

Summer 2012

Women's Center &
Shelter of Greater
Pittsburgh

Rosewood

It will never rain roses; when we want more roses,
we will have to plant more trees.

WC&S Launches Blog

Women's Center is pleased to announce the launch of its new blog, Creating Sanctuary. The blog will be posted monthly with information on domestic violence, how to help a friend, survivor stories and more.

Visit www.wcpittsburgh.org to sign up for our email list, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to receive the monthly blog post.

Check out a sneak preview of the first two posts below, and read the full posts at wcpittsburgh.wordpress.com.

FAQ about Abuse: "A client recently said that in the early years of their relationship, her husband would not physically abuse her, but he would damage the belongings she purchased, such as household furniture."

For love of dog: "He has kicked your dog before. He has withheld her food. He has made her stay outside when it's been too hot or too stormy. He's threatened to just let her out the door."

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Letter from the President/CEO



WC&S provides shelter, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, education, and more to help women move from victim to survivor. We also take pride in providing our clients with what they need to become self-sufficient. Many times, clients who come into our shelter have left a dangerous environment, quickly, and have not brought many personal belongings. Our Shelter Store and Distribution Center contain numerous items from clothing, to household goods, to toys. All of these are available for our clients. See page 7 for more information.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to our volunteers and staff who have generously given their time to help Women's Center & Shelter renovate our Distribution Center. The organization of this space has allowed us to work harder and smarter to fulfill the needs of our clients. The success of the Distribution Center is, in large part, due to our volunteers who took the time to organize the area, and who return to WC&S weekly to maintain the space. I would also like to thank our in-kind donors, who provided the donations to fill the space.

WC&S has a variety of donors, and every single donation is appreciated immensely. Monetary donations allow us to keep our doors open. Donating items to WC&S keeps our Distribution Center running smoothly, as well as assures our clients have everything they need while they are with us and when they leave. Please note, we cannot accept clothing at this time, except specific, new-only items such as new women's pajamas. Please see the Wish List on page 7 for details.

Donating time to spread awareness is another way to help the cause. The Campaign Advocate Bureau has volunteers who are trained as public spokespersons for WC&S. Raising awareness at the grassroots level is the simplest way to educate the community. Refer to page 4 to read about how you can schedule a CAB speaker for your event or group.

Thank you again for all of your support. WC&S is grateful for the hard work and dedication that all of our volunteers, donors and staff put forward on a regular basis. With your help we are taking the necessary strides to end domestic violence.

Sincerely,
Shirl Regan

Pictured: Pirates Charities support Women's Center & Shelter.

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24 Hour Hotline 412-687-8005



Spring Clothes Out Report

“I dedicate this award to my mother and all other victims of intimate partner violence who have the courage to leave their abuser.”

~ William Gay accepts Ted Craig Award

The 22nd annual UPMC Health Plan Spring Clothes Out was an emotional and inspiring event. Former Steelers player William Gay acted as the survivor speaker and was honored with the Ted Craig Humanitarian Award for his efforts to end intimate partner violence. Gay spoke about losing his mother to intimate partner violence as a young child, and how proud he is of her courage to leave her abuser.

Guests viewed Gay’s video vignette, filmed in 2010 to raise awareness about abuse. You can view the vignette, along with PSAs Gay has filmed on behalf of Women’s Center, at www.wcspittsburgh.org/Will.

While playing for the Steelers, Will was an active volunteer for Women’s Center & Shelter. He recruited fellow Steelers to join him, purchased and served dinner for shelter residents on multiple occasions, signed autographs and shared his story with residents.

Spring Clothes Out was held on April 25, 2012 at Rivers Club, and raised \$86,779.50 for our life-saving services. Thank you to those who joined us in honoring William Gay. Stay connected with Women’s Center & Shelter for information on next year’s event, being held in May 2013 at Rivers Club.

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Clockwise from top left: SCO featured silent auction, including autographed Steelers merchandise; Former teammates Ryan Clark and Ike Taylor attended in support of Gay; Hors d'oeuvres are served; Sherley Craig awards Gay with Ted Craig Humanitarian Award; Gay with Sherley Craig who won his signed jersey; SCO reception.

Survivor Story



Amy was in an abusive relationship for 14 years. Her abuser was an alcoholic who became violent when he was under the influence. Throughout this time span she would leave him, and then return, as many women who are victims of domestic violence do. She could not take the repeated abuse any longer or what it was doing to her life, so she made a plan.

"I decided to make a plan to end my life because I did not want him to be the one to end my life," said Amy. She wanted to take control of her life, and she felt that this was the only way she could. Before going through with her plan, in a moment of desperation, **she remembered the number that a friend of hers had given her a month prior.** It was the number to Women's Center & Shelter.

Without hesitation, she called. "I called just to see what would happen, and thankfully a hotline advocate picked up that night." After her discussion with the hotline advocate, Amy decided to come to Women's Center & Shelter's support group sessions and meet

with women who were going through similar situations.

"Before I came to WC&S I honestly felt completely alone," said Amy. "Once I started coming to group I realized that what I was feeling was normal and that other women were going through it too."

Today, Amy has left her abuser and is living a healthier and much happier life. She continues to come to group and has even enrolled in the Women's Center Career Development Program. "I start school in September, and I am so excited because this is the first thing I have done for myself in 14 years," said Amy. In addition to starting school Amy has started to attend Alanon meetings.

"If I would have not called Women's Center that night, I honestly would have carried out with my plan," said Amy. She is truly an inspiration to all women victimized by violence. Amy gained the strength to leave her abuser and begin to live the life that she deserves, one of health, happiness and success.

"I decided to make a plan to end my life because I did not want him to be the one to end my life," said Amy.



Amy's friend saved her life by giving her Women's Center's hotline number. Contact WC&S to request safety cards, shown to the left, and keep them handy - you never know when a friend, colleague or stranger will need one. And it may save their life.
connect@wcpittsburgh.org • 412-687-8017 ext. 338

Women's Center & Shelter's support groups follow a SELF curriculum. This framework stands for Safety, Emotional Intelligence, Loss, and Future. This is an important model because often times, victims of abuse lose sight of their own needs. With a focus on SELF, Amy was able to understand her need to be physically safe, psychologically safe, socially safe and morally safe. She was guided in creating a safety plan to handle threats to her safety. She learned methods to help handle her emotions in a healthy and non-destructive way, in order to heal. Coping with loss is another important factor in the healing process. Amy learned how to take steps to move on from her losses. She used weekly goal planning to re-establish her future.

Save the Date: Challenge Campaign, October 2012

Domestic Violence Awareness Month marks the beginning of the WC&S annual Challenge Campaign. This is a time to spread awareness about intimate partner violence as well as raise money and support for victims of abuse. WC&S will send weekly emails with specific ways to help yourself, help a friend or help the cause, information on a specific partner violence theme (dating violence, impact on children, etc.), as well as Facebook and Twitter posts about the Challenge.

In addition, Women's Center & Shelter is launching a "Friends Asking Friends" website, where individuals can set up personal fundraising pages to raise money for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. All contributions will go to WC&S, so we can continue providing shelter, hotline, support groups, legal advocacy and more.

Make sure you receive updates during the Challenge!

Emails and Text Alerts (Never more than 2 texts monthly): www.wcpittsburgh.org/connect
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WCSPittsburgh>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wcpittsburgh>

Did you know?

Shirl Regan, President/CEO of Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, has been selected as a winner of the Pittsburgh Business Times 2012 Diamond Awards, which honor the region's top CEOs and presidents.



IPV and Pregnancy

Victims of dating violence are 4 to 6 times more likely than non-abused women to become pregnant.

This statistic may be alarming because the term ‘intimate-partner violence’ usually makes people think of physical violence such as hitting, kicking and punching. Sexual abuse and reproductive coercion are often overlooked. Some very disturbing statistics accompany this type of abuse. Almost 1 in 5 women, ages 18-24, have experienced forced sexual intercourse. In addition, 53% of women ages 16-29 in family planning clinics reported physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. **There are very strong links between coercion, violence and unintended pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted infections.** All of these factors can affect a woman’s reproductive and emotional health. We need to be aware of the problem and cognizant of the warning signs.



Are you, a loved one or a patient in danger? Ask:

- Does your partner tamper with your birth-control methods?
- Does your partner refuse to wear condoms when you ask?
- Does your partner tell you who you can talk to and where you can go?
- Are you afraid to ask your partner to use condoms?
- Has your partner ever tried to get you pregnant?

The list goes on, but these are some of the most common warning signs present in sexually abusive relationships. Healthcare providers can look for abnormal behavior as well when assessing clients. **If a woman comes in for emergency contraception multiple times, this is a red flag. Also, if a woman is misplacing or ‘losing’ her birth-control, this can be a sign that her partner is tampering with it.** It is important to assure clients that anything they disclose will be confidential, and that there are many different ways they can be helped in their situation.

Pittsburgh is doing its part to research the link between IPV and pregnancy, and provide options to women at risk of sexual and reproductive coercion. Dr. Elizabeth Miller, Chief of the Division of Adolescent Medicine and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, is conducting a study on Reproductive Coercion in 9 clinics in Pittsburgh. WC&S is playing an active role in this process. Our medical advocacy supervisor visits two clinics (Bridgeville - Planned Parenthood and Downtown Adagio) twice a month to ensure that staff and patients are aware of the services that WC&S offers, replenish WC&S brochures and provide signage for waiting areas. The goal is for WC&S to continue to have a working relationship with these two clinics after the study is completed. The medical advocacy supervisor is also working with Dr. Miller and WC&S Shelter staff to develop and implement a tool to screen for recent sexual violence. Together we can make a difference in the lives of women and take strides to ending sexual abuse and reproductive coercion.



To learn more about sexual and reproductive coercion, visit KnowMoreSayMore.org.

Training for City Officials

The WC&S Legal Director, Lorraine M. Bittner, assisted the City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Personnel and its EAP, Life Solutions from UPMC, in providing domestic violence training for City Council Members and their staff. Three trainings were provided (6/15/2012, 6/20/2012 and 6/27/2012) to review the City’s 2010 Domestic Violence Policy that covers all employees (except police who have a separate policy) and to explain the dynamics of domestic violence and how it should be handled in the workplace. WC&S’s Legal Director explained WC&S’s program and services, reviewed community resources available to assist DV victims and perpetrators, and answered any questions regarding the legal relief and hearings available to assist DV victims. WC&S commends the City of Pittsburgh, and specifically Department of Personnel Director Judy Hill Finegan and Assistant Director Tamiko Stanley, for their ongoing leadership in ensuring implementation of the City’s Domestic Violence Policy for employees which includes both prevention and intervention efforts.

Request a Speaker for your Group or Event

The Campaign Advocate Bureau (CAB) has been recruiting members since the Fall of 2011, and these advocates are serving as an extension of our message and mission. These volunteers are trained public spokespersons for the Center and keep the conversation about abuse moving forward at the grassroots level.

Women’s Center & Shelter extends its thanks and congratulations to our most recent graduates: Deandra Arnold, Amy Effort, Anna Gaetano, Melva Hartzog, Heather Mifflin, Erin Morey, Elizabeth Pearson, Alexa Roberts, Molly Thomas, Shannon Vangura and Eser Yilmaz!

Campaign Advocates are ready to go out into the community and educate your friends, neighbors and colleagues. Help us identify organizations, places of worship, schools, businesses, community gatherings or other groups that would welcome a campaign advocate speaker to spread awareness about intimate partner violence. Please contact me to schedule a speaker for your event by emailing volunteer@wcpittsburgh.org or calling 412-687-8017 ext. 335.

Spotlight on the Career Development Center



The first student graduated from CCAC on May 22, 2012. Her future plans are to complete 21 additional credits needed to obtain her Associates in Business.

Students participate in a support group with other clients in the program.

Students receive support in:

- setting goals
- establishing realistic expectations
- overcoming barriers (tuition, supplies, childcare, transportation, etc.)

Students are enrolled in Liberal Arts, General Studies, Teacher Education, Pre-Nursing, Criminal Justice and Social Work academic programs.

Enrollment Numbers

Year One: 27 students
Year Two: 33 students
74% Retention Rate for First Year Students

2 students have been accepted into the highly competitive nursing program at CCAC.



to report the incident in her WC&S support group, rather than the school, because in the group she felt safe; she knew that the group facilitator, a DV Specialist, could (and did) effectively safety plan with her and connect her with 24/7 WC&S support. The Facilitator worked with her on how to remain safe without disrupting her education. That's why Women's Center & Shelter developed the Career Development Center in collaboration with CCAC and PNC.

Women's Center Career Development Center opened in August 2011 when WC&S partnered with PNC Foundation and the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) to offer workforce training and development for women receiving services from WC&S. With scholarship funding from The PNC Andrea J. Carelli Scholarship Fund, this collaborative initiative is providing WC&S clients the opportunity to receive an Associate's Degree or a certificate in a career program from CCAC and make their career dreams a reality.

Many of the women benefitting from the grant funds have achieved more than can be captured by their final grades; however, one story is worth repeating. A 56 year old client who did not have any prior college experience enrolled in her first semester in ENG-089, Basic Writing Techniques, this is the first developmental level most often followed by another developmental English course prior to English I, the first college level course. As a result of her work she was able to create a portfolio, submit it to the English department and was approved to by-pass the second developmental English course, making her eligible for English I.

Highlights from the first year of the program are displayed on this page.

Spring 2012

GPA Students

3.5 + = 26%

2.0 + = 65%

Fall 2011

GPA Students

3.5 + = 43.75%

2.0 + = 63%

Victims of intimate partner violence face different barriers for education than other students, barriers that other non-DV agencies may be ill-equipped to address. For example, recently, a CCAC student and DV victim participating in a WC&S support group reported that while waiting for the bus for school, her abuser would drive by and spit on her.

The victim waited a week



Volunteers make it possible for WC&S to work harder & smarter

Women's Center & Shelter has an area called the Distribution Center where all donations are brought and sorted so they can be distributed for clients' needs in a timely manner. This area is organized and well kept, but "it took a lot of time and effort to get the Distribution Center to look this way," said Kathi Welsh, Contracts Monitor and Distribution Center supervisor.

Prior to the renovation, keeping track of inventory was difficult and often led to WC&S purchasing items that we already had. For example, many clients come into shelter with babies and children, all of whom need supplies. WC&S often bought diapers in particular sizes to meet clients' needs when in fact the Distribution Center already had them, but staff did not know. The renovation allowed for items to be visible and tracked.

Nancy & her husband donate and install the first shelves in our old expansion space.



Before & After



Distribution Center



Before it was named the Distribution Center, the area was called the Expansion Space. During this time, donations were brought to the area and placed on the ground, because there was no clear process for organizing donations, nowhere to put them, and therefore no way to track inventory. “It was very difficult to navigate through the space and find what we needed,” said Nancy, volunteer at WC&S for more than 2 years. She explained that another volunteer inspired her to help organize the space when she began to sort donations. “I had a vision at that point, and I was determined to help **get the donations off of the ground**,” said Nancy. With this goal in mind, Nancy and her family donated hundreds of dollars’ worth of shelving to WC&S to help in the renovation. “It became a fun project for my family as well, even my husband got involved with helping set up the shelving,” said Nancy.

Not only did volunteers and staff get involved in the project but the US Coast Guard also came in to help! “They came in and really put the finishing touches on the entire project,” said Kathi. The Coast Guard placed all of the shelving in the proper places as well as cleaned the entire space.

Today, the Distribution Center is clean and organized with easy access to all of the donations. It is primarily used by staff, so they can come and quickly find whatever they need for clients. The space is managed on a weekly basis by a corps of dedicated volunteers who organize and track donations as they come in so WC&S has a clear understanding of the inventory. Management of the space would be impossible without their support, and for that we are extremely grateful.

WC&S has been able to make thoughtful contributions to clients since the area has been organized. “On Mother’s Day we distributed more than **80 Feel-Good Bags to our clients** (pictured top right), in shelter as well as outside of shelter. The bags were filled with items such as jewelry, toiletries and journals that came from the Distribution Center” said Kathi. “It really is an amazing feeling to be involved with the Distribution Center and see first-hand the generosity of people who donate,” said Kathi, “My goal now is to make the Distribution Center a more dynamic atmosphere.” She hopes to do this by taking surveys of residents to better assess their needs and use that information to tailor the WC&S Wish List for donors.

How YOU can help: To the right is a Wish List of items needed by WC&S clients. The full list can be viewed any time at www.wcpittsburgh.org/wishlist. Checking the Wish List regularly for donation items is a great way to help us meet our client needs! If you would like to host a collection drive on behalf of WC&S, please contact the Development Department at 412-687-8017 ext. 335 to fill out an event registration form. Please call 412-687-8017 ext. 359 to schedule a drop off. Thank you!

****Urgent Need Items** (New Only Please)**

- Baby Wipes
- Basketballs, soccer balls, footballs, kick balls
- Bus Passes
- Large Towels
- Combination Locks
- Women’s Pajamas (new, any size)
- Women’s Socks
- Women’s Underwear (new, especially small sizes)
- Slippers
- Casual Shoes (especially size 10)
- Boys Pajamas
- Toys for Boys and Girls (hand held games, earphones, ethnic dolls, etc.)
- Deodorant
- Diapers



Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

P.O. Box 9024
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Thank you!

WC&S extends its thanks to its major organization, corporate and foundation donors in the 2011-2012 Fiscal year. For a full list of donors, visit www.wcpittsburgh.org/OurDonors or stay tuned for the release of our 2011-2012 Annual Report.

Organizations: \$1,000 or Greater

Beards BeCAUSE, Inc.
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Seneca Valley Senior High School
Sorooptimist International of Pittsburgh Inc.
Women's Association of the Presbyterian Church of Sewickley
Young Professionals in Energy

Corporations: \$10,000 or Greater

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PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
Pottery Barn
UPMC Health Plan

Foundations: \$25,000 or Greater

The Estelle S. Campbell Charitable Foundation
FISA Foundation
H.J. Heinz Company Foundation
The Heinz Endowments
McSwigan Family Foundation

Join our Social Networks

WC&S Online Community: By joining our online community, you are subscribed to WC&S emails (and the video vignette campaign); can manage your contact information online; and can review your giving history and download receipts online.

1. Visit www.wcpittsburgh.org
2. Click the "Community" tab
3. Click "Sign Up Now!"

Email List: Join our email list by visiting www.wcpittsburgh.org/ email or scanning the QR code to the right with your smartphone.



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