

Making a Difference

The Newsletter of the

Spring 2009

Domestic Violence

Resource Center

of South County

Phone: 782-3995 • Fax: 782-3999 • **24 Hour Helpline: 782-3990** • 61 Main Street, Wakefield, RI 02879

... Hope and help for all persons in abusive relationships



DVRCSC Executive Director Mary Roda welcomes Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence and our keynote speaker at our 30th Annual Meeting.

Photo by Sue Stone

After Celebrating Our 30th Birthday, We Face Tough Economic Times

Throughout 2008, we celebrated our 30th Birthday with meetings and special events. Over 100 supporters gathered at our Annual Meeting to honor our annual award winners for their volunteer work including Jeffrey Chase, Richard McDermott, Lara Phimister, MOMS Club of South County and our 31 Visionary Awardees. Our 30th Birthday Dinner and Auction raised over \$100,000. Thank goodness it was held in August, just before September's stock market crash.

Now we face some tough decisions, and we are asking for your help. Every year, we must raise about \$1,000,000 to provide more than 12 programs for victims of domestic violence and to educate students and adults to help break the cycle of violence. Grants are a huge part of that budget, but about one-third of our budget comes from the private sector. We rely on foundations, family trusts and major donors; but there are many ways that almost anyone can help us with our efforts to help victims.

There are some simple things that you can do to help, and not all of them involve financial donations. For instance, **please give us your email address!** We would rather spend money on direct services than on printing and postage, and we like "going green." In fact, we debated on whether to continue publishing and mailing our newsletter at all in an effort to cut costs. But we want to keep the lines of communication open with supporters like you.

Help the state-wide legislative lobbying efforts of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (see article on page 2). Sometimes a simple phone call or email in support of a bill can make the difference in the vote of your elected officials.

Take a look at our volunteer opportunities (page 2). There are numerous ways that you can raise funds to help victims or help us at the Drop-In Center. Why not initiate a cell phone drive? We re-program the best ones and give them to clients for emergency purposes. Others are recycled through the Shelter Alliance Network. They send us a small donation for each one. Over the years, we have received over \$10,000 from the socially responsible recycling program.

Why not ask about our Building Business Together program? You just may increase your clients or customer base while raising funds one evening or day at your place of business. Many people want to spend their money when it can do more good than just purchase goods or a service. And it's good publicity for both of us. It's a win/win proposition.

Plan to attend at least one of our 2009 special events. Men Who Make A Difference honors men who act as celebrity waiters on April 4th at Spain of Narragansett. We are planning a Summer Celebration Dinner and Auction to be held on July 25th in Watch Hill.

As always, we welcome your ideas. Your input, volunteer time and donations help make us a stronger, more successful agency. We must continue our work to help victims find a safe, independent life. We must continue to save lives. We must continue to educate young people about making healthy relationship choices



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NEWSLETTER BY
Garrie Leitner

HELPING DVRCSC HELP OTHERS



SkyeBlue, (left) daughter of Tammy Chan who was murdered by her partner, chose domestic violence as her required senior project at Westerly High School. She raised funds and awareness at the homecoming football game (above) and other events.



Left to right: Nancy Deede, Jack Kelly and Betty Genest pose with the Silent Witnesses that they made and donated to DVRCSC after giving a Silent Witness Vigil in October. They are members of Christ the King's Social Action Committee.



Left to right: DVRCSC staff Megan Whelan, Julie Del Deo and Mary Roda receive gifts from students at the Job Corps Academy in Exeter who wanted the children at the Safe Home to have a happy holiday.



Dennis Chandler, People's Credit Union, with DVRCSC Carolyn Soares and DVRCSC Garrie Leitner with Cheryl Cady, People's Credit Union, promoted Gifts of Hope.

Domestic Violence Lobbying Efforts in Rhode Island

During the upcoming legislative season, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) has identified priorities that will help restore funding for services and increase batterer accountability in the judicial system. We are one of six members of the RICADV.

Priority One: Funding for critical court advocacy and children's services

Due to the dramatic cut of over \$400,000 in recent state funding to our Court Advocacy and Children Who Witness programs, RICADV will be introducing a bill that would raise the assessment (fees that are imposed on domestic violence offenders) from \$25 to \$125 and authorize that 80% of the funds collected be allocated to RICADV for the purpose of supporting these programs. By raising the assessment, RICADV predicts it will raise \$225,000 that will be paid only by guilty offenders. To review the bill, go to <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText09/HouseText09/H5227.pdf>.

Priority Two: Increase batterer accountability in the judicial system

This year RICADV will once again submit the Clarification Bill. This act would restore the Domestic Violence Prevention Act's enhanced penalties by clarifying that all second domestic violence offenses including petty misdemeanors would become eligible for enhanced penalties. To review the bill, go to <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText09/HouseText09/H5228.pdf>.

Additionally, the RICADV's Policy Team will be tracking and monitoring legislation submitted by other community organizations that may have an impact on victims and survivors of domestic violence. Each year, the Policy Team reviews legislation affecting the criminal justice system, welfare and healthcare systems, immigration policies as well as divorce and child support issues to ensure that Rhode Island's laws keep victims safe and hold batterers accountable.



Representative Kenneth Carter listens to DVRCSA volunteer Pam Dumas.

More Ways to Help Victims of Domestic Violence in South County

1. Sign up for our trainings offered twice a year to qualify to answer the Helpline and meet with Drop-In Clients at our Wakefield or Westerly office.
2. Provide child care for support group participants on Monday, 6:30 – 8:30pm or Tuesdays, 9:30 – 11:30 am.
3. Raise awareness by organizing an outreach presentation at your home or club (we'll provide the speaker and hand-outs).
4. Collect cell phones and deliver them to our Wakefield office.
5. Collect gift cards of all types for our Gifts of Hope program. The cards are given to clients as holiday presents and year round as needed.
6. Sell "purple ribbon" evening bags for \$30 each to raise money (we provide the bags).
7. Organize a bulb planting project in the fall for our Mother's Day Garden.
8. Hold a vigil or a special activity during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We'll work with you to help organize, promote and implement the project.
9. At your next birthday party, in lieu of gifts, ask for donations to DVRCSA.
10. Hold a dress-down day at your office with participants making a donation to DVRCSA.
11. Hold a "Wish List" party and have guests bring paper goods and other products needed by clients at the Safe Home (wish lists are updated every few months).
12. Seasonal yard work — mow the lawn or trim bushes at the Drop-In Center and Safe Home.
13. Use www.goodsearch.com as your search engine and designate DVRCSA as your charity. They will donate a penny for each new search.

Please call 782.3995 for more information and/or visit www.dvrsc.org.

Although men are often the abusers, we recognize that MOST men are NOT abusers. In the spring, we honor women with our Mother's Day Garden Celebration and we honor men at our Men Who Make A Difference event. All men attending the event are asked to sign this pledge.

MEN AGAINST RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE A Pledge to Learn, Speak, and Act

Domestic violence includes any form of coercion to control an intimate partner, including emotional, physical, or sexual violence. Calling domestic violence a private matter isolates victims and perpetuates the problem. Without a safe and loving environment, violence prevents women, *and men* from achieving fully healthy and productive lives.

As men we must work to stop violence. We need to learn positive ways to create healthy relationships, and we must learn how to take action when we witness domestic violence in our friends' and relatives' relationships and our workplace or community. If you are a man concerned with creating a safe and healthy world for all of us, you must reach out and speak to men.

I Therefore Pledge

- I acknowledge relationship violence is a problem that all men must work to end;
- I acknowledge that all people deserve to live in a safe and loving environment based on equality;
- I acknowledge that my lack of action and silence perpetuates the violence in my community;
- I commit that I am ready to be conscious of relationship violence as a serious social problem;
- I commit to end the silence about domestic violence and its effects on children, women, & men;
- I commit to engage my friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers in ending domestic violence;
- I commit to make the changes required to stop the violence in my life and to end it elsewhere;
- I commit that ending domestic violence begins with my involvement.

Visit our website
for special event
updates.
We offer many
ways to have fun
and support our
work to help
victims of
domestic violence.

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Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County

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