

FVP VOICE

A Publication of Family Violence Project

Spring 2008

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY: THANK YOU FOR HELPING!

Massive outpouring of support helps to restore funding for domestic violence programs in state budget

For awhile, it looked like the Family Violence Project's 30th Anniversary year might prove to be the last one for the provision of services to victims of domestic violence, their families, and the communities of Kennebec and Somerset counties.

But then, our communities came together to turn the tide.

In early March, we received word that the Governor's supplemental budget eliminated funding for all state-funded domestic violence and sexual assault services in Maine, including direct service to victims, school-based prevention, and community outreach education, to begin on July 1, 2008. Within two weeks, a new group, MaineCanDoBetter, was formed; on-line petitions received signatures in the thousands; Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault rallied their supporters and then some; state legislators received emails and phone calls from their constituents; and over a thousand people (supporters of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other social service programs that stood to lose vital funding) rallied at the State House on March 12th.

When it was all over, the legislative Appropriations and Health and Human Services Committees voted to restore our funds, and convinced their colleagues in the whole legislative body to do the same. Other programs were not as lucky, but funding for Family Violence Project and our sister domestic violence programs and sexual assault programs withstood the cuts that were made to close the state budget gap, and were fully restored.

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FVP IS 30!! COME CELEBRATE OUR ANNIVERSARY WITH US

Events to include Sing-a-long *Grease*, Auction and Sock Hop

Save the date!! Family Violence Project is celebrating 30 years of service to the communities of Kennebec and Somerset counties with a weekend of special anniversary events this October.

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

E-mail from Liz, “Harry, you’re the new president of the board. It’s time for the spring newsletter and we need a piece from you for it. “ Sure, no problem...Jeez... what do I write about? Well, we’ve just faced the biggest budget crisis in the past couple of decades. That’s surely worthy of a column.

Indeed it is. Between the proposed state and federal cut backs, we were suddenly looking at a potential 25-30% loss of our funding. The organization was shaken to its core; staff began thinking back to the days when the crisis lines were run out of their kitchens. The entire FVP staff began the agonizing process of prioritizing our core mission and looking for any and all ways to maintain those functions while we rode out the storm. We had to consider drastic reductions in our prevention and outreach programs, closing offices, leaving multiple positions unfilled and even the wrenching prospect of laying off staff.

Throughout these dark days, the FVP staff pulled together, brainstorming innovative ways of maximizing our efficiency and reducing our expenses. Staff who were already stretched thinner than a wire looked at ways to take on even more responsibilities. All the while, management and staff focused on supporting each other through this episode. The Family Violence Project is family and family takes care of and looks out for each other.

Just as I was putting all these thoughts down and feeling pretty proud of myself for coming up with a decent President’s Letter, I looked at the morning newspaper and saw the headline. *Woman found dead killed by ex-boyfriend who then killed himself.* A sixty-year-old woman who had just adopted her 10-year-old grandson, murdered by an intimate partner.

Once again, I came face to face with why our organization exists and why the community so vitally needs us to continue providing ALL of our services. These repeated tragedies won’t go away without our ongoing presence and energy.

Through the combined diligence, hard work and lobbying efforts of thousands of concerned people, the budget cuts were rescinded. Now we need to use that same momentum to address the real problem, the disease of domestic violence.

Service Volume in Fiscal Year 2007

Total number of clients served: **1676**
Victims receiving individual support and advocacy: **1,596**
Victims participating in support groups: **262**
Victims using emergency shelter: **244**
Victims receiving court/legal advocacy: **460**
Batterers participating in education groups: **209**
Number of calls to the crisis line: **4,124**
Number of community education hours: **5702**
Number of school-based/youth-focused prevention education hours: **1293**
Number of students participating in prevention education **6776**
Number of Volunteer Hours **1993**

Cell Phone Donations

Your old cell phone can be turned into an important safety tool for those experiencing domestic abuse.

For more information about our cell phone program, how you or someone you know can get community service hours, or how to donate a phone, please contact Jaime at: 623-8637 ext. 302 or

jaimeg@familyviolenceproject.org

30th Anniversary, cont.

Come back with us to the 1950s (well, yes, if it's 30 years, that would be back to the 1970s, but do you really want to relive that era?) for Sing-a-long *Grease*. We'll be having three performances of the movie, complete with subtitles so you can sing along with all your favorites, a costume contest (dig out your poodle skirts and motorcycle jackets), and, after the Sunday matinee performance, a sock hop with DJ, buffet dinner, and silent auction.

Showings of the movie will be on Friday, October 3 at University of Maine, Augusta; Saturday, October 4, at a location in Hallowell still to be determined; and Sunday, October 5 (matinee) at Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville. Following the Waterville performance, we will continue the celebration at Champions Fitness Center in Waterville with the sock hop/dinner/silent auction.

And, leading up to the event, we will be holding an on-line auction, made possible by the generosity of local businesses and individuals.

The on-line auction will begin in August and will close on October 5th with the silent auction.

Further details on all of the above will be available on our website, www.familyviolenceproject.org later this summer.

If you would like to donate a (new, antique, or collectible) item, art work, travel package, etc, or a service to the silent auction, or for more information, please call Liz at 623-8637, ext. 301. All proceeds from these fundraising events will benefit victims of domestic violence and their children.

The Vision of the Family Violence Project is a community where violence is unacceptable and people treat each other with respect.

In Memoriam

Patti Bourgoin, former FVP Board member, died on April 9, 2008, in Gardiner. Patti, who served on our Board in the mid-1980s, most recently worked as a caseworker for the Department of Health and Human Services.

FVP's DV/CPS Liaison, Kelly Goulette, worked with Patti and was asked to speak at the funeral. The following is excerpted from her remarks:

"The Family Violence Project benefited from Patti's support at many different levels. She was of great assistance in helping families understand the effects of domestic violence and its impact on children. The parents and children she worked with were heard, and she was patient and effective in helping them navigate the difficult challenges they had in their lives. She also recognized the importance that the work of the Family Violence Project brings to the community and did her part not only through her work as a caseworker, but also by her personal generosity to FVP over the years.

"Patti, we hope you know that you made a difference. We will honor you by continuing to do the work you did so well."

In keeping with Patti's dedication to the people we serve, her family requested that donations in her memory be directed to the Family Violence Project.

The Mission of the Family Violence Project is to fulfill its vision by: promoting individuals' safety; intervening with batterers to hold them accountable; supporting individuals' capacity to change and to take responsibility for their actions; educating communities about domestic abuse; and assisting in creating public policy which promotes the safety of individuals and the accountability of abusers.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY...

Waterville DV Vigil/Walk October 2007

On a bright, brisk October day, a diverse group of people gathered in the parking lot of Champion's in Waterville to march in a 5K Domestic Violence Walk and Peace Vigil. Many of the participants were there to honor the memory of 37-year old Rhonda Wakefield-Reynolds who was shot in the head at point blank range on January 12, 2007 in full view of her two children and died later at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor. Her husband, Richard Reynolds has been charged with her murder. Some of the comments made by participants:

"She (Rhonda) was a sweetheart. She was a very wonderful person. The girls and the guys, we miss her. Her presence is there in the room.

"It is time for men to step up to the plate" to address the issue of domestic violence.

"I think people should be more public and have more awareness of domestic violence. This is something that shouldn't be tolerated, so I'm doing my small part."

As part of the recognition of October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, walkers marched to Waterville/Winslow's Two Cent Bridge and threw flowers into the river. One participant had a handful of roses in remembrance of Rhonda Wakefield. She told a Waterville Morning Sentinel news reporter that day:

"She loved pink."



Day of Hope

Both Lawrence Jr. High and Winslow Jr. High have been running girls groups facilitated by Colby College students. The group provides a safe place and an opportunity for the girls to talk and share experiences.

These groups meet in their perspective schools on a weekly basis and talk about a wide range of topics such as how the media portrays females; boyfriends; bullying; parents; school climate; abuse; peer pressure; etc. One day a few girls started sharing situations that were going on in their lives. Because these situations had such an impact on the group members, one of the girls decided we needed to do something to recognize other students who were dealing with difficult situations either at home or some other situation. They decided on doing a Day of Hope and sold white bracelets to raise the money. This is a group of girls committed to making a positive change in our community.

It was the decision of the group to donate the money to the Family Violence project.

After an article appeared in the paper, staff from Margaret Chase Library in Skowhegan asked the girls to come tour the facility and they accepted additional monies to add to the donation.



Volunteers from the Margaret Chase Smith House preparing a mailing for Family Violence Project.

TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

INVOLVED TEENS

By Robin Allen, Abuse Prevention Educator

Margaret Mead once said “*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has*” I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention to an often overlooked group of people who are working very hard to make a change in our community: youth

Prevention education is based on the idea that abuse is a learned behavior and it is a choice. When I visit schools I talk with students about taking responsibility for their own choices and actions in relationships. One in three teen relationships is abusive which means that if a student doesn't experience abuse in their own relationship, then chances are they will know someone who does. I share with students ways that they can support other.

- Listen and believe
- Let the person know you care and are concerned (without telling them to break up and leave)
- Assist them in getting help
- Speak out when you see it happening in your school and community

I would like to highlight two specific school communities who have been very busy raising awareness and speaking out:

In the fall of 2007, Nan Bell and I attended the Cony Coffee House in Augusta. We were served coffee, delicious treats and were entertained by student performances, all for a small ticket price we were happy to pay. The coffee house is a student lead initiative held each fall in honor of Chellie Calloway, a teacher at Cony High School who lost her life to Domestic Violence in 2004.

Between performances, students spoke up and encouraged the audience to dig a little deeper into their pockets and make an additional donation to help families and individuals affected by Domestic Violence. The result was a resounding success! The Cony Coffee House raised over \$2,000. to benefit Family Violence Project. Cony High School has continued to support Family Violence Project in other ways by attending community vigils, participating in the poster contest and other awareness activities.

For the last two years Hall-Dale Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) has worked hard to raise awareness in their school community about Teen Dating violence. JMG students raised \$300. to benefit Family Violence Project by selling flowers this past February. Each student who purchased a flower was also given a Teen Dating Violence Brochure. I am excited to share that JMG students have decided to continue efforts to raise awareness by creating original PSAs about dating violence that will be used in prevention programs and on the myspace page (see myspace.com/fveducator).

It takes a community to end domestic violence and I would like to sincerely thank these school communities who have gone above and beyond to help victims of domestic violence. I look forward to working with you in the future!



Hal-Dale JMG students, Angela Silberberg and David Harper present a check.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, cont.

Troopers honor FVP with \$3000 donation

The Maine State Troopers Foundation has given a \$3000 donation to the Family Violence Project to use for our client emergency fund and advocacy in Somerset County.

The presentation of the award was made by Detective Michael Mitchell, Treasurer of the Maine State Troopers Association at a meeting of the Somerset County Domestic Violence Task Force on April 3. The donation is especially meaningful because of the close working relationship between domestic violence advocates and State Troopers.

The Troopers Foundation funds its donations through the sale of advertising space in *Maine State Trooper* magazine, which is published twice yearly. Over the past 10 years, the Foundation's generosity has enhanced the ability of many of Maine's nonprofits to deliver their services. Their gift to the Family Violence Project will help victims of domestic violence and their children begin the transition to a life free from abuse.

YARD SALE & BAKE SALE to benefit Family Violence Project

**Saturday June 21st from 8am – 2pm
83 Western Avenue in Augusta,
on the corner of Drew Street**

Starting Monday May 5th, we will begin accepting donations for the yard sale at our administrative office at 83 Western Ave in Augusta. We do ask that items be new or gently used; incomplete or broken items and stained or torn clothing will not be accepted.

For questions, or to make donations, please call Jaime at 623-8637 ext 302.

NEW EMPLOYEES AT FVP.....

JESSICA COLE - Administrative. Assistant

I started working at Menswork in May, 2007. I am a college student at Kennebec Valley Community College and I have also attended a summer program at Vassar College this past summer. I started doing volunteer work for the Family Violence Project for a service learning project, which was required for my Sociology class this past spring. I chose the Family Violence Project because I came from a violent family home and I know the affects that it can have on a family. Being a witness and a victim to violence has made me appreciate working for such an amazing organization that has so many dedicated and inspiring people within it.

LIZ HERSOM - Executive Assistant

I started my position as the Executive Assistant at FVP in October of 2007 after working for the past 32 years in the private sector, I am finding the field of domestic violence prevention very challanging and rewarding. I have just completed trainging so that I will be able to assit clients. I am looking forward to my future here.

JASON LEBLANC - Abuse Prevention Educator

I began working at FVP in December 2007 as an Abuse Preventin Educator in the Somerset schools. Previously, I worked for the Eastern Maine AIDS Network as an Outreach Educator, Prevention Counselor and Director of the Needle Exchange Program as well as HIV antibody Tester. As a native of the Skowhegan area, I have coached high school basketball and baseball and been involved in many community programs. I recently resettled in Skowhegan with my parter Lane and my foster son Corey.

STALKING KITS

Thanks to a \$1,000 grant from Verizon the Family Violence Project has put together 50 stalking kits to help victims who experience any harassing or threatening behaviors by a partner or ex partner. The stalking kits are designed to help empower victims, increase their safety as well as document stalking incidents. We are pleased to be able include these kits in our work to enhance victim safety. The stalking kits include: Emergency Cell Phone, Safety Plan, Flashlight, Whistles, Camera, Stalking Log Notebook and Pen, Calendar, Plastic Bag, Latex Gloves and Stalking Information

REACHING OUT TO HELP

To all at the Family Violence Project:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for the life saving work you do everyday. Yesterday evening a male friend of mine in Texas called and asked me to call a female friend of his in Wisconsin who had locked herself in her bathroom to protect herself from her abusive boyfriend. I was so grateful to have your “you have the power to help a friend who is being abused” magnet on my fridge! When I first picked up this magnet at the Hardy Girls office I thought, “Well, you’ll never really use this, as can you really imagine your friends in abusive relationships?” But I also figured one never knew and it seemed like an important resource to have. How glad I am that I brought it home. I never could have imagined the situation I found myself in last night, comforting and advising a woman I had never met in a state I have never been to! By the end of the night she was safe in a shelter. I just wanted to thank you for the powerful ripples your work has, ripples you may never directly see. I was so grateful to have your guide as a steady and empowering resource as I spoke to the woman last night.

It gave me the simple tools to have a much more effective conversation with her, and I know both of us are grateful.

Many thanks and all the best,

Gemma Laser, Outreach Coordinator
Hardy Girls Healthy Women

THANK YOU FOR HELPING, cont.

And all it took was... A Community. There are many ways, large and small, that people and communities can work together to end domestic violence. This was one shining moment, and we couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you. *(For other ways that you can help to end domestic violence as well as provide assistance to victims of abuse, see the center pages of this newsletter.)*

This is just a small sampling of what local individuals, organizations, and businesses can do to end domestic violence and help victims. “It Takes a Community” will be a regular feature in our newsletters.

Court Advocacy Services Available

FVP court Advocacy services are available in **Augusta District Court** on Monday mornings, **Waterville District Court** on Thursdays mornings and in **Skowhegan District Court** on Friday mornings. If you have questions about the Protection From Abuse Process, please ask the Court Clerk to direct you to the FVP Court advocate for assistance, or call the FVP office at 1-877-890-7788 to schedule an appointment with an advocate.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT
P O BOX 304
AUGUSTA, ME 04332-0304
Change Service Requested

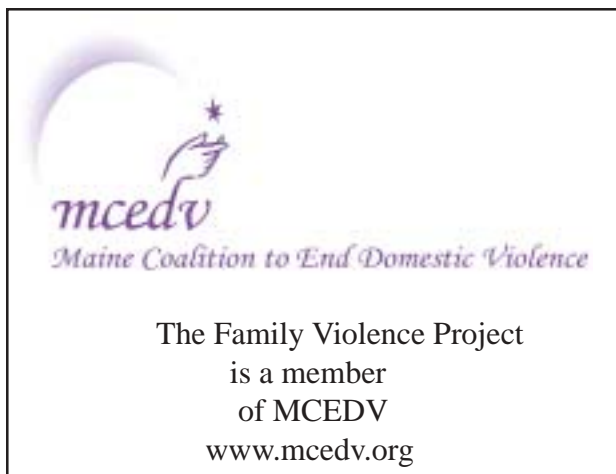
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Agencies of Kennebec Valley and Mid-Maine



To Contact FVP:

Augusta Crisisline (207) 623-3569
Waterville Crisisline: (207) 877-0835
Skowhegan Crisisline: (207)-474-8860

24 Hr. Toll Free Hotline:
1-877-890-7788

Administrative Office (207)-623-8637
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