



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.*

Fall 2017

Letter from the President/CEO



Every step we take to restore dignity and hope is essential.

Just as air and water impact our health, so too does our constructed environment. When we design physical structures, we define their relationships to the people who use them. Even the colors we choose and where we place them determine how pleasing

the entire design will be and how we will feel being immersed in it. As Winston Churchill put it, **"We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."**

As Women's Center & Shelter's renovations come to a close, I am excited to see a vision turn into a reality. My thanks to Ken Doyno and Melanie Buzgan Dower of Rothschild Doyno Collaborative for taking our vision and transforming the building into a Sanctuary that conveys dignity for clients, staff and visitors. The innovative design of the building will change the way we are able to work with survivors of domestic violence and their children, bringing even more hope for many years to come.

Our priority of ensuring a secure environment with controlled access is now even stronger for the outside perimeter of the building, while on the inside, we have prioritized access to natural light, good air quality, and warm private and communal areas, all of which lend themselves to a welcoming and healing space. The renovated building places an emphasis on conveying opportunity, hope and options for success and the work we do.

A sanctuary garden and a play area outside provide space for reflection, connection and healthy activity. **Studies have shown that the feeling of sunshine and access to views of trees and plants can have healing effects on those recovering from trauma.** The design and construction also take into account our goal of becoming a LEED-certified building, which will have a positive impact on the health of occupants and affirm WC&S' long-term commitment to sustainability.

Finally, a small area for families to bring their beloved pets will eliminate another barrier to escaping abusive homes. Leaving behind pets is simply not an option for many domestic violence survivors, knowing that pets could be harmed or abandoned by batterers.

We know that the right environment helps the healing process. The rebuild of WC&S is at the forefront of current thinking about the environment, the relationship between people and buildings, the impact of trauma on individuals and the role that environmental design plays in rebuilding trust and healing. **It is our honor to offer dignity and hope to everyone who enters the building.**

Sincerely,

Shirl Regan
President/CEO





Shelter from the Storm

THE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE ACCESS, SECURITY & HOPE

Phase One Moving Day!

We were absolutely overjoyed to introduce residents, their children and the WC&S Staff to the newly renovated residential floor in May!

Once only a section of the 2nd floor, the residential area of the building now spans an entire floor, adding much-needed livable space and enhanced security. Most importantly, the renovated area was designed to bring dignity to survivors of domestic violence and their children while they heal in a supportive environment. Every choice in design was made with a clear purpose and with knowledge garnered in the past 20 years of providing programs and services in this building.

The renovated residential area features open spaces, meant to connect residents, children and the staff in a more visual way. Natural light also plays a large role in the improvement of the space, which is created by two light monitors, the largest of which was built during recent construction. The new living room includes a space for residents to relax and an area just for the children, complete with smaller couches, a chalk board and toys! Each bedroom suite houses a total of six beds, an armoire for each resident and a multi-sectional bathroom for a better communal living experience. Two accessible suites are also now available so that we are best equipped to serve residents with varying abilities and/or special needs.

Of course, we all know that the most popular place to gather is the kitchen! So, we've added a community table near the HEARTH Wall, complete with a flameless fireplace. A low counter with seating is located right outside of the kitchen so that children can play or do their homework while their moms cook.



We've made every effort to make the residential area as comfortable as possible... transforming a house into a home for more than 500 women and children each year.

Construction Update: We're Almost There!

The second and final phase of construction is well underway with an expected completion time of late Fall. The focus of this phase are renovations to the administrative and direct service offices, the Children's Program, pet and welcome areas, the parking lot and outdoor areas, including the new and improved sanctuary garden.

Bringing together the administrative and direct service offices onto one floor will allow for even stronger collaboration among the staff and our community partners. The second floor will also feature spaces for non-resident support groups and individual therapy, as well as a large conference room for meetings and trainings. Responding to the needs of new moms, the second floor will now include a Mother's Room where moms can change their babies and nurse in private.

The newly renovated and expanded Children's Program draws on The Reggio Emilia Approach, an innovative and inspiring approach to early childhood education which values the child as strong, capable, resilient and rich with wonder and knowledge. The space will include areas for children of all ages from infants to teens, with a focus on exploration and fun!



Children's Program



Pet area

Up to 48 percent of domestic violence victims are unable to escape their abusers because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets. To break down this barrier, renovations include the construction of a pet area so that women are able to bring their beloved pets with them to WC&S for temporary housing, keeping families (including our furry friends!) together.



Direct Service and Administrative Offices



It's not too late to become a part of this campaign!

For more information or to make a donation, please visit www.wcpittsburgh.org/shelter-from-the-storm.



Shelter from the Storm

THE CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE ACCESS, SECURITY & HOPE



Sanctuary Garden

Story of Hope

"I feel SAFE here"

Lauren came to Women's Center & Shelter with her children to escape physical, mental, technological and financial abuse. The situation got really bad when her boyfriend began stalking her, hacking her Facebook page and going through her phone. A friend referred Lauren to WC&S and she knew that this was her chance. Lauren had left and returned to the relationship before but this time was different. She no longer felt safe in her home.

Lauren and her children had never stayed in a shelter before and didn't know what to expect. However, Lauren describes the renovated residential living space in WC&S' Emergency Shelter as warm and bright. "It's very beautiful. I like the way it's open because I can see my children while I'm cooking, cleaning or just grabbing a snack. I like the play area for my youngest child and the older kids, too. If it's raining outside, they still have somewhere to play.

"It's got a 'homey' feel to it. It doesn't make you feel like you are in a shelter."

As one can imagine, providing a sense of safety is at the very heart of all of WC&S' programs and services and played an integral role in the recent building renovations. Lauren said, "I feel safe here. I love the staff. They are always willing to help with whatever I need. I feel comfortable here. My kids feel comfortable here. They are actually very happy."

And, thanks to our many wonderful donors, Lauren has big plans for the future. She was just accepted into a housing program and is actively job searching with the assistance of a WC&S Economic Empowerment Advocate. Lauren is also planning to return to school in the New Year to pursue a double major. When asked what advice she would give to another woman experiencing abuse, she said, **"Don't be afraid. No, it's not your fault. It's not okay. If someone has issues with your boundaries, there is always someone else."**



Can you be a hero?

Being terrified most of her adult life was something Melissa couldn't easily shake. But thanks to you, she had the chance at her first night of peace. Even then, the bad dreams flooded her sleep. Her body twitched and she woke screaming, cowered in a ball, her arms over her face.

In a reflex, she reached for her purse, the panic so high, sweat dampened her new pajamas. Had Allen stolen her purse again? Worse yet, did he know she had been saving loose change just to have enough to escape?

She knew if he did, things would get worse...much worse. As her heart raced even louder, her eyes adjusted to her new surroundings and she cried as she realized she was safe...for now.

7 out of 8 of survivors return to their abusers due to lack of financial resources.



Hurry; there is still time to be a hero! Challenge ends soon.

www.PurplePursePittsburgh.com

Ending Financial Abuse is just that important.

Financial Abuse: Domestic Violence's Silent Partner—Together 99% of the time

WC&S partners with the Allstate Foundation to end Financial Abuse in the Purple Purse Challenge.

OCTOBER 2 – 31, 2017

We're competing against some larger organizations in our division, but just like the women and children we help, we are mighty! **The team that raises the most gets an EXTRA \$100,000.**



www.PurplePursePittsburgh.com

**You never know who you may help
as you spread the word!**

Ready to be a hero?

Make a donation

Just \$50 gives a woman her first night of safety and access to all the resources she needs for her new life.

Tell ten friends...ten heroes save ten women!

Help spread the word through email, social, any way possible. Tell your...

Friends and family
Employer
Coworkers
Dentist
Businesses you frequent
EVERYONE!!!

BE a HERO



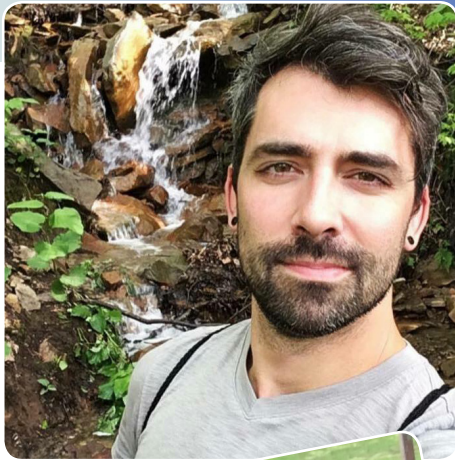
Did you know?

One in Four women is a victim of domestic violence. Thanks to you, last year WC&S served 6,000 women and children fleeing for safety.

In Loving Memory



"Trey left behind a lot of dragonflies—both men and women—who are flying because he showed us our wings."



On Monday, June 5, 2017, WC&S tragically lost a beloved member of our family, Walter "Trey" Leroy Goff III at the age of 28 in a car accident. The world lost a beautiful soul. For those of us who knew him (and even those who only knew of him) our lives are forever changed by the way Trey lived his...in acceptance and love.

Trey began with WC&S as an intern in the Emergency Shelter and Non-Resident Programs and was then hired as a Men's Group Facilitator. Just last year, he was promoted to the Data Analyst/Contracts Compliance Specialist. No matter what his role was within the agency, Trey's genuine passion for his work, particularly for the people he served, was palpable. He earned his M.S. in Counseling Psychology from Chatham University and, with one of his ultimate goals of opening his own private practice in mind, he had recently passed the National Counseling Examination. In lieu of spending the day before his exam nervous and afraid of failure, he baked a key lime pie while studying. That was Trey. He could find peace in life's most stressful and darkest moments. Trey did not live in fear and inspired those around him to find their voices.

Trey fought fiercely on behalf of those who couldn't fight for themselves, never hesitating to stand up for what he believed was right. In a thank you letter from a client to Trey, she wrote about watching a dragonfly break out of its shell saying:

"The dragonfly's transformation spoke to me. That is what you all do here at the Women's Center & Shelter. You find us when we have no choice but to tear open our very own skin, yet we are too afraid to emerge from the same shell that suffocates us. You stand on the edge and you whisper to us that it's all right. You coax us out into a world that is new, that we have not known, and, as we gaze on this world clutching our past, you assure us that it is safe to let it go. When we legitimately stand between a rock and a hard place, you teach us that we can fly."

A lover of nature, Trey saw beauty in all things. His birthday is October 21st. On this day, we ask that you please take a moment to do something nice for someone else or embark upon a spontaneous trip to somewhere you've never been in his memory. That's what he would have wanted.

"Trey was larger than life and he made us believe in a type of life most of us have never experienced"



Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Program Expansion and Enhancement

Sadly, between 40-60% of intimate partner violence (IPV) cases also involve child abuse. These situations are often extremely complex with high levels of danger and intricate safety issues and family dynamics. Over the past 18 years, WC&S has worked closely with The Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) to increase client safety & improve outcomes for CYF clients who are victims of IPV or family violence. Now, as a result of discussions about the importance of this work over the past decade, the CYF Program at WC&S is expanding to include an additional three CYF Specialists and the promotion of our current CYF Advocate to Supervisor.



This expanded and enhanced partnership, funded by Allegheny County, will: increase the number of families we are able to work with; increase WC&S staff coverage & communication; improve response time & ensure immediate replies to crisis & intake calls (even on weekends and holidays); continue our quality work with the non-offending parents; and, begin work with the offending parents. IPV victims involved in the child welfare system will now have 24-7 access to a knowledgeable CYF Specialist or Supervisor through our 24-Hour Hotline and new on-call system.

On a larger scale, recognizing the complexity, danger level and importance of cases involving IPV and child welfare, CYF and the Department of Human Services contracted with Futures Without Violence to develop a training curriculum on the intersection of IPV and child welfare specific to Allegheny County. A practice leaders group (a cross section of people within and beyond CYF) was established to guide developing

the curriculum which will now serve as a systematic training for all CYF personnel. WC&S was a part of this special cohort and has worked closely with Futures on developing the training and delivering the section on safety. This two-day training was delivered five separate times to CYF supervisors, veteran caseworkers, peer coaches, father engagement specialists, and regional office directors. The Futures Without Violence staff is now training WC&S staff and the CYF training department to be able to deliver this curriculum in the future.

The expansion and enhancement of the CYF Program will increase the safety of IPV victims and their precious children, ultimately saving lives. ***"The fabric of family preservation becomes greatly compromised without identifying and assisting in building and maintaining protective capacities with families through the collaborative initiatives of domestic violence agencies and child welfare."***

~ Diane, WC&S CYF Supervisor

Adopt-A-Family Program: Providing the Gift of Choice

"With the gift cards, the boys not only had gifts to open but they also got to see a movie in the theater which was a big deal to them. Your gift was so valued"

These words were spoken by a mom who received gift cards through the 2016 Adopt-A-Family Program. For many of us, it is easy to take for granted the opportunities of choosing gifts for our loved ones or seeing a movie in the theater. However, for victims of intimate partner violence, these opportunities may be a distant memory because their finances were controlled by their abusers and they are just starting over again. That is why WC&S' Adopt-A-Family Program focuses on empowering IPV survivors through the distribution of gift cards during the holiday season. By donating gift cards, you are providing a woman and mother the gift of choice which has often been taken away by abuse.

Last year, our very generous supporters allowed us to distribute \$16,000 in gift cards to 320 women and children. Individuals, corporations and organizations are all encouraged to participate in the Adopt-A-Family Program. Stay tuned for more details in the mail and online!





Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

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WCSCanHelp.org

The mission of Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh is to advance the safety and wellbeing of victims of intimate partner violence and prevent and respond to intimate partner violence through social change.



United Way Contributor Choice #110 | Combined Federal Campaign #81018 | SECA #4601-0042

AFCO Credit Corporation Doing Whatever It Takes

For the past three years, volunteers from AFCO Credit Corporation have gone above and beyond the call of duty to provide stellar volunteer service at Women's Center & Shelter. No task has been too big or too small for this group of volunteers. They have done everything from deep-cleaning Shelter bedrooms and bathrooms to landscaping around the perimeter of the building, and always with a smile. "Volunteering at WC&S is gratifying and enriching for our team because it gives us a chance to help make our community a better place. It also gives us the opportunity to acknowledge and thank WC&S' staff for the work they do" said Joan Miller, Premium Finance SharePoint Administrator.

An extraordinary 30 volunteers have donated more than 350 hours of volunteer service in just three years. And the giving spirit of AFCO Credit Corporation doesn't stop there. In addition to their fantastic volunteer service, they are given a budget each year to help meet the most critical needs of WC&S clients (essentials such as new pajamas, towels, and shoes) and staff (equipment for the kitchen and maintenance supplies) at the time of their volunteer project. "It doesn't cost a nickel to offer encouragement—so, if in some small way, we can brighten the lives of the women and children being helped by WC&S, that's good enough for us. Residents should know that they are acknowledged, valued and appreciated, and that there is every reason to hope for brighter days ahead," said Bernard McCrory, Vice President of Corporate Communications for Sales Support.

Employees from AFCO Credit Corporation are tremendous because of their willingness to assist with whatever is needed around the building to ensure the comfort of our residents and their children. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

