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Spruce Run News (ca. 1993)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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Repository Citation

Staff, Spruce Run, "Spruce Run News (ca. 1993)" (1993). *Maine Women's Publications - All*. 234.
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SPRUCE RUN

Services for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Hotline 207-947-0496

P.O. Box 653, Bangor, ME 04401

On the occasion of our 20th anniversary, it seems appropriate to reflect back on the generous support that Spruce Run has consistently received from this community; without the contributions made by the people listed below, and many, many others not listed, Spruce Run could not exist today. This support has come in the form of gifts to Spruce Run workers, to the organization, and to the people Spruce Run serves; gifts of tangible items, and gifts of skill and caring. We cannot name all the donors, and many would not want to be named, but we want to take this opportunity to say thank you to you all. Your support for this work is truly incalculable.

THANK YOU TO:

**Our founders for their vision and courage;

**Amazing people who have volunteered their time and hearts to be hotline workers, steering committee members, interns, and bakers and shakers;

**Steadfast folks who have remained members since they got their first membership letter;

**The woman who brought her handknit baby afghans by the bagful, so that every baby leaving shelter would have one (and, we must confess, one or two found their way to the shoulders of a chilly hotline worker);

**Community groups that gave the shelter rocking chairs, provided books about battering to libraries, and other wonderfully thoughtful deeds;

**District attorneys, advocates and police officers who found the courage and the time to learn about domestic violence and do something about it;

**Teachers, from elementary schools to universities and colleges, who believe education about this issue can make difference;

**Children from some of those classes who collect and bring books and food for the shelter;

**Scores of church and service groups and area businesses who support Spruce Run's work in hundreds of ways, from fundraising to adopting families for the holidays;

**People who have taken leadership in bringing this issue to their groups or institutions for discussion.

THANK YOU ALL!

-Sue Bradford



Funded by
the State of Maine,
United Way and
your generous donations

Life is full of sorrow
With no time for me to borrow
yet left with no hope for tomorrow
Leaving me feeling empty and hollow.

Sometimes I feel like a rag doll
That's been tossed around like a rubber
ball
Waiting for the rest of the pieces of my
life to fall
With no good memories to recall.

It's come to pass my darkest hour
For no longer am I in your controlling
power
That turned our dreams sour.

For so much have I lost
And look how dearly was the cost

No matter how hard I tried
You managed to strip me of some of my
pride
Now I feel like all I can do is hide
Because I'm scared of your darker side
But now longer by your will do I have to
abide.

To me you were not kind
You tried to take away my mind
There were no silver clouds for me to
line.

You left me without a home
and all I can do for now is roam.

Our life together was not meant to be
But at the time this I couldn't see
For to my misery you held the key
And now from your abuse I have set
myself free
But it was not done easily.

The road ahead is long
And at this time I know not where I belong.

-A Survivor

SHELTER WISH LIST

Bath towels (white & light colors)
Sheets
New underwear & socks (for women and children)
Bubble bath
Shampoo
Deodorants
Non-prescription pain relievers (Tylenol, Advil)
Cough drops (adult & kids)
Hand lotion
Chapstick
Mouthwash
Hairspray
Hairbrushes (we have combs)
Hairdryers
Diapers
Paper towels
Toilet paper
Sanitary napkins & tampons
Batteries
Lightbulbs
Lamps & nightlights
Cleaning supplies
Kitchen stuff (pots & pans, dishes)
VCR
Alarm clocks
Paper & pens
Cigarettes (being in shelter is a hard time to quit)
Baby bottles, pacifiers, thermometers
Baby powder & baby oil
Diaper rash ointment
Baby monitor
Crib sheets & blankets
Formula

NEXT STEP'S HOTLINE GOES ON LINE

As many of you may be aware, there is a new domestic violence project underway in Hancock County. The Next Step officially opened its doors (and phone lines), on November 1.

Spruce Run has been working cooperatively with Next Step to facilitate a smooth transition of services in Hancock County. We are excited by Next Step's promising beginning and we wish them all the best.

SERVICE DEMAND UP IN FY93

Once again, Spruce Run has seen an increased demand for services over the last fiscal year (ending in September '93). Hotline volunteers can confirm the steady increase in calls over the last months and years.

In FY93, Spruce Run provided services to 972 individuals. These included over 2000 hours of individual crisis counseling over the hotline to 793 callers. Additionally, 1,757 hours of support group services were provided to a total of 255 women and children.

Our shelter operated almost at capacity again this year; shelter was provided to 66 women and 74 children in FY93. The average length of stay for a family in shelter was 18 days.

Many thanks go out to the dedicated volunteers who make these services possible.

SPEAKOUT A SUCCESS

Spruce Run's annual speakout was held on October 1st at the University of Maine--an opening event to "Domestic Violence Awareness Week" on campus. A crowd of approximately 100 people gathered outside on a glorious fall day, and listened raptly as women told their stories: stories of abuse, terror, courage, and hope. Many members of the audience were visibly moved--a few were crying openly as they listened to the speakers, several of whom were sharing their stories publicly for the first time.

A reception at the Memorial Union, open to speakers, volunteers, and the general public, followed the event. Spruce Run would like to thank all the volunteer bakers and organizers who donated their goodies and time, as well as local businesses who donated everything from pizza to soda to sushi rolls, for making the reception most memorable.

Special thanks go out to the speakers, who amazed us with their courage and their eloquence.

NEW BUILDING

WE'RE MOVING!

Yes, Spruce Run's four year search for the perfect building to house all our staff and volunteers, activities, meetings, and other gatherings, has finally ended in our acquisition of a large old house located at 134 State Street (corner of Essex and State). We expect that the purchase will be complete before you receive this newsletter, and initial renovations should already be in progress.

We are attempting to minimize the inevitable chaos of moving by maintaining our phone numbers, and keeping our Bangor Post Office box as our mailing address. Please call us regarding where to drop off in kind donations.

WE NEED HELP!!

As you might expect, we are asking for donations to our Capital Fund which will be used to pay the mortgage on the building and to fund much-needed renovations. Pledges may be spread over a three-year period and should be clearly labeled "Spruce Run Association--Capital Fund." Your generous support at this critical time will be especially valuable in reducing out mortgage payments.

_____ Yes, I'd like to help. I'm enclosing a check in the amount of \$_____, to be added to the Capital Fund.

_____ I'd like to spread my pledge of \$_____ over the next three years. Please send me a reminder when my next payment is due.

SPRUCE RUN: THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

- 1972** A discussion group for abused women is formed.
- 1973** Spruce Run is incorporated on June 28; services include pro se divorce counseling and a safe house.
- 1974** First fundraiser: Black valentine cookies.
- 1975** Spruce Run serves 26 women and 1 man. The Steering Committee is created. Fundraisers include bake sales and raffles.
- 1976** Spruce Run opens the first battered women's shelter in Maine: Bangor Public Welfare provides rent and utilities, Spruce Run provides management and counseling. The first volunteer training is held.
- 1977** Spruce Run now provides information and referral services, crisis counseling, client advocacy, shelter referrals, child development counseling, community education and community information. CETA funds two full-time positions. Spruce Run and two other projects originate the Statewide coalition of domestic violence projects (MCFCS). Fundraisers include the Mother's Day carnation sale.
- 1978** Spruce Run serves 70 callers. Support groups are held for the first time. CETA funds 4 staff positions and there are fifty paid memberships. The State of Maine provides funding for the first time. Fundraisers include a benefit concert starring Bruce Thulin and Psalter.
- 1979** Spruce Run serves 170 callers. There are 5 staff positions and 22 volunteer workers. A Spruce Run worker attends the first conference of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- 1980** Spruce Run serves 278 callers: shelter is denied to half of those requesting it due to lack of space. The Maine Council for Humanities and Public Policy funds the first police training. United Way provides funding. The "Protection from Abuse Act" is signed.
- 1981** Spruce Run develops philosophical/political statement, "The Big Problem: The Source of Abuse is Power Imbalance." A cooperative organization model is adopted by staff. The Dreaded Zucchini Cookbook sells out.



- 1982** The shelter building is purchased. Spruce Run serves 442 adults and 49 children; 35 adults and 39 children are sheltered. 34 Undocumented Non-Violent Uses for Chocolate goes on sale.
- 1983** The mortgage on the shelter is paid off by an anonymous donor: in August, the first and second floors of the shelter are open. The Steering Committee moves to consensus decision-making. 5,000 bright yellow three-ring binders are delivered.
- 1984** Spruce Run opens an outreach office in Hancock County; walk in services are available there 20 hours per week. Spruce Run is designated by more people who contribute to the United Way than any other agency. Fundraisers include the "Shop & Save 3 Minute Shopping Spree," and "Spruce Run works for peace at home" T-shirts.
- 1985** Fundraisers include Yard sale and Coffee House.
- 1986** Penobscot County District Attorney, Chris Almy and Spruce Run collaborate to establish a position for Victim's Services for Domestic Violence in the DA's office. October: first annual Speakout held at Westmarket Square in Bangor.
- 1987** Training is provided for Bangor police in responding to domestic violence calls. Support groups are held in Hancock County. Fundraisers include Winter Clothing and Equipment Sale.
- 1988** Spruce Run shelters 117 women and children, and provides 1000 hours of training and community education, including programs on dating violence and rape in public schools. Housing Authorities now consider battered women a priority! The Lesbian Battering Task Force is approved by the MCFCS. Fundraisers include the Hancock County "Stay at Home Ball."
- 1989** Spruce Run provides technical information to women who are seeking protective orders. The Chocolate Party is wildly successful.
- 1990** Police Departments must now have written domestic violence policies: it's the law! Fundraisers include "Harley Owners Run for the Run."
- 1991** Spruce Run serves 732 women, 124 children, and 19 men. MSHA provides first funding.
- 1992** After three convictions of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes, the four conviction is made a felony; the legislation is sponsored by Mary Cathcart, former Spruce Runner. First speakout is held in Hancock County. Fundraisers include the "Hermon Meadows First Women's Benefit Golf Tournament."
- 1993** Spruce Run serves 972 women, children and men. Spruce Run's 20th anniversary is celebrated with a benefit concert featuring Sweet Honey in the Rock.



Spruce Run's Community Response Program

Our Community Response Program's goals are to provide information about domestic violence, and facilitate changes within our communities that will decrease battering and increase safety and support. We work toward these goals in three ways:

Through **public speaking** we give basic information about domestic violence and Spruce Run's services.

Our **systems advocacy** has focused primarily on the criminal justice system: supporting the victim witness advocates in the district attorneys' offices, doing police trainings, doing court watches, being on the board of the Family Law Project, monitoring abuser education.

We have also provided short trainings for other community service organizations which assist battered women, such as the clergy, Parents Anonymous, Headstart, Wellspring, etc.

In schools we have done a variety of introductory presentations about domestic violence, dating violence and date rape.

The most comprehensive and **intensive training** we provide is the 40+ hour hotline worker training, conducted twice annually.

COMMUNITY CHANGES

Over the course of the past twenty years there have been many changes in the community's response to domestic violence:

****Police officers** going through the academy all receive training in domestic violence based on the battered women's movement work, usually presented in part by an advocate from a coalition project.

****All prosecutors and police departments** are required to have protocols regarding response to cases of domestic violence.

The Penobscot and Hancock County district attorneys offices both have part time victim

witness advocates to work specifically on cases of domestic violence.

****There is a state commission on domestic abuse** which tracks the criminal justice system's compliance with the requirements for protocols and other issues.

****There is increased national attention** to the issues, which national medical associations requiring rural health clinics to adopt protocols, and the AMA prioritizing the issue.

****At many speaking engagements**, we find that our basic information about domestic violence is not new to the audience, which is sometimes seeking something more.

In large part due to the efforts of the battered women's movement as a whole and Spruce Run's efforts in our two county area, the nature of our work is changing. In response to this natural evolution we intend to do less systems advocacy and general public speaking. We would like to do more intensive small group trainings: a 12 week curriculum on abuse, courses for CE credit on domestic violence,

DESPERATELY SEEKING HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS

A 40 hour training for new hotline volunteers--with a dynamic group of trainers--will begin in January. Training will be held on Monday and Wednesday nights and will continue for 6-8 weeks. We ask hotline volunteers to make a commitment for one year following training, at an average of 3-4 shifts monthly.

If you would like to be a hotline volunteer, or if you'd like more information, please call Maureen Flagg at 945-5102.

WOMEN IN THE CURRICULUM FEMINIST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

What follows are quotes taken from a transcript of a day's conversation amongst many of the women who were instrumental in the origins and development of Spruce Run. This is one part of the ongoing work of the Feminist Oral History Project, undertaken by the University of Maine's Women in the Curriculum office.

"The origin for this project was hatched. . . during Women's History Month when we had a visitor. . . who was part of the original Bread and Roses Collective. And we were talking about how this generation, who are students now, didn't know about the origins of the women's movement and how we really should get that history recorded before we were unable to remember. We were also sadly remembering. . . members who have died. . . and, you know, this is going to happen. . . So, we wanted to start recording this history." -AS

"When Spruce Run started we did everything wrong. Everything. We made decisions for people, we were in the we'll solve your problems [business]. We were a rag tag bunch of divorced women going through crises and there were no professionals to advise us. . . We got into a lot of trouble but the spirit was there." -KL

"Do you know that Spruce Run is named after a reservoir in New Jersey where I used to live. . . because we couldn't think of a name, a proper name, and . . . we had the symbol of a running spruce -- a spruce tree with legs on it. . . We [thought], well, temporarily we'll call it Spruce Run. Another name will come along." -KL

"Nobody wanted to deal with this [battering], nobody wanted to talk about it as a problem, or it was always somebody else's problem. But, there was no somebody else. I mean, 'somebody else' was us." -LC

"The early people that were involved in Spruce Run were basically very entrepreneurial types. And when you're that type of person, you see a

problem and you fix it. You say all right, what are we gonna do? . . . And we, you know, and we're not exactly the reflective, listening types." -LC

ON CONSENSUS: "I understood when I first came on that we'd already gone through several different turmoils about what sort of business was this going to be. Was it a collective? Or was it a loose gang? Or was it some kind of hierarchical structure? Who was in charge here?" -SB

"There's so much work to be done that it seems like consensus just takes too long. And in reality, it's the quickest way of doing it." -CH

ON NANCY GENTILE: "[Nancy Gentile] was

Spruce Run as far as I was concerned. . . she just, she could make everything really fun and light and she was a spark." -ET

"[Nancy] was definitely the right person in the right place at the right time. She did an enormous amount for battered women across this country. . . She was an organizer." -SB

"I lived with an alcoholic husband for 44 years. I was physically abused for most of these years, and for the last 2 years of his life, I was abused every day. I was driven from my home in the middle of the night; I slept in abandoned cars, under trees, in churches and any place I could find to get out of the cold. I have had broken bones, cracked ribs, and was choked until the verge of passing out. I've had knives held at my throat while pinned to the floor. I've had a gun held to my head while crawling on my hands and knees. I've had bullets shot at my car while trying to escape.

My fear of leaving was greater than the fear of staying until my daughter told me about Spruce Run. After a very chaotic episode, I went to Spruce Run. When I walked through that door, I knew I was safe. Everyone was so kind and patient that I unloaded years of pent up feelings. My husband committed suicide 2 days later. I know that Spruce Run saved my life, as I'm sure that my husband would have murdered me, before taking his life.

-FD, a survivor



*Celebrates
20 Years*

Spruce Run
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Bangor, ME 04402

Address correction requested

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- Ann
Here it is!
It will be mailed on Tuesday
- Sue