

Hope Matters



Where Hope Begins

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A quarterly publication of Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter
10007 S. Cole Road, Whittier, California 90603

Safe at Last

Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter

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"*Lauren*" entered the Woman's and Children's Crisis Shelter in January of this year. This thirty-three year old mother entered our shelter with only two of her four children. She was desperately seeking protection from a current abusive relationship. Her previous relationship with the father of her children ended in separation because of his violence, and she had a restraining order against him to keep the family safe.

Lauren never imagined she would ever fall in love again or that her new male partner would become as violent and controlling as her former husband. She met this man nearly a year ago and described the first month of their relationship as "*wonderful*." "*He was attentive and romantic*," but day-by-day *Lauren* began to notice small changes in his behavior. In spite of this, they decided to live together, but he refused to move in unless her two boys moved out. He would only allow *Lauren's* two daughters, ages 6 and 7, to live with them.

Since last June, her two sons, ages 11 and 12, were forced to live with a relative, and over the next several months *Lauren's* abuser became increasingly jealous and distrustful. One day, he came home from work very angry and insisted that she was cheating on him. He became so enraged that he slapped her hard on her face. *Lauren* did not leave him because she did not believe his anger would ever escalate to that of her former husband, but soon his slaps became punches with a closed fist.

He would punch her in the stomach and on the back, calling her whore, bitch and slut. The attacks began to occur more frequently; two to three times a week. She knew he was smoking marijuana, but soon discovered he was also using meth. *Lauren* was now living in constant fear. Her life and her children's world were again spiraling out of control. She did not call the police because she believed he would kill her if she did. It was only after he tried to choke her in front of her daughters that she knew she had to leave. When he left for work the next morning, she gathered up her documents and her girls and walked two miles to a friend's home. At her Mother's urging, *Lauren* called our domestic violence hotline and was immediately admitted to our shelter.

She worked with her case manager and advocates to meet the goals of our program while both she and her daughters received professional counseling services. *Lauren* had an extremely difficult time facing the fact that both her relationships had ended in such violence. We helped her resolve her problems with CalWORKS, so that she could continue

Continued on page 2



From the President



We have some exciting news for everyone. This year marks the 30th anniversary of WCCS and the relocation of our administration and outreach offices! We have an ongoing volunteer recruitment drive and encourage anyone interested to participate and make a difference.

At the present time, the Women in Transition (outreach) Office, has completed its relocation and we expect the administrative offices to join them by late spring of this year. On behalf of everyone at WCCS, I want to express a big thank to the *Abmanson Foundation* for their generous grant that has helped make this move possible.

The new address for the Women in Transition Office is:
**12519-A Washington Blvd
Whittier, CA 90602-1010**

As part of our 30th anniversary celebrations, we have conducted two “*Lunch and Learn*” workshops: one last July and the second in November 2007.

Our 30th anniversary celebrations will also include *The WCCS Gala* on September 25, 2008. Keep checking our newsletter for upcoming details!

On behalf of the Board of Directions, I also want to thank *Judy Gordon* and entire *Staff at WCCS* for their constant support and their commitment to the mission of agency.

Helen Hammitt
President

Lunch’n Learn

Last November, the Women’s & Children’s Crisis Shelter presented the second in a series of **Lunch & Learn** workshops. This workshop was designed for high school guidance counselors and psychologists. The topic was “*Teen Dating Violence*.” More than 50 attendees representing schools in the Whittier Unified School District, the El Rancho Unified School District, the East Whittier School District, the Little Lake School District, and the Whittier City School District learned about how to recognize teen dating violence, its effects on students – both boys and girls – legal issues involved, and appropriate referrals and resources.



Safe at Last

Continued from page 1

receiving benefits and also helped her file a restraining order against her current batterer. *Lauren* was accompanied by a legal advocate to her court hearing, but, to their dismay, the judge refused to consider her testimony because she never called the police to report any incidence of violence.

The judge’s ruling only increased *Lauren’s* resolve to free herself and her children from the clutches of violence that had gripped their lives for so many years. When she interviewed for long-term transitional housing, she so impressed the case manager with her determination that she was offered space, even before the interview concluded!

After struggling to face her own fears and doubts while living at WCCS for 45 days, *Lauren* did not want to say goodbye to our shelter staff. She finally felt safe and did not want to leave us. Her daughters also did not want to say goodbye to our Children’s Program Staff who made them feel warm and welcome. But, at the same time, they were excited about moving into their new home and looked forward to a life free of violence.

Lauren told her WCCS case manager she was determined to secure permanent housing, so that she could reunite her children and give them a life that was free from violence.

Calhi Students Stepping Up!



Students from Calhi Associated Study Body Cabinet who worked with the entire student body to collect toys, gift cards, toiletries, household supplies, school supplies, etc. The Whittier Union High School District provided one of its warehouse trucks to transport all of the collected items to WCCS. Students collected \$800 in gift cards in addition to everything else.

“Stepping Out Against Domestic Violence” 5K FITNESS WALK

Featuring The Clothesline Project and
The Silent Witness Project



On Saturday, April 19, 2008, Shelter's Right Hand will hold its 12th annual “Stepping Out Against Domestic Violence” 5K Fitness Walk benefiting the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter. The Walk will take place in Uptown Whittier's Central Park with registration beginning at 6:30 a.m. The walk is scheduled to start at 8:00 a.m.

The Shelter's Right Hand is in its 25th year as the fundraising auxiliary to WCCS. Each spring the auxiliary holds its “Stepping Out Against Domestic Violence” 5K Fitness Walk. It is a time when the community responds with compassion and generosity in supporting the crisis shelter. Last year, over 400 participants stepped out together on behalf of battered women and their children. The \$46,000 that was raised last year provided critical funding in helping the women and children seek violence-free lives.

This year's event at the park will feature **The Clothesline Project** and **The Silent Witness Project**. The Clothesline Project is a vehicle for women and children affected by violence to express their emotions visually by decorating shirts with illustrations and graphic messages. Dozens of shirt will hang from a clothesline in Central Park on the morning of the walk. The shirts are designed by women and children who have found a safe haven at the crisis shelter or who participate in the **Women in Transition Project**, which is the walk-in program of WCCS. The display of the shirts is an opportunity to increase awareness of the impact of violence against women, to provide a safe forum for the women to courageously break the silence of violence, and to celebrate their strength to survive. The Clothesline Project originally started in Cape Cod, Massachusetts in 1990 with 31 shirts designed by survivors of assault, rape and incest. Since that first display, the Project has grown to over 300 local Clothesline Projects nationally and internationally, addressing the issue of violence against women.

Also in 1990, an ad hoc group of women artists and writers, upset about the growing number of women in Minnesota that were murdered by their partners or acquaintances, joined together with several other women's organizations to form **Arts Action Against Domestic Violence**. After much brainstorming, they decided to create 26 free-standing, life-sized red wooden figures, each one bearing the name of a woman who once lived, worked, had neighbors, friends, family, children—whose life ended violently at the hands of a husband, ex-husband, partner, or acquaintance. A twenty-seventh figure was added to represent those uncounted women whose murders went unsolved or were erroneously ruled accidental. The organizers called the figures the “*Silent Witnesses*.” In 2007, *Noah Aviom*, an eagle scout from Whittier, took on the creation of a Silent Witness Project on behalf of the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter. He crafted 8 life-size red wooden figures and presented them to WCCS last summer. Each figure has been named for a local woman who was killed by her batterer. They stand outside our administration offices to remind all passers by that domestic violence is a serious local problem. All 8 figures will be on display at the 12th annual “Stepping Out Against Domestic Violence” 5K Fitness Walk.

For Walk information visit www.sheltersrighthand.org
Or call (562) 696-6382

Our Partners in Caring

During the 2007 holiday season the following organizations and businesses donated gift items and money to brighten the holiday for the many women and children who turn to us for help. Thank you one and all!

Anaconda Street Productions	Whittier
Assistance League of Downey	Downey
Assistance League of Whittier	Whittier
California High School	Whittier
Beatitudes of La Mirada	La Mirada
Catholic Daughters	Whittier
City of La Mirada	La Mirada
Dan & Sandi's Dance Group	Tustin
Delta Delta Delta	La Habra
Delta Sigma Chi	Whittier
East Whittier Presbyterian Church	Whittier
First Christian Church	Whittier
Friendship Square Quilt Guild	La Mirada
GTE Retirees	La Mirada
La Mirada Landmark	La Mirada
La Serna High TRUE Club	Whittier
LDS Church	Whittier
Let's Face It	Whittier
Macy's	Downey
Mark Twain Democratic Club	Whittier
Marshall's	Downey
Mayflower Transfer & Storage Co.	Whittier
MOMS Club of Whittier	Whittier
Dept. of Public & Social Services	Norwalk
PEO	Whittier
Preceptor Beta Nu	Whittier
Project Night	Novi, MI
Safe Harbor Church	Whittier
Shelter's Right Hand	Whittier
Soroptomist Int'l	Santa Fe Springs
Smart Investment Club	Whittier
Southern California Carpentry JATC	Whittier
Stein Mart	La Mirada
Teamsters Local Union 396	Covina
Troop 22	Whittier
Whittier Cyclery	Whittier

People Make a Difference

We want to express a special thank you to the following volunteers, who have taken a stand against domestic violence and continue to make a difference in our client's lives.

Jeannie Albright
Nedra M. Allmond
Denese Clarke
Erin Dunroe
Mary Fitzpatrick
Connie Irwin
Linda Jaramillo
Emily Watson

Thank you for your support and keep up the good work!

ADVOCACY CORNER

Domestic Violence Budget Priorities for 2008-09

On January 10th, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger released the details of his spending plan for California. Amidst a \$14.5 billion budget deficit, the Governor's plan calls for drastic budget cuts in '08-'09, while also asking for cuts in spending for the current year ('07-'08). The Governor asked all departments to cut current year spending by 10% for all programs that receive general funds by March 1, 2008, and has called the Legislature into special session to deal with this fiscal emergency. Under proposition 58, the Legislature has 45 days to respond to the Governor's fiscal emergency and address the current year budget shortfall.

Battered Women Shelter Program

The Department of Public Health administers the **Battered Women Shelter Program (BWSP)** which provides funding to 94 domestic violence shelters in California. Shelters provide critical services to domestic violence victims and their families such as emergency housing and employment assistance, as well as safety planning and crisis counseling 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The proposal to cut BWSP grantees by 10% in the current year would cause extreme hardship to programs that are already severely underfunded. In addition, the budget proposal for '08-'09 would cut this program \$2.3 million in general fund monies. **It is estimated that 13,000 women will not receive domestic violence services due to this reduction.**

CalWORKs

California's welfare to work program, **CalWORKs**, provides cash assistance to low-income families with children. The goal of the program is to help low-income Californians become self-sufficient through education and job training. The Governor has proposed two significant changes to the CalWORKs program in the 2008-2009 budget:

A 60-Month Time Limit for child only cases. The Governor's proposal would place a 60-month time limit on child only cases for children of undocumented parents, and children of a parent convicted of a drug felony. Many of the children who would be denied the CalWORKs grant are U.S. citizens. **It is estimated that 36,700 families would be removed from the CalWORKs program.**

A Gradual Full-Family Sanction for CalWORKs families. Currently, if an adult is not in compliance with the CalWORKs program for more than an accumulated time of 6 months, a 50% grant reduction is imposed. Under the Governor's proposal, if the same adult accumulates another 6 months of non-compliance, then the full amount of the grant is withheld. The Administration proposes to implement the full-family sanction on families, when they fail to respond to attempts to bring them into compliance.

Budget hearings are being conducted now! It is imperative that our State Legislators know exactly how we feel about these proposed budget changes and the impact they will have on the lives of battered women and their children in our community. Legislators consider the number of letters they receive, as a measure of public sentiment. Write your Legislator. Stand against domestic violence. This is a bi-partisan issue. Let your voice be heard!

WISH LIST

The following new items are always welcome and always needed:

Hygiene items for women and children – hair brushes, make-up, toothpaste, skin lotions, diapers, hair products, deodorant, baby wipes and soap

Women's clothing, undergarments, pajamas, shoes and socks

Infant & children's clothing of all sizes



Plush stuffed animals, dolls and toys appropriate for toddlers

Games & Books (English and Spanish)

School Supplies

Twin size bed linens and towels of all sizes

Toilet paper, paper napkins and paper towels

Household cleaning supplies, laundry detergent and dish soap

Department store gift certificates

Fast food gift certificates

For more information or to make arrangements, please call: (562) 945-3937.

From the Executive Director



I was one of a delegation of 150 advocates in Sacramento representing domestic violence shelters and service agencies. We went from office to office in the Capitol building, meeting with any legislator or legislative staffer that would give us the time. And the time, could range from 5 minutes to nearly 45. Our concern was and is the fiscal crisis in California and how it will impact victims of domestic violence. In light of the Governor's proposed

budget cuts, we needed to tell our representatives what that would mean to our clients.

Many people brought valentine cards. I brought news clippings about the many women in our area who were killed at the hand of their batterers. Their voices needed to be heard.

- Perhaps if we had more shelters they would have been safe.
- Perhaps if they had restraining orders that were enforced they would have been safe.
- Perhaps if their batterers had been put behind bars immediately rather than allowed to get their things in order first they would have been safe.
- Perhaps if their friends and families understood that they had the right to say "No" they would have been safe.

- Perhaps if they had learned in third grade how to build healthy relationships they would have been safe.
- Perhaps if they truly believed they were worthwhile and felt cherished by the time they got to high school they would have been safe.

No one of these is the answer, but together they all are.

Domestic violence is in our faces daily, yet, the newspapers report it as "love triangles" or "domestic disputes." We seem to be seeing more and more violent endings, yet people seem to be more and more desensitized. When I asked someone recently why they thought that was, they said, "*It isn't a sexy issue anymore.*" I say, we need to make it sexy!

Recently, after the tragic death of *Monica Thomas Harris*, the LA County Domestic Violence Council wrote a letter to the Board of Supervisors asking them to make domestic violence a top priority in the County. We asked them to do this with education programs, intervention programs, and assistance programs.

If you were to follow this up with a letter to your supervisor we might have a chance. It would say to them that domestic violence is an issue, not just to those who collect an agency paycheck, but to you, their constituent. Letters count! Please don't wait for someone else to do it ... rather, get someone else to do it with you.

Judith Gordon
Executive Director

*Thank
You*

We are pleased to announce the following grant awards since our last newsletter:

Ahmanson Foundation approved a grant of \$50,000 for construction and furnishing the new walk-in center/administration offices.

B.C. McCabe Foundation approved a grant of \$62,280 for new shelter kitchen appliances, other upgrades, and individual therapy.

Margaret E. Oser Fund of the Orange County Community Foundation approved a grant of \$15,000 for part-time nursing staff for the emergency shelter.

Rose Hills Foundation approved a grant of \$30,000 for individual therapy for shelter mothers and children.

Weingart Foundation approved a second year of \$25,000 to be used for expansion of services and facilities.

Help Wanted!

We are seeking volunteers who are dedicated, empathetic and want to make a difference in people's lives. If you want to take a stand against domestic violence and are passionate about helping people, then *we need you.*

If you are interested in volunteering, please don't hesitate to call:

Brenda Morales
Volunteer Coordinator
(562) 945-3937

We currently have volunteer opportunities, for:

Hotline Operators: Volunteers who screen calls, make referrals to other community services and provide immediate assistance to help battered women and their children. No counseling or intervention training necessary. Training provided.

Children's Program: Volunteers who enjoy working with children ages 0-17. Activities include art classes, child care, support groups, story time and assisting staff with "Mommy & Me" classes, which focus on interactive play between mother and child. Training provided.

Shelter Volunteer: Volunteers who can help provide a welcoming environment, peer support and crisis intervention for women and children entering the shelter. No counseling or intervention training necessary. Training provided.

... because we can all make a difference in a person's life.



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Children's
Crisis Shelter**

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