



Women's Center & Shelter Of Greater Pittsburgh

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Molly Mercurio

412-687-8017 X338

WOMEN'S CENTER & SHELTER RECOGNIZE OCTOBER AS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

PITTSBURGH (October 1, 2007)

- A local teenage girl is allegedly stabbed and killed by her boyfriend.
- A local woman and her two adopted sons are shot and killed by her husband.
- Local police officers are promoted, though an alleged history of domestic violence lingers in all three officers' backgrounds and a firestorm of controversy erupts in the community.

Domestic Violence is not something that happens just in big cities or "somewhere else", it happens in our own backyard. As a testament, the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh stands with other shelters and domestic violence agencies across the Nation to recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month by reaffirming its mission to end intimate partner violence in the lives of women and their children in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

"WC&S feels it is necessary to articulate our mission and services to women and their children for a better understanding of the help we can offer," stated Shirl Reagan, WC&S Executive Director.

"While October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we need women to be aware of our services year round."

Formed in 1974, WC&S was one of the first six shelters in the nation for victims of domestic violence. Since that time, WC&S has taken a full circle approach in providing a myriad of services, **free of charge**, serving 5,200 adult and child victims of domestic violence within Pittsburgh and Allegheny County each year.

From July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007 the Women's Center and Shelter have:

- Answered 5,000 domestic violence related calls through our hotline
- Sheltered 590 women and children who spent 9,104 nights in our shelter
- Counseled 611 adult victims of domestic violence over 2,964 hours through our Counseling Center
- Given 70 children 463 hours of individual and group counseling
- Offered 5,447.75 hours of legal advocacy and support to 2,901 victims through the WC&S Legal Department

But the first step in utilizing these services is being able to recognize when you are being abused.

Are You a Victim of Domestic Violence?

What is Domestic Violence? Domestic Violence is a pattern of forceful, controlling behavior by an abuser within an intimate relationship.

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Domestic Violence Can Be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Financial
- Spiritual

What Can the Women's Center and Shelter Do To Help?

The Women's Center and Shelter can help the victim understand her options.

“When you are in an abusive relationship, there is a number of issues the victim thinks of that keeps them from leaving the relationship,” stated Regan. “How am I going to support my family, where will we live, how am I going to make money... are all questions that prevent the victim from leaving. WC&S can ease their pain with one call to our Hotline. Here, the needs of victims can be assessed confidentially and free of charge.”

The Women's Center and Shelter offers a complete list of other services to support the victim.

- **24 Hour Hotline (412-687-8005)**
- **Shelter**
- **The Empowerment Center**
- **Children’s Center**
- **Legal Advocacy**
- **Medical Advocacy**
- **Education**

Regan concluded, “These services provide the victim with the tools to get on with her life one step at a time, one day at a time.”

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