

# 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.*

## ***A Note from the Executive Director***

Dear Friends of WSS,

I would like to take a moment to thank those who have supported WSS over the past year. Thanks to your generosity we were able to provide services to 681 adults and children in the Northwest Corner.

We know it is a difficult time for many people and appreciate and value everyone's contributions...no matter how big or small. As you flip through our newsletter you will find a variety of ways in which you can help...by dropping off your old cell phones...donating a gift card...placing a Safe Have sticker in your businesses window...calling your legislators...and more!

During these demanding economic times the need for the free and confidential services of WSS has dramatically increased. I am confident that we will meet the challenges together, not just as an agency but as a community. Thank you again for supporting our mission of creating a community free of domestic violence.

Warmest Regards,  
Lori A. Rivenburgh



## **Governor Rell: Stimulus Enables 'Great Strides' in Battles Against Domestic Violence**

On March 26th, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced that the state is proposing to use over \$2 million in federal stimulus funding and required state funds match for a wide range of programs to prevent violence against women and to help law enforcement prosecute sexual assaults and domestic violence.

Among other advances, the money would enable domestic violence shelters to be staffed 24 hours a day, fund a training program to address dating violence among teens and pay for medical experts trained to help sexual assault victims cope with the experience.

**To learn more visit: [www.ct.gov/recovery](http://www.ct.gov/recovery)**

## **Recycle your cell phones!**

Did you know that WSS accepts used cell phones for recycling?

We participate in a program through Shelter Alliance. If the cell phones are re-usable they are updated and distributed to shelters throughout the state to be used by victims who need them. Cell phones that are not re-usable are recycled in an environmentally conscious way. The program uses zero landfill recycling.



*Stop in and drop off your used cell phone today!*

Special thanks to the local foundations that have awarded WSS funding this past year:

- ◆ \$10,000 from the Foundation for Community Health for Violence Prevention Programs at Region #1 Schools.
- ◆ \$10,000 from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation to strengthen our court advocacy program.

# Add Your Voice... To End Abuse

## Calling All Cars

WSS continues to accept used, but usable, donated cars and pass them along to local individuals in need. Vehicle transportation is critical to being able to work and function independently in this rural area of the state. Donors are eligible for tax credit for the fair market value of their gift. If you have a reliable used car to donate, or would like more information about this program, please call the WSS office at (860) 364-1080.



## Wish List

for our clients

Phone & Gas Cards  
Grocery Cards  
Gift Cards  
Prepaid Cell Phones  
Reliable Used Cars

## How can local businesses help?

Display our Safe Haven sticker (as seen at right) on the door or window of your business to let victims know they can use your phone to call for help.

For over 17 years, many local businesses have supported WSS by participating in this program. Callers have let us know that they saw the sticker and decided to call. It's a simple yet important way that we as a community can work to end violence and abuse.

Call the WSS office today to get a Safe Haven sticker for your business!

## THIS IS A SAFE HAVEN

IF YOU ARE IN A SCARY OR DANGEROUS SITUATION  
AND NEED TO GET HELP,  
YOU MAY USE OUR TELEPHONE TO CALL



**WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES**

**24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline**

**860-364-1900 and/or the Police at 911**

*Helping to create a community free of violence and abuse*



## Support Group

We offer a weekly evening support group for women who have experienced abuse. For more information on confidential location and time, please call us at (860) 364-1080.

## Support for Friends & Family

Are you a friend or family member of someone who is experiencing abuse? Would you like to be a part of a support group with others who are going through the same thing? Then let us know, we'd be happy to start a group to address your unique issues as well!

## ~ The Advocates' Corner ~

### What You Need To Know About Teen Dating Violence

*1 in 3 teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship.*

With the relationship of teen sensations Chris Brown and Rihanna in the news lately, parents and teens are talking more about dating violence. Like domestic violence, dating violence consists of a pattern of coercive behaviors used by a partner to gain power and control over the other person in the relationship. The violence may manifest as emotional, verbal, physical or sexual abuse. Controlling behaviors are usually hard to identify within the relationship, and considered "normal" to most teens. Most likely, friends and parents will recognize signs of abuse before the victim does.

One early warning sign is an increased demand by one partner of the attention of the other. This red flag is often misconstrued as "romantic." As a relationship grows, a couple will often spend increasing amounts of time together. This is not itself problematic, but becomes abusive when the demands intensify and one partner limits who their boyfriend or girlfriend can talk to or hang out with. The victim finds themselves increasingly isolated, foregoing family, friends, activities and work, in order to meet the demands of their partner.

If your teen comes to you about their relationship, listen without judging and help them identify their options. You can also call our **24 hour hotline** for support at **(860) 364-1900**.

Consider these warning signs from The Red Flag Campaign, when talking to your teen about dating violence:



Excessive phone calls and text messaging



Partner tells teen what to wear and/or who they can hang out with.



Partner acts jealous and frequently accuses the other person of flirting or cheating.



Partner puts boyfriend or girlfriend down, including boyfriend or girlfriend's friends and family.

For additional information on warning signs check out [TheRedFlagCampaign.org](http://TheRedFlagCampaign.org).

## How Can You Help?

### Contact your Legislators!

We are asking for your support for  
House Bill No. 6494  
An Act Concerning Teen Dating Violence Education

The Act seeks to protect the safety of teens by educating them about the dangers of dating violence. Domestic violence agencies across the state provide free educational programs to their local schools which include teen dating violence education programs. Women's Support Services offers this education to the Region #1 Schools. By supporting the prevention of teen dating violence now, you are supporting the prevention of domestic violence in the future.

Contact your legislators and let them know that you support teen dating violence education in your local schools!



### THE FACTS On Teen Dating Violence

- ◆ 1 in 11 teens reports being a victim of physical dating abuse each year.
- ◆ 1 in 3 teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, strangled or otherwise physically hurt by his or her partner.
- ◆ 40% of teenage girls age 14 to 17 say that they know someone that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.
- ◆ Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break up.
- ◆ 1 out of 3 women murdered in the United States is killed by a husband

## 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

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## **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. We do not subscribe to caller ID. Individual counseling and support services are available Monday – Friday or by appointment.

### **Advocacy and Referral**

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

### **Emergency Short-term Shelter**

We can provide immediate, short-term, safe shelter, as well as referrals to long-term shelter.

### **Support Group**

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

### **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 are also available to help someone obtain a restraining order, provide transportation and advocacy in Litchfield Civil Court.

### **Prevention Education**

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

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### **BOARD MEMBERS**

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