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Volume IX, Issue 1

December, 2009

Project Safe Provides:

- 24-hour Emergency Shelter
- 24-hour Hotline
- Community Support Groups
- Legal and Social Service Advocacy
- Information and Referral
- Volunteer Training
- Community Education
- Follow Up Services
- Service Coordination among Agencies
- Transitional Housing
- Emergency Financial Assistance

All services are confidential and free of charge

706-543-3331

Project Safe Hotline

Do you know that. . .

- Research suggests that women engage in physical aggression against their partners as frequently as men.
- Women are 3 times more likely to be injured than men, and psychological and economic injury are also much greater for women.
- While the rate of men killed by their female partners has declined significantly in the last 25 years, the rate of women killed by their male partners has stayed about the same.
- Witnessing violence can affect a child's ability to trust, ability to learn and self control.
- Ending patriarchy and male privilege are extremely important to ending domestic violence, but there are other risk factors that must also be addressed.

From the Director

I pull it out every year, the Christmas stocking she made me some fifteen years ago. She was serving a life sentence in prison for killing her husband, an abusive man who had terrorized her since the beginning of their relationship in the early 1980's. As a young attorney I worked on her clemency petition—gathering records, conducting interviews, framing arguments—constructing a document two inches thick in the end. I went to her childhood home, sat with her parents, and tried not to get their hopes up even as my own were sky-high. Too high it turned out, as the petition was denied in a one-sentence letter citing a reason that had nothing to do with her case. The Christmas stocking came in the mail later, along with a little cross and a letter that still makes me cry when I read it. Her expectations, I learned, were much more realistic than my own. Knowing I was mourning, she advised that I turn it into something else.

That advice was a biblical reference, from Psalm 30:11 about turning "mourning into dancing". (I didn't realize that until recently, when someone gave me the Presbyterian Church (USA) policy statement on healing domestic violence which uses that phrase in its title). I suppose I turned my mourning into a decade of work at Project Safe applying lessons from the clemency cases I worked on before (when only one out of 78 women incarcerated at the time for killing an abusive partner ever contacted a domestic violence center, but they all asked for help from someone). Rather than simply waiting for people to call our hotline, we have done everything in our power to reach out to those who may need Project Safe's assistance through educational presentations, media, professional training, and by reviewing police reports and contacting the victims to offer services. Over the years, thousands of lives have been changed and saved through the dedication and proactive efforts of staff and volunteers.

But this year an unprecedented number of lives have been lost in Athens due to domestic violence, and as a community we mourn these tragedies.

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Help from Dalton Carpet One

This October, Dalton Carpet One offered customers free installation in exchange for a donation of household items or furniture for Project Safe. The success of the promotion has already helped to furnish the homes of several families who have secured safe housing since leaving an abusive partner. Having strong partnerships with companies in our community like Dalton Carpet One makes such a big difference in our ability to help the 1,200+ women, men and children we have worked with so far this year. Owner Mike Blanton generously extended his offer by donating company time once a month to collecting large donations for Project Safe and helping to move furniture for clients who have relocated. Last month alone, they helped to furnish four apartments for families entering our Transitional Housing program, and we look forward to working with them in the months ahead.

**Way to go,
Dalton Carpet One!!
Thanks a Million!!**



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continued from Page 1

As a community, we must turn that mourning into something else—action. Project Safe will continue to lead the way in advocacy and services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, and we will continue to partner with police and prosecutors to seek justice. But we need others to join the fight. We need more researchers to focus on why perpetrators commit violence and what can change them. We need more parents to teach their children that violence is unacceptable. We need more churches and businesses to acknowledge the impact domestic violence has in their organizations and develop policies to address it. We need everyone to recognize that domestic violence is so widespread in the United States that someone they know and love is dealing with it and needs their support.

If we all turn our mourning into action, then someday we will finally end domestic violence. And then you'll see me dancing.

Joan Prittie

Your Chance to Vote! 2

As of December 1, 2009 voting is open for the 2010 installment of "Dancing with the Athens Stars." The current lineup of local stars and talented instructors is sure to include someone you will be excited to support as they perfect their dance moves in an effort to raise money for Project Safe. Trophies will be awarded to the couple earning the most votes prior to, and during the show at the Classic Center on March 21st. One dollar donated to Project Safe equals one vote per couple, fifty dollars equals fifty votes. You may vote for as many couples as you choose, as often as you like. Votes may be mailed into Project Safe at P.O. Box 7532 Athens, GA 30604, (please indicate who you are voting for), or online and at our website www.project-safe.org. The 2010 lineup is:

Couple 1:

Dylan Brooks & Christie Moody

Couple 2:

Charlotte House & Heather Hogan

Couple 3:

Jim Vanden Berg & Michelle Collin

Couple 4:

Kelly Girtz & Tenisha Cole

Couple 5:

Ira Edwards & Gene Wiggins

Couple 6:

Laure Jones & Dana Skelton

Couple 7:

Hugh Acheson & Natalie Cox

Couple 8:

Erin Thomson & Angelo Kalevela

Couple 9:

Allan Armitage & Liza Pitts

Couple 10:

Jorge Atilas & Addie Shue

Couple 11:

Sherri Goggin & Ron Puttman

Couple 12:

Kim Lisenbee & Derrek Walters

Donors June—November 2009

We thank the following for their generous contributions to our work.

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 Column 2 =>



The citizens of Georgia Power have once again generously contributed to Project Safe.

Donors

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Column 3::

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Children's Advocate, Shalene Bedell, leads prevention lessons in elementary schools.

Emergency Food Boxes

Thank you to Girl Scout Troup #2170 for creating 25 non-perishable overnight boxes of food! These food boxes will make such a difference for individuals who Project Safe helps with an overnight hotel stay to escape an abusive relationship. When someone in a dangerous situation calls our crisis hotline looking for a safe place to stay, our goal is to help them to safely enter our emergency shelter where we can provide them with 24/7 support and the comforts of home in a confidential location. When our shelter is full, our advocates do not allow this to become a barrier to the victim's safety. We may help them to get to another safe shelter in a neighboring county or pay for a night in a hotel under an assumed name until we can arrange a more permanent plan. Because of the thoughtfulness and hard work of Girl Scout Troup #2170, we can easily provide those who do stay in a hotel for a night with the same necessities we provide for the residents of our emergency shelter.

St. Mary's Health Care System Helps Out

Some thirty years ago, when Project Safe began as a network of safe houses in the Athens community, domestic violence victims needed a safe place to call home. Ultimately, empowering survivors of domestic violence through helping them to obtain their own safe home for themselves and their children is still one of our most important goals. Recently, St. Mary's Health Care System awarded Project Safe with a retired ambulance to serve as a moving truck for clients who relocate to safe environments. We now have the ability to collect large donations, move a client's belongings to a safe location, or furnish a new home without having to remove the seats from our 15 passenger van (generously purchased for us years ago by 1st Presbyterian Church of Athens). In this time of economic uncertainty, St. Mary's generous donation has reminded us that working together as a community can strengthen our ability to lend a hand to those in need and pull through this together.

Parenting Group Builds Attachment 6

Project Safe is excited about the start of a new Mom's Group which aims to stop the cycle of domestic violence by fostering positive parent-child relationships. Building on research that supports the importance of a strong attachment between mother and child, the Mom's Group provides mothers opportunities to discuss specific strategies to cultivate strong attachments with their children. The Mom's Group meets once a week and alternates between having meetings with moms only and meeting with moms and children to do interactive activities together.

Parenting research indicates that the relationship a child has with their primary caregiver serves as a template for all future relationships. If a child has observed or directly experienced incidents of violence, they can expect to be neglected, hurt or abused as part of their "normal" relationships. Yet, early intervention to develop healthy relationships can mediate the negative effects of having lived with domestic violence. In Mom's Group, we reinforce the empowering idea that only the moms can change this for their children since they are the primary caregiver, no one else.

The Mom's Group discusses having developmentally appropriate expectations for children and developing alternatives to corporal punishment for discipline. We also discuss ways to cultivate empathy in the parent-child relationship and allow children to exercise their own personal power and independence in ways that can increase their self-esteem. During our interactive activities we focus on providing positive feedback to the children and connecting with them during play.

To promote the importance of setting aside time to connect with their children, the moms developed a calendar to write down the times they plan to play or cuddle with their children each day. We also provided "Bus Packs" to help with discipline problems that arise during the long bus rides to and from day care or other destinations. The "Bus Packs" include activities that children can do on their own or with their moms while on the bus. Children can also be rewarded weekly for good bus riding behavior by earning new items for their "Bus Packs."

The Mom's Group is just starting out, but group facilitators are excited about the new direction of this group and the potential to stop the cycle of domestic violence through building strong attachments between mother and child.

Shout Out to In Kind Donors!

We receive so many generous in kind donations that it's not possible to mention them all in a newsletter. Here are just a few standouts we'd like to recognize. Thanks to David Barber at Fox's Pizza in Danielsville for donating pizza and salad once a month for our Madison County Domestic Violence Survivors support group; Carol White for consistent donations of intimates and sleepwear; Alpha Chi Omega for collecting toiletries and cleaning supplies for our emergency shelter; Jean-Marie Buxton of DaisyCakes soap for regularly donating handmade soap for shelter residents; Maggie Carter at Publix Supermarket for regularly providing toiletries and household items for Project Safe clients; the Junior League for providing dinner for our Clarke County Domestic Violence Survivors support group and collecting children's items for our emergency shelter; Athens Pagan Pride for holding a food drive for Project Safe; Church of the Nations for creating welcome bags for women entering our shelter; The Knitters and Knotters group at Covenant Presbyterian for blankets at the shelter; and Sandy Applebaum for creating capes for the Superheroes support group, handmade pillow cases for the children in the emergency shelter, curtains for the shelter, and other hand crafts for residents.



Are you looking for a place where you can “plug in” your skills to help make your community a better place to live? Project Safe would welcome any contribution you can make--time, monetary donations, sewing ability, typing skills, handy man skills, organizational skills, cooking skills, and creative ideas!! Call (706) 549-0922, and someone will get you plugged in right away. The possibilities are almost endless, and your help would be greatly appreciated!

Become a Volunteer!

Call (706) 549-0922

to find out what you can do to help.



A Candlelight ceremony in October honored those killed by domestic violence in Athens and in Georgia.

Project Safe
P.O. Box 7532
Athens, GA 30604

Working to end Domestic Violence

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