

# Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County



## Executive Director's Report

*Submitted by Maria Macaluso*

As we close out our fiscal year 2015/2016, it is my great pleasure to report on our successes and to share with you my sense of pride and celebration for the wonderful work done by our volunteers, staff and Board of Directors!

In addition to the provision of direct services to victims of domestic violence (summary chart appears in this edition of Womenews), as an organization we have continued to expand our capacity and vision in exciting ways. As I near the start of my 19<sup>th</sup> year with the Women's Center I continue to find inspiration and energy in the creativity, enthusiasm and commitment of you, our members. On a very personal level I am so very grateful to you all for the positive, supportive and innovative environment to which you all contribute. It makes this job so much more than a job; you make it a calling, a purpose and an honor to strive to make the Women's Center of Montgomery County the best that it can be. Much like our core mission of empowering women to achieve their individual excellence, you challenge us all as staff to grow, thrive and develop, and for that, we thank you always!

So as we reflect back on the past year, despite a crippling six month budget impasse that froze state and federal funds until January, I am proud and pleased to report that the Women's Center exceeded its programmatic goals, serving 5,288 unduplicated victims, conducting 167 community and school-based educational programs and 53 systems trainings for law enforcement and court personnel, and expanding our organizational capacity through strengthening our staffing and strategic planning.

New initiatives we began in 2015/2016 included:

To expand our efforts to address the generational cycle of domestic violence we have recently entered into partnerships with Abington- Jefferson Health, nationally recognized as at the forefront of senior health care management and Creative Health Services, one of the only therapeutic programs specializing in children exposed to violence in our region.

In 2015/2016 we began building on this collaboration by sub-contracting with Creative Health to offer their services to children coming through our program. The Children's SAFE Program offers services to children who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence in their families and homes. Their 12 week program is an integration of art, music and animal assisted therapies designed to work through the feelings brought about by the trauma while learning that domestic violence is not the norm. Group sessions help children develop the needed skills to break this devastating cycle of harm. Our hope is that each child will experience the group as a positive and safe environment, strengthening their self-esteem as the children learn how to protect themselves and to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner.

We also partner in our Pottstown Office with Project Safe, the Batterers' Intervention Program in our county, to coordinate services by ensuring the offender, the victim and any children in the home have access to our

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services. We believe that our skills, training and expertise in domestic violence, when combined with the expertise of these partners with these unique populations will maximize our impact, resources and skills in 2016/2017.

Through our Legal Advocacy Work we accomplished the following:

We are extremely proud to report that, in partnership with Court Administration and students from the Art Institute of Philadelphia, we have developed and produced a PFA court orientation video that will be broadcast on a loop at the courthouse and on our website beginning in October. Work on this project began in March 2016, in cooperation with the Family Court Judges, the Sheriff's Office and Court Administration. Filming was completed in May, with edits occurring in June and July. Two 8 minute segments were produced. Part 1 is completed with Part 2 due for final review in the fall.

In December 2015 we were selected by our Court Administration to serve as the first responder to victims seeking an Emergency Protection order. Emergency orders address the after- hours emergency needs of victims when the courthouse is closed. Beginning January 2016, domestic violence victims are referred to our hotline to determine whether they meet the eligibility criteria for an Emergency Order and to provide options counseling to those who may not meet that criteria.

Additionally, since fall 2015 we have been working with our County Bar Association to expand victim access to pro bono legal representation in Family Court.

Our effective efforts at Collaboration and Systems Advocacy included:

Some of the taskforces and advisory councils we serve on include Domestic Violence Legal Network, the TriCounty Network, Buxmont Collaborative, Eastern Montgomery County MDT for Children and Youth, the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition, Interagency Council of Norristown, the Sheriff's Advisory Council, and the Parent-Teen Taskforce.

We strive to broaden our scope to be inclusive of diverse community partners, with a goal of accessing victims earlier in their crisis. An example is our Lethality Assessment Project, in which police officers responding to a domestic call screen victims to assess the risk of escalating violence and refer them to us services. In 2015/2016 we assisted with 226 LAP screens and recruited 3 additional police departments.

Another example of effective collaboration has been our partnership with Nationalities Services Center. With NSC offering free legal representation and translation assistance a to Latino immigrant victims of domestic violence, we provide office facilities and support to bring NSC twice a month to our host offices to work locally with victims in need.

The WCMC has also been an active partner in the creation of community HUBs, an evidence-based collaborative problem solving tool, which uses the combined expertise of community agencies and the assessment of risk data and outcome evaluation before they become catastrophic for individuals and families. The HUB model was developed as an alternative to traditional preventive policing strategies and aims to address community problems before they become catastrophic for individuals and families. HUB modeling has proved successful in a number of jurisdictions, and established in Abington and Norristown.

We also partner with a number of attorneys to provide pro bono and/or reduced fee services to our clients dealing with divorce and custody support primarily. We host a two hour Legal Clinic 4-6 times

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a year featuring attorneys speaking on topics such as custody, support, mediation that is free and open to our clients.

In 2014 we began a new initiative with our Family Court, “Friend of the Court” program. In cases where plaintiffs who file for PFA’s also require support, custody, divorce or property representation, we are working with the court to make an attorney available to assist them. Over the past two years this project has become integral to our success in family court.

We also partner with Project Safe Batters’ Intervention to coordinate services by ensuring the offender, the victim and children in the home have access to our services.

Volunteerism continues to flourish at the Center. Examples include:

During this past year, we conducted eleven 48-hour trainings with 67 new volunteer counselor/advocates completing the training. These trainings have enabled us to maintain a volunteer work force of 185 trained counselor/advocates who provided 19,091.66 hours of direct services and community education each year. This does not include volunteer hours for Board, Advisory Board and Committee service, Special Events/Fundraising, and Thrift Shop.

Again this year we held two 6-hour skill-building trainings for staff and volunteers. Each training drew audiences of more than 60 volunteers. In 2016 we expanded our training opportunities to include mental and behavioral health certification training in Mental Health First Aid, an eight-hour training course coordinated by the National Council for Behavioral Health. With newly secured funding we will be offering this training to up to 70 volunteers each year for the next three years.

In summarizing these accomplishments we hope that you, too, will share our pride in being part of this amazing organization – the Women’s Center of Montgomery County – that continues to be a dynamic and evolving catalyst for promoting Prevention and Intervention for victims of domestic violence and Empowerment for us all!

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**WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY - AUGUST 26, 2016**  
**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**A PROCLAMATION**

Nearly one century ago, with boundless courage and relentless commitment, dedicated women who had marched, advocated, and organized for the right to cast a vote finally saw their efforts rewarded on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment was certified and the right to vote was secured. In the decades that followed, that precious right has bolstered generations of women and empowered them to stand up, speak out, and steer the country they love in a more equal direction. Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of this hard-won achievement and pay tribute to the trailblazers and suffragists who moved us closer to a more just and prosperous future, we resolve to protect this constitutional right and pledge to continue fighting for equality for women and girls.

At every level of society, women are leaders at the forefront of progress. Serving as judges and Members of Congress, setting world records in sports, founding groundbreaking companies, and fighting on the front lines of combat, women continue to tear down barriers and shatter glass ceilings -- just as they have done since the founding of our Nation. Yet such progress is not inevitable, and we must keep moving forward on our journey toward equality. In one of my first acts as President, I established the White House Council on Women and Girls to provide a coordinated response to challenges confronted by women and girls, ensuring their concerns and insights are taken into account in our policies and programs. And this year, my Administration hosted the first-ever United State of Women Summit to continue our efforts to underscore the passion, success, and ongoing

commitment of advocates dedicated to advancing gender equality and realizing a brighter future for women of all ages.

No woman should earn less than a man for doing the same job -- equal pay for equal work should be a fundamental principle of our economy and our democracy. That is why the first bill I signed into law as President was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and why I continue to call on the Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Women make up roughly half of our workforce, and we need to invest more in affordable, high-quality childcare. We must strengthen paid sick, maternity, and family leave -- too many families are forced to make difficult choices between caring for a newborn and receiving a paycheck, or staying home to help a sick child or parent and keeping their job. And we must continue striving for fairness and opportunity when it comes to improving workplace policies, because we know that when women succeed, our economy and our country succeed.

Ensuring all young women can live full and healthy lives is vital to their pursuit of personal and professional goals. Because of the Affordable Care Act, individuals can no longer be charged higher premiums simply for being a woman. But there is still more we can do to reduce discrimination when it comes to women's health -- such as protecting a woman's right to choose and safeguarding access to sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion. Every person should be able to live and reach for their dreams free from fear of violence: In America, nearly one in four women has suffered physical domestic violence, a cruelty which deprives its victims of their autonomy, liberty, and security, and inhibits them from reaching their full potential. Approximately one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college.

Through the *It's On Us* campaign and the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, we have called on individuals, communities, and institutions of higher education to recognize what they can do to stop sexual assault and change our culture for the better. We have striven to support survivors and focused on making sure our schools are safe places where all students can learn, grow, and thrive. Transgender women often face escalated levels of discrimination and violence, and we have taken a number of steps to secure their civil rights, including providing guidance to educators that can help rid school environments of discrimination. The Department of Justice has also urged law enforcement agencies to address any form of gender bias that exists in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault and ensure that such bias does not undermine efforts to keep victims safe.

Underrepresented in management positions, underfunded as entrepreneurs, under-encouraged in STEM fields, and confronted with higher levels of unemployment, women and girls of color still face very real challenges, significant opportunity gaps, and structural barriers. That is why we have hosted forums to discuss ways to increase programming and promote opportunities for women and girls of color so they can achieve success at school, at work, and in their communities. To continue building these ladders of opportunity for women -- not just in communities across our country, but also around the world -- I have made advancing gender equality a foreign policy priority. My Administration has sought to end gender-based violence across the globe, promote the role of women in ending conflict and building lasting peace and security, and empower the next generation by investing in adolescent girls and breaking down barriers to get 62 million girls into schools through the Let Girls Learn initiative.

In the many decades since suffragists organized and mobilized, countless advocates and leaders have picked up the mantle and moved our Nation and our world forward. Today, young women in America grow up knowing an historic truth -- that not only can they cast a vote, but they can also run for office and help shape the very democracy that once left them out. For these women, and for generations of women to come, we must keep building a more equal America -- whether through the stories we tell about our Nation's history or the faces we display on our country's currency. On Women's Equality Day, as we recognize the accomplishments that so many women fought so hard to achieve, we rededicate ourselves to tackling the challenges that remain and expanding opportunity for women and girls everywhere.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 26, 2016, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate the achievements of women and promote gender equality.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-first.

BARACK OBAMA

***EXTRA, EXTRA; READ ALL ABOUT IT:***

*One Woman's Powerful Stand Against Domestic Violence*

*Connecting the Global Epidemic of Human Trafficking to the Domestic Violence Epidemic*

*She Has No Money, She Will Come Crawling Back. NOT!*

*The Secret History of Women in the Senate*

Do you find the titles of these articles intriguing? Do you want to read more? Do you share a commitment to be informed and empowered? If so, we encourage you to follow the **Women's Center of Montgomery County** on **Facebook** where, each day we update our links to articles that we believe educate us about our mission and the world in which we carry it out.

Our Facebook page includes articles that span the mission from empowering women and achieving gender equality to understanding the dynamics and impact of violence against women.

In becoming a member of the **Women's Center of Montgomery County** you have demonstrated your commitment to these issues. We hope that by following us on **Facebook** that we reward that commitment with the information and awareness that we all need if we are to affect meaningful and positive social change!

**Visit the Women's Center of Montgomery County  
on Facebook!**

SAVE THE DATE 9.22.16



**NCADV**

**TAKE A  
STAND  
AGAINST  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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*In last month's issue of our Newsletter there was a poignant article written in a survivor's words describing the constant frustration of technological abuse; below please find a responsive article noting ways in which we can help address this issue within our service base.*

## **TECHNOLOGY ~ ASSETS AND LIABILITIES WITHIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Throughout the years technology has proven itself to be a wonderful aide within our society and all its many facets of being. The world of domestic violence is accountable for many positives as a result of its existence; however there are many negative vibes as well. Those of us who work within the domestic violence arena see its negative content daily. PFA filers telling their stories bring many incidents of abusiveness and violence to the surface, citing Face Book, e-mail, Twitter, audio/video materials of ill-repute, GPS gadgetry, as well as the hacking into personal, financial, medical and business accounts, including work-based "confidential" materials; all of which lead directly to destruction of individual privacy. It is devastating and proves most difficult to re-direct via the legal system

Not only is it an abusive behavior pattern established against the "victim", setting up a dangerous pathway of destruction against all parties involved; records are destroyed, erased as though they were never in existence. Its emotional damage is of course not availed for legal filing, but none the less damaging to psychological and emotional well-being. Although there are no exacting "records" of how many PFA orders contain tales of techno influence within their pages, those who work within the field can attest to 80/90 per cent of their content referencing back to techno-related abusiveness, especially as to its physically threatening behavior and abominably graphic materials, creating great fear within the recipient while its degrading massacre continues, both sender and receiver being well aware that once out in the atmosphere, the materials will never be salvageable.

What can we, the counselors, do as we listen to those stories day after day as to the powerful fears within. How can we assist our filers in addressing this issue; it would seem to be our job to allow them the tools, the strength, the courage, the perseverance to face the reality of that techno world and all its ramifications; to steadfastly support them, while believing their stories of emotional damage, added to their physical degradation; to be there for support while they fight in a legally, healthy and appropriate manner, that they may regain their self esteem while battling the abuser's deviant ways of manipulating undermining.

There are positives of the technological world available through the law enforcement community, which could contribute within the battleground of ingenuity. It is, needless to say, an uphill battle, but with time, perseverance and well connected programming, can be fought cleanly. It is up to us to assist in the comprehension of "rules" and "regulations". Each of us must allow ourselves to become more knowledgeable of techno's many facets of being, that we may service with well-founded resources as to who, when, where and how. Our approach then is to assist in any and all ways possible while empowering the "victim/survivor" to reconnect with the inner self that it may trigger life-appropriate coping skills. Honor the victim's story while supporting the uphill battle, allotting well earned kudos, just as we do each and every day.

Submitted by Lillian G Sulliman, WCMC Court Advocate



## **Take Action Against Abuse**

Though overall rates of violence against women have decreased since 1993, young women ages 16 to 24 still experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, and people ages 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.

### **Dating Violence**

- 1 in 10 teens have been physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last year.
- Women age 20 to 24 experience the highest rates of dating and domestic violence.
- 22% of college women have been victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse or threats of physical violence.

### **Sexual Assault**

- Over 11% of high school girls report having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse.
- 19% of women reported experiencing completed or attempted sexual assault since entering college.
- 84% of the college women who reported a sexual assault experienced the incident during their freshman or sophomore years.
- 85% of victims were assaulted by someone they knew, usually a fellow student.

### **How to Take Action**

- Volunteer at a local domestic violence shelter or rape crisis center
- Start an anti-violence project at your school or community center
- Talk to your friends and family members about your commitment to ending dating violence and sexual assault
- Be a role model for healthy relationships
- Post your support for anti-violence work on social networking sites

The Women's Center of Montgomery County  
Please make us your highest priority

**United Way Donor Option Number 00433**



## **Guns: A Public Health Crisis**

*by Peggy Walsh*

How has The United States confronted major public health threats like AIDS, automobile deaths and injuries, and smoking-related deaths and illnesses? The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has conducted research to determine the underlying causes, collected data, and evaluated strategies to address the problems. As a result, deaths, injury, and illness from these threats have been dramatically reduced.

In order to make any substantial changes in the gun violence that plagues our country, we must: recognize it as a public health crisis; agree that the yearly 30,000 plus deaths and many more injuries related to gun violence are unacceptable and preventable; allow the CDC to proceed as it has with our other health crises.

The CDC has not played its usual role in the gun violence epidemic that plagues our country because the kind of research needed to confront the issue has been hampered by The Dickey Amendment. Passed in 1996, this rider attached to a federal spending bill, mandated that “none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the CDC may be used to advocate or promote research or gathering any data on gun-related injuries and deaths.” After Sandy Hook, President Obama instructed the CDC to resume research into gun violence, but Congress has not allotted a single dollar for research into gun violence.

Why is research so important? Public health research can help identify the kind of programs, attitudes, and public policies that can deal with the problems of gun violence, much the way we have dealt with other national health crises. Vehicle and smoking-related deaths and injuries, HIV occurrence and death, have all diminished dramatically—thanks in large part to public policy and education developed from extensive research conducted by public health agencies like the CDC. In 2013, Boston University of Public Health did conduct research into gun ownership and its consequences. The report noted some interesting correlations between guns and violence that could be a beginning to a sane national conversation:

- (1) Women in states with higher rates of gun ownership are at greater risk of being killed by people they know than those in states where a smaller percentage of people own guns. The study found that nearly 9 in 10 femicides are committed by non-strangers, and 40 percent of the variance in femicide is explained by state-level firearm ownership rates alone.
- (2) There is a strong correlation of household gun ownership and firearm-related homicide rates level. This relationship is specific to homicides committed by offenders who are known to the victim.
- (3) There is a strong link between gun ownership and fire-arm related suicide rates.
- (4) There is a strong correlation between states that have instituted universal background checks and lower rates of firearm-related homicides.

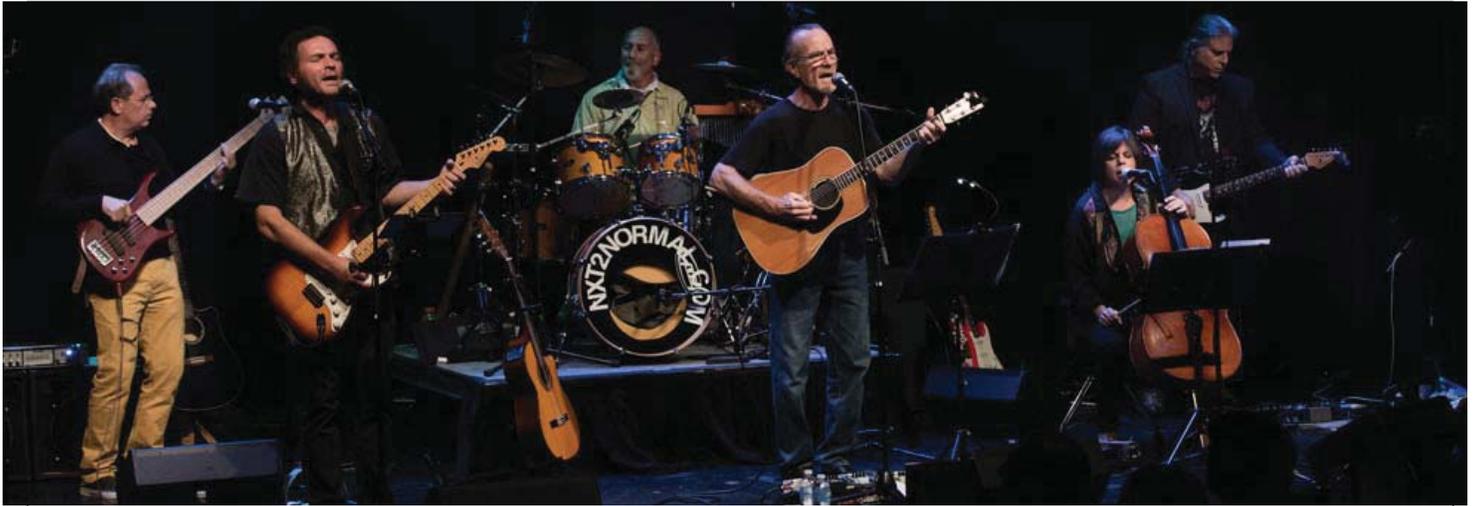
If our legislators would allow and fund similar research at the national level, we could do more than pray and hold vigils for victims of gun violence. We might be able in 10 years to look back and see that we have reduced firearm-related homicides and violence just as we have reduced automobile, smoking, and HIV deaths. We will have decided that the gun violence epidemic is not acceptable. That it is preventable.

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## **It's Membership Renewal Time**

In recent weeks, you should have received your annual membership renewal form for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. We hope that you will take the time to recommit to our mission by renewing your membership now! If you have already renewed, please let me again thank you for your generous support!

Please mail your membership renewal checks to (or pay online at [www.wcmontco.org](http://www.wcmontco.org)):  
Women's Center of Montgomery County  
8080 Old York Road, Suite 200  
Elkins Park, PA 19027



In Recognition of  
Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Join the Women's Center of Montgomery County  
As we present the  
3rd Annual Benefit Concert performed by

**nxt2normal**

Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Noon to 2:00 p.m.  
General Admission - Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

**Sellersville Theater**  
24 W. Temple Avenue, Sellersville, PA  
Adjacent to the Washington House Restaurant  
[www.st94.com/](http://www.st94.com/)

Monetary Donations in lieu of tickets  
at the door or online:  
[www.wcmontco.org](http://www.wcmontco.org)

The Women's Center of Montgomery County  
2506 N. Broad Street, Colmar, PA 18915  
For information contact Maria at 215-635-7340

All proceeds benefit the Domestic Violence Program of the Women's Center

**Women's Center of Montgomery County**  
Domestic Violence Direct Service Summary  
Twelve Month Period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

<b>Number</b> of New Victims Served (unduplicated)	5,288*
New Significant Others	190
<b>Total New Victims &amp; Significant Others</b>	<b>5,478</b>
Individual Counseling Hours	6,692.15
Support Group Counseling Hours	894.80
<b>Total Counseling Hours</b>	<b>7,586.95</b>
Emergency, Temporary & Permanent PFA Court Accompaniment	1,571
District Court/Criminal Court Accompaniment	711
Legal Advocacy/Options Counseling Victim Served (unduplicated of PFA accompaniment)	877
<b>Medical Advocacy</b>	
Number of New Victims Served (unduplicated)	414
Telephone & In-person counseling	748 hours
Hospital Trainings conducted	67
#of Healthcare Workers trained	1,570
Community Education Programs	73
Number of People reached	2,791
School-Based & Prevention Programs	94
Number of People Reached	3,179
48-hour counselor trainings	11
# of New Counselors completing training	67
Systems Advocacy Contacts	220
Systems Trainings for Law Enforcement	24 trainings/ 475 trained
Lethality Assessment Screens	226
Volunteer Hours Direct Services & Community Ed (does not include volunteers for Special Events, Board/Advisory Board/Board Committee hours or Thrift Shop volunteers)	19,091.66

\*Number of Female Victims Served: 4,590  
Number of New Male Victims Served: 696  
Self-Identifying Transgendered: 2



## SAVE THE DATES

### **Fall Volunteer Skill-Building Workshop**

Date: Saturday October 1, 2016

Time: 9am-4pm  
Check in begins at 8:30am

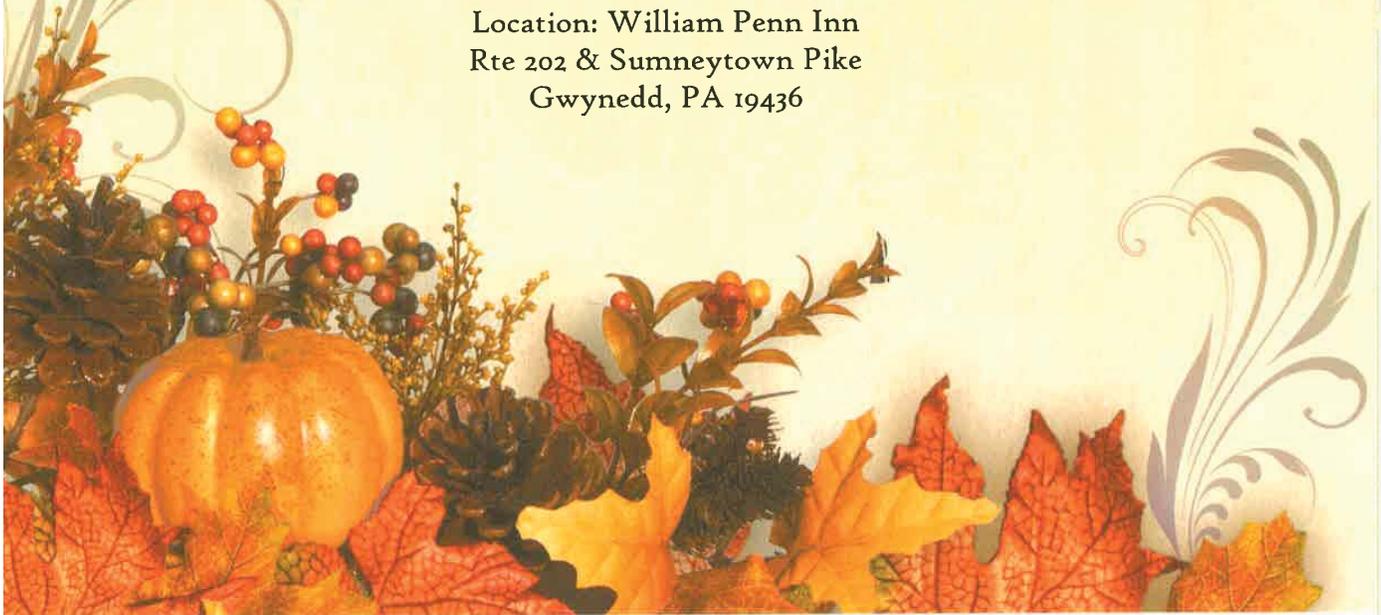
Location: Hilton Garden Inn  
530 W. Pennsylvania Ave  
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

### **Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**

Date: Sunday November 20, 2016

Time: 11am-2:30pm

Location: William Penn Inn  
Rte 202 & Sumneytown Pike  
Gwynedd, PA 19436



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Women's Center of  
Montgomery County

[www.wcmontco.org](http://www.wcmontco.org)

### Women's Center of Montgomery County

#### Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

FAX: 215-635-7347

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0651

#### Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

#### Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

FAX: 610-970-0705

#### Bryn Mawr Office

610-525-1427

FAX: 610-525-1429

#### Colmar Office

215-996-0721

FAX: 215-996-0725

[www.wcmontco.org](http://www.wcmontco.org)

1-800-773-  
2424

## DATED MATERIAL

Women's Center of Montgomery County  
8080 Old York Road, Suite 200  
Elkins Park, PA 19027

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



United Way  
of Southeastern Pennsylvania  
Community Partner