

Winter 2013

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.

Share Your Story Through our Vignette Campaign

The WC&S Vignette Campaign is a critical part of exposing the truth behind domestic violence. The vignettes are videos of real people who have come forward to tell the story of intimate partner violence in their lives. So often victims of abuse suffer in silence. WC&S creates vignettes to validate their experience and empower victims and survivors. Only by exposing the problem, through survivor stories, can we begin to educate the community and open up the conversation.

Watch our existing vignettes at:
www.wcpspittsburgh.org/wallofsurvivors

If you are interested in sharing your story as a WC&S Vignette, please contact Kristin, Development Manager at 412-687-8017 ext. 350 or brownk@wcpittsburgh.org



Letter from the President/CEO



In January and February, 2013, there were four domestic violence-related deaths in and around Pittsburgh. **This is four too many.**

The most common question that arises when tragedies like this occur is, "Why don't these women just leave?" This question implies that this is an easy problem that can be fixed by just leaving, and it fails to recognize the complex issue that is intimate partner violence. Leaving is not at all easy for a victim of violence. In fact, leaving is the most dangerous time.

90% of domestic violence fatalities occur when the woman is trying to leave. Victims of intimate partner abuse must plan their escape thoughtfully and with great caution. A safety plan and ongoing support are critical for women to fully leave the brutality and find a life of peace and happiness.

Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S) is here to help. We provide not only emergency shelter for women and children fleeing from violent situations, but we also offer supportive services to help each woman move forward in her path to self-sufficiency. And, there is hope. Studies have proven that the support services of domestic violence programs can save lives and reduce re-assaults. In fact, there is a 60% reduction in risk of severe assault when victims utilize domestic violence shelter services.

You can help save lives. Through your support, WC&S will continue to provide crisis intervention tools such as our 24-Hour Hotline and Emergency Shelter. Your generosity will also help us to spread the word to those women who need us most. Many of these women are suffering in silence. You have the power to give them a voice.

Be an angel and help to save a life. Support the WC&S Calling All Angels campaign by making a donation to the Angel's Fund today. They are counting on us. Visit our website and make a contribution under Ways to Give: Donate Now, create a Calling All Angels personal fundraising page on Friends Asking Friends, or make a donation in honor or in memory of an angel in your life by clicking Ways to Give: Make a Commemorative Gift!

Sincerely,
Shirl Regan



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Pittsburgh Sports Teams Bring Holiday Cheer to WC&S



One thing that is for certain is that WC&S can always count on the Pittsburgh sports teams to bring extra holiday cheer to our clients and residents during the month of December. The 2012 holiday season was packed with generosity and warmth from the Steelers and the Pirates. On December 17, 2012, Pittsburgh Steelers Ryan Clark and Kelvin Beachum came to WC&S to serve a holiday dinner to residents. During the dinner, Ryan Clark spoke of his dedication to supporting the cause because of his friend, and former teammate, Will Gay, who lost his mother to domestic violence as a child. Will Gay has a close relationship with WC&S, and after bringing Ryan Clark to the UPMC Health Plan Spring Clothes Out last year, Ryan committed to giving back in any way he could. Ryan and Kelvin spent time with residents, laughing, signing autographs and taking pictures.

Although Will Gay is no longer with the Pittsburgh Steelers, he made sure to send his holiday cheer to WC&S this year! Will sent tons of holiday gifts for all of the children in shelter. The children loved all of the presents and expressed immense gratitude for Will!

In addition, on December 18, the women and children at WC&S were treated to a holiday party hosted by Steeler wives Jonelle Foote, Theodora Polamalu, Erin Suisham, Latasha Wilson Batch, Mercedes Cotchery, Yonka Clark and Jillian Mundy. The women came to WC&S equipped with everything needed to decorate cookies, cupcakes and gingerbread houses, as well as gifts for the women and children. The children loved getting their hands messy in all of the goodies and they also thoroughly enjoyed getting to eat their masterpieces once they finished!

Charlie Batch came to WC&S on Christmas Eve with gifts galore! He, along with some family and friends, delivered the gifts to residents in shelter and wished everyone a safe and happy holiday.

The Pittsburgh Pirates surely didn't forget about our non-resident clients either! They hosted a holiday party for non-resident families where they passed out gifts and let the children play with the Parrot!





Annette's Story



Annette's history of abuse started at the innocent age of 6, as she grew up with her biological family. From the ages of 6-12 she was sexually assaulted by a family friend.

"I thought this was normal, because it was all I knew,"
said Annette.

One day at school, adults overheard Annette speaking with a classmate about the situation and when she saw the reactions of the adults she knew that what she had been experiencing was not normal. She was swiftly taken out of that home and sent to foster care. This seemed like the beginning of a new, safe and healthy life—but it wasn't. Throughout her adolescence, Annette was pushed through 19 different foster homes, often physically abused in each. When she became an adult and was able to leave foster care, she found herself raped by a man she was dating and became pregnant with her first child. Annette tried to move forward with her life.

She then fell in love and married who she thought was the perfect man, only to find that he too was going to abuse her. Annette recalls him beating her violently until her face was so swollen that she could not see. She had two children to this man and wanted so desperately for things to work. When she accepted that they would not, she left her first husband.

She married her second husband who turned out to be an abuser as well, even going as far as setting her hair on fire. Annette was beginning to lose all hope. Throughout her marriages she would frequent different shelters in the Pittsburgh area, including WC&S and she would safety plan and work toward a healthier life. Annette endured the abuse until she no longer could and knew she had to leave once and for all.

Thankfully, Annette found herself at Women's Center & Shelter, safely. Now at 47 years old, she is truly ready to start over. "I'm in discovery mode now," Annette said, talking about how she is discovering herself through this journey. Annette worked with WC&S Advocates to move into transitional housing and regain her life back.



"If I did not have this place, I would be dead," she said. "The strength from the staff and their true determination to help is what helped me to keep focused on my life and to stay on top."

Celebrating Survivors

In honor of Women's History Month and the many brave survivors of intimate partner violence, WC&S is teaming up with Legume bistro (located at 214 N. Craig Street) for a special cocktail and dessert promotion. Beginning with a casual Happy Hour event on Wednesday, March 20 from 6:00pm-7:30pm and running through Wednesday, March 27, for each Boyd and Blue cocktail that is purchased, Legume will donate \$5 to WC&S. Additionally, for each piece of carrot cake purchased, Legume will donate \$5 to WC&S! Stop in as often as you'd like and enjoy Legume's scrumptious food and cocktails while supporting our mission.

Casual Happy Hour

Wednesday
March 20
6:00-7:30pm

March 20-27, portion of the proceeds from the purchase of each Boyd and Blue cocktail, as well as carrot cake will benefit WC&S!

Butterjoint legume





2013 UPMC Health Plan Spring Clothes Out

The

23rd

Annual UPMC Health Plan Spring Clothes Out

will be held on
Wednesday,
May 8, 2013
at the Rivers Club in
downtown Pittsburgh.

Join WC&S for the 23rd Annual UPMC Health Plan Spring Clothes Out on Wednesday, May 8, 2013 from 5:00pm-7:30pm at Rivers Club in downtown Pittsburgh. This special happy hour cocktail event will feature the presentations of the Ted Craig Humanitarian Award and inaugural STANDING FIRM Awards, as well as a survivor story, silent auction, virtual clothing drive, delicious hors d'oeuvres, a dessert buffet and great company. Last year's event raised nearly \$87,000 for WC&S' programs and services. With your help, we hope to raise even more this year as the need for our programs and services continues to grow. Please join us!

Michelle Mejia, Director of Community Relations for the Pittsburgh Pirates, will receive the 2013 Ted Craig Humanitarian Award for her work as a tireless volunteer and campaign advocate for WC&S. Michelle is committed to improving the lives of women and children suffering due to intimate partner violence, as a way to honor her cousin Amy who was killed at the age of 22. The Ted Craig Humanitarian Award is given in memory of Edward Armstrong Craig, III who was a managing partner of Kirkpatrick and Lockhart, LLP, and a loyal friend and supporter of WC&S' efforts to end domestic violence. The award recognizes and honors an individual or organization that has demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement in their profession and has displayed an unsurpassed commitment to community service.

Both The Department of Personnel and Civil Service Commission, City of Pittsburgh and KTA-Tator, Inc. will be honored with inaugural STANDING FIRM Employer Awards that recognize superior integration of business practices addressing partner violence that promote the safety of the workplace and well-being of the workforce. STANDING FIRM is an independent organization that alerts employers to the financial, safety and human costs that partner violence has on the workplace and workforce and arms them with tools for taking effective organizational action. The Department of Personnel and Civil Service Commission, City of Pittsburgh joined STANDING FIRM in September, 2010 and KTA-Tator, Inc. joined in October, 2010. Since joining, both organizations being honored have gone to great lengths to provide awareness and training to their employees around the issue of partner violence, as well as implement best-practice action steps to address partner violence in the workplace.



Highmark Walk & Fundraising Platform



Highmark Walk

Join WC&S for the Highmark Walk!

The 2013 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community in Pittsburgh will take place on Saturday, May 18, 2013, at Stage AE on the North Shore.

- Onsite Registration and Check-In begins at 7:45 a.m.
- The 5K walk will start at 9:00 a.m. in front of Stage AE on the North Shore.
- The 1 Mile Fun Walk will start at 9:15 a.m.

Participants can look forward to food, beverages, music, activities, and prize drawings immediately following the conclusion of the walk.

Additionally, walkers receive a chance to win one of Highmark's great prizes valued at over \$1000 collectively. For every \$50 that you donate or raise in support of WC&S, you will receive one raffle ticket. Receive a Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community t-shirt if you donate or raise \$25 or more for a participating organization (while supplies last).

To register, visit:
www.wcpittsburgh.org/highmarkwalk



benefits local health and human service agencies in Pennsylvania

WC&S Launches Online Personal Fundraising Platform



During the Challenge Campaign this year, Women's Center & Shelter launched a new online fundraising component called Friends Asking Friends. This platform is a feature developed by our software provider, Blackbaud, and is an event fundraising system designed to empower supporters to share their stories through personal and team fundraising web pages, email donation requests, and popular social networks. All fundraising efforts are supported by Friends Asking Friends personal fundraising headquarters complete with helpful to-do lists, tips for success, and tools to measure fundraising progress.

WC&S wants to extend a special thanks to Highmark for their leadership in sponsoring this exciting new campaign!

The Challenge yielded success with Friends Asking Friends, however we anticipate this platform will become increasingly popular.

We now have a Friends Asking Friends page named **In Your Name**, available at www.inyourname.kintera.org.



This site is designed for any special occasion of your choice, whether it is a birthday, anniversary, holiday, etc.! Simply create a user name on the site and begin your own personal fundraising page on behalf of Women's Center & Shelter! Create teams and fundraise in groups to foster friendly competition or allow others to donate in your name on your own personal page!

Special thanks to The Benter Foundation for underwriting Friends Asking Friends and our new E-Store!



Accurate Always & shopShadyside



In 2012, Women's Center & Shelter received a call center technology donation from Accurate Always, Inc. Accurate Always, Inc. (AAI), based in California's Silicon Valley, is a high tech company that provides efficient, managed communications recording solutions that fit within existing work-flows and telecom infrastructures. They provide the tools that contact centers and healthcare and governmental organizations need to record, monitor, retrieve and manage their voice and video communications.

Voxida is Accurate Always' platform which was donated to WC&S for recording VoIP, digital and analog calls. Accurate Always engineered Voxida to help capture, analyze and act upon vital information as it occurs. It is able to record multiple communication protocols in a single or multi-site deployment.

WC&S is extremely grateful for the call center equipment and would like to thank Accurate Always for their generosity!

FRIDAY MAY 10 - SATURDAY MAY 11

shop Shadyside

Walnut, Ellsworth, Highland

Treat yourself - Pamper a loved one - Save a life

Help victims of domestic violence

Support participating businesses and sponsors of shopShadyside
Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh



Mother's Day is quickly approaching-- take advantage of this opportunity to treat yourself or shop for a special woman in your life, all while supporting victims of domestic violence.

Building Project



Due to our confidential location, most of you have likely never seen, nor heard much about our building. WC&S purchased and renovated the facility in 1993. Built to be a fortress, it's a strong and stable structure with double locking vestibule doors, bulletproof glass windows and a myriad of security cameras throughout the parking lot and entrance.



Having kept thousands of women and children safe over the last 20 years, Women's Center's facility is showing a tremendous amount wear and tear. In addition to the physical signs of constant use, a building assessment completed in 2011 determined that the mechanicals would need to be replaced within 5 years. The volume of work needing to be done was so significant, it was clear that some very thoughtful planning needed to be done.

The Heinz Endowments stepped forward to provide a grant to do just that. Women's Center is grateful for this opportunity to work with Rothchilds Doyno Collaborative to ensure that our facility operates efficiently and meets client need in the best possible way. We'll keep you apprised of every step as this exciting project unfolds!



Campaign Successes

Adopt-a-Family:



Imagine that you and your children were spending the holidays in a domestic violence shelter where you had arrived with only the clothes on your back and the contents of your purse. Women's Center & Shelter's residents face this situation. They are fortunate to have escaped abuse, but spending the holidays in shelter is a painful reminder to our women and children that they're away from their loved ones.

By Adopting-a-Family this past holiday season, contributors empowered domestic violence survivors to make this holiday season as normal and joyful as possible. Because one of Women's Center & Shelter's core values is to empower women to make their own choices, we wanted our clients to have the freedom to shop for their own children. By donating gift cards, contributors gave a woman the opportunity to delight in the experience of purchasing and giving presents to her children.

The donated gift cards went to 50 women and children in Shelter and 260 women and children in all of our non-resident programs for a grand total of 310 families served. The kindness and generosity of our donors made the holiday season special for our residents and clients!

The Challenge:

The 2012 Challenge was a success! This multi-channel education campaign aims to increase awareness through radio, television, print, email and social media. The 2012 Challenge, greatly increased our social media engagement! During the 2011 Challenge, our viral reach peaked at 6,000 individuals. In 2012, our viral reach doubled at 12,000! This means that 12,000 people on Facebook saw posts about intimate partner violence because our fans liked, commented and shared information! Thank you so much for your support! We hope you will stay involved.

During the campaign, \$30,650 was raised in support of our life saving services. The breakdown includes: \$230 in Text2Give donations + \$420 in Friends Asking Friends + \$30,000 in sponsorships! This doesn't include the \$38,840 you gave on The Pittsburgh Foundation Day of Giving.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

End of Year Campaign:

The End of Year Campaign is still taking place but so far \$164,052 has been raised, with 1,514 gifts and 442 new donors. WC&S relies on the support of individuals to support our life-saving services. No contribution is too small, and your support is greatly appreciated.



Join WC&S for our email list & text alerts

Do you want to receive information from WC&S? Please join our email list and text alert list! By doing so, you can receive updates on our agency as well as ways to get involved! Join our lists by visiting www.wcpittsburgh.org!





Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

P.O. Box 9024
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Thank you!



We would like to thank the Front Office volunteers who generously give time and energy out of their already-busy schedules every week to provide a welcoming face to all visitors, a warm voice to callers, and to secure the safety of the building. The same thanks goes to the staff who provide this crucial service, in addition to doing their other incredibly important work!

Dave Trenga and friends have been helping to provide dinner for WC&S residents every third Sunday since 2009. Thank you to Dave Trenga, Lynn Nelson, Christina Sible, Ted Tarka, Alex Lewinger and Steve Eckenrode who have all helped provide a wonderful meal each month for our residents.

Thank you to Shannon Vangura who consistently works every Monday evening assisting our residents and children in both the Shelter and Children's Program. She also volunteers her time working in our distribution center.

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.wcspittsburgh.org
2. Click the "Community" tab
3. Click "Join--Sign Up Now"

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



Facebook: www.facebook.com/wcspittsburgh

Twitter: www.twitter.com/wcspittsburgh