

# 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

## Board of Directors Update



### Nominating Committee News

*Submitted by Lillian Sulliman, Chair*

As the fiscal year comes to a close in June, we are pleased to inform our membership that the following individuals have applied for a position on our Board of Directors for the two year term that will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This slate of candidates will be presented to the full Board for approval at the May 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Voting ballots will then be mailed to active members (members who have donated more than 52 hours of direct service to Center in the past year). Ballots must be returned within 30 days to be included in the final vote count, which occurs at the annual meeting of the membership, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Elkins Park office.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, we present the slate of new candidates for the 2008-2010 term:

**Staci Levick, DO**, graduate of LaSalle University and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, is an ENT specialist with Berger/Henry ENT Associates. In addition to her practice she assists in managing their five offices in locations throughout the Delaware Valley. Having served on a variety of hospital committees over the years, Staci has outstanding organizational and negotiating skills. She has also expressed interest in fundraising. "I am passionate about stopping violence of all kinds, especially domestic abuse." Currently a single mom, she resides in Haverford. On June 5<sup>th</sup> Staci will wed her rabbi fiancé. Staci also completed the Women's Center 48-hour Domestic Violence Counselor Advocate Training in Spring 2008.

**Jill Nammar**, a graduate of Wilkes University, with extended credits from Chestnut Hill College in Psychology, is a Crises Intervention Specialist, currently employed part-time as a Crisis Counselor with Women Against Abuse. As one who has completed the WCMC Domestic Violence Counselor Advocate Training, Jill volunteers for both evening hotline and court advocacy. She is actively involved with the Buddy Program at ActionAids and pastoral counseling with area hospices and nursing home programs. She has an in-home craft business as well. Jill resides in Philadelphia with her husband.

**Patrick C Parkinson**, a graduate of Philadelphia Community College and Holy Family University with an MBA in Business Administration and Finance, is currently employed as an Administrative Analyst with the Department of Prothonotary for Montgomery County, where he manages and oversees budgetary responsibilities. Prior positions include Contract Specialist with US Dept of Defense and Financial Specialist with Philadelphia Newspapers, Wachovia Bank and Verizon. In addition, Pat is active in civic committee work. He resides in Philadelphia with his wife and two young daughters.

**Lawrence Pauker, Esq.**, graduate of American University and American U Law School in Washington, D.C., maintains law offices in Norristown and Collegeville. His legal practice involves family law, divorce and personal injury; as such he often works with our Court Advocates on PFA cases. Lawrence has published several articles in the PA Law

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## News from Elkins Park: An Office Full of Upcoming Activity!

Reminder about the Active Listening required in-services, May 12, Elkins Park, 7pm; May 14, Elkins Park, 1pm; and May 15, Bryn Mawr, 7pm.

Then on Thursday, May 20, 1pm and 7 pm, Janine Kelly is previewing the Stalking on College Campus presentation.

June is AIDS Education Month and we will have a speaker from *Philadelphia Fight* to present updated information on HIV/AIDS issues on Monday, June 9, 1pm and Tuesday, June 17, 7pm.

The in-service dates for July will be Wednesday, July 16, 1pm and Thursday, July 17, 7pm, topics to be determined later.

Starting in June, the Elkins Park Office will be open on Monday evenings until 9pm for drop-in time for those who want in-person counseling. Counselors in the office will answer the hotline here and this will also be an opportunity for counselors to do evening follow-up calls and for trainees to do their required practicum. We will also then offer groups that will each meet once a month, a different group each week during the month. The possible groups are *Women in Transition*, *Parents of Adult Children*, *Raising Daughters in Today's World*, *Lesbian Support Group*, and *Legal Remedies Clinic*. The groups will be open to Women's Center members and others in the community. I am looking for counselors who want to take part in this, either as a hotline counselor in the office being available as peer counselor for walk-ins or as a group facilitator. And I welcome help on publicizing this Monday Open Night at the Women's Center.

On Monday, June 2, at the Elkins Park Office, there will be a planning meeting at 7pm for those interested. Monday, June 9, we will start with the *Parents of Adult Children* group. The schedule for the rest of June will be determined later. Contact me at the Elkins Park office for more information, 215-635-7344 or [dlinn@dca.net](mailto:dlinn@dca.net).

Finally, I will be giving a domestic violence counselor training starting in May primarily geared for college students who want to do a summer internship, but it is open to anyone interested. The training will be at Rosemont College, May 28-30 and June 4-6, 10am-3:30pm. I will be scheduling other trainings during the summer on the more traditional one day or one evening a week for 8 weeks. Contact me for applications or more information.

*Deanna Linn*  
*Director of Volunteers*

### **Attention Book Lovers!**

For an evening of stimulating discussions and good fellowship, join us on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30. Call Sunny at 215-576-6215 for further information. Hope to see you!!!

#### **Book Club Calendar:**

May "Brooklyn Follies" by Paul Auster

June "On Chesil Beach" by Ian McEwan

The Women's Center of Montgomery County  
Please make us your highest priority  
**United Way Donor Option**  
**Number 00433**



## **NORRISTOWN VOLUNTEER UPDATE**

### **In-Services:**

A special thank you to Amy W. Sosnov, an attorney and long-time friend and an early member of the center. Her discussion on women's property rights was interesting and informative to volunteers and staff.

Our next in-service is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 13, 2008** from **1-3pm** in the Norristown office. Deanna will be facilitating an active listening in-service. This in-service is mandatory and part of the 8 hour required in-service hours for the year. There will also be an evening active listening in-service available in Elkins Park if you are unable to attend in Norristown.

### **Legal Remedies:**

We thank Lenore Myers, Esq. and Scott Kreiger Esq. for facilitating our April Legal Remedies workshop. The participants were greatly appreciative of her input and expertise.

The next Legal Remedies Workshop will be held on **May 20, 2008** from **5-7pm** in the Norristown office. The guest attorney will be Steve Rubin, Esq., former Board member and long-standing friend and supporter of the Women's Center. The discussion will be open to civil and family law. The information sessions are held at our Norristown office at 18 West Airy Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Please call 610-279-7474 to register to attend. Also, please refer a family member or friend to this valuable program!

Happy Spring!

*Jenn B.*

*Norristown Volunteer Coordinator*

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## **Pottstown's Potpourri**

Spring is a busy time in the Pottstown community. Many activities and events are available for those who are striving to live a healthy, safe, and fulfilling life. Last month, the third annual Healthy Lifestyles Expo was held at the West campus of the Montgomery County Community College. Tables of information from 76 participants were accessible to the attendees encouraging them to make healthy lifestyle choices, including our own Women's Center table promoting healthy relationship choices.

April also had another interesting event that proved to be of interest to some clients of the Women's Center. A Health Careers Informational Breakfast was held at the Lakeside Inn. The Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board Medical Subcommittee provided information detailing health careers and the educational requirements necessary to achieve these careers. The program and the breakfast buffet were free to all those who registered.

Finally, May also has its share of events. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, Healthy Woman, a program offered by the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center, is celebrating its one year anniversary with a dinner at the Sunnybrook Ballroom. This program is a free community resource that is designed to empower women with the knowledge and confidence to make informed healthcare decisions. Also this month, the Safe Dating play, "Mirror, Mirror", sponsored by the TriCounty Community Network Domestic Violence Committee will be performed at Pottsgrove High School immediately before their prom. Four performances, one for each class, are scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Look for more on this event in next month's Potpourri!

*Kristine Wickward*

*Legal Advocate - Pottstown*

Thank you to the dedicated students and staff of Highland Elementary School in Abington, who organized a donation campaign to benefit children in crisis. As part of their Martin Luther King Day of Caring commemoration, the students, teachers and staff collected toiletries, small games and toys, packaging them in care bags to be presented to children who are displaced or living in crisis because of family violence. Our sincerest thanks to these wonderful individuals who inspire us with their beautiful gifts of compassion and civic minded efforts honoring Dr. King!



**Women’s Center of Montgomery County  
Domestic Violence Service Statistics  
2007-2008  
Nine Month Period 7/1/07 through 3/31/08**

*Excludes Medical Advocacy, Community Education,  
Non-Domestic Violence Crisis Services*

**Contacts:**

Telephone counseling	4069
Peer Counseling	479
Support Groups	177
Inperson counseling	841
Court Accompaniment	970
<b>Total</b>	<b>6536</b>

**Time:**

Telephone counseling	1135.75
Peer Counseling	480.5
Support Groups	308.75
Inperson counseling	837.25
Court Accompaniment	1017
<b>Total</b>	<b>3779.25</b>

**Unduplicated Victims:**

Telephone counseling	2575
Peer Counseling	156
Support Groups	50
Inperson counseling	650
Court Accompaniment	725

# POLICY POSITION PAPER

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## SENATE BILL 1250: THE “MARRIAGE PROTECTION ACT”

Senate Bill 1250 would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to prohibit recognition of any relationship other than a marriage between a man and a woman as legally valid or the “functional equivalent” of marriage.

### SB 1250 WOULD ENDANGER THE PROTECTION FROM ABUSE (PFA) ACT

Because SB 1250 would prohibit legal status to any “functional equivalent” of marriage, it may jeopardize protections given to unmarried victims who seek Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders—as happened in Ohio.

- The PFA Act is a civil protection order statute that offers protections to victims of domestic violence, including spouses, ex-spouses, sexual or intimate partners, and, among others, persons living as spouses.
- Because the PFA Act offers protection to victims “living as spouses,” **SB 1250 would subject the PFA Act to legal challenge** for creating a legal status for unmarried cohabitating relationships that may be considered “the functional equivalent of marriage.”

### PCADV OPPOSES SB 1250 because it would:

- Jeopardize the safety of domestic violence victims by inciting legal challenge to the PFA Act as applied to unmarried victims; and
- Deny same-sex couples marriage rights, civil unions, and/or other equal rights under law.

### THE OHIO AMENDMENT WAS USED TO SHIELD PERPETRATORS FROM LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

After a similar constitutional amendment was passed in Ohio in 2004, domestic violence perpetrators who were not married to their victims began hiding behind the Amendment.

- Defendants claimed that by applying to unmarried persons, Ohio’s domestic violence laws created a legal status for relationships of unmarried persons, in violation of the constitution.
- Two of Ohio’s appellate districts, representing 23 counties, *agreed with the defendants*, holding that Ohio’s domestic violence laws were unconstitutional. ***The effect was that in 23 counties in Ohio, domestic violence victims who were not married to their abusers were denied protective orders.***
- Mass confusion continued from the time the Amendment was adopted in 2004 through July of 2007, when the Ohio Supreme Court ultimately upheld the domestic violence law in *State v. Carswell*, 871 N.E.2d 547 (Sup. Ct. Ohio, July 25, 2007). *This outcome is in no way binding on Pennsylvania courts.*

### THE OHIO EXPERIENCE IS A CAUTIONARY TALE AND MUST BE AVOIDED

The legal challenges in Ohio caused enormous **safety risks to victims** who were denied—or deterred from seeking—legal protections against violent, even life-threatening abuse.

- The Ohio cases also caused **mass confusion among law enforcement** responding to victims’ calls for help. Police officers were dumbstruck: when called to intervene in a domestic assault or violation of a protective order, officers were forced to tell unmarried victims the law did not protect them.

If SB 1250 is passed, Pennsylvania will face years of costly litigation, conflicting legal opinions, diversion of resources from serving victims to defending laws in court—*during which the safety of unmarried domestic violence victims will be in crisis with no certainty as to whether the laws protect them.*

**SUSPENDING THE PFA ACT’S PROTECTIONS FOR EVEN ONE DAY IS A RISK PENNSYLVANIA’S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS CANNOT AFFORD. PLEASE VOTE TO PROTECT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS BY OPPOSING SB 1250.**

For more information, please contact Nicole Lindemyer at PCADV, 800-932-4632 or [nal@pcadv.org](mailto:nal@pcadv.org).

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), 6400 Flank Drive, Suite 1300, Harrisburg, PA 17112  
800-932-4632 - [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org) - 2008

**April 13<sup>th</sup> Champagne Brunch:  
A Day to Remember!**

Thank you to all of our members and supporters who joined us at the Meadowlands Country Club on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> to honor State Representative Josh Shapiro for his amazing leadership, particularly as an advocate for domestic violence victims. It was also a most memorable day thanks to our moderator, Larry Kane, and his guests, brothers Chris and Jim Matthews.

We could not have wished for a more informative, humorous, and fascinating discussion! With more than 200 guests attending, many of whom posed their own insightful, enlightening and challenging questions for the Matthews brothers – our professional and entertaining emcee, Larry Kane, led an extremely dynamic and witty question and answer session.

A truly heartfelt acceptance speech by Representative Shapiro made the event complete. Filled with warmth, grace and admiration for the family that helped shape the remarkable person he is, the audience was genuinely moved by his sincerity and charm.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and management of the Women’s Center, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of the individuals who participated in the success of the event: our wonderful honoree and our distinguished guest speakers; our gracious moderator; the incredibly supportive and generous sponsors and patrons; the staff who donated their time working at the event; and, most importantly, the dedicated, energetic and creative women who planned and executed this year’s successful fundraising brunch: Co-Chairs Donna Jarrett-Kane and Sandy Kravitz, Special Event Planning Committee members Joyce Skobinsky, Andi Seidner, Norma Jarrett, Harriet Brecher, and Lillian Sulliman. And a sincere thank you to volunteer Judy Blumstein, who worked tirelessly to create festive auction package displays!

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Journal, as well as serving on the Executive Board at Temple Sinai. Interesting family note: Lawrence’s mother was a personal friend of both Gladys Diamond and Mary Gaynor, activist/advocates with the WCMC for many years.

Current Board Members seeking re-election to another two-year term (2008-2010) are:

**Aeryn Fenton** - Federal Criminal Defense Attorney, part time; full time mother. First joined the Board in 2006. An accredited WCMC DV Counselor/Advocate who works direct service within several WCMC office venues and serves on several Board Committees. Aeryn has been involved in the volunteer sector for many years having served on the Crime Prevention Board and as a fundraising chair for the Philadelphia Historical Society. Aeryn resides in Penn Valley with her husband and young family. *Seeking re-election to her second term.*

**Jennifer McGraw** - A summa cum laude psychology graduate of Widener University with expertise in women’s issues, she acquired her JD from Beasley School of Law, Temple University. Joined the Board in 2006. Jenn was previously employed as a law clerk for Bucks County Common Pleas Court Judge Goldberg and as a training analyst for US Dept of Labor. Jenn currently chairs the Operations Committee, which oversees Finance and Personnel Committees. She resides with her husband and two young daughters in Northeast Philadelphia. *Seeking re-election to her second term.*

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# Champagne Brunch 2008



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**Kathy Gallagher** – Senior Vice President, Retail Financial Services Citizens Bank discovered the unique aspects of the Women’s Center while helping determine the Center’s worthiness of the first area’s Community of Champions. Immediately following the presentations ceremony she requested to join the board and continue her support that she has provided other organizations as an active board member. Ms. Gallagher’s is based in Plymouth Meeting and is quite familiar with the needs of the community.. Kathy has served for the past two years on the Personnel Committee. *Joined Board in 2004 - seeking re-election to her third term.*

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to the following individuals whose terms come to an end. Thank you for your dedicated leadership, vision and unwavering support!

Renee Brock  
Naomi Shapiro  
Derek McGee

Kathryn Morris  
Ray Rife  
Grant Miller

**Save the Date!**

The Women's Center of Montgomery County invites you to join us for our Fourth Annual

**"Unmask the Abuse" 5K Walkathon**

Do your part to STOP domestic violence in our community and raise awareness!

Join us at Montgomery County Community College  
Blue Bell Campus,  
Blue Bell, PA

**Saturday, October 11, 2008**  
**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

For more information on how to register or to work on the Special Event Planning Committee for this event, contact Maria at our Elkins Park office at 215-635-7340.

*Proceeds will benefit the Women's Center of Montgomery County*

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

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