in a process that we hope will ultimately benefit the victims of domestic violence we serve!

Working With Adolescent Perpetrators

The Healthy Relationships Group at Melrose Middle School

By Casey Corcoran, Adolescent Training Specialist

Many of us remember what an awkward and challenging time middle school was. Many of us also remember how awkward and confusing our first relationships with the opposite sex were. It was a time of testing boundaries, taking risks, and building our relationship skills. And as statistics show, this is also an important time for intervention and prevention with young people around relationship issues:

- Data from a study of 8th and 9th grade students showed that 25% of them had been victims of nonsexual dating violence and 8% had been victims of sexual dating violence (Foshee et al. 1996).
- Nationwide, 9% of students reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months prior to being surveyed (Grunbaum et al. 2004).
- A nationwide survey found male students (41%) more likely to have been involved in a physical fight than female students (25%) in the 12 months preceding the survey (Grunbaum et al. 2004).

It is because of this unique and formative period in the lives of young people that Emerge recognized a need for dating/family violence intervention and prevention efforts with young boys.

In the Emerge Adolescent Program, school staff and community members receive professional development to help them identify boys who may benefit from the group. They are told to look for things like controlling behavior with female friends and classmates, instances of family violence, and generally poor skills around relationship building. It is through these school and community agencies that eighth grade boys are recommended for group participation in a one hour psycho-educational group for 16 weeks.

For the past four years, thanks to funding from the Svrluga Foundation, Emerge has run a healthy relationships group for eighth grade boys in Melrose, MA called The Boys Seminar. These groups are intended to teach boys the skills of healthy relationships as they transition into high school. The Emerge Adolescent Curriculum is a developmentally appropriate, asset-based tool that uses cooperative activities, games, and role-plays. Some of the topics include identifying what “pushes their buttons,” positive and negative self-talk, the different types of violent and controlling behavior, respectful communication, building empathy, and how to be an ally.

Adolescent groups have particular challenges that make them different from conducting adult groups. For example, many of the teenagers have existing relationships with each other. They also frequently know each others’ friends, girlfriends, and family members. As opposed to many adult groups, the boys are in the group voluntarily. Since their participation is not court ordered it can be a challenge to keep attendance high.

Another challenge in doing adolescent intervention is that many of the boys only present risk factors or generalized controlling behavior. Because of this, the Emerge Adolescent Curriculum is designed as a hybrid of prevention and intervention skills. The curriculum seeks to teach them how to be in a healthy relationship, both with their girlfriends and with their friends and family. The goal is to provide them with the foundation to have healthy relationships in all parts of their lives.

We all have a responsibility to encourage and teach young men and boys to have healthy relationships. Through this asset-based approach, Emerge is taking the steps to build these important skills and make sure that these boys grow into healthy and responsible men.

**WOMEN'S CENTER OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
AND SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF POTTSTOWN
PRESENT OUR SECOND ANNUAL
"UNMASK THE ABUSE"
WALK-A-THON**

**SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 28TH , 2006
10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON**

**5K (3.1 MILES) WALK-A-THON
AT MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BLUE BELL CAMPUS**

**Join us as we work to raise awareness and promote community collaboration in our effort to end
domestic violence!**

**For more information on how you can help,
Please contact Denise in the Norristown Office at
610-279-7474.**

**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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