

The Stepping Stone

Summer 2008



The Stepping Stone is a newsletter published quarterly by Someplace Safe, Inc. We are a non-profit social service agency, committed to serving survivors of Domestic Violence.

Among our services are:

24-Hour Crisis Line
Emergency Shelter
Crisis Intervention
Legal Advocacy

Women's Individual & Group Support Services
Children's Individual & Group Support Services
Community & School
Education Programs



All services are accessible by calling:

Someplace Safe, Inc.
330-393-3003 or
CONTACT'S 24 – hr hotline
330-393-1565 or 2-1-1

www.someplacesafe.org

Someplace Safe, Inc. is funded by the State of Ohio (Marriage License Bureau), VOCA, VAWA, United Way, Family Violence and Prevention, Trumbull County Department of Jobs and Family Services, and private donations.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Someplace Safe, Inc.

2nd Annual Nite At The Races

Fundraiser



Saturday, November 1, 2008

**The Elks Lodge 295
3581 Youngstown Rd. SE,
Warren**

Doors Open 6:00p.m. ~
Races Start 6:30p.m.

See you at the races!!!

New York City Family Courts Endanger Domestic Violence Survivors and Children

An article in *Speaking Up*, The Family Violence Prevention Fund's News & Tips for the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Communities, June 25, 2008 Vol. 14, Issue 8.

There is little consideration of domestic violence in custody cases, and New York City court officials often disregard the law and the court's own policies and procedures in ways that imperil victims of domestic violence. These are among the findings of a report based on surveys of self-identified domestic violence survivors whose cases were heard in the New York City Family Court.

Voices of Women Organizing Project, a grass roots advocacy organization of domestic violence survivors released *Justice Denied: How family Courts in NYC Endanger Battered Women and Children* last month. More than half the women surveyed said that reports of child abuse or child sexual abuse against their ex-partners were not taken seriously in court proceedings. Women were also often instructed by lawyers and court personnel not to mention domestic violence in the court proceedings because, they said, it would hurt their case or was irrelevant. Ultimately, more than one-third of women surveyed (37 percent) lost custody of their children in spite of being the primary caregiver.

Justice Denied says, "Women are re-victimized by the Family Courts when allegations of domestic violence and child abuse are minimized or ignored when the abuser is either not held accountable or judged to be more credible."

At the release of *Justice Denied*, domestic violence survivors and their children and families joined advocates in calling for more transparency and accountability in New York City Family Court. The report recommends that courts: enforce all laws and procedures and ensure that court proceedings are fair and just; hold judges, law guardians, lawyers and other court personnel to the highest standards of their profession; take seriously all allegations of domestic violence and ensure the safety of victims, including while they are in the court house; and hold abusers accountable for their actions and not allow courts to be used to further abuse and control victims and their children.

The report is based on two years of interviews with more than 75 domestic violence survivors, focus groups with battered women and teens in foster care, and meetings with court personnel. To read it, please visit www.vowbwrc.org/.



Cell Phones Wanted

Cell phones can still be dropped off at Someplace Safe, 1540 Tod Avenue NW, Warren. We will be there from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday. We want to thank the community for it's continued support in this endeavor. For information call 330-393-3003.





Cyberbullying

So, what exactly is cyberbullying? “Cyberbullying” is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to be a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyberstalking. Adult cyber-harassment or cyberstalking is NEVER called cyberbullying.

The methods used are limited only by the child’s imagination and access to technology. And the cyberbully one moment may become the victim the next. The kids often change roles, going from victim to bully to victim again.

Children have killed each other and committed suicide after having been involved in a cyberbullying incident.

Cyberbullying is usually not a onetime communication, unless it involves a death threat or a credible threat of serious bodily harm. Kids usually know it when they see it, while parents may be more worried about the lewd language used by the kids than the hurtful effect of rude and embarrassing posts.

This is happening more and more with the young children of today. A lot of parents don’t understand the technologies that the kids do and do not take this seriously. As stated before, kids have killed and kids have committed suicide over this situation. Parents become more aware. Educate your children. Kids talk to your parents. A good website to visit is www.stopcyberbullying.org

House Bill 247

Shynerra Grant, 17, was shot to death in her home a few days after her 2005 graduation from Start High School by a former boyfriend, Antonio Bryant, who had a history of harassing and physically assaulting her. Bryant then went home and killed himself.

Rep. Edna Brown (D., Toledo), said, “When I learned that several other young women in Ohio had suffered a similar fate to Shynerra’s at the hands of former juvenile dating partners, I felt it was imperative to try to stop obsessive perpetrators from committing these acts of what is commonly known as teen dating violence.” She sponsored House Bill 247 which passed the house and goes to the senate for consideration. State law currently does not provide for the issuance of protection orders for teens within the context of “dating relationship”.

Ms. Brown’s bill would require that any petitions for a protection order involving an alleged offender under the age of 18 be filed in juvenile court, which could enforce such orders for up to five years or until the offender turns 21.

It expands the list of allegations that could allow an alleged victim to seek protection to include felonious assault, aggravated assault, menacing, aggravated menacing, menacing by stalking, or a sexually oriented offense or its equivalent within a dating relationship. The bill also expands the definition of a family or household members allowed to request protection orders on behalf of a teen to include a foster parent.

Ms. Brown noted that the power of juvenile court judges in such cases today is largely limited to the issuance of no-contact orders. “No contact orders are hard to enforce, because they do not stop an offender from continuing to harass, stalk, or intimidate a victim by showing up at school basket ball games where the victim is cheerleading, as happened to Shynerra Grant,” she said. “They incessantly call on cell phones and eventually inflict serious injuries.”

If the senate agrees, Ohio would become the 31st state to enact such a law.

Someplace Safe Garage Sale Was A Success!!!!



Someplace Safe held a garage sale as a fundraiser May 9th & 10th at St. William Parish and raised \$5,600!!!

We would like to thank St. William Parish for their generosity and letting us use their wonderful facility. We would also like to thank the Lordstown Lions Club who donated the food for the concession stand.

Thank you to the members of the Warren Garden Club who volunteered to help us sort and price donations.

We are very grateful for the community's support. All the money raised will continue to assist Someplace Safe with providing the vital programs necessary to help victims of domestic violence live a life free from violence.



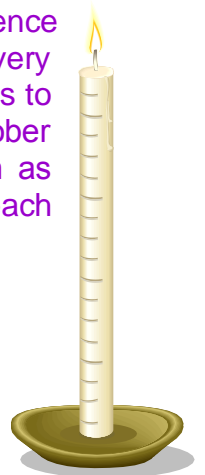
Unity Day is Just Around the Corner

Someplace Safe will sponsor their annual Unity Day on Monday October 6th on Court House Square in Downtown Warren at 7:00 pm. Someplace Safe recognizes this day by remembering victims of domestic violence and celebrating survivors.

There will be music, inspirational poetry and readings from survivors who will share their stories and feelings with the audience. The evening will end with a special candle lighting ceremony to commemorate those who had lost their lives to domestic violence; to celebrate and honor those who have endured and persevered with the hope of the end of violence to come. This is a very special evening for staff and survivors alike. We would like to share the evening with all that are interested. All you need do is show up.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month evolved from the first Day of Unity observed in October 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The Day of Unity soon turned into a week when a range of activities were conducted at the local, state, and national levels. The Day of Unity is now celebrated the first Monday in October.

The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed in October, 1987 with conjunction of the beginning of the first national toll free hotline. The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month legislation was passed by the Congress in 1989 and has passed every year since. Now Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a national movement that works to bring domestic violence and it's prevention to the front of public debate. Every October Domestic violence Awareness Month's activities are planned across the country such as recognition ceremonies, memorial events, public education campaigns, community outreach events, news conferences, and many more.



VIOLENCE COMMON AMONG YOUTH

Three studies released in July find high rates of dating, sexual and other forms of violence among youth in the United States. Researchers who conducted the studies all recommend more education, detection and interventions earlier in life.

A study published in the July 2008 issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* finds that many college students experience physical, emotional or sexual violence, often before college. Emotional violence is most frequent before college; sexual and emotional violence are equally common during college. Women report being victims of violence more often than men, but male victimization is common. More than half the violence that students experience during college is partner-related.

This study was based on a survey of 910 students in 67 classes at three diverse urban colleges. It finds that almost half of college undergraduates have experienced some form of relationship violence in their lives, as a victim, a perpetrator or both. The rate of victimization increases around age 13, when dating often begins, rises sharply between ages 15 and 17, and continues to rise between ages 18 and 22.

Authors recommend that counseling and education focusing on healthy relationships begin during childhood. "Relationship Violence Among Female and Male College Undergraduate Students" is based on a survey of college students age 17 to 22 at a nonresidential community college, a mid-size Catholic university, and a large Ivy League university.

A second study examines serious dating violence, finding that 2.7 per cent of 12 to 17 year old girls and .6 percent of boys report being physically or sexually assaulted by a date or partner. That correlates to 335,000 girls and 78,000 boys in the United States as victims.

The study is based on a survey of 3,614 families in which the parent and adolescent were interviewed separately by phones. The authors note that the rates of serious dating violence would have been considerably higher if they had excluded from the study 12 and 13 year olds, and youth who have not yet had dating relationships.

It finds that sexual assault is the most common form of serious dating violence for this age group, followed by physical assault. Risk factors for serious dating violence include being an older teen, female, and having past experience with violence; in fact, it finds a strong association between having experienced a previous violent event and becoming a victim of serious dating violence.

Victims of serious dating violence are more likely than teens who are not victims to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and major depressive episodes. "Severe dating violence does occur in the adolescent population and this phenomenon has a negative impact on the mental health of those individuals who are experiencing dating violence," the authors write.

"Prevalence and Correlates of Dating Violence in a National Sample of Adolescents" is published in the July issue of the *Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.

One in six New York City high school students (16 percent) report experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lives – a higher percentage than the national average. That is the major finding from a three-year research project on sexual and dating violence among New York City high school students, conducted by the Columbia University Center for Youth Violence Prevention and the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault.

Just two in five students who self-identified as having experienced physical or dating violence (41 percent) told someone about it, and 71 percent of those who confided in someone told a friend first. Only 13 percent first told a parent about the violence, and just one in four sought help from a health professional, teacher, or guidance counselor.

Nearly ten percent of students who report having a dating partner in the past year say their partner touched them sexually when they didn't want to be touched, and seven percent say they were forced to have sex against their will.

"These are alarming statistics any way you look at them, and we are hopeful that these findings will highlight an issue that has been kept in the shadows for far too long, and encourage more young people to seek help when they are victimized," said Harriet Lessel, Executive Director of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault.

"These data highlight the need for early identification, treatment, as well as prevention," added Dr. Vaughn Rickert, Professor at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. "Unfortunately, funding for relationship violence among youth is not a priority. Funds need to be made more available at the city, state, and federal levels in order to promote sound intervention strategies for youth."

1,454 high school students, age 13 to 21, from one Brooklyn and three Manhattan high schools participated in the study. The New York City Department of Education granted researchers permission to enroll high school students anonymously with their parents' consent and their own permission, with the agreement of school principals and district superintendents.

To read a summary of the research, visit www.nycagainstrape.org.

Article found in FVPF's Speaking Up Volume 14, Issue 10.

Help Us Save Money



If you would like to receive our quarterly newsletter via e-mail instead of snail mail, we would be happy to add you to our e-mail list. Please e-mail Someplace Safe at Someplacesafe@someplacesafe.org with your e-mail address and include your name and the mailing address you would like us to stop sending the newsletter to. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

NEW FACE AT SOMEPLACE SAFE

Hello, my name is Joy Coleman and I am a new face that arrived at Someplace Safe in 2007. I started in December and I am working as a Shelter Monitor. I am a Niles native and I currently reside in Warren with my fiancé and our two wonderful children. I am "fortunate" enough to have the opportunity to work one on one with the women and children displaced by domestic violence. Although domestic violence work is a very heart-wrenching field to be involved in, I say that I am "fortunate" because the victims allow me to enter their lives at this sad time and they trust that I, along with all the other wonderful staff members here, will guide them in the right direction. I work with the residents on setting goals for themselves and empowering them to act towards achieving those goals. I also do a weekly class with the shelter residents on life skills. It is here they are taught valuable skills such as; budgeting, interview techniques, cooking and many other integral parts of maintaining an independent lifestyle. The most rewarding part of working at Someplace Safe is seeing the residents come to the realization that they don't have to endure anymore abuse, and to watch them take the necessary steps to rebuild the lives of their children and themselves.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

From
SOMEPLACE SAFE
330-393-3003

It's that time of the year to remind every body that there are violence prevention programs available to the educational systems free of charge. Just call Someplace Safe at 330-393-3003 and ask for Darlene

TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

This three-day presentation is designed to educate students from the 5th to 8th grade levels in the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Students will learn the components of a healthy relationship and be able to recognize the warning signs of a toxic relationship. They will learn the definition of domestic violence and learn the cycle of abuse. A thirty-minute video with peer representation discussing these relationships will be shown. There will be information on bullying and how to handle these situations will be discussed. Self-esteem issues will be discussed and the consequences of low self-esteem will be addressed. Relationship Bingo will be played one day. This is an interactive presentation, with the students encouraged to participate in discussion. Various handouts will be given and a pre and posttest will be done.

DANGEROUS RELATIONSHIPS

This three-day presentation is designed to educate students from the 9th to 12th grade levels in the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Students will learn the components of a healthy relationship and how to recognize the signs of a violent, abusive dating relationship. They will also learn the definition of domestic violence and the cycle of abuse. This will focus on domestic violence being a learned behavior and that patterns can be detected. The power and control wheel of dating relationships will be discussed along with the equality in dating relationships. A thirty-minute video with peer representation discussing these relationships will be shown. Self-esteem issues will be discussed and the consequences of low self-esteem will be

addressed. Relationship Bingo will be played one day. This is an interactive presentation, with the students encouraged to participate in discussion. Various handouts will be given and a pre and posttest will be done.

GROARK IS A COLORFUL LITTLE DRAGON THAT HELPS TO TEACH CHILDREN WITH MUSIC AND ACTIONS

This is a three-day presentation for K thru 4. Each day a new topic will be discussed. In each of the videos, Groark runs into a situation with his puppet buddies and goes to talk it over with the real children and his puppeteer. He then takes the solution back to his puppet buddies and they work out the situation.

In Groark Learns to Control Anger, the students will learn that anger can cause us to lose control of our behavior, how anger can lead to violence even when we don't intend it, and how we can calm our anger and stay in control.

In Groark Learns to Work Out Conflicts, the students will learn that conflicts between people are normal, how to prevent minor disagreements from escalating into serious fights, and steps for working out conflicts fairly and peacefully.

In Groark Learns about Bullying, the students will learn to recognize different forms of bullying behavior, why being a bully is wrong, and why they shouldn't participate in bullying behavior.



**Someplace Safe, Inc.
1540 Tod Ave. NW
Warren, Ohio 44485**

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**IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS IN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS
PLEASE ENCOURAGE THEM TO CALL "CONTACT" FOR 24-HR
CRISIS INFORMATION AT 330-393-1565 or 2-1-1.**

Someplace Safe's Crisis Line & Shelter is Staffed 24-hours a Day.

All services that Someplace Safe provides are free of charge.

If you need assistance in obtaining a Civil Protection Order or need Court Accompaniment; please call 330-393-3003 for an appointment with one of our Legal Advocates.

We believe in the philosophy that everyone is entitled to a life free of violence!