



## Raising Community Awareness and Support for Domestic Violence Victims this October

Every year, approximately 10 million people become victims of domestic violence, which equates to just about 20 people every minute. These are some pretty big and startling numbers. Most Americans don't realize just how real domestic violence is and how many lives are affected by it. It affects not only women, but men and children of all different races, status, religions, and culture. No one is immune to it.

Domestic violence shows itself in a number of different forms: punching, slapping, choking, threatening, manipulating, yelling as well as many other actions. Most domestic violence incidents are left behind closed doors. No matter the situation, domestic violence is never ok.

That is why **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** was introduced back in 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to not only educate and raise awareness but bring the support and strength that domestic violence victims need. It was created to bring more awareness to others and to connect and unify the millions of affected victims that had been battered due to domestic violence. The hope of having a month dedicated to Domestic Violence Awareness is to break the chains of violence.

Huge strides to do this began after the Violence Against Women Act was put into place in 1994. A variety of programs, services, and shelters were made available to domestic violence victims, thanks to the issues that had been addressed through legislation. And the overall domestic violence rate has dropped dramatically by nearly two-thirds since then as well. But there still is much work to be done, as the current statistics of domestic violence indicate.

This October let's all do our part in not only raising community awareness of domestic violence and speaking openly about this issue which is still prevalent today in every community, but to also encourage friends, family, and coworkers that have been affected by it to seek out the support and resources available to them so that they can overcome the trauma and begin rebuilding their lives.

### CCC Partners with City of Elgin for "Movies in the Park"

Summer is always the perfect time to have outdoor movie nights in community parks across the county, and this summer was no exception in our community. The Crisis Center so enjoyed helping host the City of Elgin's outdoor movie night on August 1st, where we sold popcorn, soda and candy in Festival Park while the community gathered at sunset to watch the movie LUCA. A big thank you to the City of Elgin for including us this year!



### DV Calendar of activities

#### October 3<sup>rd</sup>

##### *DV Outreach Event*

10 am to 1 pm, Elgin Community College, Building B

#### October 7<sup>th</sup>

##### *"Paws for a Cause" Dog Walk*

10 am, Carpenters Park, Carpentersville

#### October 9<sup>th</sup>

##### *DV Outreach Event*

9 am to 7:30 pm, St. Charles Library

##### *Moonlight Bike Ride with Elgin Community Bikes*

9 pm, Festival Park

#### October 11<sup>th</sup>

##### *"In Her Shoes" Event*

9:30 am to 7:30 pm, Elgin Community College, Alumni Room

##### *DV Community Outreach Event*

10 am to 1 pm, Elgin Community College, Building B

#### October 16<sup>th</sup>

##### *"Empowerment Self-Defense" Class*

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, Gail Borden Library

#### October 17<sup>th</sup>

##### *"Clothesline Project"*

9 am to 7 pm, at ECC, Building F International Lounge

#### October 26<sup>th</sup>

##### *DVAM Rally to include "Spotlight on Stories" Play*

7 pm, Elgin Community College, Seigle Auditorium



## Domestic Violence Survivors Break Through What Holds Them Back

"I can't do it!" That was the initial reaction of one woman who attends one of Community Crisis Center's DV support groups. Group members were taking turns breaking a wooden board with their bare hands.

CCC's DV support groups meet weekly and provide a place for women who have experienced domestic or dating violence to come together and share their experiences and support each other. Support groups can be an extremely powerful step in the healing process for survivors of abuse and violence. Women who participate in groups discover they are not alone and that their feelings are normal and valid. Survivors have often been criticized, blamed for the abuse they've experienced, and isolated. As a result, survivors may start to question themselves, and doubt their right to be treated with respect and to be safe. Repeated abuse and violence eats away at a person's confidence and self-esteem. In addition to contributing to feelings like depression and anxiety, it can be part of what makes it difficult to leave an abusive situation.

Recently in one of our DV support groups, the group members and facilitators were talking about how to reclaim your power, and how to recognize your own strength. Group facilitator and DSV Counseling Program Coordinator, Juli Brown, suggested that group members participate in a "board breaking" exercise. Juli has a background teaching martial arts and self-defense and says that breaking a board can be empowering. "Many times people who have been in an abusive relationship, especially women, doubt themselves and feel like they are powerless. Breaking a board demonstrates in a very tangible way that you are strong and powerful! It can be transformational. Feelings of self-doubt and powerlessness can be replaced with feelings of strength, confidence, and self-efficacy."

The group members first practiced the palm heel strike on a soft practice pad and went through the basics of how to use the technique effectively. Juli explained how the technique could be used in a self-defense situation, but also emphasized that when in an abusive relationship, sometimes physically fighting back is not the best choice because it can cause an abuser to become more violent. In that situation, survivors are encouraged to trust their knowledge of the situation and do what they need to do in order to survive, which may mean not physically fighting back.

After practicing the technique, group members had the option to write or draw on their boards before breaking them. Group members chose to either write inspiring messages, such as "I can do hard things", or negative messages they have received, or that have held them back like "You're a weak woman", or "No one will believe you". Then they broke through their boards – every single woman broke their board on their first attempt. There were cheers and applause as each person stepped up and broke through feelings of self-doubt, and experienced their own personal power.



"After breaking that board, I felt so strong!" That was the reaction of the group member who initially didn't believe she could break a board. Now she knows she can do it, and she took one more step towards reclaiming and believing in her own power.

CCC offers DV support groups for adult women survivors of domestic or dating violence. These groups are available for English or Spanish speaking women. Some groups have children's groups that run at the same time. For more information or to find out how to join a group, contact CCC at (847) 697-2380.





## CCC's Counseling Rooms get a Makeover

This past summer was a very busy one for the Crisis Center's counseling team, not only in serving clients, but giving our counseling rooms a fresh new look. With a little elbow grease and a bit of funding from several supporters, we were able to refresh the look of our individual counseling rooms and group room, making them more comfortable and inviting for our adult clients during their counseling appointments. Our staff counselors are always striving to help our clients feel as safe as possible during their counseling sessions, as domestic and sexual violence victims as new clients may feel anxious coming in for the first time and sharing their story. We couldn't be more pleased with how our counseling rooms turned out with this DIY makeover!



## The Importance of Advocates in CCC's Domestic and Sexual Violence Program

From prevention education to advocacy, CCC's Domestic and Sexual Violence team keeps busy 24/7 supporting our community. When our prevention team is not in schools, colleges, or at community events giving presentations about healthy relationships and the prevention of sexual abuse among children and young adults, and the various services provided by the Community Crisis Center, we are planning and executing CCC's DSV events and activities throughout the year

Our advocacy team also works in close collaboration with local States Attorney's Offices, law enforcement agencies, private attorneys and hospitals to provide legal and medical advocacy to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Some of these services include: an explanation of a victim's rights and various laws in their favor, explaining legal procedures, helping fill out petitions for protective orders, following up on police investigations of the crimes and providing support to survivors at hospital emergency rooms, as well as being present during a victim's reporting of the crime and throughout the legal process.

## Volunteer Corner

The Crisis Center was founded by volunteers and today volunteers are still a very important part of our daily work. From providing donated goods, sorting and doing inventory of community donations that we receive daily, helping out here at our facility with weekly tasks, as well as helping us with our fundraising events, we would not be able to serve those in need in our community without the help of our volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, or learning more about our volunteer program, please contact Marissa Laurie at [mlaurie@crisiscenter.org](mailto:mlaurie@crisiscenter.org)





## OUR VISION

To eradicate violence and end crisis

## OUR MISSION

Community Crisis Center's skilled, caring individuals provide 24/7 crisis intervention, resources and shelter

Since 1975 the Community Crisis Center has focused on being 'always home' for individuals and families in crisis in the Fox Valley Region of Northern Illinois. Whether that crisis be domestic or sexual violence, financial need, or emotional anguish, the Crisis Center's mission is that our skilled and caring individuals provide 24/7 crisis intervention, resources and shelter to those in need.

Our organization is often the last hope for those with few to no resources or support. Through the generous support of our community partners, residents and community funders, we are able to provide those in crisis not only with 24/7 year-round critical social services, assistance with shelter, transportation, and personal care resources but with legal, medical and educational advocacy as well.

## EC PROGRAM'S WISH LIST

- Diapers: Sizes 5 and 6
- Baby Wipes
- Individually Wrapped Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste

The Crisis Center provides services through the following programs that are staffed 24/7 by professionally trained staff with a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree in a related field.

### Domestic and Sexual Violence Program

This program provides emergency shelter, a 24-hour crisis hotline, counseling, court and hospital advocacy, support groups for victims and support groups for victims' children.

### Abuse Intervention Program (AIP)

This program provides off-site individual assessments and individual and group counseling to those individuals who have been abusive to intimate partners or family members

### Children's Program

This program provides a safe, nurturing environment where children are free to express feelings, play peacefully, learn non-violent behaviors and gain age-appropriate knowledge about domestic and sexual violence and trauma.

### Economic Crisis Program

This program offers emergency shelter for homeless women and children; financial assistance for housing, utilities and transportation; emergency pantry that provides food, diapers, personal care items and limited clothing; and in-person counseling.

The Community Crisis Center helps victims find their voice. We help perpetrators learn alternatives to abuse. The impact of our work is substantial in that we constantly strive to improve the lives of victims, perpetrators and those individuals and families in need, with the by-product benefit of improving our community as well. We would not be able to do this critical work or provide these critical programs and services to any individual or victim in need in our community without the help and support of our generous donors, funders, volunteers and community partners.



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