

WomeneWS

Women's Center of Montgomery County

Executive Director's Notes



Submitted by Maria Macaluso

As I write this month's article, thoughts of Thanksgiving are very much on my mind. I have always loved this holiday because of what it represents – a day to be reflective and to honor the many gifts life has given us. For me personally, it is an opportunity to step out of the breathless momentum of life's daily rush and to freeze time for the briefest of moments while I consider, with extreme awe, satisfaction, and pride, all the wonderful things for which we have to be grateful here at the Women's Center of Montgomery County.

Since coming to the Center almost nine years ago, I have often been so very moved by the depth of commitment, passion and support demonstrated by you, our volunteers, members and staff. It is easy to be overwhelmed and inspired with gratitude for all of you who make the Women's Center such an incredible place that I feel somewhat humbled, amazed and quite ill-prepared to do those feelings justice! You truly set a standard of excellence in community giving that is unequalled and unimaginable!

Over the years, I have also learned to be thankful for the many 'gifts' you all bring to the Center as individuals: the energy, leadership, vision and talents that have guided and shaped our course. Through your willingness to share your ideas and suggestions, you have helped us to build a Center that is strong and stable, more than capable of withstanding the changing political and economic environment. Our Women's Center, unlike so many of our sister organizations, ill-affected by funding cuts, remains a safe house, where ideas are allowed to flourish and a commitment to volunteerism remains among our core values.

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Expressing Our Sincerest Appreciation to Our Friend and Supporter, Montgomery County District Attorney Bruce L. Castor, Jr.

It is my great pleasure to publicly acknowledge a very special gift we received this month, thanks to the generosity and support of our District Attorney, Bruce L. Castor, Jr. On behalf of a most grateful organization, I am delighted to announce that we are one of the recipients of a \$25,000 donation from the District Attorney's Law Enforcement Fund in support of our work to end domestic violence in our community.

It is, of course, quite a shock to open an envelope and find an unexpected donation of that size. But beyond the initial rush of excitement and the sense of security that comes with the knowledge of what good work can be done with those funds, there is something profoundly moving and sobering – mingled with feelings of pride, amazement and heartfelt gratitude - associated with this gift that makes me feel quite ill-equipped to articulate how much this donation means to our organization. For while monetary assistance is a most welcome gift, what truly gives this donation meaning is the recognition and appreciation for our work it symbolizes. And that it comes from a community partner – a man known for being a champion for victims' rights committed to vigorously prosecuting acts of violence against women – elevates the donation to an act of trust and confidence which requires no less than our best efforts to honor and to do justice to his kind support with action and service to our community.

After receiving this donation, I took the opportunity to learn more about the man who chose to honor our organization with his support. Some of you may know that District Attorney Castor has been a prosecutor with the Montgomery County District Attorney's office since 1986. He was elected District Attorney seven years ago, on November 2, 1999. On more than

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On a personal level, getting to know so many of you over the years has deeply enriched and inspired my life! Honoring your guidance and support are an integral part of both my comfort and my conscience in leading this organization. It truly is my privilege to serve as your Executive Director, and for that opportunity I am most thankful every day.

With new programs and new initiatives coming into focus, I am proud and grateful for the tremendous strides we as an organization continue to make. As I see the Board of Directors evolving as well, I am sincerely appreciative of all that they do to support and enable my work.

And so, as I look ahead to Thanksgiving, on behalf of myself, the staff and the Board of Directors, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to work to fulfill the mission, goals and visions you have set for us. I hope this year we can all be thankful for the health and well-being of our programs, our members, and the individuals we serve!

Bruce Castor continued from Page 1

several occasions, his work has been recognized by the state legislature and Governors Ridge and Casey. In 1990 he was named by a local Chamber of Commerce as Montgomery County's "Law Enforcement Man of the Year."

This is an individual who has led a life of dedicated community service, a man committed to fighting crime and improving the world in which we live. For those interested in a more detailed biography, I would direct you to the Montgomery County District Attorney's website. What most interested me, however, was not a story found on a website but rather a testament to his character that rested in a conversation shared with me by Mary Onama, Executive Director of Victims Service Center. Mary had the opportunity some time ago to speak with members of Bruce's family. In those unguarded moments of honest reflection, they shared with her stories of Bruce from childhood which included his passionate commitment to fighting violence against women that started him on his career at the age of 17, volunteering as an intern in the DA's office, and led to years of dedicated service to the community.

In learning more about the man, I must tell you that the magnitude of his donation was made even more meaningful. For although I always knew that our District Attorney and his staff were staunch allies and supporters of our work in the courts, what I have learned as a result of this donation is that this is man we are proud to have as a friend and ally. This is someone whose respect and good opinion is truly worth earning and keeping. This is *the* partner to have as we fight to end domestic violence in our community.

I hope all of our members will join me in expressing a heartfelt thanks to District Attorney Bruce Castor.

Norristown Volunteer Update

Submitted by Jenn B.

Norristown Volunteer Coordinator

I want to give a sincere thanks to the volunteers for making the Volunteer Appreciation brunch a very special event. It was very nice to spend the day with you all. I hope you felt the love in the room! Each of you plays an important role at the Women's Center. We couldn't do it without you!

IN-SERVICE:

The next WAP in-service will be **Tuesday, November 14, 2006** from 1-3 pm in the Norristown office. Our guest speaker will be the Executive Director, Eddie Cruz, from ACLAMO. Hope to see you all there! Let me know if you plan to attend.

SAVE THE DATE:

I can't believe it is that time again! Our WAP holiday party is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 12** from 12-3 in the Norristown office. As always it will be potluck, so bring your favorite recipe! Come join us for the infamous pollyana game, it is always a big hit!

LEGAL REMEDIES:

The next Legal Remedies Workshop will be **Tuesday, November 21, 2006**, from 5-7pm, facilitator to be announced. The information sessions are held at our Norristown office at 18 West Airy Street, 4th floor from 5-7p.m. Please call 610-279-7474 to register to attend. Also, please refer a family member or friend to this valuable program!

Elkins Park Volunteer Update

Submitted by Deanna Linn, Director of Volunteers

It was wonderful to see everyone at the Volunteer Brunch. The Women's Center would not be able to provide services to victims in need without the many hours provided by WCMC volunteers.

On **Tuesday, November 21st**, a PCADV representative will be at the Elkins Park office to monitor the Women's Center and program compliance. As part of the day, Maria is asking interested volunteers in meeting with the PCADV monitor to discuss program issues and concerns. The time is scheduled for **1:00 pm at the Elkins Park office**. I hope you will be able attend and provide your input.

I am going to be mailing out a survey to hotline counselors to assess in-service training needs and interests. There is a requirement of 8 in-service hours per year in order to remain an active counselor, including 2 hours of active listening. I want the in-services to be something useful to volunteers, so I want your ideas. In addition to the daytime and evening "tea parties" at the Elkins Park office, I am exploring the possibility of offering times at other offices.

On Monday, November 20 at 7:00pm, at the Elkins Park office, Women's Center counselors are meeting to discuss their concerns about the insufficient services for victims of domestic violence and possible ideas and actions for volunteers. Please join the counselors with possible plans and enthusiasm. Call Deanna to RSVP.

The current in-service schedule is:

- Wednesday, November 8, 7:00 - 8:30pm. Counselor skills review (active listening). *It will actually be fun*
- Tuesday, December 5, 7:00 - 8:30pm. Children and Domestic Violence. *Holiday tea party*
- Thursday, December 7, 1:00 – 3:00pm. Assessing Dangerousness. *Holiday tea party*
- Thursday, January 4, 1:00 – 3:00pm. To be announced
- Tuesday, January 9, 7:00 - 8:30pm. To be announced

Please RSVP to me at the Elkins Park office if you are able to attend.

The Women's Center Wednesday Evening Book Club November 2006 to January 2007

The Women's Club is pleased to offer the following program:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Hostess</u>
November 15	<u>Orange Blossom Special</u> <i>by Betsy Carter</i>	Sandy	Ruth
December 20	<u>History of Love</u> <i>by Nicole Krass</i>	Caryn	Caryn
January 17th	<u>The Glass Castle</u> <i>by Jennifer Wells</i>	Ruth	Sandy

Reading enthusiasts please call Sunny at 215-576-6215 to join our lively and interesting book discussions. New members are always welcome!

A reminder from the Women's Center: If you are interested in buying any of these books online, we encourage you to use the shopping link on our site (www.wcmontco.org) to visit Amazon.com or Barnes&Noble.com. Both vendors donate approximately 5% of the sale price back to the Women's Center to support our efforts to empower women in our community.

**Would you like to win a \$50 gift card good at Willow Grove, Plymouth Meeting or Gallery East Mall?
The Women's Center needs your help.**

The Women's Center goal is to provide supportive counseling, information on available resources, and legal options for victims of domestic violence. The problem always is – how can victims become aware of the availability of these services. A victim of domestic violence may have difficulty obtaining information that she needs due to her isolation and her fear of the abuser discovering her search for assistance. For this reason, the Women's Center has posters with tear-off slips with the hotline telephone number that we place in community locations. Good locations are in women's bathrooms and neighborhood bulletin boards.

I am asking the assistance of all Women's Center volunteers to distribute these posters. Two posters will be mailed to every Women's Center volunteers this week. In return for your assistance in placing the posters in the community, for every poster you put up, you will receive a raffle ticket. The prize for the raffle is a *\$50 gift card good at Willow Grove, Plymouth Meeting or Gallery East Mall* donated by Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust.

Be creative — everyone has favorite stores, businesses, restaurants, religious organizations, library, hairdresser, meeting places or the place where you work. *Please ask permission before you put up the poster;* it won't help if it is taken down immediately.

If you want to put up additional posters, you will be eligible for another raffle ticket for each additional poster. This event is also open to family and friends who can also put up posters and receive raffle chances. However, everyone must be careful to ask permission before putting up a poster. If you do not wish to participate in this activity, perhaps someone you know would like the opportunity. If not, please send back the posters so they can be used elsewhere.

After you have put up a poster, please fill out the raffle ticket with your name, telephone number, and location where you put the poster, and send back to the Elkins Park Office. The drawing will be held on December 15.

The Women's Center is also looking for members to “adopt” their local police department. This would involve more than just a poster, we are asking the Adopter to take brochures, coloring books, and other literature. If you do this, you would receive *ten* raffle tickets. It would be very important to maintain contact with “your” police department to replenish their supplies when necessary.

If a hotline caller mentions that she called because she saw a poster in a specific location, if it is your poster, you will receive 10 additional raffle chances.

A prize will be given for the most creative poster location, so please note on the raffle ticket where the poster is placed.

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

**United Way Donor Option
Number 00433**

Domestic Violence Victims Celebrate Prison Releases

*Elizabeth Fernandez, Chronicle Staff Writer; San Francisco Chronicle
Sunday, October 22, 2006*

Each woman was a “lifer,” condemned to spend the rest of her years behind bars.

Each woman had been battered by her domestic partner, and went to prison for murder or crimes related to the death of her abuser.

But these women have won their freedom — either through parole or a unique state law that allows redress for some found guilty of murdering their abusers before 1992, when the state began allowing battered woman syndrome to be used as a defense.

On Saturday, in a singular reunion in Oakland, a dozen of the formerly incarcerated women gathered to celebrate and to summon support for other battered women behind bars.

“I thank God for allowing me a second chance to be a part of society,” said Ollie Johnson, 49, an East Palo Alto resident who was paroled last year after serving 18 years in prison for the second-degree murder of her boyfriend.

“Sometimes it feels overwhelming,” she said. “I was 28 when I went to prison. But I got through it.”

In the last nine years, 26 battered women who were given life sentences have been released from state prison, according to Free Battered Women, a San Francisco nonprofit that advocates statewide.

“It feels like this day is a miracle,” said Dr. Linda Barnard, a marriage and family therapist who served as an expert witness in the cases of several of the women. “The world, even now, doesn’t have a lot of sympathy for women who feel they have to use lethal force. These are women who never would have gotten out. Some of them are the most courageous women I’ve ever encountered.”

A handful of the women were granted parole, said Andrea Bible, coordinator of Free Battered Women. Others were freed due to a law — the only one of its kind in the nation — that allows battered women to petition for a new trial if their original trial did not involve expert testimony on domestic abuse.

Cheryl Orange-Jones, 53, of Modesto, was granted a new trial in May through the efforts of the California Habeas Project, which works to secure freedom for battered inmates.

Jones went to prison 21 years ago, convicted of second-degree murder in the 1985 death of her husband, Frank.

Jones said her husband hurt her physically and mentally throughout their seven-year marriage, breaking her front tooth, shattering her eardrum, locking her in the trunk of his car. She said he trained his pit bull to guard her. “If I tried to move, the dog would attack me,” she said.

Jones said she shot her husband one night when he pulled a knife on her and tried to rape her.

During her original trial, “they never raised the fact that I’d been battered, they just said he was the victim and I was the criminal,” she said. “The lawyer talked me into taking a deal of pleading guilty to second-degree murder. I was dumb and took it.”

She was sentenced to 17 years to life. In prison, she became a surrogate mother to fellow inmates, acquiring a nickname: Granny.

After a new, three-week trial in May, Jones was acquitted.

Stanislaus County public defender Greg Spiering and Kellee Malone-Westbrook represented Jones. “Things are now night and day in terms of how we look at these cases,” Spiering said. “Back then, things were very different.”

When she was freed, Jones went straight to the store — and bought a Coke.

“It had been a long time since I had one,” she said. Then she and her friends and relatives went to her parents’ home — where she now lives — to hold a victory party.

Jones is rebuilding her life. She recently bought her first car — a lime green 1985 Thunderbird with 141,000 miles for \$560. And she just acquired certification as a forklift operator.

“I always wanted to drive a forklift, even in prison,” she said.

Saturday’s event, attended by more than 200 people, included a silent auction. Donated artworks included scarves and garments made by Linda Field, who was convicted in Alameda County of first-degree murder in the death of her husband, Elwin. Field, who said her husband beat her and their three children, was released in January on a habeas petition. She pled no contest to voluntary manslaughter and was given credit for time served — 19 years in prison.

Field is now living in a small town east of Stockton and enjoying every minute she spends with her five grandchildren.

“I’m like a kid in a candy store now,” she said. “In the first days, it was so amazing to see how things had changed. I had never seen a remote control or a cell phone. My health is not all that good, but I’m free.

“I’m finally free.”

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Bachman, 43, said he carries his Treo everywhere and loves the feeling of not being “tethered to my home and my computer.” In stores, if he wants to comparison-shop, he can go online to check a price. At Starbucks, he can track his caloric intake after ordering that venti latte — about 400 calories. He snaps pictures and shoots video of his three children. On his new Treo 700, he can listen to Internet radio as he trains for the Marine Corps Marathon.

But until a reporter called to ask how he had erased the data on the used phone he was selling on Craigslist, Bachman said he never realized how vulnerable his data was to theft or resurrection.

“And I consider myself a pretty savvy smart-phone user,” he said.

His 143 passwords and PINs for various check-cashing cards, online bank accounts and e-mail services were stored on the phone in an encrypted form, which would have made it almost impossible for a hacker to access them. But the other data he thought he had erased — personal contacts, pictures and Web search terms — were recoverable, experts said.

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Pottstown Support Group Update

Just a reminder to our hotline counselors that we offer a Support Group in the Pottstown Office of the Women’s Center, every Tuesday evening from 5:30pm - 7:30pm. If you need more information or direct clients to please call: 610-970-7364.

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Cellphones store data on a type of chip known as flash memory. The phone operating system never actually erases data, though. It “dereferences” it, or deletes pointers to where the data is located, so the phone essentially “forgets that it’s there,” said Bruce Schneier, a security technologist in Mountain View, Calif. That is similar to what happens on personal computers — the files remain on the hard drive; only the references are deleted.

There are 220 million cellphone subscribers in the United States. Typically, cellphones are used for 1 1/2 years before they are replaced, providing ample opportunity for data breaches through lost, stolen, sold or recycled models.

Trust Digital recently bought from the eBay online auction site 10 used smart phones, each with at least 40 megabytes of memory, for an experiment in data recovery. Using simple software created in-house, the firm’s technicians retrieved an astonishing variety of information — one company’s plans to win a multimillion-dollar federal transportation contract, e-mails about another firm’s \$50,000 payment for a software license, bank accounts and passwords, medical prescriptions, and receipts for utility payments.

Then there was the text-message exchange between a man and his paramour, who Trust Digital determined was not his wife from the thousands of pages of personal data on his phone.

“So,” the woman typed, “I’ll talk to u next week.”

“You want a break from me?” the man messaged back. “Then fine.”

Paraben, of Pleasant Grove, Utah, buys about 300 used cellphones each year from eBay and other sites for training sessions. Though the sellers think they have wiped the devices clean, 80 to 85 percent of the devices still have data intact, Schroader said.

“We’ve recovered everything from complete address books . . . to pictures taken in intimate moments. It’s like, well, I didn’t need to see that,” Schroader said.

The fact that cellphones can give up secrets makes them as valuable to law enforcement as to criminals.

Lee Reiber, a Boise, Idaho, police detective specializing in cellphone forensics, has used recovered phone data to crack homicide, child abuse, domestic abuse cases. This year alone he has examined more than 100 phones in criminal and civil investigations and recovered data from 90 percent of them, he said. A man suspected of being a pedophile was undone by his phone. “We had all his pictures,” Reiber said.

Besides the Treo, made by Palm Inc., there are other smart-phone makers, including Nokia Corp. and Siemens AG.

BlackBerry devices are in theory among the most secure of smart phones, Schroader said. However, those used by consumers lack the same security features as those used by government and private companies,

Laudermilch said. “Even though there may be some security features on the device, most people don’t know how or when to use them,” he said.

As more people sell their old phones and upgrade to fancier models, Palm has developed a method that not only erases, but also overwrites the data with 1’s and 0’s, sometimes called the “zero-out” method. Instructions can be found on the Palm.com Web site by searching “zero-out reset” or “factory reset.”

Trust Digital recommends that cellphone owners seek advice from device manufacturers, carriers that sold them their phones or their companies’ information technology administrators. The Web site Wirelessrecycling.com provides directions for erasing data from many models.

Alerted to the security vulnerability, Bachman pulled his Treo 650 off the market and performed an advanced factory reset by following instructions on the Palm Web site. He said he plans to put the Treo 650 up for sale again. Meanwhile, he is already eyeing the Treo 750, not yet available in the United States.

Used Cellphones Hold Trove of Secrets That Can Be Hard to Erase

By Ellen Nakashima Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday, October 21, 2006

Sam Bachman is a frequent upgrader. Not of cars or homes, but of his “smart phone.” Hooked on the convenience of a cellphone that’s also a mini PC, calendar and address book, the Virginia social worker just bought his sixth Treo smart phone. And before advertising his old model for sale online, he took what he thought was a savvy step: He “reset” the device to wipe it free of data. Or so he thought.

It turns out that hackers or sleuths armed with commercially available software can fairly easily resurrect erased data on cellphones, including address books and calendar contacts, photos, videos and e-mails, turning used phones into a treasure trove for identity thieves and allowing them in effect to buy personal data off the Internet, security experts say.

“You could recreate someone’s entire life from the data you recover from these devices,” said Norm Laudermilch, chief technology officer for Trust Digital, a McLean security company that helps companies and government agencies protect data.

Cellphones with lots of memory are essentially little computers that people carry around and, like laptops and PCs, are at risk of a data breach. Cellphones pose a special risk because of two converging trends: their size and portability, making them easier to lose, and the fact that increasingly, we are documenting our lives through our phones.

“It is amazing how a couple of megabytes of data on a cellphone can reveal so much about you — the last place you were, the last person you talked to,” said Amber Schroader, chief executive of Paraben Corp., a forensic software firm that teaches law enforcement agents how to get cellphones to spill secrets.

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Women's Center of Montgomery County

Elkins Park Office

215-635-7344

Thrift Shop: 215-885-0620

FAX: 215-635-7347

Norristown Office

610-279-1548

FAX: 610-279-7740

Pottstown Office

610-970-7363

FAX: 610-970-0705

Lansdale Office

215-853-8060

FAX: 215-853-8065

Bryn Mawr Office

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