

# NEWS

*Support and advocacy for those affected by domestic violence and abuse in the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon and nearby NY & MA.*

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

It is a time to mourn those who have lost their lives as a result of abuse, to celebrate those who survive and thrive and to connect with others who support the cause to end violence against women. Throughout the month, Women's Support Services will be sponsoring a series of awareness events and exhibits to focus attention on the issue of domestic violence and abuse.

Please join us for our

### *Annual Candlelight Vigil*

October 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.  
On the Sharon Green

*WSS would like to thank the town of Sharon for its support of this event.*



## Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Get Involved

From July 2011 to June 2012, 64,526 victims of domestic violence received assistance from their local domestic violence program in Connecticut. To honor the millions of victims and survivors of domestic violence, as well as those who continue to live in fear of abuse, Women's Support Services will host several events this October.

**October 1st ~ National Unity Day:** Wear your purple ribbon on National Unity Day to add your voice to end abuse!

**October 9th ~ Candlelight Vigil:** Women's Support Services will host our annual Candlelight Vigil on the Sharon Green. The event will start at 6:00 p.m. and will include guest speakers, performances by local youth choirs, and more.

**October 25th ~ Operation Jungle Red:** Taking place at HVRHS this year, OJR was first held in 2008 at Miami University (Ohio) to commemorate the anniversary of the Virginia Tech shooting. The program starts a conversation about acts of violence committed every day. Participants display a visible marker meant to spark discussion about violence and focus awareness of their cause.

**Other ways to show your support:** Switch your regular lightbulb outside your home or business with a purple one...wear your purple ribbon every day in October...teach your children that hands are not for hitting...speak out against violence seen and unseen in your community...write to your local, state, and national government officials urging them to support measures against violence...display one of our Safe Haven stickers in the window of your business...

*Remember, don't just stand by...stand up!*

*From Executive Director Lori Rivenburgh*

Dear Friend,

Lack of financial security as a result of abuse is an obstacle often faced by victims of domestic violence. Financial abuse takes many forms: not allowing a victim to work, demanding she hand over her paycheck, harassing her at her work, denying her access to education or professional training, dragging out divorce proceedings, or not paying child support.

To aid our clients facing this obstacle, the WSS Board of Directors has focused fundraising efforts on fortifying the WSS Client Emergency Fund and creating both the WSS Legal Fund and the WSS Housing Fund. These funds help bridge the gap between a client's needs – for example, a lump sum payment for a resource necessary to leave her abuser – and her available finances. They are allocated on a case-by-case basis as part of a safety plan defined by the client in coordination with our staff.

These fundraising efforts complement the services we have offered in the years since our founding in 1981 – services needed as much as ever. From July 2011 through June 2012, WSS worked with **699 individuals (656 adults and 43 children)**, responded to **488 crisis contacts** (phone calls and walk-ins) and provided **551 individual counseling sessions** for persons in our service area. WSS provided short-term shelter to **17 individuals** and referred **30 individuals** to long-term or alternative shelter. During that period, **31 individuals (16 adults and 15 children)** attended support group sessions totaling **174 contacts**. WSS provided clients **1,008 units of information and referrals**. Our community educator and staff reached **4,352 participants** in local schools and community groups. Through Calling All Cars, we transferred ownership of **5 cars** to local residents in need.

On a final note, I'd like to recognize our new volunteers and welcome them to the WSS family. They have worked diligently to complete our 25-hour training and we look forward to having them join us in helping victims of abuse.

Peace,



**WELCOME** to Molly McDowell, who joined our staff as Fund Development Coordinator in June. A WSS volunteer since 2009, she comes to us from The Hotchkiss School, where she spent three years as the Alumni and Development Communications Specialist. Prior to Hotchkiss, she worked in public relations for Panasonic in New Jersey. Molly earned her B.A. from Cornell University. A Connecticut native born in Sharon Hospital and raised in Kent, she considers herself incredibly fortunate to work on behalf of the Battered Women's Movement.

## THANK YOU!



WSS thanks all of you who made TRADE SECRETS 2012 such a success!

ELAINE LAROCHE, LIONROCK FARM; BUNNY WILLIAMS & JOHN ROSSELLI; DEBRA BLAIR & RICHARD DEBART; JACK HYLAND AND LARRY WENTE; JANE & BOB KEITER who graciously opened their properties...

THE VOLUNTEERS whose generous spirit and hard work made it run smoothly...

THE COMMITTEES that planned and brought forth the event...

THE VENDORS for a superb display of rare plants and garden antiques...

THE WSS BOARD which supports this event in innumerable ways...

THE COMMUNITY for their support through donations and for tolerating the traffic!

**Save the Date! TRADE SECRETS MAY 18 & 19, 2013**

## HerStory: Dana Leaves

At only 19 years old, Dana had already experienced the horrors of domestic abuse. After her boyfriend violently attacked her and was jailed on felony charges, Dana found Women's Support Services, learning of us through our Family Violence Victim Advocate in Bantam Criminal Court.

WSS helped Dana rebuild her life. Through counseling with our adult advocate, she learned the warning signs of abuse and what a healthy relationship looks like. Newly empowered, she chose to leave her abuser.

Dana then decided to learn a trade so she could always be financially independent. With funding from WSS and a scholarship from the Connecticut Workforce Development Council, she enrolled in a trade school, graduated, and earned her professional license. Today, Dana works in her field of training and lives a healthy life free from abuse. Without support, her story would have a much different ending.

Thanks to our community, especially our donors, volunteers, local grantmaking foundations, and funding from the six towns we serve, we can offer free, confidential, client-centered services focused on safety, support, advocacy, and community outreach to persons in the northwest corner of Connecticut and nearby areas who have experienced violence at the hands of someone they love. Dana is just one of many of your friends and neighbors WSS has been privileged to empower to pursue a happier, healthier life.

## Giving to WSS

Our work is made possible by donations from individuals, businesses and foundations. **Together, we can create a community free of domestic violence and abuse.**

How to give:

- Send a check to WSS, P.O. Box 341, Sharon, CT 06069 or drop it off at our office during business hours
- Make a secure online donation through PayPal at [http://wssdv.org/take\\_action](http://wssdv.org/take_action)
- Call our office at (860) 364-1080
- Send in or drop off your LaBonne's receipts. LaBonne's donates a percentage of the sales recorded on these receipts to WSS.

In addition to financial contributions to meet our operations, outreach, counseling, legal advocacy, and programming needs, WSS continues to accept the following items for clients in need.

- Phone and gas cards
- Grocery cards
- Gift cards
- Gently used women's and children's clothing in good repair
- Old cell phones
- Used, but usable cars for our Calling All Cars program\*

\*Additional information about this program, including donation and application forms are available on our website at [http://wssdv.org/take\\_action/calling\\_all\\_cars](http://wssdv.org/take_action/calling_all_cars).

## ADVOCATES' CORNER

Each of our three advocates assists our clients in different ways, all of which are important components of the comprehensive services we offer.

**Liz Davis, Adult Advocate:** Our adult advocate is often the first person a woman who chooses to make changes toward a safer, abuse-free life sees when reaching out to WSS. Whether a woman plans to leave her abusive relationship or is choosing to stay in it for safety reasons, Liz offers individual counseling and advocacy in which she and the woman discuss the woman's situation, her hopes, fears, and short-term and long-term goals, and explore options and resources that will empower the woman to live a better, safer life.

**Rebecca Cohen, Child Advocate and Community Educator:** Our child advocate offers counseling and advocacy to children and teenagers who witness abuse or are themselves victims of it in a family situation or a dating relationship. Rebecca provides age-appropriate counseling and works with the child's parent to help them understand the child's feelings about the abuse they witness or experience. As community educator, Rebecca works with schools and other local organizations to educate the public about domestic violence and abuse, bullying, cyber bullying, healthy relationships, and dating violence.

**Denise Leclair, Family Violence Victim Advocate:** Working out of Bantam Criminal Court, Denise meets with victims of domestic violence in cases in which an arrest has been made. She helps victims navigate the court process, understand choices available to them, notify the court of their wishes in the pending case, and provide information on that case so they do not have to go to court and face their abuser. Denise also helps victims understand protective orders.

## OUR MISSION

The mission of Women's Support Services is to create a community free of domestic violence and abuse through intervention, prevention, and education. We offer free, confidential, client-centered services focused on safety, support, advocacy, and community outreach.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that domestic violence and abuse is a pervasive cultural problem. In our efforts to eliminate it, we believe we must:

- ◇ Increase public awareness and understanding of domestic violence and abuse
- ◇ Work toward social change that empowers women
- ◇ Engage all members of the community in our efforts to end violence in the home and in relationships

## Women's Support Services 24-hour Hotline (860) 364-1900

*All services are FREE and confidential. Collect calls accepted. We do NOT subscribe to Caller ID.*

### Support and Crisis Counseling

We are available to talk with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week on our hotline. Individual counseling and support services are available Monday – Friday or by appointment.

### Prevention Education

We provide programs to school groups, professional in-service trainings, and community groups.

### Emergency Short-term Shelter

We provide immediate, short-term, shelter, as well as referrals to long-term shelter for victims of domestic violence.

### Support Group

A confidential and non-judgmental support group meets each week to talk about issues of abuse, support, change and healthy relationships.

### Parenting Group

A support and educational group that uses the evidence-based "Common Sense Parenting" curriculum.

### Court Advocacy

Our Family Violence Victim Advocate works at Bantam Criminal Court to assist victims of family violence following an arrest and throughout the court process. We can also help someone obtain a restraining order, and provide transportation to and advocacy in Litchfield Civil Court.

### Advocacy and Referral

We can help you find and use the social, legal, and medical services that you need.

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