

# Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County

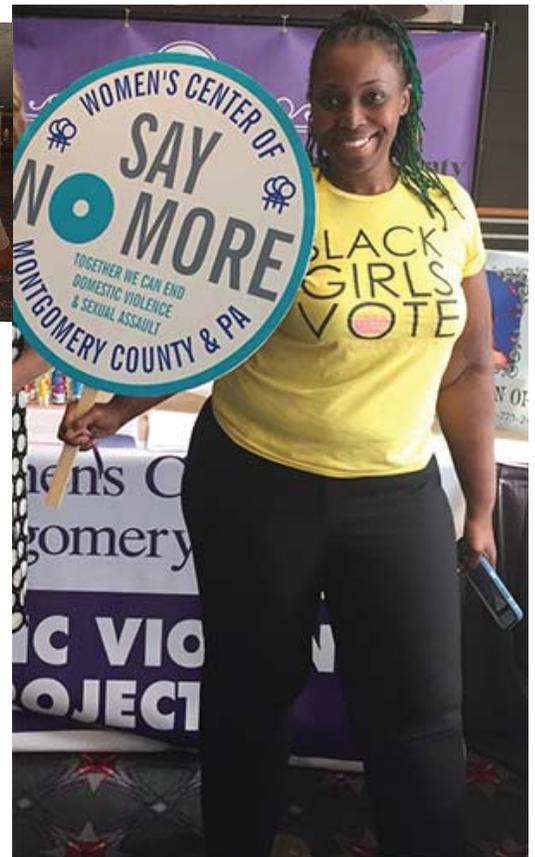


## The WCMC at the DNC!

As we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of this membership organization, dedicated to the empowerment of women, could there possibly be a better time and place for the historic political events occurring at the DNC in Philadelphia???. Many of our members, those who in the 1970's recognized the urgent need for women to take action, to become catalyst for social change and to advocate for the empowerment of women, created the Women's Center of Montgomery County to give voice and action to the need for advocacy and change. Is it any wonder that many of us, this week, have watched with enthusiasm and excitement the proceedings at the DNC, especially as we watch the first woman nominated to run for the office of the presidency??

Even more than just watching, I am pleased and proud to report that the Women's Center, through the hard work and efforts of our Community Education staff, secured a place for the Center on the scene, in the midst of it all, at the Convention Center this week. With an information table 'wo-manned' by staff and volunteers alike, we greeted more than 800 visitors, recruited a number of volunteers and new members, and educated many about our work, our mission, the dynamics of abuse and the need for social change.

For many of our volunteers and staff it was the opportunity of a lifetime, to be at the center of what we hope will be the start of new generation of positive change and growth, for our country, for women and for our future as a society. And what better way to start off the next 40 years???



More photos on WCMC Facebook

**Welcome from your new Co-Presidents  
of the WCMC Board of Directors –  
Amy Stern and Rosie Santulli**

We are excited and honored to be working together as the new co-Presidents of the board this year. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our past president, Sandy Capps for her many accomplishments, guidance and mentorship. As your new presidents, we look forward to working closely with the board, members, staff and volunteers to grow the Center and promote the important services it provides. We see our new roles as an opportunity to help move the Center forward in a positive and productive manner and maintain our mission, while providing essential services to those who are in need. As we move ahead we encourage your involvement, hope you will continue to support our wonderful events and welcome your input and suggestions. Look for more to come!

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***CUT IT OUT***

**Salons Against Domestic Abuse**  
Submitted by WCMC Volunteer Alyssa Reams

This month at the Women's Center of Montgomery County, our Community Education Specialist, Alison Rose, with the help of dedicated interns, have begun implementing the *CUT IT OUT* program, created by the Professional Beauty Association (PBA Foundation). Though the program was initially intended for salons to take the first step to reach out to local domestic violence organizations, the Women's Center decided to take initiative, reaching out to salons to motivate participation. By doing so, our participation rates have been higher and the program is gaining momentum.

The program is designed to mobilize salon professionals to stand against domestic abuse by educating and training stylists about various aspects of domestic violence. Through a one-hour interactive session with a WCMC advocate, stylists are taught general information about domestic violence, including prevalence, types of abuse, and common myths versus facts. In addition, stylists are trained by our advocates to recognize signs of abuse and how to handle different types of situations when abuse is suspected. Upon completion of the session, stylists are awarded with certificates of participation and the salon is left with flyers, business cards, and other types of outreach material.

Overall, our goals for the program are to educate, empower, and reach out. We hope that by the completion of the program salon professionals will feel confident in recognizing signs of abuse, responding by offering a listening ear, creating a safe space for victims, and referring to WCMC resources.

So, *why salon professionals?* Statistically, one in three individuals will at one point in their lives be victims of domestic violence. When the average stylist sees 200 clients every 4-6 weeks, it adds up to a lot of potential victims. Salon professionals can be great connections between victims and resources, tending to have unique relationships with clients and creating comfortable environments to disclose personal information. Salons can serve as a space where victims feel safe, often unaccompanied by their abuser. Stylists also see clients on a regular basis, sometimes every six weeks, which can be a rare interaction for isolated victims.

In order to keep the program going and increase our outreach, WCMC needs your help! We ask that at your next salon appointment you reach out to stylists and tell them about our program. We are also in need of volunteers/interns to become trained to conduct the sessions throughout Montgomery County. Conducting these sessions is a great opportunity to gain experience in community outreach and health education, as well as taking steps to end domestic violence. For more information, stylists and volunteers may contact Alison Rose at 215-635-7340 or by email at [alisonrose@womenscentermc.org](mailto:alisonrose@womenscentermc.org).

## **Farewell Address Outgoing WCMC Board President Sandra Capps**

My journey began on the Board in July 2010 and my plan was to be a great board member and a supporter of the Center. Little did I know that in less than two years I would be Co-Chair President with Larry Pauker. Larry and I were a team for approximately fifteen months. We each had our style of leading the Center but with good communication and Maria's guidance I believe we led the Board and made progress in forming a team that worked together and all for the cause.

As I reflect upon my last year as President of WCMC, I continue to be optimistic that this agency has positioned itself as the model organization of our community. With a strong Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and community supporters, we have managed to maintain our budget despite the growing challenges in our area. I will try to highlight some of the challenges and accomplishments that have occurred in past four plus years.

We continue to have our Annual Champagne Brunch and Race/Walk events each year which are our primary fund raisers, but we have ventured out of the box and now have several smaller events each year that contribute monies for operating expenses to the budget. Last year was a challenge due to the budget impasse but with the board working closely with Maria to look at areas we could cut and putting a line of credit in place there were no job cuts or office closings. This is thanks to Maria, staff, volunteers and the Board for working together to keep our doors open.

Just to name a few of the special events in the past years:

- Family Lawyers' Cocktail Reception and Auction (2014)
- TCN Bingo – a joint collaboration with seven other Non-Profits
- Pyramid Club Book Club Fund Raiser (2016)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Award Ceremony/Brunch Honoring the Life and Legacy of Toby L Dickman (held in collaboration with Rubin, Glickman, Steinberg & Gifford Law Office)
- Garden Tour and Tea – a joint event with Victims Services Center (2014)
- nxt2normal Band Fundraiser – an event coordinated by band members who are WCMC staff and volunteers

Challenges & Accomplishments:

- Relocation of our Thrift Shop and renaming to Second Chances Shoppe
- Collaboration with the District Attorney's office to do joint education presentations in schools
- Strategic Plan
- Received NAACP award for outstanding Non Profit in 2015

These are just a few of things done during the past years I could list numerous others but without the support from the community, staff, volunteers and board the list would be smaller.

The Center remains strong due to the leadership of the Center.

We are celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and the evolution of our services over these past 40 years is remarkable. I am proud of our work over these years and look forward to our future accomplishments.

I will remain on the board this year as Ex-Officio President and look forward to working with the new Officers and I know the leadership of Amy Stern and Rosie Santulli, as Co-Presidents will only see us reach goals and meet the challenges of today.

## **"Technology is my Tormentor"**

Story of "Maureen", Domestic Violence Survivor.

I first met "John" when I was fifteen and at high school. There was an instant attraction and we began dating at sixteen, beginning a relationship that would be on and off for the next eleven years. The relationship was abusive within a short time, but I stayed because I was not a popular girl at school, I was not beautiful, but he loved me. The abuse was physical, mental, and emotional – he literally cut me to see me bleed.

At one point I moved out of state to get away from him, met someone, and married. Unfortunately the marriage did not last and I returned. John and I got back in contact and soon he accepted my son as his own and we tried to build a family, having our own daughter in 2010. But old patterns came back and soon after the birth the abuse started again, mostly emotional. He believed in traditional roles and told me I was stupid and useless. I believed him. He would abuse drugs and disappear for long periods. The physical abuse began and one morning my son woke up and found a pool of my blood outside his door, from me being punched. John had threatened to cut my hands off. After many calls to the police I got a PFA and he moved out.

I wasn't available to him anymore so he had to find new ways to hurt me. PFAs usually allow for some contact for the exchange of children and these exchanges I came to dread. At one point he disappeared from our lives for eighteen months, and the PFA expired. A few months later I was applying for another.

John is a talented and intelligent man, and he is a natural with computers and technology. When he worked in IT he made really good money, although I always had to use the courts to fight for support. The PFA protected me from physical aggression, but he unleashed his aggression through social media. He contacted me through all the normal social media sites, and I was never able to enjoy them as they were meant to be, a forum for catching up with friends and family, exchanging photos, learning about people and places. For me it became a hostile environment. He stalked me on Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter. He set up fake accounts. He began a blog, first of all talking about his experiences in court, and particularly PFA court. He talked about the "professional victims" and their "fake tears". In his blog he described the process as one where all the "victims" were women and all the defendants male. I was terrified to be in PFA court, while he wrote in his blog the he "found a good seat in the back row and made myself comfortable". He described the people who came to drop their petitions or seek an agreement as "the low hanging fruit". He criticized the court advocates and the judge, and belittled the whole process.

He continued his blog which was widely circulated on social media, especially those for men going through divorce, adding his bitterness to theirs. He claimed our four year old daughter had been sexually assaulted in my care, and he set up a fund page for an attorney. He attached pictures of our daughter, and only removed them when ordered to do so by a judge. My life, as he saw it, was laid bare on the internet. He accused me of being a drug addict, suicidal, a prostitute and a bad mother. My name and number were put on a site stating that that I would sell myself for sex. He called CYS on me many times.

I stopped looking on line but I could not stop looking on line – I wanted to know what was out there about me, but I dreaded finding it. I felt uneasy and persecuted and was always Googling my own name. I stopped sending emails and texts, they were a way to constantly harass and demean me. His texts and emails would start at 6 in the morning and continue to late at night. I was compelled to have contact with him because of our child. If I did not I would be in contempt of the custody agreement.

I complained to the police 8-10 times about his constant emails and texts, but because they always began as a

question about our daughter and then deteriorated, the police did not take me seriously, and said there would have to be a direct threat before they could help, and even then they had to prove it came from him! One of them said “he just wants to see his child”. I was very frustrated, my PFA was really useless. I was mentally and physically exhausted. The stress put my physical health into decline. I developed panic attacks and would have one when I opened my phone and computer. I always knew there would be something from him. He was in my home 24/7 even though I had a PFA. I began to record him at custody exchanges because I knew the police would not accept my word about how he treated me and the things he said. He recorded me, and in the middle of all of this, was our little girl.

Then he sent me an email saying simply “I am going to kill you”. I believed him but I did not want to go to the police as they did not believe me. My advocate said she would come with me and talked to the Captain of the local department. Finally they took notice, and I will always be grateful to the Captain for his assistance and strong words of support.

I wish I could say that is the end of the story, but the internet campaign against me continues. My pick up and drop off point is now at the police department, and sometimes the police are sympathetic when I make reports of continuing harassment and PFA violations, and sometimes they are dismissive. The police ask me why I respond when he attacks me on social media. *Because I have to* – I have to defend myself and my children – would you allow yourself to be called such vile names and not respond? Would you allow yourself to be vilified to an audience of millions and say nothing? I know it feeds the fire and I know he does it to harass and hurt me, but how do I make it stop?

This morning I awoke to seven new emails. My stomach churns at the very thought of opening them. It’s a terrible way to start the day.

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**With Sincere Condolences  
In Memory of WCMC Volunteer  
Virginia ‘Ginny’ Stone**

It is with great sadness that I report that our dear friend and volunteer, Ginny Stone, passed away earlier this month. It is truly one of the hardest challenges we face in our work to say goodbye to volunteers who have really touch our hearts. Working so closely together, seeing and sharing a commitment and passion to helping others builds such strong relationships and regard that we feel these losses much as we would a family member or trusted friend, an integral part of our daily lives

For those of you who did not have the chance to work as closely with Ginny, who served as a volunteer Legal Advocate for many years, we have included an excerpt from the obituary and tribute provided by her family:

VIRGINIA STONE (Davidson), 84, of Worcester Pa, formerly of Ambler and East Norriton, died peacefully July 20, 2016, at Meadowood Senior Living, where she resided for the last 11 years. Born in the Burholme section of Philadelphia on Dec. 20, 1931, Ginny was the daughter of the late Delmar and Jennie Davidson, and the sister of the late D. Raymond Davidson. Ginny graduated from Beaver College, taught science at the junior high level as a first career, and worked for US Healthcare as a Medicare marketer in her later years.

She was proud to have volunteered at the Women’s Center of Montgomery County as a court advocate for abused women, and as an ombudsman for local nursing homes. Ginny was an avid Toastmaster.

In celebration of Ginny’s life, I ask that we all take a moment to remember this lovely, talented, gracious and kind woman who inspired and nurtured us with her presence!

## Remove Firearms from Abusers, Keep Communities Safer SB 1182 ♦ HB (N/A)



The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence urges the General Assembly to pass legislation that strengthens protections for domestic violence victims by keeping firearms out of the hands of convicted domestic violence offenders and defendants subject to an active final Protection from Abuse Order (PFA). It is critical to the safety of our communities that when a victim takes steps to end an abusive relationship and seek protection through the justice system that her or his abuser does not have access to firearms.

### Summary of House Bill (N/A) & Senate Bill 1182

Senate Bill 1182, sponsored by Senator Pat Vance (R-Cumberland & York) and House Bill (N/A) sponsored by Representative Sheryl Delozier (R-Cumberland) protects victims of domestic violence by:

- 1) Barring gun possession for all domestic abusers subject to active final protection orders and requiring them to turn in their guns
- 2) Strengthening existing surrender policy for convicted abusers so that they turn in their guns within 24 hours
- 3) Eliminating third-party safekeeping provision and ensuring surrender is made to the sheriff's office or a licensed dealer
- 4) Supporting sheriffs and law enforcement to recoup the costs of confiscation, storage and disposal of certain firearms that have been relinquished without retrieval and thereby deemed "abandoned"

### Background

Domestic violence abusers and guns are a lethal combination. Last year in Pennsylvania there were 146 domestic violence-related fatalities; of the 113 victims killed, 61 were fatally shot. Over the past decade, guns have been consistently used in over half of Pennsylvania domestic homicides.<sup>i</sup>

Felons, criminals convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence, and abusers subject to domestic violence protection orders are prohibited from gun possession by federal law.<sup>ii</sup> However, for people subject to final PFA Orders in Pennsylvania, the gun prohibition does not require relinquishment but rather only allows a court to include prohibition in its Order.<sup>iii</sup> Between 2011-2015, only 14% of final PFAs included surrender provisions in Pennsylvania.<sup>iv</sup>

The current system makes it too easy for prohibited abusers to access guns by allowing the abuser to turn their weapons over to a third party—usually a friend or family member that does not live with the abuser. Since the third party provision was enacted a decade ago, there have been tragic consequences.

- In Luzerne County, days before Christmas in 2012, a 41-year-old woman was shot and killed by her 51-year-old estranged husband before he killed himself. The wife, a teacher, had filed for a final PFA a few months earlier and the perpetrator surrendered his firearms to his brother. The husband's brother violated the safekeeping permit by giving the perpetrator back his guns, which he used in committing the murder-suicide. The brother, who was barred by law from giving those firearms back, later pled guilty to a first degree misdemeanor count of persons not to possess or transfer firearms.<sup>v</sup>

### Action Requested:

Bring Pennsylvania in-line with Federal law and pass SB 1182 requiring all convicted domestic abusers and defendants subject to active final protection orders to promptly and safely surrender their firearms.



Time to get that artistic hat on! Whether you are a beginner, an expert, or anywhere in between, the Women's Center of Montgomery County wants you to join us for a night of painting, snacks, raffles, drinks, and FUN!

Join us on Wednesday, August 17th at 7PM.

Grab a friend and come help support a great cause, learn about what we do, win some prizes, and create a masterpiece! Sign up today!

<http://www.wcmontco.org/painting-with-a-twist.html>

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2016**

**A FUNDRAISER FOR THE  
WOMEN'S CENTER OF  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM**

**7:00PM - 10:00PM**

\$35.00 per seat, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Women's Center of Montgomery County Domestic Violence Program, serving more than 4,700 victims of domestic violence.

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is a volunteer-drive non-profit organization with a primary focus on freedom from domestic violence and other forms of abuse.



## Second Chances Shoppe

201 Leedom Street,  
Jenkintown, PA 19046

215-885-0651

Monday - Friday  
10:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Saturday  
10:00 am to 4:00pm



### 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