

# Womenews

Women's Center of Montgomery County



## Executive Director's Message

by Maria Macaluso

### **An Empowerment Challenge to Exercise Our Voices and Take Positive Actions**

I want to take a moment to thank so many of our members who shared with me their stories and experiences as they participated, January 21<sup>st</sup>, in the Women's March in Washington and in cities worldwide. For me, what I felt most was the positive expression of individuals – men and women – who believe that now is a time to become engaged and enlightened citizens, dedicated to making our world better. Seeing the generations, young and old, working together to build a community that empowers and nurtures encourages and inspires me with optimism.

I have heard the phrase a lot lately – ‘Making American Great Again ‘ - and it occurred to me that the greatness we seek is not money and wealth. Greatness lies in the selfless act of caring and commitment that I see in our volunteers, who give of their time and energy, in service to others.

I personally saw greatness in the simple act of witnessing the Martin Luther King Day of Service at Abington Friends School, during which more than 600 children and their families dedicated their day to projects that would help others. Those children didn't know the strangers who would benefit from the blankets they made, the soup they prepared, the encouraging messaging on cards they wrote; all they knew was that through their actions they could help improve the world for those in need.

As much as we have heard about divisions and adversity in recent months, the message I have found in many places is that we have the potential to be passionate, caring, motivated, and visionary people willing to speak and act with a positive goal of building a better future.

To that end I want to share one of the messages that came out of the March of Washington, shared with me by our Board President, Rosie Santulli who returned from her experience enthusiastic and eager to do more. While the march served as a starting point to remind people of what they can collectively accomplish, the next steps are equally critical. Those next steps include following up – whatever your personal interest or cause – with actions that promote positive change.

From the organizing site of the March - <https://www.womensmarch.com/> - I share the message “10 Actions/100 Days”. The goal of this campaign is to encourage people – whatever your political or personal ideals and views – to see the next 100 days as a challenge to take constructive and positive action on an issue that you care about, starting today. I share those suggested actions steps with you, along with my encouragement that you consider what you, as an individual, can do to advocate and act on an issue that matters to you.

The following is the first step in a proposed action list from the March organizers as a guide, but the choice to act and how to act is one you need to make for yourself. I just ask that you remember the goal to make our world better!

Action 1 - Write a postcard to your Senators about what matters most to you and how you are going to continue to fight for it in the days, weeks and months ahead. (The site provides printable postcards you can download.)

To learn about the remaining recommended action steps, visit the site or take a moment to choose the positive, constructive path of your own design!

## **From the Board of Directors' Series – Getting to Know Your Board Members**

*Submitted by Sandra Hyman, Board Treasurer*

When asked to contribute an article for the newsletter, I was baffled as to what could be said. I then sat back at our last board meeting and the love, excitement, dedication, imagination and commitment spoke to me.

I first learned of the Women's Center in 1986. It was then a grass roots organization without an office but a mission to help women fulfill their needs and teach them to dare to dream. Domestic abuse became evident that women in all walks of life and economic situations have experienced and were still battling this secret horror. Economic control, verbal abuse, isolation, physical and sexual abuse were just some of the symptoms that were being experienced by so many women that the organization felt compelled to address this quiet killer so it has become our primary focus as an organization.

The changes that I have seen over the years have been nothing but inspirational. When our office was at another location there was always something going on. Korean art classes, our first thrift store, meetings of varied interest are just some of the activities available for those that chose to participate. We were always open to new activities that would benefit our members and the community.

We were started by our founding mothers with their helping hands, still today helping to stir the pot. Contributions by all that have served on the board have given so many different ideas and hard work to help create the organization it has evolved into today. Offices throughout the county, courtroom assistance for victims, counseling, an affiliated United Way organization, 24 hour hotline, etc.

“WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY, BABY” It is exciting to look back at all that we have accomplished but I am even more excited about our future. We are determined more then ever to help our clients find their desired life free from any form of abuse. Our training teaches us, “It is their life therefor their decision how they want to proceed through their lives.”

Our board is a mix of different professionals, back rounds, ages of men and women. It truly creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm for our future with ideas for programs, events and a really strong direction or the future. The determination to take the high road by defining our focus for the coming years has been one of the best things to come out of this group of brain power. We are working hard to create a strong strategic plan so to stay focused on our goals. It is also important that we stay current with our communications to our clients, volunteers and the general public.

Fund raising has become a huge function of our board so that we can continue to provide services. Our board has come up with several new events and opportunities for the business community to get involved. How exciting it can be when we all come together for a common cause. Everyone becomes a winner.

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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, February 16th at 6:45 pm** at our Colmar office at 2506 N. Broad Street in the Walton Meeting 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 Co-Presidents Amy Stern and Rosie Santulli c/o the Elkins Park office.

## **WCMC Member Beth McGowan Gallagher Organizes 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Emergency Purse Campaign**

Building on her remarkable success from last year's holiday season, WCMC Member Beth McGowan Gallagher again coordinated a campaign to collect 84 purses containing emergency supplies for women in crisis. The purses are distributed through our various offices to help women with emergency needs – toiletries, winter gloves and scarves, Kleenex, first aid supplies, etc. – all those small essentials that we take for granted but mean so much in our daily lives. For the women we serve, the purses not only serve a practical function but they are reminders of the caring and thoughtfulness of our special friends like Beth, who not only recognizes the unmet needs of women in crisis but mobilizes a community to meet those needs!

Thanks so much to Beth, her family and friends who have made a HUGE difference in the lives of many!!



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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

# Remove Firearms from Abusers, Keep Communities Safer

SB 1182 ♦ PN 1955



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 Senate Bill 1182 (will have new number in 2017-18 Session)

Senate Bill 1182, sponsored by Senator Tom Killion 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. In 2015 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.

<sup>i</sup> Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2015). *2015 Domestic Violence Fatality Report, Murder-Suicides: Shockingly Common*.

<sup>ii</sup> 18 USC § 922(g)(9). Offenders are prohibited if they are current or former spouses, parents or guardians of their victims, if they share a child with their victims, or if they cohabit or have cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian.

<sup>iii</sup> The existing prohibition law has been in place since 1993.

<sup>iv</sup> A Right to Know Law Request from the Pennsylvania State Police revealed 6,500 of 47,000 final PFA orders included a surrender provision between 2011-2015.

<sup>v</sup> The Standard Speaker (Sept. 10, 2014). "Man pleads guilty in connection to murder-suicide," retrieved from <http://standardspeaker.com/news/man-pleads-guilty-in-connection-to-murder-suicide-1.1750075>

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General: 717-545-6400/800-932-4632 • {TTY}: 800-553-2508  
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**NO MORE**  
TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

## **Thank you to Our Friends at Abington Friends School**

Once again we are extremely grateful to the students, staff, faculty and parents of the Abington Friends School who selected the Women's Center as the recipient of the proceeds from their clothing drive and rummage sale conducted as part of their Martin Luther King Day of Service activities. This partnership, which began more than seven years ago, is an inspiring opportunity to experience a genuine sense of community giving and caring.

Each year I have the honor of joining this wonderful community working with them on this event. Their commitment, energy and passion for helping others is so powerful and motivating! It reinforces for me the message of volunteerism and the greatness we can achieve when we work together selflessly to make life better for others. Our futures are truly in safe and caring hands under their leadership!

In addition to a donation of clothing, the school raised and donated \$1,168.00 to support the Women's Center of Montgomery County. Please join me in expressing our sincerest thanks and admiration to the Abington Friends School community!

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### **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Women's Center of Montgomery County is seeking to fill the following positions to be based in our Colmar and Lansdale offices:

#### **Volunteer Coordinator– Colmar/North Penn**

**Purpose:** 1) to develop, maintain and supervise the volunteer component at Colmar and Lansdale Hospital sites; and 2) to assist the Women's Center in delivering services to abused individuals as needed.

**Classification:** Part-time (20 hours per week)

#### **Medical Advocate at Lansdale Hospital**

**Purpose:** Responsibilities include: 1) assist the Domestic Violence Program in delivering services to victims of domestic violence onsite at the hospital; 2) coordinate and conduct training to healthcare providers to identify exposure to domestic violence in children; 3) assist in supervising volunteers who provide support in the delivery of services; and 4) coordinate protocols and referrals between the hospital and WCMC, and 5) participate in and promote the network of service providers in the region through taskforce meetings and collaborative efforts.

**Classification:** Part-time (20 hours per week)

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

or mail resumes to

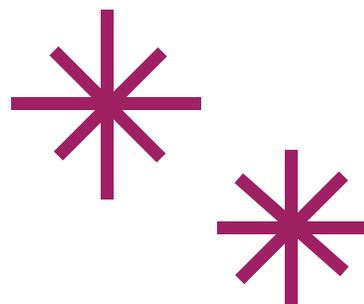
Maria Macaluso, Executive Director c/o the Elkins Park office,  
no later than February 25, 2017

*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.*

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Thrift Shoppe**

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Women's Center of  
Montgomery County,  
Domestic Violence  
Awareness Project*



**WCMONTCO.ORG    215-885-0651**

**SECOND CHANCES SHOPPE  
201 LEEDOM STREET  
JENKINTOWN, PA 19406**



**Second Chances Shoppe**

# JUST DANCE



Calling all dance and music buffs.....

You are invited to participate in a fun dance tournament using Xbox Kinect©

**Who:** Ages 13-18 – Teams of 4 participants.

**Where:** The Microsoft Store at the King of Prussia Mall

**When:** Saturday, February 18 - 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Why:** To have healthy fun!

**How:** Register online at - [www.microsoftstore.com/kingofprussia](http://www.microsoftstore.com/kingofprussia)

If you do not have enough players for a team of four (4), no worries, we will place you with teammates!

## PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED

**Just dance©** is an interactive game for dance and music lovers that measures the accuracy of your moves. Come get your groove on as you stand up to your competition *and* take a stand against dating violence. Information: [latripp@microsoft.com](mailto:latripp@microsoft.com)

The Microsoft Corporation



*The Women's Center of Montgomery County*  
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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