

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.

Letter from the President/CEO



For more than 42 years, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh has been serving victims of intimate partner violence and their children through a myriad of programs and services, many of which are provided on-site at our current facility. We first moved into this building in the early 1990's and completed a successful capital campaign at that time in order to renovate our three-story, 38,456 square foot facility to best meet our needs and vision. The building has seen much wear and tear over the past 20 years and we are now facing failing mechanical systems, including the heating and air conditioning, elevator and pipes. Also in this time, we have continued to learn more about how physical space can support healing.

Today, I am coming to you, our loyal and dedicated donors, in the hopes that you will support our new vision in building "the Sanctuary of the Future," through the **Shelter from the Storm** capital campaign ~ the Campaign to Ensure Access, Safety and Hope. Last year, Women's Center & Shelter operated at an average of 112% of capacity in our Emergency Shelter. Sadly, we referred 445 women and children to alternative resources because our beds were full. The time to expand our living space and provide the most holistic approach to healing is now.

Getting to this point has taken several years of strategic thinking and planning from our staff, board and community partners. We have teamed up with the incredible architectural firm of Rothschild Doyno Collaborative who has helped us to grapple with every single detail of renovating our facility to fully support those we serve. Our renovated facility will focus on security; confidentiality; a collaborative culture; nurturing independence; healthy indoor environments; access to the outdoors; natural light; and high-performance. Overall, the building will center on warmth and inclusiveness, serving as a sanctuary for all.

In the next section of Rosewood, you will read more about the detailed vision of our \$11.2 million **Shelter from the Storm** capital campaign, as well as the progress on construction thus far. We hope you find it as exciting as we do! In the coming weeks, you will be receiving a special letter requesting your support for this campaign. We are truly thankful for your support for our annual campaign, and hope that you can stretch to make an additional gift to the **Shelter from the Storm** capital campaign. Thank you in advance for joining us in this very special endeavor of creating an environment of healing and hope for those who most need our protection.

Sincerely,

Shirl Regan
President/CEO



Shelter from the Storm

THE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE ACCESS, SECURITY & HOPE

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In this Issue

2 Shelter from the Storm Campaign
3 Construction Progress
4 Survivor Story & Social Media

5 WC&S New Initiative & Rhonda Fleming Award
6 Art Healing Hearts
7 Corporate Spotlight



Shelter from the Storm – The Campaign to Ensure Access, Safety & Hope!

The vision...

The vision for our building renovation centers on The Sanctuary Model, a trauma-informed best practice for meeting the physical and emotional needs of domestic violence survivors. This model has been used by WC&S since 2008, allowing us to provide an emotionally safe environment for both clients and WC&S staff. The updated physical space of our renovated building will reflect this philosophy and more.

Women and children coming into our building have experienced some of the most horrific abuse imaginable. Our building will continue to serve as a space where they can feel safe and heal in a whole new way. Through the use of a combination of private, open and communal spaces, residents will begin to rebuild the relationships they have with themselves, those around them, and the outside world. The redesign of the building is intended to facilitate this process and allow our clients to establish trust again. In our newly designed space, a sense of community and diversity will be fostered through the use of large common areas, aimed at encouraging interaction and building relationships between residents, staff and guests.

The updated building was conceptualized around ordered, rhythmic spaces that have been proven to create calm and provide the best environment for healing. The ability to connect with nature and natural light was also very important in design. An additional light monitor is being added into the new Emergency Shelter space so that natural light can be seen from all points. Every aspect of the building has been thought through with particular care, from the paint colors to the security features. In an effort to reduce barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, the renovated building will also feature a pet suite, designed to temporarily house beloved family pets, who as research has shown, are also vulnerable to abuse.

Child witnesses will be provided additional healing through zones of inspiration in the children's area such as a workshop, brain room (computer room), a make believe zone, art studio, reading space and an open piazza! The outdoor space will feature a sanctuary garden, where moms and children can plant and harvest together. It will also include a safety fence for increased security. The building will be LEED certified, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective operations.

Perhaps one of the most exciting features will be the Hearth Wall, celebrating the many quilts that were created by our founders and the many faces that we have served. Utilizing various shades of wood, the Hearth Wall will span all three floors, celebrating diversity and inclusivity. Stay tuned for a special **Shelter from the Storm** campaign mailing so you can learn how to become a part of this masterpiece!





Construction progress...

The idea that has been reinforced over and over since the inception of this project is the community's need for our programs and services. This project directly addresses the demand by increasing living space and incorporating elements vital to the healing process.

Rycon Construction began renovations in July 2016. WC&S staff and those we serve continue to occupy the building during construction. As expected, construction has caused some temporary challenges for staff but residents have remained mostly unaffected. The sanctuary space in our Emergency Shelter is being moved from part of the second floor to occupy the entire third floor – an open, trusting, safe and secure environment. In addition to expanding the number of beds from 36 to 47, this move enhances physical security. The third floor is expected to be completed by mid- to late-March, with clients being able to occupy the new Emergency Shelter space by early- to mid-April.

At the same time, demolition is taking place on the first floor. During the initial first floor demolition, an unknown partial basement and crawl space were discovered. The basement contained an old, inactive boiler with asbestos insulation that had deteriorated and disbursed in the space. The boiler and asbestos were safely removed, and the space was structurally secured and covered over. A new, more secure entryway has been configured, along with a safer perimeter, allowing for a complete view of the street. Once complete, the entrance will provide a more welcoming experience for clients and guests, including the addition of a waiting area/lounge.

In an effort to make our renovated building more efficient, the air handlers and HVAC heating and cooling units have been moved to the roof top into a consolidated format. New high capacity, digital water heaters have also been installed. Renovations will conclude on the second floor with direct service areas, meeting rooms, and staff offices. This reconfigured space will create supportive, engaging, and overlapping community areas to increase interaction between staff and clients. It will provide more efficient space utilization and shared support spaces.

It is projected that renovations will be complete in late Fall 2017.

To see additional photographs of construction progress, please visit our website at www.wcpittsburgh.org/shelter-from-the-storm/.



Shelter from the Storm

THE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE ACCESS, SECURITY & HOPE



Survivor Story



Natalie's Story of Hope...

No story of abuse is ever the same. Everyone who suffers from domestic violence has a unique story, and some stories last longer than others. When Natalie came to Women's Center & Shelter, she wanted to explore the idea of obtaining a divorce and leaving her abusive husband of more than 40 years.

Natalie first met with an attorney, who learned about her situation and discussed her options moving forward. Through this, Natalie was immediately connected to a WC&S Legal Advocate. Together, Natalie and her Legal Advocate created a safety plan so that she could leave her home safely. This process was extremely difficult, especially because Natalie kept the abuse a secret – most of her family and friends had no idea that she had been experiencing abuse for the duration of her marriage.

After several months of working with her Legal Advocate, Natalie was finally able to safely leave and relocate. Her WC&S Advocate helped her with the process of finding possible housing options. Natalie was then able to move into an affordable housing complex for seniors. Her Advocate provided referrals for assistance with Natalie's relocation expenses.

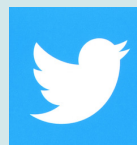
Through Natalie's connection to WC&S, she was able to safely escape an abusive relationship of more than 40 years and create a feeling of safety for herself that she forgot even existed. Success stories like this take place on a daily basis for our clients here at Women's Center & Shelter. All of our programs and services are aimed at helping women and their children transition from a place of fear and abuse to a place of safety and freedom. Although Natalie endured many painful years of abuse, the future ahead of her is bright and she is ready to experience it.



Get social with us!



@WCSPITTSBURGH

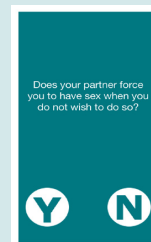


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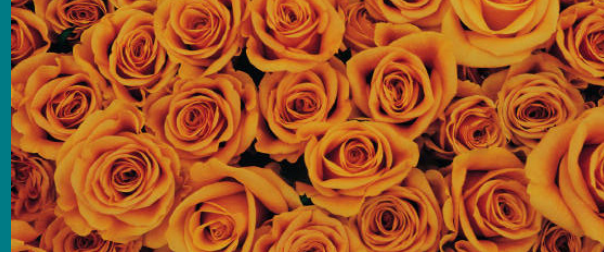
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WC&S Launches New Initiative

Rhonda Fleming Woman of Excellence Award



WC&S launches new initiative...

WC&S was recently funded through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to launch a new initiative, serving victims of domestic abuse who are immigrants, refugees or have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The three-year grant will focus on strengthening WC&S' on-site programs; providing meaningful outreach to partner organizations who serve immigrants, refugees, and those with limited English proficiency; and working with the court system to increase accessibility for these under-served populations. Four bilingual team members were hired to staff the initiative – a Specialty Hotline/Shelter Advocate, Specialty-Services On-Site Advocate, Specialty Services Outreach Advocate, and a Specialty Legal Advocate.

We have found that individuals who are immigrants, refugees, or speak limited English experience increased barriers to receiving services. To address this, the on-site services component of the program focuses on having staff who can work intensively on all of the needs of shelter and non-resident clients who are immigrants, refugees, and speak limited English. Very importantly, it also includes making WC&S a most welcoming space for everyone through training staff on cultural competency, translating brochures and materials into various languages, and establishing a multilingual phone system.

Outreach includes connecting with organizations that work primarily with immigrants, refugees and those who speak limited English to establish support or educational groups and individual counseling for clients on-site. In addition, WC&S will provide professional development and consultation to their staff members to help them safely work with domestic violence victims.

The Specialty Legal Advocate will work with immigrant, refugee and limited English proficiency clients as they make their way through the court system, providing court accompaniment and emotional support from the time that they file for a Protection From Abuse order (PFA) or enter the court system in another way.

This initiative is an incredible opportunity to expand our reach and offer support to those who need our help. We are so grateful to have the opportunity to do this meaningful work and we look forward to sharing many success stories with you!



Rhonda Fleming A Woman of Excellence



Rhonda Fleming, WC&S Education and Men's Program Director, was honored at the Women of Excellence Awards Luncheon, an event held to recognize the inspirational women within this community who work so tirelessly to make a positive impact on Pittsburgh. More than 350 guests attended to celebrate the 48 amazing women honored by the New Pittsburgh Courier.

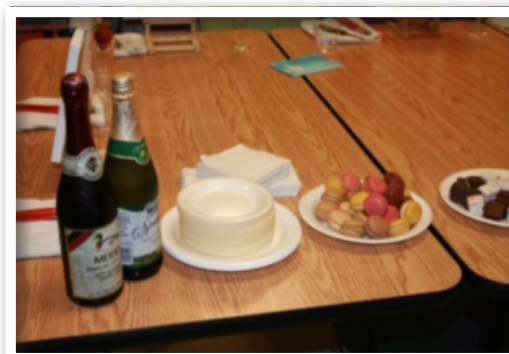
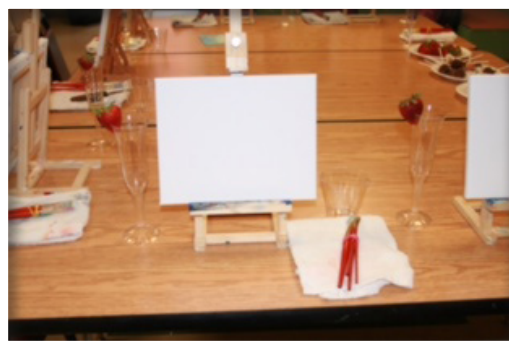
Rhonda Fleming began working at WC&S in 1990 and has been doing incredible work for the organization ever since. She co-authored the award-winning curriculum, Hands Are Not for Hurting, which has been implemented in Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Michigan and South Carolina. Hands Are Not for Hurting addresses teen dating violence prevention and intervention. Rhonda primarily manages the WC&S Men's Program (Men Embracing Nonviolence and Safety), which is our batterers intervention program aimed at teaching abusers to learn how to be accountable for their actions and change their abusive behavior moving forward.

Rhonda is a huge asset to the Women's Center & Shelter family. We want to take the time to recognize all the wonderful work Rhonda does and say congratulations on this much deserved honor.



Art Healing Hearts

Using art to heal hearts...



In 2014, Lu Monteleone established Art Healing Hearts in Marin County, California. The program is aimed at motivating individuals, especially those who suffer from brain injuries, mental illness, addiction and trauma, as well as the elderly and those with special needs, to express themselves through painting. When Lu moved to Pittsburgh, she brought this amazing program with her, sharing the gift of healing through art with Women's Center & Shelter residents.

The motivation for starting Art Healing Hearts came when Lu lost her first husband. She took to painting as a way to cope with the loss. Shortly after her husband's death, she found herself in a severely abusive relationship. When she was able to escape the abuse, she once again turned to painting as a way to deal with the pain and heal. On the other side of this trauma, Lu realized that she needed to share this gift with others, and so began Art Healing Hearts.

On the first Wednesday of every month, Art Healing Hearts comes to Women's Center and sets up a peaceful environment equipped with individual painting supplies as well as sparkling cider and delicious desserts to make the experience especially relaxing. Lu starts the session by asking the group of residents to repeat after her:

“ I am a beautiful, strong person and everything that's negative inside of me and all of my pain, I will put out on the canvas. ”

Residents are then encouraged to paint whatever they feel. With Lu's guidance, they each create a painting that is meaningful to them and at the end of the class, they are able to keep their creations. Residents at Women's Center & Shelter love this program and Lu is just as excited to share this with them.

“ Having gone through an abusive relationship and loss, it helps me to relate with the ladies and show them that they can heal and move forward. They can use their experiences to help others and turn negatives into positives – it's so rewarding when I see that they understand there is hope. ”

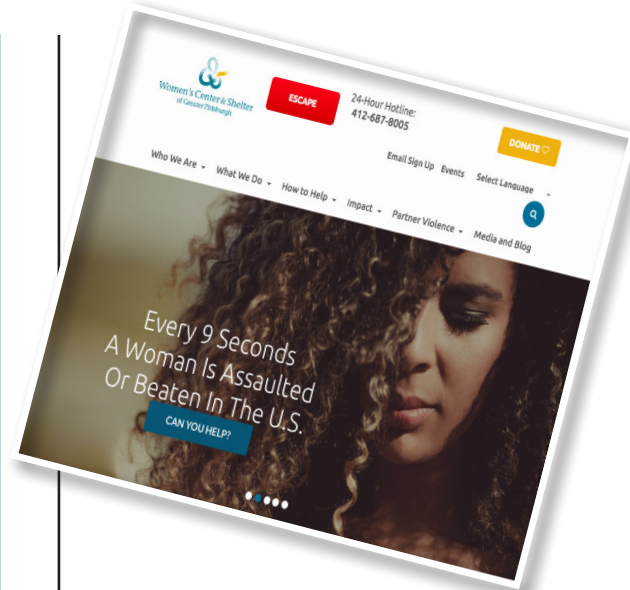
-Lu Monteleone

GAP Shadyside and South Hills Village – Be What’s Possible

Volunteers from GAP Shadyside and GAP South Hills Village sure know how to throw a party! From festive holiday parties complete with donut snowmen to their notorious bingo nights with fabulous prizes, GAP volunteers go out of their way to make WC&S residents and their children feel loved. There is never a shortage of food, crafts and fun when GAP volunteers are around! GAP volunteers have also done a variety of other projects around the building over the years, including bringing their specialized retail skills to the old WC&S distribution center, ensuring that all donations were organized for a better shopping experience for residents.

Since August 2014, GAP Shadyside and South Hills Village volunteers have donated more than 128 hours of service to WC&S, resulting in more than \$3,000 through their GAP Foundation Money for Time Program. This doesn't include the thousands of dollars of in-kind donations such as food, new clothing, crafts, gifts cards and more!

Tina Santo Dias, General Manager of GAP South Hills Village said - "I am always so happy to help out. Everyone there is always so thankful and welcoming to me and the other volunteers. I think when you tell someone that hasn't been there, they have a completely different view of what it is like. They don't expect to hear laughter from the kids or have conversations with the women where you both are smiling and laughing. The shelter is a place of hope for everyone there from the women and kids to the wonderful employees and volunteers."



NEW YEAR, NEW WEBSITE.

Over the course of the last year, Women's Center has been working diligently on the creation of a brand new website. With the ***Shelter from the Storm*** capital campaign charging full steam ahead, we understood the need to have a modern, clean and informative website for both survivors and donors. WC&S worked with a website developer to help establish website goals, generate new content and tie it all together with a fresh new design. Today, www.WCSCanHelp.org exists proudly and we would love for you to take some time to check it out!





Women's Center & Shelter
of Greater Pittsburgh

P.O. Box 9024
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Save The Date

FRIDAY MAY 5, 2017

celebrating
SURVIVORS

SPONSORED BY UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Join Women's Center & Shelter and UPMC Health Plan as we come together to celebrate survivors of domestic violence, remember those who have lost their lives to domestic violence and honor the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania Women's Leadership Council-Allegheny County with the prestigious Ted Craig Humanitarian Award.

Visit
www.WCSCanHelp.org/event/celebrating-survivors/
for more information.