Domestic Violence
Resource Center
of South County

Annual Report

FY 2009/10

Freedom From Fear

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Executive Director

Mary Roda

OUR MISSION

The Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County offers safety, support, advocacy, proactive community education and a network of services to all people who are affected by domestic violence.

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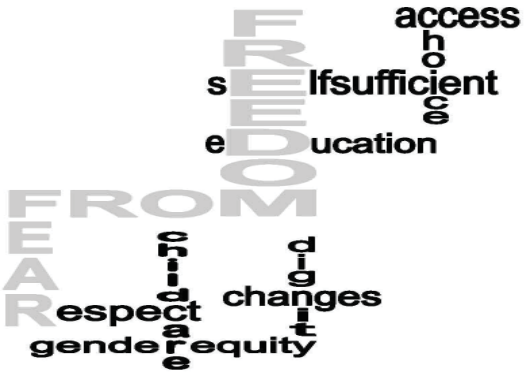
Vincent Vespia, Jr.

Letter from the Executive Director

Words are so powerful. They can be loving, playful, encouraging and down-right harmful. They can cut you to threads and make you doubt the value of your existence.



Imagine, being berated and humiliated by someone who loves you so often that you lose your self-respect? Your dignity? Your choices are made for you. Education is denied, and you are constantly reminded how stupid and ugly you are. You are stripped of your self-esteem and other words on the grid above – like "choices" and "dignity" - are things of the past. You believe you are worthless, alone. One. Word. At. A. Time.

Freedom From Fear. It sounds so normal, yet for so many it is the ultimate wish. There have been eight domestic murders in Rhode Island in 2010! Refuse to remain silent – it's our best weapon against relationship violence.

Mary Roda

FY2009/10 Sponsors & Honorees

2009 Summer Celebration

The Washington Trust Company
George C. Moore Company
James & Susan Stone
Bob & Roseanne Fetzer
Fred & Barbara Frost
Mike & Sue Hazard
Thomas D. Goldberg
Rob & Peggy Leeson
Marc One Coin Company, Inc.
David & Joyce Ruppell
Russell & Marian Burke
Reverend Doctor Joyce B. Duerr
Paul D. Lynch
Hugh & Nancy Weidinger
Iasimone Plumbing & Heating
Narragansett Rubbish Removal, Inc.
Quality Landscape Services, Inc.

Peace in Our Backyard

Held with the Courthouse Center for the Arts

GFWC Women's Club of South County
Centreville Bank
Narragansett Police Department
South County Tourism
Rhode Island Foundation
WPRI, Channel 12
South County Independent
Narragansett Beer
Panera Bread
Belmont Market
BJ's Wholesale Club
ICopy
BankNewport
Sam's Club

Men Who Make A Difference

Men who Enrich South County

Bob Cashmon
Scott Mueller
Bruce Perreault
Barry Wepman
Jaime Wilson

2009 Annual Meeting Honorees

Community Impact Award

Susan Crohan

Candle in the Darkness Award

The Washington Trust Company
People's Credit Union

Circle of Peace Award

Chariho High School Volunteers

Survivor to Thriver Award

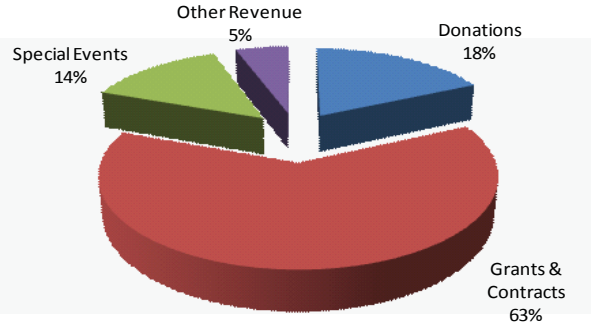
Lisa Mabe

Dancing with the South Kingstown Stars

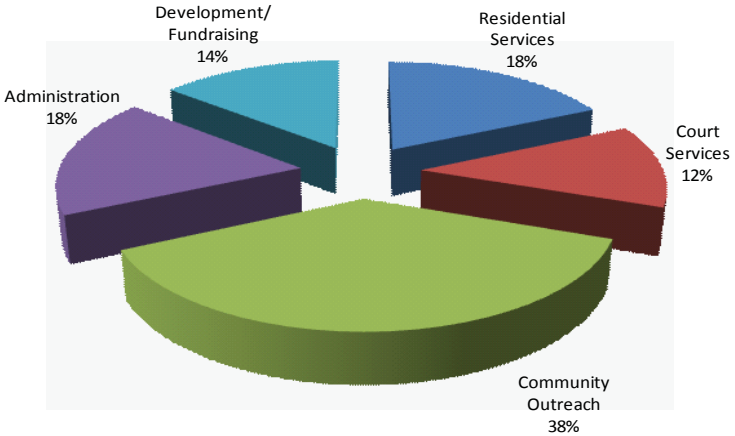
Held with the South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce

South County Independent

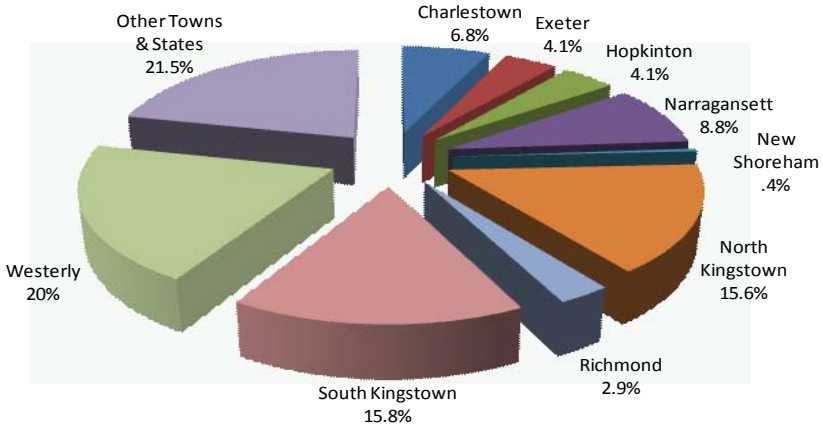
Funding Sources



Department Expenses



Clients Served by Town



Although every attempt has been made to ensure the reliability of the information contained herein, some inaccuracies may exist.

Service Statistics

July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

Support Groups: 133 clients

One-on-One Therapy: 31 clients

New Directions Psycho-Education: 8 clients

Safe Home Program: 1,640 bed nights

Transitional Housing Program: 1,423 bed nights

Helpline Calls: 2,658

Drop-In Center Personal Advocacy: 120 services

Child Advocacy: 15 services

Disposed Court Cases: 506

Court Walk-Ins: 876

Temporary Restraining Orders: 135

Court Calls: 934

Professional Trainings: 141

Classroom Education: 3,054 students

Adult Outreach: 1,798

Volunteer Hours Worked: 2,432

Safe Home & Transitional Housing

Our Residential Programs offer numerous services to help clients achieve a stable, independent life. Our clinical services provide support to both adults and their children. (We often have more children than adults at the Safe Home.) Our collaborative partners can offer professional help with issues that our agency staff and volunteers are unable to address.

Our client numbers were low in Autumn and Winter of 2009. We lost two anticipated federal renewal grants that meant a loss of about $150,000 for both our Transitional Housing and our Safe Home Emergency Shelter. We had to let staff go and change our staffing pattern for the Emergency Shelter. Because of this loss, we closed the Safe Home to new clients from November 15, 2009 to January 31, 2010 while we re-assessed how to best meet our clients' needs and operate with fiscal responsibility. Meanwhile, our Transitional Housing program's bed nights more than doubled.

In February, we re-opened our Residential Programs and accepted new clients. We also helped a man who needed an emergency stay of five days. We are moving forward, along with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to reassess our clients' needs and how our programs can best serve them on a state-wide basis.

Melyssa Marland of Zero Wampum and Megan Whelan, DVRCSC Education Advocate, show paper goods and household cleaners donated to the Safe Home by store customers during the holidays.

Court Advocates

DVRCSC Court Advocate Ann Perlman (front) meets with Debbie Sheldon, URI Prosecuting Officer. Court Advocates have built relationships with law and order branches that work with us at the McGrath Judicial Complex.

Court advocacy is still one of our busiest programs. Our staff and volunteers assist clients/victims in cases that are becoming more and more complex. Many clients face multiple issues in district, superior and family court, and sometimes in all three at the same time. We worked with a variety of judges last year, and each one had a different way of handling domestic violence cases.

Our court advocates also offer crisis intervention, one-on-one personal support and referrals to other service-providers who work with issues such as substance abuse or mental health. Advocates educate clients to review realistic assessments of their options.

Our seven advocates, some of whom are volunteers, have about 55 years of combined experience working at the court. With their experience, and the luxury of a full-time office at the McGraph Judicial Complex, our agency can handle hundreds of clients and cases each year.

Volunteers

Helpline/Drop-In Center

Trained volunteers work four hours a week to help us operate our Helpline and offer personal advocacy to drop-in clients. They receive 12 hours of training and begin working in pairs with more experienced volunteers. Six of our volunteers have committed twelve years to our agency, and one has worked unpaid for thirteen years. Some of our volunteers work as Court Advocates and others work with clients at the Safe Home.

Our Helpline is often the first service a client may use for emotional support. Callers may receive numerous resources and referrals, discuss safety plans and what they often need most ~ non-judgmental reassurance that hope and help is available for them. Often a concerned family member may want to know how to help a daughter or sister that they suspect might be in a violent relationship. From Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, the public may "drop in" at our office, 61 Main Street in Wakefield, to confidentially discuss any of these issues in person.

From left, volunteers Ena Volpe and Elizabeth Colagiovanni discuss updates to the referral reference book with Volunteer Coordinator Leslie Nelson.

Support Groups & One-on-One Counseling

Support Group Facilitators Deb Greene and Carleen Lefebvre prepare for an evening support group meeting. Deb has worked for 15 years at DVRCSC, and Carleen has worked for 14 years at the agency.

We offer support groups three times a week, two in the morning and one in the early evening, to accomodate almost any schedule. Clients may attend at any time without a reservation. Given at confidential locations in South Kingstown and Westerly, the support groups are an open forum where clients can share experiences, identify the patterns of abuse in their lives, and look for ways to break free from their abusive relationships. Our Westerly group has given us the opportunity to reach out to many more clients.

Our four support group facilitators have a combined 43 years of experience leading support groups. Topics may include:

- Identifying feelings
- Shame and guilt
- Self-esteem
- Communication skills
- Meeting needs
- Setting boundaries
- Making choices
- Grief and loss issues
- Healthy relationships
- Goal-setting

Our counselor has 31 years experience and meets clients one day a week. One-on-one counseling helps abuse victims find emotional and psychological strength when faced with the complex scenario of relationship violence. We offer counseling to many clients at no cost, or ask for a fee based on income.

Education & Outreach

DVRCSC envisions a future free from violence. We work with elementary, middle and high schools to discuss age-appropriate topics. Because of our extensive work with schools, we were invited by the Exeter-West Greenwich School System to develop a comprehensive curriculum for grades 3-12 to be implemented next school year 2010/11. Topics will include bullying, conflict resolution, healthy relationships and dating violence.

We form Community Partnership Teams in rural areas where abuse victims may be isolated. Current teams are in Chariho (Charlestown, Richmond and Hopkinton), Exeter and South Kingstown. Some past projects included school play productions about dating violence, library bullying displays and Silent Witness Vigils.

We also gave trainings on how to recognize, respond to and/or refer victims of domestic violence to professionals who may come in contact with victims. Last year, we trained police academy cadets, URI interns, nursing classes, hair stylists, local police and case workers at the Jonnycake Center.

Students at Metcalf Elementary School in Exeter created Bully "Wanted Posters" incorporating some of the language and techniques they learned from our Education Advocates.

From our Clients

Dear DVRCSC,

Please find enclosed my check in the amount of $1,000 in memory of my parents... The year was 1988...when I had to find a safe haven for myself and two children. Mary was the Executive Director at the time. I stayed in the shelter just prior to the rennovation project and was there for 10 days.

I always wanted to repay the center, but never quite had the means [until now].

Thank you.

Hi,
I don't know how to start, but what I know what ever I say can't express what is in me.

Thank you very, very, very, very much for your gifts for me and my kids. You make me so happy. I pray for you.

God give you more. I'm sorry my English is not that good, but I try.

When I read your message, I cry. I feel somebody care about me, expecially I have no family here.

I really thank you -- you put [a] smile in everybody face in Christmas.

God bless you... I can't explain what I feel.

Domestic Violence Resource Center
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www.dvrcsc.org
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DVRCSC Staff

Mary Roda, Executive Director
Judy Beatrice, Director of Client Services
Garrie Borden, Director of Public Relations, Grants & Special Events
Janice Carlson, Legal Advocate
Julie Del Deo, Community Outreach Advocate
Elaine Harrison, Director of Human Resources & Administrative Services
Linda Mello, Training Coordinator/Legal Advocate
Leslie Nelson, Development Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator
Ann Perlman, Legal Advocate
Carolyn Soares, Administrative Assistant
Megan Whelan, Youth Education Advocate