

Choices



Community Newsletter

Winter 2012 

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*Dedicated to creating a community free of family violence, sexual assault
and stalking through empowerment, support and education.*

Public Office (541) 957 0288 Toll Free (800) 464 6543 24-Hour Crisis Line (541) 673 7867 www.peaceathome.org



Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Advocates have been committed to our mission for over 35 years. This past year, the board and staff met to set goals for the next year ahead to strengthen the agency and enhance services. The foundation was laid for the new Executive Director. Together our new mission was developed, to create a community free of family violence, sexual assault and stalking through empowerment, support and education.

Over the next year we will be focused on supporting and empowering survivors through peer counseling, setting goals to meet their needs and community collaboration. Staff and volunteers will also educate others through outreach activities, trainings and building relationships with the media and community providers.

As the new Executive Director I am excited to be able to lead staff and instill guiding principles and practices that are important to me in the work we do. I believe that the work we do should be family focused and client driven, we will help build on people's strengths and build upon natural supports.

Sincerely,
Melanie Taylor Prummer
Executive Director

Walk-a-Mile in Her Shoes

The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Violence.



Each year, an ever-increasing number of men, women and their families are joining the award-winning *Walk a Mile in Her Shoes*®. This event is a playful opportunity for men to raise awareness in their community about this serious cause—effects of sexualized violence.

This event is abundant with opportunities to get people talking. It provides preventive education, gives men the opportunity to better understand and appreciate women's experiences, changes perspectives, helps improve gender relationships and decreases the potential for violence. It demonstrates that men are willing and able to be courageous partners with women in making the world a safer place.

A Story of Hope and Happiness

Shortly after my second pregnancy began, I would take a BPA brochure from the doctor's office every appointment. I would read it over and over until I had to throw it away before my husband came home from work. I would read the questions on the flyer or pamphlet over and over. I eventually began answering them and realizing my relationship was not a normal one.

A friend told me about Battered Person's Advocacy's services at the courthouse to help with restraining orders. The thing I appreciated the most about the services the BPA offers at the courthouse is the support I received during the process, especially to have someone there when I was in front of the judge. I felt intimidated and I was relieved to have someone to talk to afterwards that could offer reassurance.

My husband contested my restraining order and sent my emotions into a tailspin. At the BPA office, I watched a very helpful video on preparation and used the information as a template for my own case. I went into court very nervous but also very prepared. The judge upheld my restraining order. I felt like this was my first victory in my new life. Again, the BPA representative attended my appearance before the judge. The availability of an advocate during one of the most stressful times in my life was amazing.

If it were not for BPA, I may still be in a situation that is not healthy or safe for my kids and me. I needed the encouragement in those few crucial moments of my life that held life-changing choices. I am happy to say that I am now a Registered Nurse and feel very adjusted to my life. My kids are growing and thriving and so am I.

~ Megan

Save the Date

Valentines Gala

An elegant, romantic evening of dinner and dancing. To be an event sponsor or purchase your ticket contact Melanie Prummer at melaniep@cmspan.net.

Saturday, February 16, 2013

Walk-a-Mile in Her Shoes

Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Violence. To register yourself or a team contact Cheryl Newell at cnewell@cmspan.net.

Friday, April 26, 2013

Volunteer Training

Earn a total of 30 hours of training. Application, interview and background check is required. Please contact Joy Ward for more information at joyw@cmspan.net.

Starts January 2013

Sexual Assault Response Team Training

Please contact Cheryl Newell for more information.

Starts March 2013

Adopt-a-Family: Holiday Giving Program

For families who have recently survived domestic violence, the holidays can be especially challenging—many mothers are living with their children in temporary emergency shelter without their belongings or resources.

To help spread holiday cheer to these families, Battered Persons' Advocacy coordinates an annual holiday drive for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The generosity of individuals, businesses and churches make the gift collection a success; Battered Persons' Advocacy's dedicated team of volunteers and staff willing to work evenings and weekends make sure the gift distribution is just as successful.

More than just presents for children and their mothers, the holiday gift drive helps families establish a renewed sense of stability as they build their lives—an important step on the journey to recovery from domestic violence. Over the last decade, the Adopt-a-Family program has given food baskets, clothing and gifts to over 300 families. For more information please contact Joy Ward at joyw@cmspan.net.

Co-located Advocates **NEW**

In collaboration with Department of Human Services and Douglas County Health Department we have been able to provide advocates at their sites. It has been effective to have advocates on-site for many reasons but most importantly we help community partners identify, assess and refer victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Advocates assist with safety planning to enhance the personal safety of the family. They also engage case workers and staff in consultation and training to provide better services and alleviate barriers to successful family stability, safety, and economic and personal self-sufficiency.

If advocates were not at these two locations in the community many victims and survivors may not have become aware of our services. At the Health Department many women have been able to meet the advocate at their appointment which meant they did not have to make a call on their own (which may not be safe). They connected with an advocate in the moment when they need us most.

Child Welfare, Self-sufficiency Program case workers and our advocate worked together to help safety plan with a woman to be able to leave and re-locate out of state with her children. The family successfully went to a safe place, closer to her supports which prevented the children from going into foster care. There are many stories like this; partnering has been valuable as we coordinate services and advocate in the best interests of the family.

"Our new BPA advocate makes herself available and is reaching out to the workers in this office to make her presence known. She is doing a wonderful job at building relationships with staff and bridging the gap between Self-Sufficiency Program services and BPA services." ~ DHS Case Worker

Peace at Home Support Group

Empowerment through Survivor Support and Art-Making

Battered Persons' Advocacy started an art program in September 2012 to help foster healing for survivors of domestic violence while providing education around the dynamics of domestic violence. The program focuses on empowerment, and the group setting provides a supportive environment for survivors. The art program began with help from *A Window Between Worlds*, a non-profit based in Venice, California that has helped implement domestic violence art programs in DV agencies all across the country for 20 years. The Windows program provided the BPA's art program liaison with training for art workshop facilitation and provides ongoing program support.

Since beginning the program, advocates have witnessed the positive impact that art has had on their clients. No art experience is needed for participation and any client can benefit from art-making. Clients can use art as an empowerment tool by making decisions about their art after living in a world where an abuser has taken daily choices away from them. The art workshops are also a time for them to relax and take time from what is often a difficult transition out of violence. After recently leaving her abuser one participant said "It felt really good to do something positive instead of lying curled up in a ball all day crying." Art also gives survivors a voice to express their recent struggles and their hopes for a better future. During the workshops they also learn about the dynamics of domestic violence. Much of what they learn comes from one another's experiences, and art cultivates a colorful means of expressing these experiences. One survivor said "The art just comes out. You don't even have to think about it."

Battered Persons' Advocacy currently holds art workshops during the *Peace at Home Group*, which is a support group geared specifically towards mothers who are survivors of domestic violence. Advocates also provide art workshops in the shelter's weekly *DV Awareness Group* as well as in one on one peer support and DV education sessions for DHS clients.

Stats: 2011

Crisis Response

4106

24-Hour crisis line calls from victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

1078

Adult face-to-face crisis response and assessments.

798

Families were assisted by Emergency Services with food and clothing etc.

Safe Shelter

187

Women received emergency shelter.

80

Children received emergency shelter.

100%

Shelter residents left with a safety plan.

Sexual Assault Services

148

Sexual assault face-to-face assessments.

24

Sexual assault victims met by an advocate at the hospital.

Legal Advocacy

1151

Individuals were assisted with legal advocacy.

Quotes

"This is the first time in years I have felt hope and I am less afraid."

"The domestic violence educational meetings are super insightful and a great tool."

"I appreciate the understanding of cultural diversity from staff."

"I have been able to grow into a stronger person that will allow me to have a safer environment for my son."

Programs and Services

All service core philosophy is to provide options, resources and information about how to increase safety and build a life free of intimate partner violence.

Emergency Services	Includes 24-hour crisis line, peer counseling, safety planning, danger assessment, assistance with food, hygiene items, 911 emergency cell phones, and assistance with other safety needs.
Confidential Emergency Shelter	Safe shelter for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.
Transitional Services	Support groups, long term case management support and transitional housing apartments.
Legal Advocacy	Assistance with protective and stalking orders, court support, and advocacy with law enforcement.
Sexual Assault Services	Coordinate county wide sexual assault team, provide acute hospital rape response, peer counseling, legal and medical advocacy.

Poster Contest Winner

The 2012 Domestic Violence Awareness Month Poster Contest was themed "Safe & Together".

1st place winner:

Calvin Sharpe

Attends Douglas High School.

Special thanks to
Ms. Lusack's class.



Volunteers play a vital role in supporting survivors in our community and assisting staff. Each year we have over 60 volunteers dedicate over 14,000 hours of their time. A special thanks to our outgoing board members Candice Voynick, Kelly Cooper and Bobbi Bullock for their service.