

Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County



SPOTLIGHT ON A LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROJECT CHAMPION!! **With Gratitude and Recognition to Our Friend, Lt. Mark Drakeley**

In April 2012, the Women's Center of Montgomery County was one of 13 programs in PA selected as a participant in the Lethality Assessment Project (LAP). Essentially an expansion of our existing police referral process -the Police Permission Slip Project created by the Center in 1987 – LAP includes a Lethality Assessment Tool, Each year, through the Police Permission Slip Project, we receive more than 1,500 victim referrals from police officers responding to domestic violence calls. Through the Lethality Assessment tool, police officer can now assess whether the risk is escalating and connect the victim immediately with a counselor. Since LAP was implemented in 2012, more than 650 victims have screened in as at-risk for escalating violence and were referred for services.

One of our first partners in this initiative was the Upper Moreland Township Police Department, who have embraced the concept and our commitment to ending family violence in our community. Through this partnership we have had the great privilege to work with Lt. Mark Drakeley who has made been a tremendous friend and ally in helping us to promote the project, enthusiastically assisting in training fellow officers throughout the County, and zealously advocating for resources and training to help victims of family violence find safety and stability.

On behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers of the Women's Center of Montgomery County we thank Mark for his vision, leadership and dedication!

Mark Drakeley was hired by the Upper Moreland Township Police Department in 1988 following earning his bachelors and Master's Degrees in Criminal Justice from Temple University. He served as a patrol officer until 1996. In 1996 he was assigned to the detectives division where he stayed until his promotion to Sergeant in 2000. From 2000 to 2013 he served as a Sergeant. In 2013 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. He is a 2008 graduate of Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command and a 2014 graduate of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar.

He has been trained as a negotiator by the FBI, ATF, and Philadelphia Police Department. Since 1996 he has been a member of the EMSWAT serving as a negotiator. In 2009 he assumed the role of EMSWAT Negotiation Commander. He currently serves on the board of the Delaware Valley Negotiators Association and has served as an assessor for the FBI 40 hour Basic Negotiator School.

In May 2012 he was selected to attend the first National Law Enforcement First Line Supervisors Training on Violence Against Women that was sponsored by The International Association of Chiefs of Police. Later that year the Upper Moreland Township Police Department partnered with The Women's Center of Montgomery County in using a Lethality Screen based on the Maryland Model. Lieutenant Drakeley developed the policies for oversaw the implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program for UMPD. He has lectured on the use of the lethality screen for the Women's Center of Montgomery County and the Montgomery County District Attorneys' Office.

This year, April 10th through the 16th, is our opportunity to recognize Crime Victims' Rights Week AND Volunteer Appreciation Week. As our committed ally in this work we can think of no one better to exemplify excellence in both areas, we would like to acknowledge and thank our friend, Lt. Mark Drakeley of Upper Moreland Township Police for all of his efforts and kindness!

SELF-HEALTH /SELF-CARE

by DENISE FLYNN

PROGRAM DIRECTOR - WCMC LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

SELF HEALTH/ SELF-CARE is a very real issue for victims of domestic violence and an important part of moving past domestic violence and abusive relationships. It is also important to know why you need to heal yourselves. You may have experienced being blamed for EVERYTHING that goes wrong in your relationship with your partner/spouse (“it’s your fault that...”). Aside from the physical, mental, verbal, emotional & psychological assaults you have experienced from your partner or spouse, it’s also worth mentioning what you do to yourself.

You begin to “own” what is said about you and you repeat it over and over, until you finally believe it or it becomes true. You believe nobody wants you but him; you can’t do anything right, you are ugly and worthless; to name a few things you may have heard in your relationship. You speak so negatively about yourself, your circumstances, just about everything, it becomes harder and harder to see the “light at the end of the tunnel.” Making mistakes is a normal part of living life; don’t stay stuck on those mistakes and past experiences. We learn from our mistakes as much as we learn from our successes. All that has occurred is not your fault or responsibility!

Your responsibility is to take care of you!

You have a lot of work to do in self-care and healing. Taking that first step, that baby step is important in your self-empowerment & self-improvement.

Self-Health begins with rebuilding your self-esteem. Rebuilding your self-esteem requires certain considerations. As care-givers, female and male, we take care of so many others and put others in front of ourselves, putting ourselves last. We don’t give ourselves the gift of yearly check-ups and doctor visits, we don’t monitor our health, body signals. Our negative self-talk prevents us from moving forward with our goals and we do not embrace our positive attributes and areas of positive growth.

Self-awareness. You have to do self-inventory, self-talk, self-evaluation as to where you are physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, to understand how life has impacted you, your decisions, and your way of life. One of the ways to do this is to journal your feelings, including, the wealth of feelings bottled up including feelings this may open up. Another way is to speak to a counselor or therapist who can help you process these feelings. If you have spiritual beliefs, let them also guide you in your self-care.

Self-acceptance. This requires you to examine your different emotions and accept them. Become aware of your emotions, good and bad attitudes, demeanor and feelings, recognize where you are overly critical of yourself and others, and adopt a more loving and caring attitude. It’s okay to LOVE YOU!! CELEBRATE YOU!!! (and your strengths), while you work on your weaknesses. You have to forgive yourself for the mistakes you feel bad about; from decisions, occurrences, and life issues.

Self-assertiveness. “Closed mouth does not get fed!” In order to receive all that you need to move forward, including basic needs met, you have to speak up, ask for what you want/need. It’s important to do so in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Set boundaries, especially when it comes to your partner, children, family members, friends and others who may not support your moving forward in a positive way/direction. It’s important to speak up, be firm, not abusive or negatively demanding. The goal is to develop a sense of self-control over your life and trust in yourself and your decisions.

Self-integrity. Learn what is true for you and live your life accordingly. Step back, listen carefully to your inner self, determine what is best for you and trust your decisions to positively impact you and others. Live your life according to healthy, moral principles, and believe in yourself.

Self-Growth. We all have areas of growth that we can improve upon. Don’t stay stuck in the “Blame Game” meaning, whose fault it is and why circumstances turned out the way they did. Move forward from that and strive to grow in a positive direction. This is an important benefit for everyone whose life you effect. Positive change in you creates a positive change agent (you), that affect others around you. The Ripple Effect! Change you – change the world!

It is important to take care of you, health-wise, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually! Taking care of the needs of others is fine; it is just as important to take care of you!

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.

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

For Immediate Release: February 25, 2016

www.nnedv.org/census

10th Annual Census of Shelters Shows the Need for Domestic Violence Services is Growing

Today, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) released its 10th consecutive annual Domestic Violence Counts: A 24-hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services (Census) report. In a single 24-hour period, on September 16, 2015, local domestic violence programs across the nation counted the services they provided to victims, as well as the services they were not able to provide due to a lack of resources.

More than 1,700 – or 93 percent – of identified local domestic violence programs in the United States and territories participated in the Domestic Violence Counts Census this year. On Census Day alone, these local programs provided help and safety to 71,828 adults and children who were victims of domestic violence. These survivors were given a safe place to stay and access to the resources or services necessary to escape violence and abuse. In addition to providing direct services, these programs answered more than 21,000 hotline calls and educated more than 27,000 individuals on domestic violence, all on the survey day.

“The Census shines a spotlight on the often invisible but lifesaving work of advocates and domestic violence programs,” said Kim Gandy, NNEDV President and CEO. “As one survivor said to the advocate who accompanied her to obtain a court order of protection, ‘I could never have gone in there alone. You helped me so much’ That is just one example of the help provided every day to tens of thousands of survivors and their children who are seeking safety from abuse, all across the country.”

Sadly, 12,197 times during the same 24-hour period, a hotline phone rang or a victim knocked at the door to request a shelter bed, an attorney, children’s counseling, or another vital service, and the local program was forced to say no because they did not have the resources to help them. Countless programs spent hour after hour trying to find victims other services and help, often finding help for them in faraway places – even other states – but sometimes not at all.

“Victims and their children are the ones who suffer the consequences when services are not available, and often have no choice but to return to the abuse,” said Gandy. “Again and again in the Census responses, we read about a survivor who needed help but couldn’t get it. It is simply unacceptable for victims to be turned away at their time of greatest risk.”

The increased attention to domestic violence across the country has led to an increase in demand for victim services. At the same time, many of these programs are experiencing stagnant or reduced funding, which limits their ability to serve more victims. Out of the 12,197 unmet requests for services, 41 percent were for emergency shelter, 22 percent were for transitional housing, and 36 percent were for non-residential services. While recently some funding streams have been increased or restored at the federal level, many programs are only beginning to rebuild after repeated cuts.

IMPACT 100 Philadelphia

I am pleased to report an exciting development for the Women's Center of Montgomery County. In January 2016, we submitted a letter of inquiry to a new funding group based in our region: Impact 100 Philadelphia. This is a group of approximately women leaders who are each asked to give \$1,000. By pooling their resources and selecting up to five organizations as the beneficiary of their funds – with grant awards ranging from approximately \$25,000 to \$100,000 - the group hopes to maximize their impact.

In February, based on our initial letter of inquiry, the Women's Center advanced in the process and was invited to submit a full proposal.

I am extremely thrilled to announce that we have now advanced further in the process, with our proposal selected, along with 15 other organizations, to progress to the next round, which includes a site visit to the Center on Monday April 4th. Should our proposal be the finalist selected, funding would be used to support a new and much needed initiative in the community: the implementation of an economic self-sufficiency curriculum to help survivors of domestic violence attain financial stability and physical safety as part of achieving independence from an abusive relationship. Should we advance to the next and final round, the Center would make a formal presentation of our program to Impact 100's full membership at their June meeting, at which time they would vote on the five finalists.

While we recognize that this is a highly competitive award and that there are other worthwhile projects to be considered by the review committee, I think it is important that we take this opportunity to celebrate this moment of recognition. It is truly a reflection of the amazing work being done by our staff and volunteers each day here at the Center. Your efforts continue to inspire and motivate us all to achieve all that we can, every day, and to aspire to do more for women in need in our community. Your commitment to our mission lends vision and focus to our work, and it is through your dedicated services that we are able to attempt this next leap toward empowering women. On behalf of myself and the members of our Board of Directors, I hope that you will join us in this moment of pride and accomplishment for it is most sincerely your support and your efforts that have brought us here!

Save The Date

Sunday, May 1st - Annual Champagne Brunch - Celebrating 40 years of Empowerment

Sunday, July 31st - 12th Annual 5K Run/3K Walk Turn the Tide of Domestic Violence

Sunday, October 16th - 3rd Annual Concert to Benefit the Women's Center with nxt2normal

Details : www.wcmontco.org



Trends Wall

By Marsha Levell

Last year I was struck by a talk given by Sue Pine a Vice President at Association Headquarters. Within her organization Sue is a champion of a forward thinking concept that is fueled by a having stakeholders, which in our case would be the most important people, our volunteers, our staff and our clients, tell us what they see in the world around them. What things are going on in their world? By observing, compiling, analyzing and remaining vigilant we as an organization can move The Women's Center of Montgomery County forward. This concept is a trends wall.



On September 12, 2015, Sue presented the concept to our board of directors. In the ninety minute presentation Sue clearly outlined what a trends wall is and is not. It is not a panacea; it is a collection of information. Most innovations in our world come about because someone was watching; someone put the pieces together and filled a need that no one knew they had. Think iPhone and Facebook.

So what is a trends wall, simply it is either a blank sheet of paper with ideas, observations, and concepts are written on it. If while riding the bus you notice that more people are reading a certain newspaper, or playing a certain game, or a book, or texting rather than talking to the person next to them, and you see it occur often, it could be a trend. If when grocery shopping you notice that certain things seem to sell out fast, or people don't go to movies as often or the types of popular shows seem to have a recurring theme, it may be a trend. More reality shows, or more cop shows, or more mysteries or comedies, you get the idea. You may notice that families that experience domestic violence are more likely to eat separately than together at the table, or are less likely to speak to their neighbors. The point is there is constant change in the world and you see it.

The board would like to hear what things you see, observe, it is also your opportunity to tell us what the board you elected needs to respond to, or consider as we embark on creating a strategic plan. It is a voice of the customer, our most precious resource, our volunteers, staff and clients. Hearing what you see, what you would like us to know, and using that information to inform our decisions will help us guide the organization by looking through the windshield instead of in a rear view mirror.



MCAT was formed in the spring of 2011 with the purpose of raising awareness and creating a network of resources for survivors of sex trafficking. It was founded by Rachael Yudt in collaboration with the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office and the Office of State Senator Daylin Leach. Since then, the coalition has undergone phases of growth and change. It is currently comprised of community members, social service organizations, law enforcement agencies, and local experts. It is now the leading authority on human trafficking in Montgomery County.

Mission Statement: Our mission is to educate professionals and society alike on human trafficking and sexual exploitation in our county to increase awareness and foster prevention.

Goals and Objectives: Our vision is to abolish human trafficking and sexual exploitation in our county by educating our communities and mobilizing them to take action against modern slavery. In order to accomplish this, we will:

- Educate community members, service providers, professionals, and organizations about the prevalence of local, national, and global human trafficking.
- Build a community network to identify signs of trafficking and equip them to take action
- Identify at-risk populations and seek to strengthen local efforts that provide opportunities to educate, empower, and protect the vulnerable individuals and families.
- Acknowledge and establish efforts to reduce the demand in our culture's sex industry.

We will focus on reaching schools and students; religious organizations; health care institutions; legal professionals; business owners and the general community.

Human trafficking is the second largest criminal industry in the world and the fastest growing. In order to make an impact, it is critical that we educate as many people as possible. "Montgomery County is the third largest county in Pennsylvania, the second wealthiest county in the Commonwealth and the 51st wealthiest in the United States. With just under 800,000 people living in its 487 square miles, Montgomery County is home to scores of major employers in pharmaceuticals, banking, manufacturing, healthcare and education."¹ MCAT is the leading authority on human trafficking in the county. With the combined experience and strength of service providers, law enforcement officials, and experts in the area that form the coalition, any single organization pales in comparison.

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Domestic Violence Counts Pennsylvania Summary

On September 16, 2015, 60 out of 60 (100%) identified domestic violence programs in Pennsylvania participated in the 2015 National Census of Domestic Violence Services. The following figures represent the information provided by 60 participating programs about services provided during the 24-hour survey period.

2,600 Victims Served in One Day

1,332 domestic violence victims (697 children and 635 adults) found refuge in emergency shelters or transitional housing provided by local domestic violence programs.

1,268 adults and children received non-residential assistance and services, including counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups.

This chart shows the percentage of programs that provided the following services on the Census Day.

| Services Provided by Local Programs: | Sept. 16 |
|--|----------|
| Individual Support or Advocacy | 98% |
| Children's Support or Advocacy | 82% |
| Emergency Shelter | 80% |
| Court or Legal Accompaniment/Advocacy | 72% |
| Transportation | 40% |
| Legal Representation by an Attorney | 28% |
| Bilingual Advocacy (services provided by someone who is bilingual) | 25% |
| Homicide Reduction Initiative/Lethality Assessment | 22% |

748 Hotline Calls Answered

Domestic violence hotlines are a lifeline for victims in danger, providing support, information, safety planning, and resources. In the 24-hour survey period, domestic violence programs answered more than 31 hotline calls every hour.

2,475 Educated in Prevention and Education Trainings

On the survey day, 2,475 individuals in communities across Pennsylvania attended 74 training sessions provided by local domestic violence programs, gaining much needed information on domestic violence prevention and early intervention.

444 Unmet Requests for Services in One Day, of Which 84% Were for Housing

Many programs reported a critical shortage of funds and staff to assist victims in need of services. In addition to housing and emergency shelter, programs reported that of the service requests they could not meet, Rental Assistance/Utilities and Attorney/Legal Representation services were most in demand.

Cause of Unmet Requests for Help

Across Pennsylvania, 23 individual services at local programs were reduced or eliminated in the past year.

- 15% of programs reported government funding cuts.
- 15% of programs reported staffing cuts or reductions.
- 5% of programs reported reductions in private funding.
- 3% of programs reported fewer individual donations.

Across Pennsylvania, 35 staff positions were eliminated in the past year and most (77%) of these positions were direct services such as shelter or legal advocates, so there were fewer advocates to answer calls for help.

"For some time we had been providing safety planning, legal coordination and support for a woman and her four children who have been in an abusive relationship for almost 10 years. Advocates were able to provide her with assistance locating adequate permanent housing, financial assistance to cover the necessary security deposit, furniture and household items. They were also able to obtain on-going counseling services for her and her children. As it happened, she came to our facility on Census Day to pick up her rental assistance check for her security deposit on her 'safe haven,' as she called it. As she walked around to all the staff that assisted her to make this life-changing event, she cried and said 'Thank you for saving our lives.'"

— Advocate



*Honor Your Mother on
Mother's Day
With A Special Gift*

Please accept the enclosed donation of \$_____ **in honor** of _____ on Mother's Day.

If the Women's Center receives this flyer by MAY 5th, then my honoree will receive a personalized Mother's Day Card, letting her know she inspired this donation to the Women's Center and their work to empower women and end domestic violence.

Please accept the enclosed donation of \$_____ **in memory** of _____ on Mother's Day.

For credit card donations, please supply the credit card number, expiration date and the zip code of the billing address.

Minimum donation: \$5 per card

Mother's Name _____

Mother's Address _____

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

Your Personalized Message to be printed on your card
(or you can opt for our standard message):

Send Completed form and payment to:
Women's Center of Montgomery County
8080 Old York Road, Suite 200
Elkins Park, PA 19027

We need to protect domestic violence victims: 61 shot dead in 2015

By Megan Trimble | mtrimble@pennlive.com
on February 09, 2016

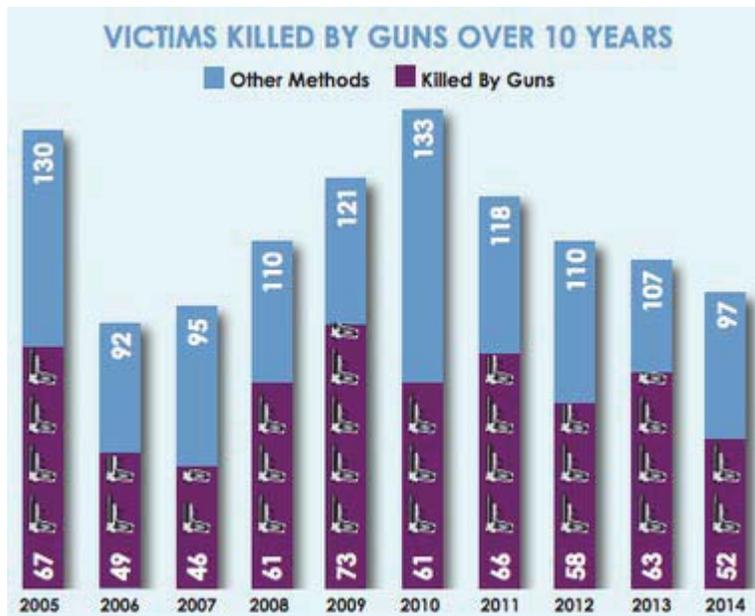
About 85,000 victims walk into Pennsylvania domestic violence centers each year, seeking shelter, counseling and legal assistance.

Some of the most serious cases end in death, and the majority in death by gun.

By the FBI's count, 124 people died in gun-related domestic homicides between 2006 and 2014 in Pennsylvania.

But a look at the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence's 2014 data reveals a more stark reality: 529 people shot to death in domestic violence incidents during that same period. Sixty-one more were killed in 2015.

"Fifty or more percent of homicides are connected to guns, and many years it's 60 [percent] or little more, making it overwhelmingly common," said PCADV Executive Director Peg Dierkers, adding that other victims died from strangulation, stabbings, beatings and other means.



PCADV 2014 Domestic Violence Fatality Report

The Coalition's 2015 fatality report — with data collected by county agencies and cross-referenced with media reports and police confirmations — found 146 people died in domestic violence-related homicides in Pennsylvania. Of that number, 113 were identified as victims and 33 as perpetrators in the incidents.

The FBI's supplementary homicide report is based on data self-reported by law enforcement agencies and reflects a large undercount in domestic violence deaths compared to the PCADV

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data, which also covers a broader definition of "domestic" to include all household relationships.

In Pennsylvania, state police in 49 counties and 93 municipal departments report their statistics to the FBI.

"Help is available," Dierkers said, and it's available before the high-stress life events that often coincide with abuse: a break in a relationship, the serving of custody papers, court appearances and sentencings.

Murder-suicide

York and Montgomery counties each saw four murder-suicide incidents in 2015, but they were not alone.

Twenty-four murder-suicides were reported in the commonwealth last year, and there have been 110 murder-suicide incidents in Pennsylvania since 2010, according to the PCADV.

Certain counties rank high every year and "then it moves around a bit year to year," Dierkers said. Places like York, she said, have bought in to the coalition's approach to lessening domestic violence.

"We need to protect domestic violence victims, and doing so will hopefully protect their abusers as well," she said. "They each have families that are devastated when they lose loved ones."

The state-wide coalition runs 60 local centers across the commonwealth's 67 counties. For the PCADV's part, a three-pronged approach targets the fatality numbers in an effort to reduce them, from screening victims for early indicators of future abuse to criminalizing strangulation and tightening some firearms laws.

Early indicators

Eleven questions could save a life, and it only takes between 5 and 7 minutes.

Dierkers said the program is called a "lethality assessment" and the coalition is pairing with law enforcement to screen victims to highlight people at risk of future death. Officers conduct the screenings when they're called to incidents and then connect victims with people to develop a safety plan.

Dierkers said 179 police departments out of 1,200 in the state participate in the program. "Research has shown that people who score high on the screen are at a high likelihood of being killed, so police have a conversation with the victim right there and say, 'Other people in your situation have been killed, would you get on the phone with a domestic violence counselor right now and talk to that person about your situation?'" Dierkers said.

About 70 percent of victims agree to take the call, and 70 percent of those go to a local center, Dierkers said. In comparison, Dierkers cited national research that showed only about 4

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percent of people killed in domestic violence situations had participated in services in the year before their death.

"That information is very unsettling — learning that you have a high chance of being killed," she said.

Criminalizing strangulation

Strangulation is a strong marker for future homicide, and several legislators have backed House Bill 1581, which looks to establish a felony strangulation law

Under the bill, strangulation would rank as a second-degree felony or a first-degree felony if the defendant is named in an active protection from abuse order, uses an instrument of crime or has been previously convicted of strangulation.

Six people died from strangulation in Pennsylvania last year, according to PCADV statistics, and one study has reported the odds of becoming a homicide victim increased by 800 percent for women who had reported strangulation by a partner in the past.

Tightening gun laws

More than a dozen states have passed stronger firearm-related laws in an attempt to curb violence. Maine's legislature, for example, passed a law in 2015 that prohibits domestic violence convicts from owning guns for five years after they complete their court-ordered sentences.

Some Pennsylvanians are looking to do the same, and Dierkers is hopeful legislators will propose changes to state gun laws "in the next couple of weeks."

The PCADV is asking the legislature to bar domestic abusers with active protection against abuse orders from having guns and requiring them to turn the weapons in; to include a 24-hour time limit in gun surrender policy; to eliminate the state's third-party safekeeping provision that allows those prohibited from possessing guns to give them to a family member, friend or acquaintance; and to deem firearms "abandoned" when they are not retrieved from a sheriff's office.

"These would eliminate a great deal of risk, including the risk of abusers having access to those guns as an immediate threat to victim," Dierkers said.

There is always work to do, though, on the state, county and local levels, she added. More than 70 percent of people who have experienced domestic violence have been abused before they are 24 years old.

Dierkers said it's important to teach men and women how to play a part in ending cycles of abuse.

"The more we talk about it and the more we support victims in coming forward, the less victims there will be and the more stigma that will surround abuse," she said.



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Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

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