



HELP & HOPE

A Quarterly Newsletter from Safe Horizons of Somerset

Volume 1, Issue 1

July 2009

HELP AND HOPE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE IN SOMERSET COUNTY

FORMERLY RESOURCE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Celebrating a New Beginning

The Resource Center for Women and Their Families has reached a very important milestone—providing safety and services to victims of domestic abuse in Somerset County for 30 years. We are doing it by writing a new chapter in our story

Safe Horizons of Somerset is open for business... that is, business as usual. For over 30 years, our agency, formerly known as the Resource Center for Women and Their Families, has fulfilled our mission to end domestic abuse and empower victims by providing protection, education



and resources in the community. Over the years, the face of our clients has been changing. Women, men and children seek our professional assistance in a

complex society and we are responding in ways we never dreamed of in our beginnings.

Our services are inclusive of the entire Somerset County community. Everyone in need of our services should feel welcomed to come and seek a brighter future that is violence free.

Help and hope, that's what we offer and what we want to achieve peace in all homes in Somerset County.



Purple Laces... Safer Places Pledge Walk

June 6, 2009 – On a beautifully sunny Saturday afternoon at Pleasant Valley Park in Basking Ridge, caring community members and their families came together for Purple Laces ...



Bernards Twp. Mayor Carolyn Kelly and Bill and Gina Kosakowski and family cut the ribbon to begin the walk.

walk raised over \$11,000. The support given through pledges at the walk will make a big difference in the lives of Somerset County residents who suffer in silence from the devastating effects of domestic abuse.



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Safer Places, a family pledge walk to help support victims of domestic abuse in Somerset County. The afternoon of family fun featured the live local band Stolen Hearts, games, contests and prizes for everyone there.

Bernards Township Mayor Carolyn Kelly and volunteer Bill Kosakowski and his family cut the ribbon and led the walkers around the park. The pledge

Thanks to Our Pledge Walk Sponsors!

Applebee's

Dental Associates of Basking Ridge

Friends of the Shelter

Just Subs of Hillsborough

Millstone River Creamery

Pfizer

Rotary Club of Hillsborough



A Message from the Executive Director Paloma Amar-Coleman, MFT, LPC

A victim of domestic abuse engages in a lengthy painful journey towards becoming a survivor who is empowered; a survivor who fully believes that she or he does not deserve to be abused but instead deserves respect and love; a survivor who will allow safety and healthy relationships in her or his life.

For the past 30 years, the Resource Center for Women and Their Families has been providing comprehensive high quality services to women, men and children whose lives have been impacted by domestic abuse. These services are designed to meet the needs of victims who seek safety and hope. Currently we serve over 700 individuals in Somerset County, provide nearly 5000 hours of counseling, case management and legal advocacy a year, shelter nearly 90 women and children and answer over 3000 hotline calls from victims, their

families and others concerned about safety.

In the past year, the Board, staff and leadership of the Resource Center for Women and Their Families engaged in our own journey of discovery. We set out to discover if our name, along with our services provided victims and the Somerset County community we serve with a message of hope and safety.

With the talented and generous guidance of Mara Connolly Taft of Taft and Partners, our administrative staff conducted focus groups with our clients, staff, Board of Trustees and supporters. This research led us to conclude that a name change was necessary. Our aim was to be more inclusive and to describe, in spirit if not in letter, the work we do to bring both safety and hope to survivors of abuse.



Safe Horizons of Somerset, Inc. was then born. This is a name that helps us achieve our goals in terms of providing two primary messages to our community and our clients. The message of safety for everyone who is a primary or secondary victim of domestic abuse and, that there is hope for a bright future free of violence. Our new name, Safe Horizons of Somerset, better reflects our vision of bringing peace to all homes in Somerset County.

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Our Services

The mission of Safe Horizons of Somerset is to end domestic and empower victims by providing protection, education, and resources .

Services include:

- **Emergency Shelter – Transitional Housing –**
- **Legal Advocacy –**
- **Domestic Violence Response Teams –**
- **Outreach Counseling –**
- **Community Education –**
- **Culturally Sensitive Programs –**
- **Services for Adults & Children –**

all offered free of charge

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formerly the Resource Center for Women and Their Families

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Friends of the Shelter

When times are tough, your friends are the ones who stand with you. Is there anything more empowering than a friend who stands with you through thick and thin?

In 1987, a circle of committed women in the Somerset Hills section of Somerset County joined together for the purpose of helping victims and survivors of domestic abuse. From a modest number of a dozen friends, this wonderful group of supporters has grown to more than 50 dedicated women, a circle of friends; The Friends of the Shelter.

Over the years, the impact of The Friends has grown from primarily raising money to support Safe Horizons of Somerset's Safe House operations to raising well **over one million dollars** to support counseling and other services so needed by victims and their children. The Friends' Derby Day, held each year on the day of the running of the Kentucky

Derby, is the main support of Safe Horizons' camp fund which provides scholarships to dozens of children in Somerset County to attend camp each summer.

Yearly, the Friends of the Shelter donate over \$100,000 from fundraising events such as Derby Day and other gatherings to support the mission of Safe Horizons of Somerset. Through the Friends' generous contribution to the Safe House, their donations of time and money to our holiday efforts, and their dedication to the many events we conduct to support victims of domestic abuse, they have enabled Safe Horizons of Somerset to aggressively forward our mission to end domestic abuse in Somerset County.

The Friends of the Shelter have created a circle of love and support that surrounds Safe Horizons of Somerset. That circle of friends has continued to sustain the free programs and services provided by Safe Horizons that are critical to keeping all of our friends in Somerset County living in peace.

Friends' Author Luncheon

Featuring New York Times best-selling author Jane Green

October 21, 2009

Basking Ridge Country Club.

Put the date on your calendar and send your name and address to:

friendsoftheshelter@hotmail.com

You'll receive an invitation in mid-September.

November 20, 2009

Save the Date for

A Starry Night to Remember

to benefit

Safe Horizons of Somerset

formerly The Resource Center for Women and their Families

A Survivor's Story

This story reflects the experience of one of our clients. Her name is omitted and some of the details were changed to protect her anonymity. Her story, in her own words, is real.

Safe Horizons of Somerset has been an integral part of my growth and independence over the last year, and I'd like to share how the agency's services have helped me evolve through the process of leaving an abusive relationship.

No one starts out her marriage thinking that bad things can happen, that the person she loves and chose to spend her life with could hurt her in any way. I come from a good family, where I never encountered abuse of any kind. When I got married I believed in the 'happily ever-after'.

My husband and I had been going through difficulties for years before things ever came to a head. I believe our different cultures were a problem, but most of our issues were differences in personalities and values. Although there were difficulties there were many qualities I loved about him. As the years went by, our differences became more apparent. There were even times I would say to myself that his behavior to me seemed like abuse. Then I would deny it. I had made a commitment to the relationship and decided to stick to it through thick and thin. Any changes he wanted me to make in myself I would make.

"When you put a frog in cool water and slowly heat it up, more than likely he won't even know he is boiling. I believe that is what my marriage was like."

He started to call me names. The verbal abuse was subtle, and then became strident. I thought it was his way to tell me what I was doing wrong, to tell me what I had to change, to tell me I was stupid and didn't listen.

He would go into rages about something I had done or said and would punch walls and tear down doors. He started dictating to me. He isolated me from my family and banned them from our house because he believed they had insulted him. At some point he started to focus on a relationship I had had years before I met him. In his anger he started beating me. The physical abuse was intermittent, but often he would keep me up all night berating me.

I likened being in this marriage to a frog: When you put a frog in boiling hot water, he will either jump out immediately or die. When you put a frog in cool water and slowly heat it up, more than likely he won't even know that he is boiling. I believe that is what my marriage was like.

Guilt and fear also kept me in it. This went on for years until I turned around and saw myself in a beautiful home with all my friends and family rejected by him; and looked at my children and realized what it might be doing to them to have to hear the anger, to be afraid and isolated.

One day he accused me of having an affair and demanded that I better tell him the truth. I was afraid of getting another beating or worse. He choked me and threatened me, and I became afraid for my life. I had no idea what I was going to do. I just left with the clothes on my back and my two children. Making the decision to leave felt like jumping off a cliff.

I contacted Safe Horizons of Somerset. It wasn't until I was at their intake session that I finally realized that I had been victimized all these years. Until that point, I wouldn't recognize it. I couldn't admit it. I cried that day for all the years I believed that it was only me, that it was my fault, thinking that if I had been a better wife, a better person he wouldn't have done the things he did to me.

I joined a group session to learn about domestic abuse and to recognize it. It was wonderful to meet other women of all walks of life and share parts of ourselves. It was good to know that I wasn't alone.

I began individual therapy with the most wonderful therapist I've ever met. I have experienced therapy before but none of it ever helped me until I came to Safe Horizons of Somerset. I have gone through



all the emotions; allowing myself to grieve the loss of my marriage. I have learned how to forgive myself, love myself, to understand myself and to go back to the person who I used to be. My children have also benefited through group therapy as well as individual therapy.

Safe Horizons of Somerset has truly been a blessing to my family and me. It has provided the opportunity to bring me back to me. Without Safe Horizons, I don't know whether I would have gotten the help I needed. I have come to understand who I am. I'm learning to stand up for the choices I make. I am becoming the woman I was meant to be. I believe in myself. I have evolved from my fear of my husband to making changes in my life and making decisions. I am learning to forgive myself and be proud of who I am.

Safe Horizons of Somerset embraced me, tenderly, compassionately, openly. This has been a phenomenal journey for me and I will always be grateful to them.



Community Corner



October is Domestic Abuse Awareness Month. Safe Horizons remembers and honors victims in Somerset County with our annual Candlelight Vigil held at the Historic Somerset County Courthouse in Somerville on the first Thursday in October.

Above—Supporters gather in front of the Courthouse flanked by several of our “silent witness” statues, each representing a victim who has died in our County as a result of domestic violence.



Above—Hand-knit teddy bears were a hit with our client children thanks to the generosity of the knitter’s group (pictured) from The Down Cellar in Basking Ridge. The soft, plush bears provide a sense of warmth and comfort during the initial stages of recovery and counseling.



Above—Associate Director of Community Affairs Tony Winchatz lights his candle from Board of Trustee President Diane English. Board members Mary Jo Altom, Gordie Jamieson and Susan Kalison Karp join the procession as the Candlelight Vigil commences.

Left—Bill Kosakowski of Basking Ridge presents a check for \$3,200 to Associate Director of Community Affairs Tony Winchatz. Bill raised these funds through pledges when he participated in the “Escape from Alcatraz” triathlon in July 2008. Bill also helps organize the annual Purple Laces...Safer Places pledge walk to help provide services for victims of domestic abuse.

Fore Love Golf Open—2009

Presenting Sponsor

Phillips-van Heusen Corporation

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For sixteen years, Somerset County golfers have teed up with Safe Horizons of Somerset at their annual Fore Love Golf Open. Safe Horizons' 16th annual spring outing was held again this year at Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson New Jersey. On June 8, close to 100 golfers enjoyed camaraderie and a shared commitment to ending domestic violence in Somerset County. The day featured fabulous fairways on a beautiful and challenging course.

An afternoon passing shower did not spoil the day or cool off the putting contest shoot-out between Safe Horizons Board of Trustee member David Williams and Lane Williams, vice president with Ace Sponsor ABM.

Golf committee co-chairs Mort Penson and Mike Spishock, both of Johnson & Johnson, handed out the golf awards and prizes during dinner. Prizes were awarded for the On the Green Contest, the Putting Contest and individual women's, men's, and team play.

Although employees of third year Presenting Sponsor Phillips Van Heusen

dominated the course with over 40 players in attendance, Johnson and Johnson had a sizeable and competitive contingent on hand! After winning the team "best ball" contest, Johnson and Johnson's Mike Dombrowski and his team echoed the sentiment of the day and donated *back* their prize. The donation, a golf foursome at Twin Brooks Golf Club, was offered during our energetic live auction and sold to another enthusiastic supporter.

The 19th hole was sponsored by Zyr Vodka, who provided a vodka tasting after the rounds were completed and the scores were all tallied.

Thank you to all who enjoyed the day of golf in support of ending domestic abuse. If you love golf and haven't been to a Safe Horizons of Somerset Fore Love Golf Open, stay tuned for information about Fore Love 2010.



Mort Penson and Mike Spishock, Fore Love Committee co-chairs and event advisors for nearly every one of our successful golf outings.



Lane Williams of ABM Janitorial Services and Dave Williams, Safe Horizons Board Member, square off in the finals of the putting contest. Lane won the "putt-off" and became the proud owner of a set of clubs and pro bag from Metedeconk National Golf Club.



Left—Teeing off for a worthy cause!
Right—Even a heavy downpour in the early afternoon didn't stop our golfers from an enjoyable round of golf at one of New Jersey's premier courses.



Volunteer Spotlight—Susan Pierce & Michael Huddleston

The spirit of philanthropy that nurtured the conception of the Resource Center is constantly renewed at Safe Horizons of Somerset with the efforts of two extraordinary volunteers, husband and wife team Susan Pierce and Michael Huddleston.

Sue, a vice president with Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation, is a leader on the planning team for our annual Starry Night Black Tie Gala and has chaired the committee several times. Sue's commitment to helping others has been powerfully evident in her guidance of Phillips-Van Heusen's community outreach efforts.

With great creativity and passion, she has galvanized her coworkers, encouraging them to pour their time and talent, as well as their dollars, into campaigns to benefit local agencies including the United Way, the Monmouth County Food Bank and Safe Horizons of Somerset.

Sue is very deft at keeping her coworkers continually involved while being mindful of not allowing her dedicated partners to feel inundated by requests for

assistance. "With so many different needs out there, it's important to keep people focused," said Susan. "I try to get others involved for the long term."

As the principal of Trans-County



Sue and Mike have as much passion for helping others as they do sharing their lives together.

Title Agency, Mike, Sue's husband and equally dedicated Safe Horizons' volunteer, has committed his organization to a yearly sponsorship of the Fore Love Golf Open for the past decade. Mike is always a frequent high bidder on many of the fun, live auction items up for purchase, not only at Fore Love, but also at the yearly Starry Night Gala held in November. Mike and Sue

always attend and Trans-County Title Agency also sponsor the event. They also very generously donate a week in their home in Kiawah for live auction. Mike quietly gets the bidding going, rallying the auction participants in a gesture to enhance funding for the free children's and adult programs and outreach services provided Safe Horizons.

For each of the last three decades, groups of volunteers, families, churches and small and large businesses have helped to add another chapter to Safe Horizons' story of empowerment. Mike and Sue are volunteers whose passion for ending domestic abuse and strengthening survivors impacts

their larger community. This couple displays a vibrant commitment to helping others through their individual actions, and their ability to encourage corporate giving to help those in need. Volunteers like Sue and Mike are the vital link to forming the community partnerships critical to solving social challenges, like domestic abuse, in our neighborhoods and towns.

You Can Make A Difference!

We invite you to get involved!

Volunteer time, make a contribution, organize a fund raiser, host a party in support of Safe Horizons, collect loose change, give at the office and ask your employer about matching donations.

There are no limits to the ways people can show their support for others in their community who need help and support.

Any contribution, no matter how large or small, will help make a difference in the life of a domestic abuse victim.

Find out more. Visit us on the web!

www.safehorizonsofsomerset.org



Safe Horizons of Somerset

HELP AND HOPE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE IN SOMERSET COUNTY

FORMERLY RESOURCE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Safe Horizons of Somerset

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Visit Us on the Web

www.safehorizonsofsomerset.org

Upcoming Events

21st Annual Candlelight Vigil For Victims of Domestic Abuse

October 1, 2009

The Steps of the Historic Somerset County Courthouse
Somerville, NJ

Friends' Author Luncheon

October 21, 2009

Basking Ridge Country Club
Send your name and address to
friendsoftheshelter@hotmail.com for more information

A Starry Night to Remember

November 20, 2009

Our Annual Black-Tie Gala Celebrating Our
Accomplishments in the Community

Holiday Gift Drive

November through December 2009

Collecting gifts and donations for our client families to
make the holiday season festive and bright

Children's Art Show

April 2010

Bridgewater/Somerset County Library
Expressions in art from children affected by domestic
abuse in their lives

Coming Soon!

A new look for the website for Safe Horizons
of Somerset

Our new and improved website is being designed to be
more interactive for our clients and supporters.

On line access to information about domestic abuse as
well as access to news and happenings at Safe Horizons
of Somerset will be available anytime... 24-hours a day!

Supporters will have direct access to our free on line
subscription service to receive important updates of news
and events and to make a donation or contribution to our
programs through our donation center.

www.safehorizonsofsomerset.org