



Battered Women's Shelter
Of Summit and Medina Counties

New Year's Resolutions

By Terri Heckman, Executive Director

It's almost time to sit back, reflect on the past year and then look ahead to 2006. It is hard to believe another year has passed so quickly and we all wonder where the time has gone. Often in our reflecting on the passing of another year, many of us make resolutions and promises that somehow will improve our individual and collective lives in the year ahead. It is this same kind of reflective thinking that leads victims of domestic violence to turn to the Battered Women's Shelter throughout the year, when they are at a point in life where they are ready to make a resolution to live in peace.



Our New Year's Resolutions are rarely easy to achieve and maintain. Most of us have tried over and over to reach individual goals such as losing weight, quitting smoking, saving more money or finding additional time to relax. Achieving these goals means changing habits and coping skills that we have woven into our daily lives. Family violence victims have the same struggle when they decide to end their abusive relationships. A person may want to stop the violence, but may not always want to end the relationship. Therefore she tries over and over to achieve the goal, without leaving her family. This change takes a tremendous amount of strength.

Often walking away changes a lot of other things that have to do with the victim's daily life as well. Most times her address will need to change, her children will go to a new school, and she will need to find a new job. A one-car family may find that the family now needs to use the city bus system for transportation, and economically everything will be changed forever. Even victims of domestic violence question their ability to remain in a dysfunctional relationship vs. their ability to set up a new life away from the abuser.

Her resolution to leave represents so many other changes that just may look too difficult to manage.

When it comes to other people's resolutions, all of us can look at others and find fault and judgment. We can tell others how to quit smoking or how to lose weight. We can spout off better ways to save money and why it is imperative to spend more time at home. Similarly, we can all look at a victim of domestic violence and tell her why and how she should leave her relationship. But just as many times as we try and fail at our own New Year's Resolutions, a victim of domestic violence may try to leave her abusive relationship. When we can better understand how difficult that is, or just what that resolution may mean for her and for her children and the huge adjustment that it will be, it may be easier for all of us to understand why it takes a long time for a victim to become a survivor.

Resolutions are just never easy. If they were easy, we would live in a world stress free and healthy - a world without cigarettes, weight issues, financial concerns or family violence. So as we approach the New Year, maybe we could all make a resolution to be more patient and understanding of one another. Maybe we could stop judging and condemning others for their inability to "do things the way we think it should be done". Maybe we could all make a resolution to be more supportive of one another.

Regardless of your resolutions, we encourage you to set goals in small achievable steps. Each day find a way to do SOMETHING positive to improve your life or the life of someone else. Little improvements will build to larger improvements. Remember the longest road was built one brick at a time.

***For positive and achievable New Years Resolutions you *can* keep, see page 5.

Rape Crisis Center Welcomed Into Agency

At 5:00pm, June 1, 2005, the Rape Crisis Center of Summit County became partners with the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties. This move came through an unfortunate chain of events which left the YWCA of Summit County financially unable to support its programs. The Rape Crisis Center, one of those programs, could not support itself either. As a United Way partner agency and a much-needed service provider to victims of violence, it needed to find a home somewhere in the community, hopefully with another partner agency.

For those of us already working with victims and survivors of domestic violence, it seemed like placing the Rape Crisis Center with the Battered Women's Shelter would be a logical move. The Battered Women's Shelter was already successfully partnered with Rape Crisis Center of Medina County for several years. Our administrative staff also had a rich work experience in serving sexual assault survivors. BWS wanted this partnership and knew it was a good match.

Several stalls in our attempts to convince all of the community almost

placed the Rape Crisis Center elsewhere. But in the end, the agency was placed by the United Way with the Battered Women's Shelter.

The agency became administratively part of the agency's currently running Rape Crisis Center in Medina, and became formally "The Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties" from this action.

The Rape Crisis Hotline was officially transferred into our care as of 5:00 pm June 1, 2005. The Hotline experienced not one second of down time and we have been on duty 24 hours a day to serve the community ever since.

This service is so needed and it exists for anyone who needs to talk about a rape, sexual assault, or information regarding these experiences. The agency also provides Hospital and Court Advocacy, and in-office Crisis Intervention.

This new agency also means new staff has joined us. We welcome Heather May, Rape Crisis Manager. Margo Miner and Alice Smith, Rape Crisis Advocates in Summit County, and Jayne Pecheco-Philips and Crystal Baker, Rape Crisis Advocates in Medina County.

The Rape Crisis Hotline has also

added 15 new volunteers to help cover the hotline since June 1. We continue to need more volunteers, and welcome anyone with a caring heart and good listening skills to become a Rape Crisis volunteer. Please call 330-374-0740 ext. 27 to inquire about volunteer opportunities on the Rape Crisis Hotline.



rape crisis center
of medina and summit counties

Medina Business Phone (330) 764-8635

Medina Fax (330) 723-9660

Summit Business Phone (330) 374-0740
#26

Summit Fax (330) 374-0119

info@medinacountyrc.org

Medina County Hotline:

1-888-334-4064

Summit County Hotline:

1-877-906-7273 (RAPE)

330-434-7273 (RAPE)

Medina County Advocates Office Moves

If you have grown accustomed to dropping off donations or contacting the advocates for the Battered Women's Shelter or Rape Crisis Center at 740 N. Washington Street, Suite E6 in Medina, please know that these offices have moved. These offices are now at 704 North Court Street, the United Way building. Our offices are in the back of the building and located on the ground floor. Business office hours for both the Battered Women's Shelter Court Advocates and the Rape Crisis Center offices are 8:00 am - 4:30pm or by appointment. Phone numbers are as follows: **Court Advocates 330-723-9610** and **Rape Crisis Office 330-764-8635**. No donations are accepted at this location, so to donate items in Medina, please call **330-723-2163**.

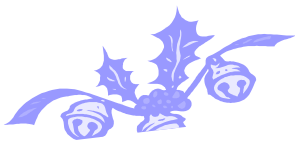
WomensLaw.org

What is it? WomensLaw.org is a website designed by women Lawyers, Teachers, Activists and Web Designers who wanted to help disadvantaged women with legal and protective issues.

How can it help? The web site provides hundreds of links to organizations and agencies that give reduced cost or free legal help.

Who can get the help? Women. The website was design especially for victims of domestic violence who need legal help in their divorce or domestic violence issues. There are also links for legal resources that are available to teens, immigrants, tribal, and military personnel.

Log on to www.WomensLaw.org for more information



BWS Gears Up for Holiday Giving

With autumn comes the anticipation of the Holiday Season. At the Battered Women's shelter and Rape Crisis Centers of Summit & Medina Counties, the Holidays have already begun! Our donation drives kick off early so that we can be sure that every family and child we can support will not spend the Holidays in need.

Every year, our donation lines begin ringing early with giving agencies, corporations, and community organizations requesting our wish lists for shelters and families. Because there are so many who would like to give and so many areas where there are needs, the following programs have been developed to help us direct those with a desire to give.

Adopt-A-Shelter

In 2004, our three shelters provided over 16,000 nights of protective housing to residents of Summit & Medina Counties. Obviously, our shelters have on-going needs very similar to any household. If your group or family would like to "Adopt-A-Shelter", you will be given a general list of needs including: towels, sheets, toys, cleaning supplies, bus tickets, long distance phone cards, and many more items. These donations help to maintain the shelters.

Adopt-A-Family

Families who have recently been helped by the BWS and who have financial hardships are eli-

gible to be "adopted" during the holidays. These are families struggling to recover from family violence and who are working with our agency in an effort to build a peaceful life. They must agree to NOT be involved in any other holiday giving program.

Each family is "adopted" out one at a time only and the group/family accepting the "adoption" will be asked to provide a complete holiday for the entire family. First names, sizes, gift ideas, and family needs will be provided to the "adopting" family or group. This is a confidential program and therefore, you will not meet your family or be permitted to take the gifts directly to their location. We ask that any gift certificates, cash, or tickets be specifically handed to the Executive Director during the drop off. Finally, we ask that any single use cameras be marked "OPEN FIRST".

The Giving Tree

There are families who enter the shelter the week of Christmas, or the week following. These "last minute" families are often those with the greatest need.

You will be provided with a "theme of items" such as "kitchen gifts" or a general list of items such as pajamas, sweat-shirts, socks, and the like. These will be used for those families entering the shelter at the last moment or immediately

following the holidays. Giving Trees are a great way to help families who might otherwise have an empty holiday.

Feed A Family

This holiday giving program will offer a group a chance to fill our food pantries. Consider having a canned food drive. Take your children to a store and involve them in the selection process of canned and boxed foods for the shelters. This is a great way to get the little ones involved in holiday giving.

Christmas All Year Long

Our needs continue through the year. Consider making an on-going commitment by sponsoring a monthly expense. Sponsorship might include: fresh meat or perishables, bus tickets for residents, utility heating or water bills, etc. Sponsorship of one or any number of months would be helpful!

Drop-Offs & Giving

Drop-off days for all of the programs are scheduled for the following:

*December 11th from 1:00-4:00pm
and again December 17th
from 8:30 am - 12:30pm
at 303 W. Exchange Street
in Akron.*

*WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A
MEDINA COUNTY
DROP-OFF LOCATION*

For more information on Holiday Donations or to sign up for any one of the above programs, please call Polly at (330) -374-0740

BWS & RCC Speakers Offer Outreach, Education, and Training

What are some things that you can do to prevent your son or daughter from becoming a victim of intimate partner violence? How easily could one of your loved ones become a victim of sexual assault? Does your workplace protect you from becoming injured because of someone else's domestic violence issues?

You might not ever think about these things, but now that I have your attention, these are just some of the issues that our Outreach team speaks to when they are out educating the community.

Why is community education important?

Community Outreach and Education is so important, especially on the topics of domestic violence and sexual assault because these are the issues in our society that are greatly misunderstood. The victimization itself is shrouded in shame and secrecy, and most reported cases that make it to the nightly news reinforce the stereotypes that people hold about these issues.

However, the national average states that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 7 men will experience some form of sexual or relationship violence some time in their lives. With numbers like that, we have much to do to break down the ideas and stereotypes that people have about who our agency is designed to help.

Who do Speakers speak to?

It is our belief that any information we can give to our community

serves a beneficial purpose. To those who have never experienced domestic violence, we think it is absolutely essential that they hear about our services so that they can direct people to help should the opportunity present itself. To those who are in a dangerous or controlling relationship, outreach programs let them know that they are not alone and can sometimes break down the fear that binds people from seeking help. It also lets them know that there are a variety of services available to help them.

What other ways does Outreach and Education help the community?

One of our highest priorities right now is Prevention. We have developed educational programs to reach all students from pre-school aged through college level. We know that children who grow up in a household where there is domestic violence have 1,000 times higher of a chance of being either abusers or victims themselves when they grow up. We also know that if they get some intervention before they reach adolescence this statistic can be greatly reduced. We also include information on rape, sexual assault and warning signs of power and control in abusive relationships. Young people just entering the age of dating need to be aware of these signs so that they can make healthy and safe decisions about their partners. Finally, we want all children to know that it takes a great deal of strength to break the cycle or talk about any victimization they might have encountered. But just because they have been exposed to violence does not mean

they are doomed to repeat the cycle or remain victims. They can learn that there is help for them if they choose to ask for it.

What other type of programs do your speakers offer?

We have a variety of programs for all kinds of groups. One of these programs that has been especially successful has been our Violence in the Workplace Training. We have, on many occasions, gone into companies during their lunch hour to do a 1 to 2 hour training on awareness and prevention of domestic violence.

We have also just produced two fabulous Power Points. These five-minute musical presentations really communicate the importance of all of our services in the community.

The Power Points also work well with our awareness and service programs that we do for fraternal organizations, women's clubs and church groups. Recently, we have concentrated our Outreach efforts on the minority and non-English speaking communities. (See related article on page 7). We have a responsibility to reach all communities that may need our services or may have the need for a speaker at their school, event or church.

How Can I get a Speaker for my club or organization?

Just call 330-374-0740 ext. 28 to book a speaker from the Battered Women's Shelter or Rape Crisis Center. We can discuss your needs for information and program length.

New Year's Resolutions That You Can Really Keep

It's that time of year again; time for making those New Year's Resolutions! Every year we promise to lose 20 pounds, pay off all of our debt, be better to ourselves, be better to others, or just be better people. We mean well, we really do! Is it just that these promises are too hard or unrealistic? Or is it that we just don't have a plan in mind to help us achieve those goals? Well, our agency has devised a plan to help you make some New Years Resolutions you really CAN keep. Read below for some great ideas that can help you with those promises to help others and feel great in return.



Start a Drive!

Start a donations drive at your office to benefit the BWS! Canned food, Cleaning Supplies, Cold Remedies, Old Cell Phones; these are all items the shelters need *all* the time! Please call 330-374-0740 to ask how to start your donation drive.

Send a Kid on a Field Trip

It costs an average of \$15.00 per month for one child to go on a field trip. Make a resolution to sponsor a child in shelter for a field trip or for a year's worth of field trips. This can be done monthly or all in one donation. Please see the attached envelope or call 330-374-0740 for details.

Pay A Utility Bill

Make a resolution to pay one utility bill for us this year, or one bill a month for the whole year. This can be anything from helping us with the heat or electric, to helping us provide cable service to our clients. This can be set up by calling 330-374-0740 or by sending in a donation in the envelopes enclosed in this newsletter .

Become a Shelter Volunteer

Volunteering in the shelter can be so rewarding. You can help answer the phone, help residents fill-out paperwork, or just be a friendly face for clients when you let them in and out of the door. What an impact you can make on the residents just by being there for them!

Rape Crisis Hotline Needs You!

If you have some time but are hard-pressed to show up at a location, you can always volunteer for the Rape Crisis Hotline. Hotline Responders work from their own homes for any length of time. All that is required is attending our free training and a caring heart. Call 330-374-0740 ext. 27 for more information.

Buy Some Groceries!

Resolve to purchase some needed perishables for the shelters. We are always in need of meat, milk, eggs, and butter or margarine. When you go to the grocery store, buy a few extra packs of these items and drop them off any time at 759 West Market Street, Akron or at

Postage Please?!

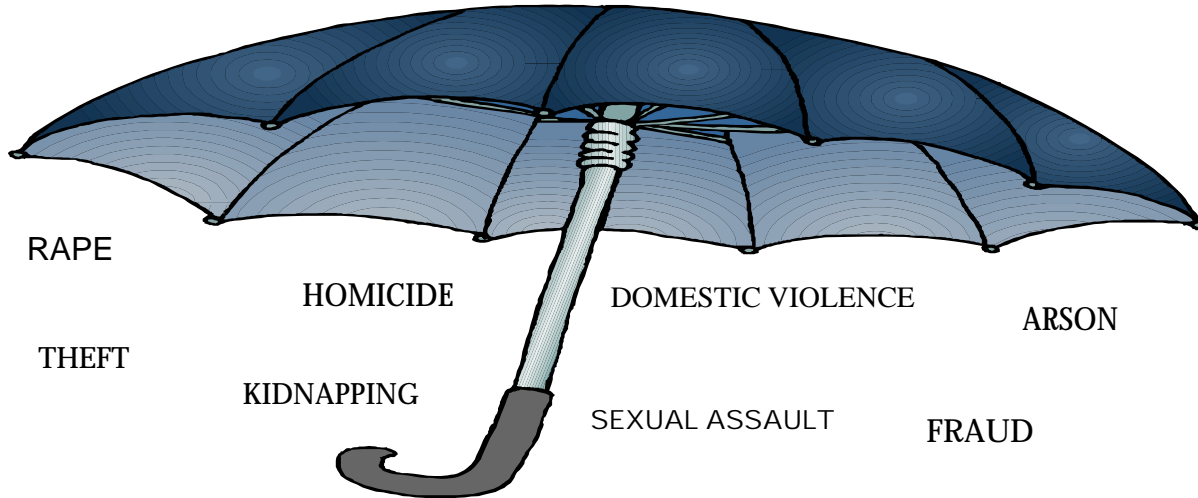
Something to think about - we always needs stamps - for our clients correspondence, legal documents, etc. Make a resolution to help us with postage. It's so simple! When you go to the Post Office, pick up an extra book of stamps and mail it to us at BWS, 759 West Market St. Akron, Ohio

Schedule a Speaker

Have a Speaker from our agency come to one of your fraternal, church, or social organizations to help increase awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault and what valuable services our agency provides to the community. We will fit our presentation to your time schedule and audience needs. Call 330-374-0740 ext. 28 to schedule your event now!



Services for All



Imagine going to one building for all your victim service needs. Imagine one phone number to answer crisis calls for victims and survivors of every type of crime. Is it possible? Is it in the best interest for all victims and survivors? Could it really be accomplished in a world where non-profit agencies are all working diligently just to keep their doors open?

These are the questions that have been discussed for the past year by the Battered Women's Shelter and Victims Assistance Boards of Directors.

For thirty years, our community has been blessed with some of the best victim services possible. Whether one is a victim of theft, auto casualty, rape, domestic violence or assault; there has always been a place for her or him to turn for support, comfort and information. Since 1972, Victims Assistance has been providing crucial services to victims and survivors of all crimes. Through the years, specialty services were born including the Rape Crisis Center and the Battered Women's Shelter. But as the times have changed, so too has the funding for these programs. Along with our mission to provide quality services to those who need it, the leaders of these organizations must work together to streamline programs to ensure a non-duplication of service delivery and combine expenses whenever possible.

With this mission in mind, the Battered Women's Shelter worked tirelessly during the summer of 2005 to successfully shift the Rape Crisis Center from its previous home at the YWCA to its new location merged with the ongoing domestic violence services. The Rape Crisis Center has maintained its own Board of Directors and non-profit status as a 501© 3. However the back room expenses and leadership are now under the same

talented group of professionals that have helped the Battered Women's Shelter to grow during the past ten years. This has been a successful move for both agencies from a business and a victim services point of view.

But the combining of victims services and its agencies is not a new idea. In fact, BWS and Victim's Assistance had been talking about this idea for quite a while when the opportunity to add the Rape Crisis program to BWS came about. Viewing its successes so far, new questions emerge about how this would look for both the service providers and those in need of services.

Could all three victim programs work together, providing the most comprehensive services possible for all victims in a user friendly environment? Can we have ONE HOTLINE? Could Advocates be cross-trained to handle questions about all type of crime?

Bob Denton and Terri Heckman, Directors of the three agencies involved in discussion, continue to provide a positive and optimistic vision for uniting these services. The mission appears to be reflected in a statement from Dr. Denton that; "Victims and survivors of crime deserve a seamless system of service delivery". Terri has already stepped up to begin that process with the Rape Crisis Center. Now the two Directors look to their Boards to determine the path ahead. All involved look with excitement toward the day when a crime survivor can dial one number and receive all necessary information and support. If this plan comes to fruition, then the reality will be that never again will our neighbors, friends and family members be instructed to dial number after number or be sent to another local agency for the crisis services they need.

Cell Phone Donation Program Continues to Save Lives!

By Polly Lincoln, *Donations Coordinator*

People often call the Administration Office to ask if we are still taking cell phone donations. The answer to that question is "YES!"

The 911 Shelter Alliance Cell Phone Program was started in July of 1997. The program provides victims of domestic violence used cell phones programmed to only dial 9-1-1. Our clients use these as a part of a safety plan and feel much safer having the 9-1-1 phone. They have the ability of calling for help if they feel any kind of threat to themselves or their children.

This program is continuous. We take cell phones all year long and turn them in to the Shelter Alliance Program. Since we started the program, we have collected well

over 1,000 phones and have had over 600 phones redistributed to our clients. Older phones or phones in ill repair cannot be redistributed. However, the program does sometimes provide monetary exchanges for some phones. So the program can also help to raise some money for our client's other needs!

Anyone can help with this program. The ideal phone for reprogramming is no older than three years. No need for the chargers or accessories, just the phone and battery attached.

Often people have used cell phones that are just collecting dust and they may know nothing about the Shelter



Alliance 911 Program. Tell people about our Cell Phone Program, or better yet, start a cell phone drive in your office, school, or place of worship to help us spread the word!

This donation is entirely tax deductible and we provide the tax forms upon request. Acknowledgements for the phone donations are always sent when addresses of cell phone donors are given or available. If you wish to drop off or send used cell phones to us, our address is 759 West Market Street, Akron, 44301. For more information call 330-374-0740 Thank you for helping help others feel safer through the 9-1-1 Cell Phone Program.

Agency Focuses on Diversity Outreach

Recently, the Battered Women's Shelter received a grant to recruit and train speakers who represent people of color. This grant was developed to reach the many diverse communities within our service area who perhaps we have not been able to reach, or who have not yet reached out for help to our services due to language or cultural barriers.

This grant, entitled Stop Domestic Violence Now, is in need of speakers who feel a need to connect their communities to information about our shelters, support groups, and other services. Training on domestic violence and our agency information is provided, and language and culturally appropriate materials are being developed.

Speakers are paid stipends per each speaking engagement that are booked and successfully presented. If you are a person of color and interested in helping us to connect with people from diverse cultures within the Summit and Medina County areas, please call 330-374-0740 ext. 28 to find out how you can be a speaker or to find out how you can get a speaker for your school, club or organization.

Volunteer Explosion!!!

The addition of the Rape Crisis Agency to our already busy agency has prompted us to engage the community in a drive for help. In short...WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Thankfully, we now have a full-time volunteer coordinator to recruit and train these individuals. Jeannette Phillips, who was a Case Manager for nine years at our Crisis Center and also a Rape Crisis Volunteer, has just the right combination of experience, wisdom, and intuition to help recruit and train our helpers!

"I am hoping to pull from the volunteer's strengths and creativity to make their placement with us a success," says Jeannette.

Her time spent as a volunteer coordinator for both Rape Crisis and the Battered Women's Shelter has helped us to add over 25 new volunteers to our roster.

"But we always need more!" Jeannette says enthusiastically.

Right now, opportunities exist for volunteers in every program that our agency provides: Crisis Intervention Hotline, Shelter, Donations, Child Advocacy, Rape Crisis Hotline, Field Trip Chaperones, Clerical and Data Entry, Plumbing, Carpentry, Home Repair and Maintenance, Moving and Delivery, and we welcome ideas for more ways you can think of to help.

If you would like to become a valued member of the BWS and RCC volunteers, please call 330-374-0740 ext. 27 to talk to Jeannette.

Shelters Feel Economic Squeeze.

As we face the end of another year, we can look back and be thankful that we made it through this year not being buried under a tsunami, or a hurricane or even flood waters. We have all watched with great empathy as our sisters and brothers in all parts of the world have dealt with devastating disasters. In many ways, witnessing these horrors have brought us closer together, realizing our wealth in a clean and dry shelter and having all of our co-workers and their families accounted for and safe.

These natural disasters have taken a toll on every nation's economy, however. And though we live far away from the devastation, the damage done to each and every consumer's lives does touch those of us whose work depends on the generosity of others. This year, the Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties is feeling an economic squeeze as everyone in every community has had to tighten their belts. Financial donations have been noticeably diminished. Household goods and cleaning product supplies are often being replenished by our own employees because the need is there - but the supplies are not.

Perhaps one of our biggest needs right now is for food. At the holiday time of year, many organizations run food drives for the shelter that supply us with most of the canned and non-perishable food products we will use for a good part of the year. Right now, we are approaching bare bones status. With the Holidays upon us, we are trying to remain positive, but are asking for your help. If your organization is wondering how you can get involved in a giving project for the Holidays, or if you just want to do something meaningful for the Holidays that will be truly appreciated, think about starting a food drive. We always need canned food, dry mix foods, such as bread, cake, and muffin mixes, and rice, noodles, and soup.

Compared to the huge needs that the victims of each natural disaster are facing, our needs somehow seem miniscule. However, all of us are in the same position when it comes to getting through its effects. We have to rely on each other and ask each other for help. On one television program reporting about the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, one man put it best: "Without your neighbors, without our community to help each other out and see each other through this, no one could make it alone." We are asking our community and our neighbors for help. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Battered Women's
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