

New Beginnings



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services is commemorating its 25th anniversary this year. On September 16, 1984, a young woman with two children walked in the front door of the agency's very first shelter at Parkview Health Center, and thus began our work. Our 25th year may prove to be one of our most challenging as we have important work to do in a demanding environment.

I'm often asked how the challenging economy has affected the demand for services. The first point I make is that the economy does not cause abuse to occur. The abuse, in the form of power and control is already present in these homes. However, it is true that the difficult economy can add additional tension to an already stressful situation. Unfortunately, as a result, we are seeing more women with severe physical abuse as well as more abuse being perpetrated on children. The challenging economy also acts as a barrier for women seeking help—they may decide due to financial reasons they are unable to leave the abusive situation, or they may feel they have no choice but to return home as the likelihood of securing employment to support themselves and their children seems out of reach. Abusers also use the difficult economy to keep victims close in order to maintain that power and control, and to reinforce the message that “you will never survive without me”. In short, the numbers are increasing, the complexity of cases is increasing and the barriers for women in their attempt to leave an abusive relationship are increasing.

The economy is obviously causing challenges on the funding side as well and Christine Ann has taken steps to face the challenge. We decreased our 2009 budget by 5% over last year, going through each and every line item looking for areas to reduce expenses. Because we are a service organization, staff expenses are the largest part of our budget and unfortunately, they took the greatest hit. Having to tell our hard working staff that they will not get a pay increase this year and they will have to pay more for their medical insurance was difficult. But being dedicated professionals, they digested the news and they continue to work harder than ever on behalf of victims and their children.

Despite our funding challenges, woman and children continue to come to us for help in their most desperate hour. It is critical that we are there to provide them with the support and services they need—and we can't do it without your continued support. We are grateful for all that you have done for us over the past 25 years in support of our mission and hope that you will maintain your support even in these difficult times. We've come far and accomplished much, providing life saving services to thousands of victims and children. We need you to help us continue our work.

For our clients, the road from victim to survivor is difficult and the journey long, full of twists and turns, anguish and triumphs. The problem of violence against women and the continued increase in the number of people seeking our services can seem insurmountable. But the essence of what we do is that we change lives, one person at a time. And that is what we are called upon to do each and every day.

Julie Fevola

Julie Fevola
Executive Director

Annual Meeting & Celebration

Celebrating 25 years of giving hope and empowerment to domestic violence victims.

Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services is pleased to invite you and your guests to attend its 25th Annual Meeting and A *Special Celebration of Achievement*.

The evening will include a powerful survivor testimonial and recognition awards to community members who make a difference in the agency's vision to alleviate domestic violence.

Wednesday, April 29, 2009 ~ 5:00 pm
The Waters • 1393 Washington Ave, Oshkosh

Please RSVP by calling 920-729-5727
or email info@christineann.net

Website

www.christineann.net

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SPRING 2009 Volume 35

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Standing Strong: A Story of Hope



"I want to thank everyone. From the time I came to the shelter I was made to feel safe. The very first night I was unsure, afraid, hopeless—and you heard me when I said that he would kill me if I didn't find someplace safe...you made my son and I feel welcome...we came with almost nothing but that night we felt more normal and slept soundly for the first time since he'd been arrested. Throughout my stay you've help me...when I first came in, I felt like I was waking up from being brainwashed. Over time, I've learned healthy ways and how to recognize red flags in men that should prevent me from remaining in this cycle.

Christine Ann is the one organization I've encountered that knows about many programs and cares enough about their clients to give them that information. We're able to heal mentally and physically in shelter and the staff do their best to find programs and work to ensure that the women and their families are independent when they leave. In so many ways, it's like having a really emotionally healthy family there to help you when you need it most..."

~ Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services Survivor

NOTES FROM GREEN LAKE COUNTY

A Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence by Winn S. Collins, District Attorney, Green Lake County

Domestic violence exists in all communities across the state, including those in Green Lake County. In the first six months of 2008, approximately 15 percent of all non-traffic misdemeanor cases included a charge related to a domestic abuse offense. Nearly 10 percent of all felony cases during this period also included at least one charge related to a domestic abuse offense.

Crimes of domestic violence impact an entire community, not only those within the household. The immediate impact to the victim is self-evident, but children growing up in abusive households also experience emotional trauma. These consequences spread to the entire community as a battered victim experiences an increase in health care expenses and a decrease in work productivity with the victim's children become less likely to thrive and more likely to exhibit problems in school.

A coordinated community response is needed to address a crime that impacts the entire community. Although police, prosecution, and courts have a responsibility to serve in the frontline to address an act of domestic abuse once it has occurred, the entire community must work toward solutions to prevent future acts from occurring.

In the last two years, Green Lake County began developing a coordinated community response to combat domestic violence. Last year, our county sent a five-member team to a conference focused on developing a formal Coordinated Community Response (CCR) team. This year, the team worked with law enforcement to revise a domestic abuse worksheet, which is an investigative tool used by officers in the field when investigating an allegation of domestic abuse.

The success of the CCR team ultimately will depend upon the level of support that the team receives from the community at large. The team remains largely a concept at the present time with only a small core of members working toward developing a broader mission for an expanded team.

Members of the community interested in joining the CCR team are encouraged to contact the Green Lake County District Attorney office at (920) 294-4046 and ask to speak with the Victim/Witness Coordinator.

The nation will hold another Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October of 2009. Locally, we will have the opportunity to initiate more programs and greater community awareness during the month provided we have an active CCR team fully operational with broad based community support. You may support this goal for tomorrow by becoming involved in combating domestic violence today.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Dishing Up Smiles

In March, Christine Ann clients were "Cooking Outside the Box." Long-time volunteer and former board member, Judy Swanson, from the Alliance of the American Dental Association, presented an interactive cooking demonstration at the shelter that centered on healthy eating and healthy smiles. The Alliance donated Dishing up Smiles, a cookbook put together by dental families, so each woman could have a copy of her own. Deb Lee, Christine Ann's volunteer coordinator, helped put the program together and Julie Denton, Shelter Services Coordinator, helped wisk up some food around the counter in the kitchen at the shelter. From vegetable rice soup to \$100 cake, the women had fun creating a nutritious and delicious meal. While cooking, ways to cut costs, cut fat, and promote good health were discussed. It was a wonderful experience for everyone that ended with hugs and thanks all around.



Judy Swanson and Christine Ann's volunteer coordinator, Deb Lee

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Teen Advocate to Serve on Children and Youth Committee of the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse

Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services' teen advocate, Abby Ellison has been invited to serve on the Children and Youth Committee of the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse. The mission of the committee is to identify the needs of children and youth affected by domestic violence and dating violence; make recommendations to meet those needs in order to prevent future domestic and dating violence; and identify strategies for primary prevention of domestic and dating violence.

The invitation comes in part as a result of Ms. Ellison's efforts in forming an area Teen CCR (coordinated community response) Team, which hopes to help agencies communicate, network and coordinate its resources to initiate change and make a positive impact that will help teen victims become survivors.

"We are very excited to be a part of this Committee and to offer our expertise in the area of teen dating violence," said Julie Fevola, Christine Ann's Executive Director. "We have seen a steady

increase in demand for our teen services as more teens enter into abusive dating relationships and we will continue to intensify our focus to educate teens on healthy relationships.”

The Governor’s Council on Domestic Abuse is a statutorily-created, 13-member body that advises the Governor, legislature, and Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. Members are appointed by the Governor and/or legislature. The Council has four standing committees: Access, Budget, Children and Youth, and Justice. The committees are comprised of Council members and interested community members. Much of the work of the Council is done through the committees.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

By *Stephanie Crum, Shelter Advocate & Expressive Arts Program Coordinator*

The Expressive Arts group at the Christine Ann Center came together for several weeks in 2008 to create artist books with the theme “Past, Present, & Future”. When the project was presented, some of the women in the group proceeded with confidence; others were visibly uncomfortable. They hadn’t been asked to create something in many years and they weren’t comfortable with the art media. In time, the women began sharing their stories and similarities began to emerge. Though they came from different backgrounds and situations, their feelings about and experience of living with a partner who consistently devalued, disrespected and instilled fear in them, created a common ground.

One woman in particular said that she hadn’t thought about her own thoughts and feelings in so long that she couldn’t find the words to express them. She stared at the blank sheet of paper, seeming to be lost and without direction. As she was encouraged to take “small steps”, she seemed to blossom with thoughts and ideas. She shared with the group that she had been focusing on her role as the mother of a preschool child, supporting him as a single mother, all while being involved with a man who was both emotionally abusive and physically violent. She had worked so hard to survive; working long hours, struggling to spend quality time with her son as well as parent him at times when his behaviors were difficult—she was left with little energy to consider her goals for the future, let alone her thoughts and feelings about her present situation.

She decided to begin the project by writing a letter to her son. She planned to focus on this letter for the “future” component of her book, as she felt that her most important goal was providing a stable home environment for herself and her son. As she began thinking about her future and her goals for healthier relationships, she started to re-think the past. She shared with the group that there were many unhealthy people in her past and that she wanted something better for her son—she wanted him to grow up to be different than the unhealthy male role models that he’d had in his short life.

Her story is typical of Christine Ann clients. A victim of domestic abuse often has many barriers that prevent her from considering her own emotional and physical needs while she struggles to meet the basic needs of her family. These barriers often persist even after she has made the difficult and courageous decision to leave a controlling and frightening partner. Creating therapeutic art in a group setting encourages survivors of abuse to process and explore their individual experiences, identify their thoughts and feelings, and connect with other women to build a support system. Introducing a directive such as “Past, Present, and Future” gives them the opportunity to focus on what they have learned from their experiences and use this knowledge to create the groundwork for a path to a healthier future.

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services gratefully acknowledges the following grants received from September 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009:

- Jane & Tad Shepard Family Foundation—\$13,000 to support agency operations
- Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, Winnebago County Crime Prevention Fund—\$700 to support the Safe Locks Project
- Target Foundation—\$1,000 to support the Emergency Shelter Program
- Jeweler’s Mutual Charitable Giving Fund—\$2,000 to support the Emergency Shelter Program
- J.J. Keller Foundation—\$23,200 to support the Children and Teen Program and Crisis Advocacy Services
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans—\$25,000 to support Project P.O.W.E.R.
- Wisconsin Public Service Foundation—\$1,000 to support the Emergency Shelter Program
- Walmart Foundation—\$400 to support the Emergency Shelter and Client Advocacy Services Programs.
- Women’s Fund for the Fox Valley Region—\$250 to support the “Life As We Know It” art exhibit by Christine Ann clients
- Green Bay Packers Foundation—\$1,000 to support Project P.O.W.E.R.
- Women’s Fund for the Fox Valley Region—\$2,500 to support a special financial services offering for clients
- The Roundy’s Foundation—\$5,000 to support the Community Education and Prevention Program

Christine Ann is also proud to be a partner agency of the Oshkosh Area United Way and United Way Fox Cities and is grateful for their continuing support.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Ellipse Fitness, Neenah—KNOCKingOUT Domestic Abuse

On March 7th, Ellipse Fitness held its 3rd annual nationwide Victory Over Violence Fitness Marathon. Ellipse members and marathon participants raised money and collected items for local domestic abuse organizations.

Christine Ann was fortunate to be the benefit agency of Ellipse Fitness in Neenah. Neenah members raised over \$1,000.00 to help support Christine Ann and the services it provides to women and children in Winnebago County.

“Working out for an awesome cause couldn’t be more rewarding—the thought of being able to help others who truly need it makes the 4 hour workout fly by!” said Becky Verbeke, owner, Ellipse Fitness Neenah. “I look forward to working with Christine Ann next year to raise even more money to help “knockout” domestic abuse.”

The marathon included segments of kickboxing, strength training, stability ball training, boot camp portions, and abdominal exercises. The marathon also included a number of drawings with prizes coming from local businesses as well as food, fun and a steady stream of pumped up music to keep participants energized and motivated during their 4 hour work out.



VOV Crew including first row, far right, Becky Verbeke, Ellipse owner, & in 2nd row, second from right, Christine Ann Board Member, Julie Waite.



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25 YEARS AGO, HELP ARRIVED

It wasn't a large shelter at 4,000 square feet. But it boasted several bedrooms, a large kitchen and five bathrooms—amenities to sustain about 13 women and children.

For its time, it was a start. Tucked into Winnebago County's nursing home, Park View Health Center, it was safe. It was visible. It would serve as the agency everyone knows today as Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Service's first shelter, first home. "For what we had to do back in 1984, it was the perfect location," said Eileen Connolly-Keesler, executive director of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and Christine Ann's first executive director at its launch in 1984. "It was public, but we didn't have to put a sign out back then, either."

Twenty-five years ago, help arrived. Twenty-five years later, help is here. Twenty-five years from now, it will remain. Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services will be here as long as the need exists. That first year Christine Ann served just 51 women and children, today the agency serves more than 1,200. The agency, its staff and volunteers and communities-worth of allies will spend 2009 recognizing its 25th anniversary and serving, inspiring and mobilizing Winnebago and Green Lake counties around its ongoing mission like never before.

The agency's anniversary year officially kicked off with April 3's Swing Into Spring fundraiser. It continues on with the 9th Annual Men Who Cook event, followed by a Sept. 16th observation of the first shelter's opening in 1984, another vibrant Take Back the Night rally and an even bigger Race For The Light 5k Run/Walk in December.

In between, Christine Ann's staff and volunteers continue their day to day shelter and advocacy work and partnerships and prevention efforts with Winnebago and Green Lake counties' schools, churches and law enforcement that has made the agency a state leader in the campaign to bring domestic violence to an end. In 2008, the agency fielded more than 12,000 hotline calls and more than 9,300 nights of shelter while speaking to more than 6,600 area students and community members.

It all began in 4,000 square feet of safe space in 1984, the year the Macintosh computer was born. While the world has changed immensely in the last 25 years, domestic violence has been a constant in our area communities. And so has Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services.

"You can't help but feel great that you got to be part of something that helped boards and staffs make that grassroots organization what it is today," Connolly-Keesler said.

Stay up to date and involved in Christine Ann's 25th anniversary year's worth of events at www.christineann.net.

MEN WHO COOK 2009

Enjoy An International Flavor

Get ready to tempt your tastebuds at the 9th Annual "Men Who Cook for Christine Ann" to be held this year on Saturday, June 27th. Once again, men from around Oshkosh and the Fox Valley will prove that they CAN cook. New this year will be an international foods theme, so you can enjoy a sampling of extraordinary dishes that span the globe.



The award-winning event will take place at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh's Reeve Memorial Union, where over 50 local "chefs" will come together to share not only their love of cooking, but also their common goal of helping victims of domestic abuse break free from the cycle of violence. Using exquisite culinary skills, the men will share samples of their favorite appetizers, entrees, side dishes and desserts to guests amidst musical entertainment, silent and live auctions, and more. "Men Who Cook" is a key fundraising event for Christine Ann; it is also part of the agency's efforts to more actively engage men in the work to end violence against women.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. We look forward to an amazing event this year—so please mark your calendar now—you won't want to miss it!