

# Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County



## Board of Directors News

### Save the Date April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

Please join us in Honoring Judge Toby L Dickman

The Women's Center of Montgomery County

&

Rubin, Glickman, Steinberg & Gifford, P.C.

Help us Kick off The Women's Center's 40<sup>th</sup> year by remembering the valuable contributions and the legacy of the **Honorable Toby L Dickman**.

April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

11:00am to 3:00pm

At the William Penn Inn Gwynedd, Pa

More details to follow.

 RUBIN, GLICKMAN,  
STEINBERG & GIFFORD, P.C.



The Women's Center of Montgomery  
County

Women's Center of  
Montgomery County



800-773-2424

*Fabulous Shoe Night* is a fun girl's night out with a purpose. We don't sell shoes, we wear them! Fabulous Shoes + a Fun Girl's Night Out + Local Charities = Fabulous Shoe Night!

**STOP  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN**



**WHAT-** As women, we at Fabulous Shoe Night feel it is vitally important to support other women, and especially women-centric causes. One of the causes that tops that list is sadly pervasive ... yet seems to get little attention ... domestic violence.

Please join us on Friday, January 29, 2016 at 6PM for an empowering Fabulous Shoe Night event to benefit the Women's Center of Montgomery County.

**WHERE-** SEASONS 52 (160 N Gulph Rd, Suite 101, King of Prussia, PA 19406)

Tickets are \$30.00 and include heavy appetizers, drink specials and a donation to the Women's Center of Montgomery County. There will also be fabulous raffles. 100% of event proceeds + 100% of raffle and sponsorship proceeds are donated to the Women's Center of Montgomery County.

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is a volunteer, community organization with a primary focus on freedom from domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Our programs, policies, and procedures reflect our strong commitment to empowering women.

Our 24/7 hotline number is 1-800-773-2424

Tickets can be purchased at [fabulousshoenight.com](http://fabulousshoenight.com)

*Enjoy your shoes, enjoy your friends, and enjoy a girl's night out on the town, all while doing some good for your community*

**A message from the producers and directors of the *Hunting Ground*, a documentary film about rape and violence against women on college campuses:**

While millions have been inspired by our film, a small handful whose wrongdoings it exposes have elected to attack. Amy and I can take it, but they cross a line when they go after survivors.

This week we published an [article in the Huffington Post](#) confronting 19 Harvard Law professors who have attempted to discredit Kamilah Willingham, one of the courageous women featured in our film.

Read it below, then share this message. Stand with survivors and make sure people know the truth.

*Kirby Dick* | Director | *The Hunting Ground* [www.thehuntinggroundfilm.com](http://www.thehuntinggroundfilm.com)

**How Harvard Law Professors Retaliated Against An Assault Survivor**

We were warned.

At a public discussion *following the premier of our film* *The Hunting Ground*, which is about sexual assault on college campuses, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) predicted: “The power on that status-quo side, you’re going to see it in response to this film... Believe me, there will be fallout.” She was right.

Two powerful universities whose wrongdoings were exposed in the film have gone to great lengths to attack the accounts of survivors: Harvard Law, which protected an assailant who was repeatedly found to have committed assault, and Florida State University, which covered up a rape investigation of its star quarterback. Both have mounted aggressive disinformation campaigns to protect their reputations, only to be proven wrong as more facts about these schools have come to light.

Controversial subject matter is nothing new for us. We previously made the award-winning documentary *The Invisible War*, which lifted the curtain on the crisis of sexual assault in our military and spurred five Congressional hearings and the passage of dozens of reforms. The Pentagon, rather than attacking the film, began extensively using it as a training tool to address the problem. Many colleges and universities are doing the same with *The Hunting Ground*, *and to date there have been nearly 1,000 screenings on college campuses.*

Unfortunately, FSU and Harvard Law are outliers, attacking the messenger rather than the problem. Before the film’s broadcast debut on CNN, FSU President John Thrasher released a statement *condemning both the film and CNN, claiming, «FSU does not tolerate rape. Period.»* The following week, a New York Times *story contradicted that claim when it reported that FSU’s former victim advocate director testified that 40 football players had been accused of either sexual assault or intimate partner violence and only one found responsible.*

More recently, a group of Harvard Law professors launched a public campaign to discredit an assault survivor. In doing so, they ignored the facts of the case: Kamilah Willingham was a third-year Harvard Law student when she reported to the school that a fellow student had sexually assaulted her and a friend while they were unconscious and incapable of consent. Her assailant admitted to committing assault in both text messages and a tape-recorded interview.

Harvard Law's Independent Fact Finder undertook an extensive three-month investigation and found Willingham to be credible and her assailant not credible, in part because he had changed his story multiple times. Harvard Law's Administrative Board and Appeal Hearing Officer agreed, and found the accused student responsible *for sexually assaulting both women while they were incapacitated, and recommended his dismissal. Then, a group of Harvard Law faculty overturned that finding and allowed the accused student to return to campus, using a secretive process that the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights later determined was biased toward the accused and violated the civil rights protections of students under Title IX. The truth is that if that process had followed OCR guidelines, the Harvard Law faculty would not have legally been able to overturn the finding.*

Rather than acknowledging their involvement in this unfair process, these Harvard Law faculty have instead tried to publicly discredit Willingham, even going so far as to team up with the assailant's defense attorney to build a biased website against Willingham. It is wrong for professors who have adjudicated a case to side with one of their former students against another in this way. These aggressive actions send a very chilling message to all current and future students at Harvard and Harvard Law: if you report a sexual assault, your professors may come after you publicly. What student would report a sexual assault if they know this might happen? Very few—and when fewer assaults are reported, rapists are free to continue to assault, and the school becomes a more dangerous place.

Students and other faculty at Harvard Law, and attorneys who specialize in campus sexual assault, have strongly and repeatedly criticized these professors. Despite this, the Harvard Law faculty continue to retaliate against Willingham. Even more troubling, in all their attacks, these Harvard Law professors have neither acknowledged that their school has a sexual assault problem, nor expressed any genuine concern for the hundreds of survivors who've been sexually assaulted at Harvard Law over the past decades.

Oddly, Harvard Law's attacks on Willingham did not begin until November 11, nearly 10 months after the film premiered. But they did come just eight days after Harvard launched a \$305 million fundraising campaign. The disturbing irony is that Harvard Law is doing exactly what *The Hunting Ground* shows universities have done for the past 50 years: discrediting survivors to protect their own reputations and funding, all at the expense of their students' safety and well-being.

Despite the aggressive tactics of these few schools, 2015 marked an important year in the fight against campus sexual assault. Dozens of schools conducted surveys of their students, revealing how pervasive the problem is, and legislatures around the country began developing reforms. After Governor Cuomo screened *The Hunting Ground* twice for members of the New York State legislature, they passed *the bipartisan «Enough is Enough»* legislation reforming how all colleges in New York address sexual assault. Meanwhile in Congress, Senators Gillibrand (D-NY) and McCaskill (D-MO) have reintroduced the Campus Accountability and Safety Act. The bill has gained 34 cosponsors, including Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio (R-FL).

As filmmakers, it is always our goal to focus on topics that will generate awareness—and this film has achieved far more than we ever hoped. As we start the New Year, it's on all of us to continue these critical gains in the fight against campus sexual assault—and to refuse to bend to powerful institutions that protect the status quo by shaming and silencing the courageous young women and men who are trying to change it.

## It's Time to Acknowledge Male Victims of Domestic Violence

Blog from **Bari Zell Weinberger, Esq.** for the Huffington Post

When we discuss domestic violence, it is often assumed that the victims are women. And the statistics are truly traumatic. The less-told story is that a striking number of men are victims, too, suffering physical, mental and sexual abuse in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. According to the CDC, one in four adult men in the U.S. will become a victim of domestic violence during his lifetime. That's upwards of three million male domestic violence victims every year or one man in America abused by an intimate or domestic partner every 37.8 seconds.

Highlighting these statistics is not meant to downplay in any way domestic violence among women. It is, however, intended to add to the growing conversation that *anyone* can be the victim of domestic abuse and *everyone* who needs protection deserves access to it.

Male victims of domestic violence, just like female victims, often deal with intense self-doubt and anxiety before reaching out for help. Victims may fear their abusers will seek retribution if they go to the police, or they feel great uncertainty about leaving their home for temporary safe house shelter. Men and women can both experience these kinds of worries. But one barrier to that tends to only apply to male victims? The belief that domestic violence laws and resources don't apply to them.

Is there any truth to this? There may be no better time than October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month to clear up a misconception that has persisted for far too long. If you are a man in an abusive relationship, or know someone who is, here are five reality checks that your safety is valued and important.

### **Fear: Police Don't See Women as Abusers**

**Reality Check:** A few weeks ago, a domestic violence case in Florida made headlines when a man - an army ranger - came forward with evidence that his estranged wife had physically abused him. His proof? Video from a Go Pro camera he was wearing that allegedly showed his wife physically assaulting him in front of their children. The two have been engaged in a bitter divorce and custody battle, and now domestic violence has been added to the mix. The wife in this matter has been charged and is currently in jail.

You don't need video evidence before the police will take you seriously. Start keeping a log of all instances of abusive actions taken by your partner, and be as specific as possible with dates, places, times, what happened, and the names of any witnesses. Carefully document any cuts, bruises or other injuries, taking photos whenever possible and seeking medical care as needed. If you feel unsafe having this information in your home, ask a trusted friend or family member to keep it in a secure place in their home. In the event you call the police, or someone else calls 911 to report an incident, producing this kind of evidence can be a powerful tool to clarify the situation for the police. Yes, female abusers may falsely claim that they were only fighting back in self-defense, or in a same-sex relationship, the other male partner may claim it was a mutual argument that got out of hand. The police understand these kinds of tactics and are trained to do their job to assess the incident and take the correct action. You can help them by being up front with what has been happening in your relationship.

### **Fear: Domestic Violence Victim Shelters Don't Help Men**

**Reality Check:** This month the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, one of the state's leading domestic violence agencies, changed its name to the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence. A statement put on the organization's website explains that this more inclusive name clarifies that the group's work is for the benefit of *all* domestic violence victims. What's in a name? Unfortunately, the female-centric names that many domestic violence advocacy groups carry can send male victims the message that they aren't welcome. While women may be the predominant group these agencies serve, many shelters and outreach groups provide services for male DV victims, including safe house shelter and legal assistance. In you are a male seeking help, don't let a shelter's name or title throw you off.

### **Fear: Domestic Violence Laws Are Stacked Against Men**

**Reality Check:** In domestic violence situations, all states offer their courts the ability to issue restraining orders that restrict contact between abusers and victims. Restraining orders are often the most significant legal remedy available to abuse victims, and can be obtained regardless of gender. When it comes to other domestic violence statutes, most states (approximately 37) have laws that use gender-free language. Even in states that don't, the law in practice is typically applied to both female and male victims; a few states even have special legal language protecting victims in same-sex relationships.

You don't need to be an expert in the law to get help as a male victim of domestic violence, but it can be helpful to have an attorney by your side to advocate for your rights and guide you through the system, especially when it comes to filing for a restraining order. According to one recent study, 83 percent of victims who had an attorney help them file a restraining order successfully obtained one, compared to approximately 30 percent of victims who went it alone.

### **Fear: Gay Male Victims Will Be "Outed"**

**Reality Check:** When seeking help from a shelter or other domestic violence victim services, gay men who wish to keep their sexual orientation private may believe they will need to reveal this information in order to get help. However, it is enough to identify yourself as a victim of domestic violence. Domestic violence advocates and counselors know that you are in crisis and are trained not to pressure victims to respond to questions they are not comfortable answering. It's also okay to ask about what policies are in place to ensure that any information you share will be kept private.

### **Fear: Men Who Seek Help Are Weak**

**Reality Check:** Many men don't seek help for domestic abuse because they fear that it will make them look weak. The truth? There are few actions that require as much bravery as walking away from an abusive relationship. To recognize that you are in need of help and then take the steps needed to get it is not weakness. It's a sign of strength.

**NCADV STANDS WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA  
AS HE TAKES EXECUTIVE ACTION TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE**

**Denver/Washington D.C., January 4, 2016** - The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is proud to stand with President Obama as he makes good on his promise to address gun violence with executive action.

Firearms and domestic violence are a deadly combination; the risk of intimate partner homicide increases 500% when a gun is present. Abusers also use guns to intimidate, control and terrorize. A survey by the National Domestic Violence Hotline found that, of respondents whose abusers had access to firearms, approximately 2/3 believed their abusers were capable of killing them.

The intersection between guns and domestic violence remains lethal. Although people convicted of domestic violence or subject to a domestic violence restraining order are prohibited from owning or purchasing firearms, abusers are able to obtain guns from private sellers who are not required by federal law to conduct background checks. State and local governments have made great strides in closing these background check loopholes, and it is time for the federal government to follow suit by enforcing existing laws and acting on the will of the people.

The President will prove his commitment to making our communities safer from gun violence by announcing the executive branch's action plan that identifies several key actions.

**First, keeping guns out of the wrong hands.** Robust background checks are vital to prevent abusers from accessing firearms. The ATF will define 'engaged in the business' in regulation to make clear that whether gun dealers are conducting business in stores, at gun shows or over the internet, they must obtain a license and conduct background checks. The FBI will work to improve the efficiency of the NICS background check system.

**Second, making our communities safer from gun violence.** President Obama has directed the ATF to improve tracking of illegal online firearm sales and to finalize rules requiring lost and stolen firearms to be reported to law enforcement. The President's budget will call for funding to hire more ATF agents. He is also specifically addressing the intersection between domestic violence and firearms by directing the US Attorneys' offices to improve domestic violence outreach, engage with groups interested in the intersection between guns and domestic violence, and identify a point of contact for communication.

**Third, increasing mental health treatment and reporting to NICS.** Among other issues being addressed, the administration will be increasing access to mental health treatment in an effort to intercept such issues before they become dangerous. New resources and information will be utilized to ensure that mental health issues are dealt with thoroughly.

**Finally, shaping the future of gun safety technology.** Obama will task the DOD, DOJ, DHS with conducting and sponsoring research into safe gun technology and periodically reviewing available safe gun technology.

NCADV stands with President Obama as he acts to keep firearms out of the wrong hands, make our communities safer, increase access to mental health services, and promote safe gun technology. The President will also direct The US Attorney's office to establish a point of contact for domestic violence and to engage with organizations focusing on the intersection between gun violence and domestic violence. President Obama recognizes the dynamics of power and control set domestic violence apart from other violent crimes, and is actively taking a stand to make sure the wrong people do not have guns for the wrong reasons.

Although there is much work to be done, this acknowledgement of the issue and the efforts to influence change are encouraging. The President has taken a stand against domestic violence, and Congress must follow his example. NCADV will continue to work with our allied organizations to address the intersections of domestic abuse and gun violence in collaboration with all who want to ensure victims and survivors of domestic violence do not suffer further and that those who use firearms to cause harm in domestic violence situations will be held accountable.

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### **Board of Directors News**

The next meeting of the Women's Center of Montgomery County Board of Directors will be held on **Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:45 pm** in our Colmar office at 2506 N. Broad Street in the Walton Meeting Room.

The February Board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday February 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 pm** at our Elkins Park location in the ground floor Community Room.

Board meetings are open to current members of the Center.

Also, as a reminder, current members can also join most of our Board committees. If you have an interest on serving on our standing committees – Finance, Special Events, Planning, Governance or Development – please contact our President Sandy Capps c/o the Elkins Park office.

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### **Seeking Interested, Committed and Qualified Candidates to Join the Women's Center of Montgomery County Board of Directors**

Once again it is that time of year when we are in search of prospective nominees for Board candidacy. If you or someone you know would consider serving our Center at this level, please feel free to discuss with a Committee member or our executive director at our Elkins Park Office (215-635-7340). We are at present seeking persons with expertise/interest in the areas of finance, development and/or strategic planning, as well as connections to local corporations.

Interested potential candidates can also contact our Governance Committee Chair via email at: [bethfrubin@msn.com](mailto:bethfrubin@msn.com).

Please remember this is YOUR board and its composition and service reflects your interests and concerns. Your input is of great value to those of us currently on Board. We appreciate and honor each of you for all that you do. We look forward to hearing from you!

#### **WCMC BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Beth Rubin, Chairperson

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is seeking to fill the following position to be based in our Colmar office:

### **Community Education Specialist Outreach, Education and Public Presentation**

**Purpose:** 1) serve as a representative of the WCMC within the community, providing education regarding domestic violence and ways to involve the community in supporting the mission of the WCMC; 2) educate our volunteers and the community concerning domestic violence, the movement against domestic violence, and available community resources; 3) maintain current materials and resources to support outreach efforts; 4) coordinate outreach efforts to ensure that information about the WCMC is reaching diverse community and professional groups; 5) recruit train and supervise volunteers as part of a Speakers' Bureau; 6) provide support as needed to the Director of Volunteers to coordinate and/or facilitate 45-hour Domestic Violence Counselor/Advocate trainings; and 7) perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.

**Classification:** Non-Exempt/35-40 hours per week

Interested applications should fax their resume to (215) 635-7347 or

email to [mmacaluso@womenscentermc.org](mailto:mmacaluso@womenscentermc.org)

or mail resumes to

Maria Macaluso, Executive Director c/o the Elkins Park office,  
no later than February 1, 2016.

*It is the policy of the Women's Center to provide program services and opportunities for volunteerism, training and employment without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, ancestry, disability or sexual orientation.*



*Now Open!*

## Second Chances Shoppe

201 Leedom Street,  
Jenkintown, PA 19046

215-885-0651

Monday - Saturday,  
10:00 am to 5:00 pm



### Women's Center of Montgomery County

#### Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

FAX: 215-635-7347

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

#### 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