

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.

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Letter from the President/CEO



In recent months and weeks, there have been highly publicized acts of violence both nationally and internationally. These incidents have dominated the headlines leaving us disheartened and concerned. Here at Women's Center & Shelter, we see the traumatic effects of violence and abuse on a daily basis. Though these acts of violence may not always make the news, they devastate families and this trauma can, and often does, have lasting impacts. Our mission at Women's Center & Shelter is to advance the safety and wellbeing of victims of intimate partner violence and prevent and respond to intimate partner violence through social change. We work toward our mission every day, through our highly trained staff that provide supportive services and resources to women and their children. Whether it's a Children's Advocate

working with a child on how to express their feelings, a Shelter Advocate assisting a woman with housing and career goals, or a Legal Advocate providing support as a woman makes her way through the legal system – our work is always focused on safety, support and healing.

All of this could not take place without the constant and continued support of the community. Your generosity supports our programs and services, which allow our clients to transform their lives, freeing them from violence and abuse. I hope that you read this issue of Rosewood and gain some insight into the meaningful work taking place here at Women's Center, knowing that without your support, we would not be able to impact the lives of so many. On behalf of Women's Center & Shelter, and the families that we serve, thank you.

Sincerely,

Shirl Regan
President/CEO

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Program Highlight:

WC&S Adopts Specialized Team Case Management

In order to continue to meet the ever-increasing and complex needs of domestic violence victims, WC&S is always working to improve its services and strengthen its programs. WC&S just recently launched an improvement initiative, implementing a more comprehensive Specialized Team Case Management model. The Shelter houses approximately 21 women (plus their children) at a time. Until recently, our service model required that each Shelter Advocate work individually with every woman in Shelter, which made for a difficult case load for the Advocates to juggle. After 9 months of structuring, preparing, training, and pilot testing, WC&S launched our new Specialized Team Case Management model. This model is organized around 3 teams of Advocates, each with specialized responsibilities, who provide quality service to the 500+ adult and child shelter residents that we serve each year. Each team works at any given time with 6-7 women (and their children) instead of all of the women housed in Shelter at once. The team approach allows for more individualized work and follow-up, and overall provides more effective advocacy. The new model includes the following advocacy positions:



- **Economic Empowerment Advocate:** Responsible for housing advocacy and advocacy related to benefits and income.
- **Safety Advocate:** Responsible for safety planning and goal planning on an ongoing basis and serving as a liaison to the Legal Advocacy Department.
- **Specialized Services Advocate:** Responsible for advocacy related to career and education, alcohol and other drugs, health issues, LGBTQ issues, cultural/language issues, and pet issues (and any other specialized issues that arise for the resident), and serves as a liaison to the Mental Health Coordinator and the CYF Outreach Advocate.



Transitioning to the Specialized Team Case Management model has allowed Shelter residents to receive more comprehensive services, and as a result, will better equip them to transform their lives and the lives of their children. The Advocates have expressed greater satisfaction with their jobs and interactions with residents since the transition, as well.

HIGHMARK WALK

for a Healthy Community 2016



WC&S' Development Team passing out information at the table

Every year, WC&S is grateful to be invited to participate in the annual Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. It is a fun-filled event, allowing local nonprofits to come together and raise funds for their respective causes.

Women's Center has been participating in the Highmark Walk for years and at this year's walk we had a total of **39 walkers**, **8 total teams** and **94 total gifts** - raising a total of **\$4,002**.

WC&S had walkers, staff and board members show up despite the rain and we even had a money wreath worth more than \$100 that was raffled. Thank you to all who participated in this year's walk. Your continued support means so much to us and we hope we can count on you again next year!



\$100 Money Wreath for raffle



RU Safe? App Update!

The 2015-2016 WC&S Fiscal Year proved to have many exciting highlights for the RUSafe App. They are as follows:

- **October 2015** – Marc Majors from Newton Consulting and Kathy Marecic, RUSafe Coordinator, appeared on Pittsburgh Today Live to educate and promote the RUSafe App.
- **November 2015** – Pittsburgh Steeler & RUSafe Spokesman, Will Gay received the Ed Block Courage Award for his courage in the battle against domestic violence.
- **December 2015** – Will Gay visited the WC&S Shelter, served his annual holiday dinner and provided gifts to our residents. At that dinner, he took a photo with the RUSafe sign and posted it to his Instagram with the caption:

“**Love ... peace ... and happiness**”

- Within 24 hours, the photo received 2,100 likes – bringing awareness to domestic violence, WC&S and RUSafe.
- **March 2016** – Highmark RUSafe Happy Hour networking event took place at Olive or Twist. The goal was to have 50 attendees and WC&S doubled attendance with more than 100 people.
 - After the Happy Hour – RUSafe was downloaded 123 times in March – the most downloads in one month since the national Launch.
- **May 2016** – Newton Consulting was awarded a 2016 Jefferson Award for creating and maintaining RUSafe.

FUN FACTS:

- RUSafe has been downloaded in all 50 states.
- There are more than 1,560 women's shelters with 24-hour hotlines across the U.S. available through the RUSafe App.



Stay Connected! Sign up for our email list today!

The best way to stay connected to Women's Center & Shelter is to join our email list by visiting www.wcspittsburgh.org/join. By signing up, you will receive updates on all aspects of Women's Center & Shelter as well as other important information about intimate partner violence in our community, nationally and abroad. **Please sign up today and support our cause! Thank you!**



Domestic Violence Awareness Month Approaching!

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) takes place every October and allows us, as a community, to stand together in our efforts to end intimate partner violence.

Women's Center has quite a few ways for you to get involved this DVAM:

- **Attend "Remember My Name, Be My Voice"** – the 5th Annual Fundraiser in loving memory of Karissa Marie Kunco. Karissa's life was tragically taken too soon in an act of intimate partner violence. Karissa's Army now aims to combat domestic violence and support organizations like WC&S. All proceeds for the night will benefit Women's Center & Shelter, Crisis Center North and The Washington Memorial Fund for Victims of Violent Crime.

Saturday, October 1, 2016

The Royal Place (2660 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234)

6:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m.

Buffet Style Dinner served from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Chinese Auction, 50/50 Raffle and Door Prizes

Cost: \$25 per person

Tickets will be available at the door



- **Participate in #PurpleThursday** on **October 20, 2016**. Wear something purple in honor of DVAM and post to our social media pages.



www.facebook.com/WCSPittsburgh/



www.twitter.com/wcspittsburgh



[@wcs_pittsburgh](https://www.instagram.com/wcs_pittsburgh)

- **Join the conversation!** Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep up to date on the various DVAM activities. We would love to hear how you are supporting DVAM!

Stay tuned for even more updates and ways to get involved during Domestic Violence Awareness Month!

Adopt-A-Family

Every year, we ask our supporters to participate in our Adopt-A-Family program during the holiday season. This particular program is so important because with your support, WC&S will distribute gift cards to women staying in our Emergency Shelter and to non-resident clients who participate in our other programs such as Support Groups, Legal Advocacy, etc. Gift cards empower women with the freedom to choose gifts for their children. By donating gift cards, you are providing survivors of intimate partner violence with a sense of freedom and choice that perhaps has been taken away by violent abuse.

"Thank you very much for your donation on holiday gifts for the women and children at this shelter. May blessings always be with you this holiday season."

In addition to making the holiday season more joyful for our clients, the gift cards also allow us to meet critical client need throughout the year. Please stay tuned for updates on the 2016 Adopt-A-Family Program.



Survivor Story

Lauren was increasingly afraid of her husband and his threats against her child and herself. Lauren was pregnant with their second child and afraid to have another child come into the physical, sexual and emotional abuse she suffered at home. At one of her prenatal appointments, Lauren was connected to Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S). She met with an attorney to discuss the possibility of divorce. The attorney recognized the potential lethality of the situation and made an immediate connection to a Women's Center Advocate. Together, they developed a safety plan that allowed Lauren to stay at home until she determined it was safest to leave. As the situation became more dangerous, Lauren decided to leave and came into WC&S' Emergency Shelter. While working with Shelter Advocates, Lauren applied for housing and was able to obtain an affordable apartment. She worked with WC&S Advocates to help her with transportation, childcare, applying for Department of Public Welfare (DPW) benefits, and help with filing a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order. Lauren is now able to continue along her road to self-sufficiency and to do so without fear.





Celebrating Survivors



The 2016 Celebrating Survivors event was another great success, netting nearly \$95,000 to benefit Women's Center & Shelter's programs and services!

With more than 250 guests in attendance, Celebrating Survivors was held on Friday, May 6, 2016 at the stunning J. Verno Studios in the South Side. Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor of Hope, UPMC Health Plan, and our Sponsor of Strength, the Pittsburgh Steelers. We also want to thank our many other corporate sponsors for their support of Celebrating Survivors.



Paul Kunco and Karissa's Army

The evening was made especially poignant by the recipient of this year's Ted Craig Humanitarian Award, Karissa's Army. In 2012, Karissa Kunco's life was tragically taken by her estranged boyfriend in a horrific act of domestic violence. Not allowing their grief to overtake them and choosing to fight back, Karissa's Army was formed by her family and friends. Karissa's Army honors Karissa's memory by raising awareness of domestic violence and helping to support local domestic violence programs like WC&S through donations.

In his acceptance speech, Karissa Kunco's father, Paul Kunco, said,

“Karissa's spirit, everything she was about, is with us in everything we do. We need everybody here to physically be her voice. I promise my daughter every night that her name, the name Karissa Kunco, her legacy, will never ever become just another statistic.”

Congratulations to Karissa's Army on this well-deserved honor. We ask all of our supporters to remember Karissa Kunco and be her voice by taking a stand against domestic violence.

Save the Date for Celebrating Survivors 2017 ~ Friday, May 5, 2017 at J. Verno Studios!



WC&S' Legal Department



Event Host, Diane P. Holder



The Craig Family



FedEx Cares

The name says it all. FedEx employees care about the communities in which they live and work. Women's Center & Shelter's relationship with FedEx Ground began back in October 2014, when we received a call from a FedEx Ground employee looking for a volunteer opportunity for nearly 80 employees. While we couldn't accommodate all of their volunteers for one project on one day, we decided to schedule volunteer projects throughout the month of October (Domestic Violence Awareness Month) including cleaning, organizing donations, cooking and serving meals and hosting children's parties.

The month was so successful that FedEx Ground once again volunteered throughout October 2015, and will be doing so again in 2016. WC&S also received a \$5,000 donation from FedEx Ground in February 2016 through this incredible partnership. "It is a true pleasure hosting FedEx volunteers. Whether it's preparing and serving a meal or hosting a children's party, volunteers always go out of their way to make the project extra special for the women and children," said WC&S Development Director, Kristin Brown. "We appreciate their volunteer and financial support, both of which help us to achieve our mission."

We are so thankful that FedEx Cares!



GET SOCIAL WITH US

Connecting with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is a great way to learn more about us as well as communicate with others who share an interest in WC&S and the vision of working to end intimate partner violence! Comment and share information with us. We love to hear from you!



www.facebook.com/WCSPittsburgh/



www.twitter.com/wcspittsburgh



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Center & Shelter
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[wcs_pittsburgh](https://www.instagram.com/wcs_pittsburgh)

Following

Women's Center & Shelter WC&S' mission is to advance the safety & wellbeing of victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) and prevent and respond to IPV through social change. www.WCSCanHelp.org

70 posts 89 followers 66 following



Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

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WC&S Receives 4-Star Charity Navigator Rating!



"WC&S' exceptional 4-Star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public," according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. "Only a quarter of charities rated by Charity Navigator receive the distinction of our 4-Star rating. This adds WC&S to a preeminent group of charities working to overcome our world's most pressing challenges. Based on its 4-Star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support WC&S."

Charity Navigator, www.charitynavigator.org, is the largest charity evaluator in America and its website attracts more visitors than all other charity rating groups combined. The organization helps guide intelligent giving by evaluating the Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency of more than 8,000 charities.

Since 2002, using objective analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a 4-Star rating. In 2011, Charity Navigator added 17 metrics, focused on governance and ethical practices as well as measures of openness, to its ratings methodology. These Accountability & Transparency metrics, which account for 50 percent of a charity's overall rating, reveal which charities operate in accordance with industry best practices and whether they are open with their donors and stakeholders. On June 1, 2016, Charity Navigator upgraded their methodology for rating each charity's financial health with CN 2.1. These enhancements further substantiate the financial health of its 4-Star charities.