

# SafeNet

SafeNet Center Counseling, Education, Legal Advocacy & Hospitality House Emergency Shelter

## Domestic Violence Ripples Through Our Community

Violence at home is reflected in many of the troubles our country and communities face today—growing prison populations, welfare needs, increased poverty and high school drop-out rates, underachievement, and loss of productivity in the workplace.



### Impact On Safety And Performance At Work

The effects of domestic violence easily ripple into the workplace. Consider "Pam." She's 34 and has been working in clerical support at a medium-sized company in Erie. She often went to work aching and bruised. Her husband abused her at home. Her clothing concealed the marks on her body, so her co-workers thought she was just a shy person who kept to herself, never realizing the fear and distress she was enduring.

One evening, Pam tried to get free from her abusive husband for a second time. She stayed overnight at a motel, and went to work the next morning.

At the office, her husband began to call her on the phone repeatedly—as many as five times an hour. Seeing something was wrong, her office mates grew concerned for her. When they discovered what was happening, they understandably got anxious about their own safety. Alarming, 75% of the abused women who have jobs outside of the home are stalked and victimized *at work* by their abusers.

Fortunately, Pam was able to get free of her abusive husband. Her work performance and relationship with her co-workers have greatly improved. But Pam's case is only one of hundreds in Erie County. Domestic violence remains a serious challenge and expense for employers here and across the country. Over half of the battered women who work miss at least three full days of work per month and are late for work at least five times a month.

Pam also had medical expenses that were paid in part by her health coverage at work. Annually, \$18 million is spent on medical treatment for women in Erie County who are abused by husbands, boyfriends and fathers. The cost of Pam's treatment is not reflected in this figure because she told doctors she stumbled on the stairs.

**Did You Know? 97% of the inmates at the Albion prison say domestic violence was part of their home life when growing up.**



In our local schools the effects of domestic violence flow through children who witness domestic violence at home. Some lash out, becoming disruptive in classrooms and aggressive with schoolmates in hallways or on playgrounds. Others withdraw, resulting in poor achievement. As they search for love and understanding, many boys and girls take a wrong turn to drugs, gangs, delinquency and unwanted pregnancy.



# Shelter Begins The End Of Abuse

As we recognized October as "Domestic Violence Awareness Month," we continue to work toward the elimination of violence and oppression against women and their children as well as provide emergency and support services for victims/survivors of domestic violence.

We are committed to a vision of a just society, and to changing the current beliefs and institutions which encourage violence against women. Our guiding principle is empowerment; this emphasizes gaining power from within, instead of seeking approval and power from outside sources. To empower victims and their families to break the cycle of domestic violence, we provide shelter and on-going direct services.

We are in the midst of a capital campaign to improve living conditions for Erie's abused women and children. Overcrowding prompts our building project and \$2 million campaign. The capital campaign for SafeNet has been endorsed

by the Community Fund Drives Committee and your financial contribution is greatly needed and appreciated.

Shelter is vital in the range of supports needed to get free from abuse. It is our vision to create a true sanctuary, where victims, young and old, rich and poor, will have the physical and emotional space to work through a difficult time and begin to heal.

Regrettably, domestic violence is a problem that is not going away. It's a community issue with dire and deadly

effects.

We must do all we can to comfort and lessen the damage to women and children's lives. This is our 30th year of service to the area community and we are grateful to our many friends and loyal supporters. Thank you for making a difference in lives of so many others.

*Shirley Williams*  
Shirley Williams  
President, Board of Directors



## Focus On Young Victims

Erie's annual professional training conference on domestic violence, which took place November 1, focused on ways to help children who experience domestic violence or witness abuse at home.

Featured presenters Sandra Bloom, MD and Casey Keene, MSW spoke to a filled auditorium of health professionals, teachers and social workers at the Ambassador Conference Center.

Dr. Bloom is the author of *Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies* and the president of CommunityWorks, Inc, a behavioral consulting firm that helps develop nonviolent environments.

Casey Keene specializes in issues relating to children's exposure to domestic violence and is the Resource Coordinator for the National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women in Harrisburg, PA.

Hamot Medical Center, Mercyhurst College, Saint Vincent Health Center, Western Psychiatric Institute and SafeNet sponsored the event.

## Thank You All

We extend our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and companies for their generous donations to our Capital Fund Drive. Their combined gifts total more than \$1.1 million!

Susan Hirt Hagen  
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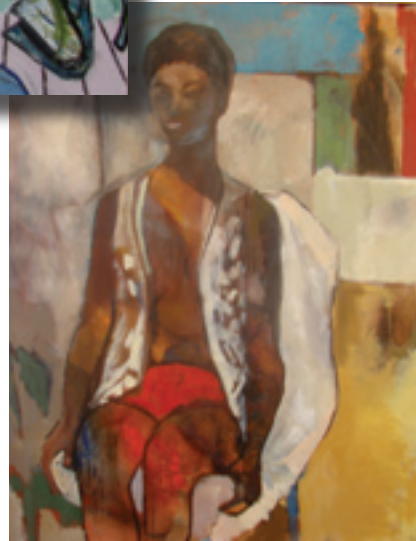
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# Look Inside The Annex

We're just starting to furnish the recently built annex to our emergency shelter. The kitchen appliances have been installed and the new quiet room is coming together. The annex walls are currently decorated with inspiring works of art generously loaned by the Erie Art Museum. These life affirming works are from the museum's permanent collection, featuring paintings by local artists such as Roy Ahlgren, Nancy Bacon, Mary Rosiak and Richard Nene. There are also works by nationally recognized artists including

Victor Vasarely, Ann Philbin and Alexander Calder on display. *Special thanks to museum director John Vanco and Vance Lupher who worked with us selecting and hanging the wonderful artwork for this collaborative project.*



The quiet room will be a retreat where victims of domestic violence can get away from the stress of their situation and begin to heal.

## Teacher, Friend & Inspiration Remembered

Erie was blessed with a most extraordinary woman—Sister Mary Charles Weschler, who passed away in August. She gave decades of service to the Sisters of Mercy, Mercyhurst College and toward the betterment of abused and impoverished women. She was a brilliant woman whose mind ranged from the broadest visioning and highest ideals to the exacting tasks of budgeting and planning.

Sister Mary Charles served as Treasurer and then President of the Board of Directors of Hospitality House just after our shelter was founded. When then

Governor Dick Thornburgh recognized the growing problem of homelessness, particularly of women and children, Hospitality House had the chance to provide longer term housing to help stabilize families leaving our emergency shelter. Sister led the way and motivated all of us to dive into the competitive grant process and secure funding for our Bridge House—the first transitional housing program for women and children in the state.

Sister Mary Charles' life accomplishments were enormous, and she truly was "the rising tide that floats all boats." She had great regard for people and listened to what we all had to say. We, in turn, learned so much from her and feel so blessed to have known her.



## Welcome Attorney Rebecca Wolford

Rebecca Wolford has joined SafeNet as its new Civil Legal Attorney. She will be handling cases concerning custody, support, landlord/tenant agreements, divorce, unemployment compensation, social security and public welfare for clients referred from our counseling, shelter, PFA and SafeHorizons programs.

Rebecca is from Erie and a graduate of Harborcreek High School. She received her B.A. in English from the College of William and Mary, her teaching certification from Edinboro University and taught high school English in Annapolis, MD before studying law at the University of Pittsburgh. After passing the state bar exam, she returned to Erie to work as the legal clerk for Judge William Cunningham.



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*Please remember SafeNet in your will.*

### Gannon Fraternity Brothers Lend A Hand

Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers (a.k.a. Pikes) recently lent some of their time and boundless energy painting SafeNet offices and sprucing up areas outdoors as part of Gannon University's 2007 Service Day. They are pictured here with Kathy Hubbard who directed the effort for SafeNet. *Thanks guys!*



### Johnny Appleseed Day Helps Plant Seeds of Awareness

On Johnny Appleseed Day each October, SafeNet and Community Health Net work



together to plant the seeds of awareness about domestic violence. SafeNet provides domestic violence screening, safety and referrals to all Health Net

patients and CHN provides information on nutrition and healthy living. Plus everybody enjoys tasting the new crop of apples and cider donated by Burch Farms. Pictured here are Stephanie Schaff-Turri from CHN (left), Suzanne Kuligowski from SafeNet and field student Kim Kurchev.

### Verizon Donates \$1,000

At the grand opening celebration of its new communications store in Erie, Verizon Wireless made a \$1,000 donation to SafeNet.

The store also will be collecting used cell phones for its HopeLine program, which reconditions old phones and gives them to victims of domestic violence to use in case of emergency. Pictured here are store manager Michael Held (right) and Kathy Hubbard from SafeNet.



### Save The Date In '08

**The Great Chili Cook-off** will take place February 24, 2008, 2-5 p.m. at BrewErie in Union Station.

**A Legal Conference** will take place April 16, 2008 at the Bel-Aire Hotel and Conference Center. The featured speaker will be widely commended law enforcement officer and domestic violence expert Lt. Mark Wynn.

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