

The *SafeVoices* Echo

Working to End Domestic Violence

Formerly the Abused Women's Advocacy Project

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NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

We're a month into 2012 and now is the time many of us take stock of our New Year's Resolutions. Have we held fast to our goals or cut corners when the going got tough? While we may no longer be as zealous about that new hobby or finally organizing the garage, those of us at Safe Voices remain committed to our resolution to provide the best possible support to women, men, and children experiencing domestic violence.

Making good on our goals, we have expanded our advocacy programming to include a Rural Outreach Advocate in Androscoggin County and are currently working with the largest group of trained volunteers ever in our agency. It is when we are focused on our goals that we can best help the people we serve achieve their resolutions to find

safety or leave a dangerous relationship.

It takes courage to confront a situation and take action—whether that's taking stock of household finances or improving one's health—and that is especially true for people living with domestic violence. Leaving is the most dangerous time for a victim. That is why Safe Voices is committed to being there—24 hours a day on our helpline; in the courts, assisting with Protection from Abuse Orders; in support groups, sharing laughter and tears.

The year has only just begun. It's not too late to make a change and reclaim a life of independence, opportunity, and love.

~Jane Morrison



RAFFLE CALENDAR

This year's Lucky March Prize Calendar is here! Each year Safe Voices puts together a raffle calendar full of prizes donated by local business leaders. For a sample of the prizes that you could win, please see the newsletter insert.

Tickets will go on sale February 1st and your last



chance to get a ticket will be February 29th. We will draw a winner each day in the month of March, and each name will be put back in the drawing. So even if you win, your name goes back in the drawing for future prizes. That's 31 chances to win!

For more information contact

Lana at 795-6744 x14, via email at lwhittemore@safevoices.org or get your tickets instantly online.

Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25.



Get your tickets now online!

<http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/lanawhittemore/lucky-march-prize-calendar>

RECENT GRANTS

Safe Voices has received two new grants to support education and outreach with area youth.

The Maine Women's Fund, in partnership with the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation, has provided funding to support an awareness project entitled Crossing Lines: Avoiding the Dangers of Teen Dating Violence. The project will involve an interactive reading of a novel that illustrates the realities of teen dating violence. It will be followed by

a student-directed project to raise awareness in their school and community. The first of these groups will be led by Jessica Dorr in Franklin County.

Support from the Verizon Foundation will be used for developing the education program's technology resources. The \$10,000 grant will be used to purchase new laptops and video recording devices that will allow educators to better access media in the classroom. These tools will also allow Safe Voices

to better engage youth by giving them the tools to create their own media messages against teen dating violence. In addition, Verizon's HopeLine program gave a check for \$1000 to Safe Voices in order to provide holiday support to families in need due to domestic violence. On behalf of all the people we serve, thank you to the Maine Women's Fund, Bangor Savings Bank, and Verizon.

ONE STEP AT A TIME: JONI'S* STORY

Joni's struggle out of her abusive situation has been long and arduous. For nine years she stayed with a physically violent man who stalked her, threatened to take away her children, and took her money to feed his drug habit. Joni herself struggled with drug addiction, and in the summer of 2011, lost her children to DHHS. While she had tried to get help before, this was the year Joni would take back control of her life.

Working with Safe Voices and a caseworker, Joni made a plan to get clean and safe. She worked with court advocates and the Child Protective Services Liaison to

get a Protection from Abuse Order, connect with the support group, and regain custody of her children. Part of that process included Joni entering a 28-day drug treatment program, which she successfully completed by the end of November.

All this time, however, her abuser was stalking and threatening Joni, even moving in across the street from where she was staying. When she found him hiding in her bathroom, she no longer felt safe where she was. After escaping the attempted assault, Joni sought shelter at a domestic violence agency in another area.

Determined, Joni

continued to travel to her appointments in the Lewiston area and eventually relocated to the Safe Voices shelter. She was soon accepted into Stepping Stones, a program that reunites parents with their children who are in state custody. Now Joni is back with her children and away from her abuser. She is thriving and hopes to go to school to become a drug counselor or social worker. She wants to support people like her in finding freedom, hope, and a new life.

(*Name changed to protect confidentiality.)

To learn more about the dynamics of domestic violence and what services are available at Safe Voices, visit our website at www.safevoices.org.

SAVE THE DATE: WALK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2012

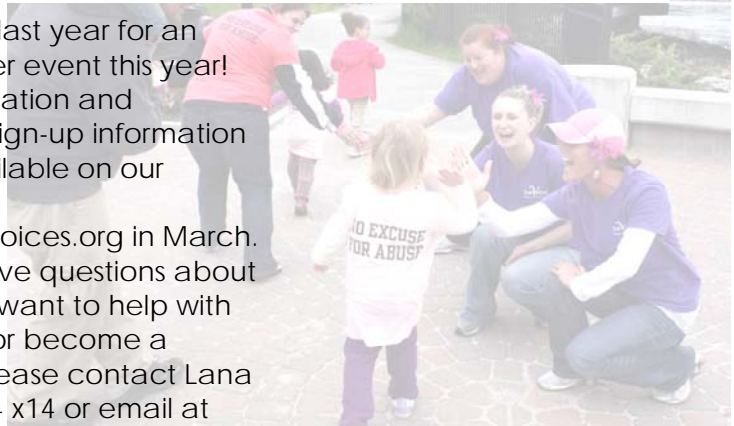
Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 2nd, 2012, for this year's Walk to End Domestic Violence!

We had a wonderful walk last year, raising \$22,500 with an estimated 300 people in attendance thanks to the support of many community members and local businesses. All of the funds raised supported victims of domestic violence in our community.

The planning has already begun to build upon the

success of last year for an even bigger event this year! Early registration and Firstgiving sign-up information will be available on our website at www.safevoices.org in March.

If you have questions about the event, want to help with the event or become a sponsor, please contact Lana at 795-6744 x14 or email at lwhittemore@safevoices.org. We look forward to seeing you there!



RUMFORD ADVOCACY SUCCESS

For several months now Safe Voices has partnered with Rumford Hospital to provide domestic violence advocacy services directly to staff, patients, and the larger Rumford community. Once a week, Safe Voices' Rumford Court Advocate is stationed in the hospital cafeteria to make contact with anyone impacted by domestic violence. She is there to listen, offer support, and assist with safety planning.

Thus far the program has been successful. Many staff from all departments drop in during their lunch breaks to ask questions about the services in order to better support their patients. They say they feel better equipped to handle domestic violence cases knowing that an advocate is readily available. Others, including patients and their

loved ones, take advantage of the casual setting to seek support for themselves. In more confidential situations, the hospital has provided rooms where the advocate and a victim can meet in private.

The program has been such a good fit that many at Rumford Hospital have begun to view the advocate as an extension of the staff. According to the Rumford Advocate, the "hospital [and staff] have been very warm and welcoming; they have gone over and above to accommodate having this service on site." And there is no doubt that it is having an impact in the community. Many people we work with report that, for various safety and transportation reasons, they would never have been able to access Safe Voices services if an advocate had not been present at the

hospital.

We are looking forward to another year of partnerships with Rumford Hospital and the Central Maine Medical Family.

*The "hospital [and staff] have been very warm and welcoming; they have gone over and above to accommodate having this service on site."
~ Rumford Advocate*



WHY DOES SHE STAY?

It is a question advocates hear over and over again, and while not all victims of abuse are women, watching someone stay or go back to an abusive situation can be frustrating, scary, and confusing. Knowing the dynamics of power and control can help us understand what is behind that decision. Common reasons people stay include:

Fear: It is likely the abuser has made some sort of threat to the victim's safety, livelihood, or children.

Awareness: Often people experiencing abuse do not recognize the behavior as being wrong or unhealthy.

Manipulation: Some abusers will emotionally abuse their victims to the point that they no longer believe they deserve safety and love, or that they are responsible for the abuse.

Children and Family Pressures: Often victims are reluctant to break up their families or end a committed relationship. There may also be pressure to "keep up appearances" in public.

Material Barriers: In many cases, a victim tries to leave but is faced with a lack of housing, money, transportation, childcare, and other supports necessary to leave for good.

Love: Most abusive relationships do not start out violent and controlling, and the victim may yearn for "the way things used to be." Likewise, she or he may see something in the abuser that she feels outweighs the abuse.

Ultimately, no one enjoys being abused. It can take an average of nine attempts before someone leaves an abusive relationship for good. If you know someone who is struggling to get out of an abusive situation, let them know they are not alone and that there are services here to help. Refer to your local domestic violence agency or law enforcement.

TDVAPM: THE BIG PICTURE

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month (TDVAPM), a time to engage youth on the issue of abuse and how they can make a change not just in their own lives, but in the culture. Toxic media images provide a constant stream of gender stereotypes and violence. Many of these images are aimed directly at teens and young adults, teaching them what is normal and acceptable in dating relationships.

This February, commit to having a conversation on abuse with a teen or teens you care about. Get them thinking critically about the influence of media on our relationships and self-esteem. Ask them questions. What is their opinion on a show, a celebrity, a musician? What messages do they hear on TV, in music, at school? What bothers them about dating relationships? What makes them feel good?—Youth are eager to educate the adults in their lives and appreciate having someone there to listen.

It is not just educators and families who will be taking part in the TDVAPM discussion. On February 7th Governor Paul LePage will be signing a proclamation declaring February Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in Maine. In recognition, Safe Voices will be conducting a variety of outreach projects in schools and communities throughout Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin Counties. Many of these will include media literacy workshops designed to get youth thinking about what popular culture says about dating and relationships. To learn more about what is happening in your area, contact Safe Voices' administrative office at 795-6744.

HOLIDAY WREATHS

This year's wreath fundraiser was very successful, raising almost \$2,500 for domestic violence services. Volunteer time contributions were crucial to this success with more than 20 community members volunteering 100 hours of time. Thank you to everyone who purchased a wreath and volunteered time to create the beautiful decorations that adorned many homes this holiday season.



www.safevoices.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Safe Voices offers a variety of support groups throughout Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin Counties. If you or someone you know could benefit from attending one of our groups, please call our 24 hour Helpline at 1-800-559-2927 to be put in touch with the advocate in your area.

The mission of Safe Voices is to support and empower those affected by domestic violence and engage the community in creating social change in Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin Counties.



Stay updated on all our events and activities on Facebook. Search Safe Voices and click "Like."



I would like to make a contribution to Safe Voices.

I am interested in volunteering with Safe Voices. Please contact me.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make checks payable to: Safe Voices

Please mail to: P.O. Box 713, Auburn, Maine 04212.

Or visit us at www.safevoices.org to make a donation



Thank you for your support!!

OUR SERVICES:

24 Hour HELPLINE 1.800.559.2927
Domestic Violence Shelter
Transitional Services
Individual and Court Advocacy
Support Groups
Community Education
Dating Violence Prevention
Youth Services
Advocacy with Child Protective Services
Elder Abuse Services
Alternatives to Abuse
Volunteer Programming

Questions or comments about this newsletter?
Contact Lana Whittemore at 207-795-6744 x14 or lwhittemore@safevoices.org



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Working to End Domestic Violence



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