



WOMEN'S
SUPPORT
SERVICES

SPRING 2011

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.

COME SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE AND COMPLETE YOUR GARDEN WITH A UNIQUE LOOK!



TRADE SECRETS MAY 14 & 15, 2011

A Benefit for Women's Support Services of Sharon, CT

Saturday, May 14, Garden Antique and Plant Sale

Early buying starts at 8am* \$ 100

*(breakfast included)

Regular admission 10am—3-pm \$ 35

Sunday, May 15, Garden Tours

All five gardens 10am-4pm \$ 70

(Tickets purchased in advance \$60)

We regret that we cannot welcome pets to this event on either day.

For further information or to purchase tickets: www.tradesecretsct.com or call WSS at (860) 364-1080.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Women's Support Services (WSS) is looking forward to the 11th annual Trade Secrets two-day event and extends its sincere thanks to Bunny Williams, our honorary chair, and to Elaine LaRoche, who has allowed us the use of the picturesque LionRock Farm in Sharon, CT for many years. We would also like to thank the countless community volunteers, vendors and underwriters who make this event possible. Proceeds from prior years have helped WSS purchase a new building and provide emergency funds to clients in need.

Trade Secrets 2011 proceeds will be used to fund WSS education and counseling programs and to provide direct funds to help clients with legal, housing, transportation and medical emergencies.

Please join us at this special event and support this worthy cause! Together we can create a community free of domestic violence and abuse!

~Lori A. Rivenburgh



Interested in volunteering at Trade Secrets?

Call (860) 364-1080 today to learn how you can get involved.



CORNER...

Help End
Abusive Relationship
Tendencies



This winter, the Adult Counselor/Advocate, Liz Davis, facilitated a H.E.A.R.T. (Help End Abusive Relationship Tendencies) Group Marathon Meeting. This meeting was held for a total of 12 hours on a Saturday, with 9 participants. The day consisted of exercises to promote personal growth and healing as well as exercises to promote fun. These exercises were designed to encourage the women to view the trauma they experienced as a part of their lives rather than having it define their entire life. The Marathon Meeting was a great success and provided the group members with a safe environment to bond and develop additional support outside of their group. Below is a short story describing the day's experience from the Adult Counselor/Advocate's perspective.

I arrived at WSS at 8am to begin preparing a breakfast for all to share. The office smelled of bacon, eggs and English muffins. Our Executive Director came in around 8:30 with a wonderful crock of homemade chili, bread and brownies for our evening meal. I was so moved by her contribution to our day's event. A woman's spirit of giving is a wonderful thing to be a part of and I thank her for being who she is and what she does not only for WSS but for the battered women's movement as a whole. As the members began arriving, I saw the excitement on their faces and the mere fact that they cared and loved themselves enough to commit to the day long program left me in awe of their strength and courage. What a wonderful spiritual way to begin our bonding by sharing food together.

After breakfast we cleaned up as a team and moved on to an exercise called the time line where each member walks a timeline laid out on the floor and takes the time to share her "herstory" in as much or as little detail that she chooses. This is an incredibly powerful exercise and we created a safe space, lit candles in the fireplace, and went to work! As I listened, I heard about fear. I heard about torture. I heard about near death beating. I heard about sexual abuse. I heard crying and saw lots of tears. As each woman walked and sometimes sat along the time line, she shared her story, her body language almost childlike. Often the head would be down and shoulders turned in, talking softly and timidly. Sometimes it was so intense I would ask them to stop, take a break, and guide them in a grounding exercise. The grounding exercise acted as a way to remind them they were in a safe place sharing the memory of their abuse. At one point, I was moved to see a veteran member listening intently to a timeline story, and at the same time she had another newer member next to her on the couch, curved into her body providing this newer member with support and nurturing without having to say a word. Women literally supporting women, it cannot get any better than that! As each member moved further along to the present day, it was incredible to observe the change that took place both physically and emotionally. These women started the exercise as victims and as the exercise progressed, they began to speak in clear, strong voices, standing or sitting tall, and making eye contact as they transformed into survivors of domestic violence. By the end of the exercise, each woman was amazed at how much they have healed and moved forward, realizing they are no longer victims or survivors but formerly battered women. They embraced the darkness of their trauma and worked through it so they could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The day flew by with the sharing of lunch and then foot reflexology, hand massages, and manicures. During this nurturing fun part of the day, I was moved by their resilience, chatter, laughter and bonding. It was a healing like none I have witnessed in a long time. The power of a woman's spirit is a beautiful thing. We all came into the day as individuals and left as sisters who all shared a common bond and connection that will have an everlasting effect on each and every one of us. We are not alone and we all need the support of others in our journey forward to live a life free from trauma and abuse. I have to say this is one of the best days on the job as the Adult Counselor/Advocate for WSS. I am truly blessed to have a job that I love.

Again, women helping women it cannot get any better!

Peace.

Liz Davis



HELP END
ABUSIVE
RELATIONSHIP
TENDENCIES

Thank You LaBonne's!

Many thanks to LaBonne's Market in Salisbury and to all our neighbors who save their LaBonne's receipts and forward them to WSS. LaBonne's generously donates a percentage of the receipt totals we collect.

To participate, just collect your receipts mail them in or drop them at the WSS office. Thank you to all and keep up the good shopping!



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.



Community News

Interested in what WSS has been doing in the community? Check it out here!

Primary Prevention News in CT

In the state of Connecticut, there has been much focus on preventative education on a number of topics, including bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence. The WSS Community Educator attended several exciting trainings about primary prevention.

Primary prevention education focuses on the belief that prevention is a long-term process that requires change at various levels of the community to prevent intimate partner violence before it occurs. With this in mind, primary prevention activities seek to reduce the overall likelihood that anyone will become a victim or perpetrator rather than educating individuals on how **not** to be a victim.

WSS has been working to develop new and exciting programs that integrate these principles. WSS plans to offer programs that include topics such as: gender roles, social norms, violence in the media, and masculinity in our culture. These programs will be offered in multi-session trainings in order to effectively impact those attending.

The opportunities are endless and we are all very excited to engage the community in primary prevention education to eliminate violence in our community!

If you are interested in hearing more or scheduling a program, contact WSS at (860) 364-1080. Programs are offered for **ALL** age groups in a multitude of settings. We would be happy to provide prevention and awareness programs to your religious organization, corporation, medical staff, students, parents, teachers, and any other members within the community who are interested in learning more.

Peers Educating Peers: Encouraging Peer Leaders



This school year, Women's Support Services has partnered with Housatonic Youth Service Bureau to offer an exciting new program. The program, Peers Educating Peers (PEP) is a multi-session workgroup designed to educate students and encourage leadership skills.

PEP is designed to educate students on the many challenges facing youth today and teaches them ways they can help. Students in the program are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills, develop awareness about community issues, and use positive peer influence to promote a healthy and supportive school community. PEP covers topics such as: smoking prevention, bullying and cyberbullying, communication skills, conflict resolution, and discussion around being a positive role model to other students.

To date, the program has been completed at North Canaan Elementary School, in partnership with the AHA! (After Hour Activities) program. Currently, we are working with the 5th grade class at Lee H. Kellogg to offer the exciting program. Students have demonstrated heartfelt participation and sensitivity and understanding around the challenges they face.

If you are interested in more information or offering the program to students in your school, contact WSS at (860) 364-1080 or HYSB at (860) 824-4720.

Interested in becoming a volunteer?

Women's Support Services is looking for special people interested in helping local victims of domestic violence and abuse. A **FREE 25 hour training** will begin in **September 2011**. WSS is currently seeking hotline volunteers to assist in answering our 24/7 crisis line.

This year, trainings will be held on:

6pm to 9:30pm, Thursdays: Sept. 1
Sept. 8
Sept. 15
Sept. 22
9am to 3:30pm, Saturdays: Sept. 10
Sept. 17

For more information please call (860) 364-1080 or visit our website at www.wssdv.org.

There is no excuse for abuse! Make a difference today!

Kid Connection!

Are you interested in adding your voice to raise awareness about bullying? WSS invites local children to submit their best anti-bullying poster to be featured on our website! Posters must focus on an anti-bullying message, on a standard 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper. Posters must be submitted by **May 31st** to:

**Women's Support Services
P.O. Box 341
Sharon, CT 06069**

The posters with the most creative messages will be selected and showcased on our website: www.wssdv.org.

So break out your art supplies and add your voice!

For further information or questions, please call (860) 364-1080.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WSS? INTERESTED IN SCHEDULING A PRESENTATION OR TRAINING?

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.WSSDV.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS.



Keyword: **Women's Support Services**

Add your voice to our Facebook discussion board!

Current topic: What do you think **SHOULD** happen to celebrities

that are found guilty of domestic violence or admit to abusive behavior?



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. 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.

BOARD MEMBERS

Micki Nunn-Miller
President
Laura Wertz
Vice President
Lana Morrison
Treasurer
Sara Joannides
Secretary

Elizabeth Allen
Judith Crouch
Rita Delgado
Susan DeMelle
Pari Forood
Lisa Foster
Maria Horn
Lynda Ott Jaeger
Pam Longwell
Janet McCormick
Marianne Ostendorf
Patricia Prem
Tara Manning Rock
Dick Taber
Sarah Zarbock

Lori Rivenburgh, MA
Executive Director



158 Gay Street
PO Box 341
Sharon, CT
06069-0341

POSTAL PATRON

Non-Profit
Postage
PAID
Permit #3
Sharon, CT