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Spruce Run News (December 1986)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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SPRUCE RUN

Services for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Hotline 207-947-0496

VOLUME XIII, No. 2
December, 1986

SHELTER WISH LIST

New Pillows
Towels
Plastic covers for twin & double beds
Teaspoons
Ditty Bag items: toothbrushes, toothpaste,
soap, combs, shampoo,
Small appointment books

Many thanks for all your gifts and
donations in the past year!

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RESPONSE? (CRP)

The Community Response program has one immediate goal: to enhance the establishment of a community-wide cooperative effort to stop violence against women in Maine. Community Response uses the tools already in place, as well as encouraging communications among the criminal justice system and the "helping professions" that address domestic violence. The program is based on the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota. DAIP incorporated many agencies and individuals--the battered women's shelter, police, probations officers, judges, prosecutors, bail commissioners, and abuser counseling and educational services. They all work together to establish a coordinated response to curtailing the abuse and protecting the victim.

In Maine, we are fortunate to have as strong a domestic violence law as that which exists in Minnesota. As we said in the Summer newsletter, the Legislature has designated funds to our state coalition to develop programs on Community Response. In essence, the State has issued a mandate to:

- encourage development and coordination of a community systems response which strongly discourages battering and enforces sanctions against it;
- provide services and protection for women who are being battered;
- deter the batterer by using the law to its fullest extent when applicable;
- follow through with criminal cases of domestic violence in the courts;
- provide counseling and education to batterers in conjunction with a jail sentence or probation when appropriate;
- establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with negotiated policies and existing laws.

We hope to train mental health and law enforcement professionals and those in the criminal justice system to work more effectively with victims and to hold the perpetrator accountable for the violence. We also plan to continue educating the whole community about the extent and nature of this crime which affects one in five American women in a given year, and to familiarize the community with existing services. As more agencies having contact with battered women become involved with Community Response, the benefits to all will increase.

At Spruce Run we have begun to work on Community Response, and we are seeking more Spruce Runners to participate in planning and development of this program. Sue Bradford contributed this report on our work so far:

(over)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW!
TRAINING STARTS IN
JANUARY. CALL
945-5102

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

art by Diane Bowman

P.O. Box 653, Bangor, ME 04401 (207) 945-5102
P.O. Box 524, Ellsworth, ME 04605 (207) 667-9489

In November, we developed an "Introduction to Community Response" sheet, which is the column you just read. Sue attended the monthly statewide CRP meeting and participated in the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services ad hoc structure committee for CRP. We held several meetings to plan and organize Spruce Run's CRP, did some follow-up with therapists who are attending the training on working with abusers. Many Spruce Runners attended the lectures and workshop on changing the church's response to family violence by the Rev. Marie Fortune, which were held at the Bangor Theological Seminary. Sue B. continued to work cooperatively with the District Attorney's office in Bangor, serving on the hiring committee for their new victim/witness advocate, who will work with battered women.

December has also been busy, beginning with a meeting at Spruce Run with therapists who are being trained to work with abusers. We were disappointed that only two of the seven therapists came; it was nevertheless an inspirational and productive meeting, especially for Hancock County. We shall organize another meeting with therapists after the January training. Sue, Katey, and Brenda met with therapists from Community Health and Counseling Services in Ellsworth to plan the CRP there, and Sue is meeting with the new Penobscot victim/witness advocate to plan training, education, and how we can work together.

In January, the big event will be the one-day conference on January 7, followed by training for therapists. After meeting again with therapists, we expect to set up meetings with the D.A.'s and judges to inform them of the plans to offer abuser treatment programs and to discuss forming our own "team" with other community professionals.

Let us know if you'd like to be part of this exciting new program!

POEM

By Lisa, a former resident

Before I was ready to tie the knot
I met a lot of guys and we went out.
In the end we went our separate ways,
But me and Harold we got married one day.

Harold was a joker, always making people
laugh;
He was funny and I wanted our love to last.
But after we married the jokes were on me.
One day I woke up and his jokes weren't funny.

He was always criticizing and degrading me
In front of our friends; it was embarrassing.
Despite my disapproval of his rotten jokes
He continued to slander, harass and poke.

Feelings began to stir in my heart.
Hating him at times and loving him most.
The beatings had begun to enter our lives.
I was starting to feel like a battered wife.

I tried to talk to my husband and explain
I wasn't going to stick around and be the blame
I'd go to Spruce Run where battered wives go.
He said, "I'd kill you and that you know."

"You aren't battered," he would say;
"Those women who go there have no other way
To get out of their marriages; this is their
answer.
Their way to get help for the future."

He convinced me to stay married to him. I was
lucky
He forgave me for my sins. Hoping it would be
better,
Living in a fantasy, little did I know my dream
I'd never see.

My dream ended in a disaster
With my husband beating up my father,
Throwing me across the floor,
Then he ran to leave with my little girl.

My mother called the law that night,
They came out to talk after the fight.
They said that Harold was basically good.
"Things should be better in the morning,
they should!"

I left in the morning for a safe place,
Kept thinking that day that my life was
a disgrace.
Being beaten like that and called those
bad names,
I was glad to be out and glad things
weren't the same.

I'm feeling very scared and very confused.
I know now that I have been abused.
No matter how hard you try, Harold, you'll
not get me back.
I won't play the fool; I will not back
track.

So I sit here full of fright
Waiting and waiting all through the night.
Dreaming of the day in court I see his
face.
When I get rid of him and present my sad
case.

CHERYL'S STORY, Part II

On May 16, 1984, I turned myself in to Penobscot County Jail to start serving the 6-year sentence I received for Manslaughter. On May 17, I was transported to the Maine Correctional Center in South Windham. I was cuffed all the way down. When we got there the guard took me down to be processed. A female officer at the Correctional Center strip-searched me and made me take a shower with quell lotion*, another humiliating experience they do to everyone who comes in. I was then issued three sets of State clothes, which are worn the first two weeks there. After that I was taken outside and down to Dorm #4 (the female dorm). While I was walking through the yards, the male inmates yelled out; the remarks they made were not nice. I was scared to death. I was scared of jail.

Inside Dorm 4 the officer took me in the office, did more paper work, read me the rules and regulations. I saw two people that I knew. Then I was taken to the room where I'd be staying. The dorm consisted of 15 rooms, 3 segregation cells, 2 bathrooms, living room, kitchen, and office. The bedrooms had a bed, desk, dresser, locker, and bulletin board. The living room had couches, chairs, and tables, T.V. and stereo. The kitchen had a stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer, sink, tables, sewing machine, iron and ironing board, hair dryer, chairs, and coffee pot. The whole place looked like a house. But the love was not there, and loneliness was, and people talking and strangers looking!

The first two weeks, you don't work, outside the dorm. You go somewhere only when called. After I had been there two weeks I received my own clothes and radio. I was classified; then I was able to work. I was still scared and lonely.

I started out cleaning front offices, then worked on labor pool, then in the home ec room; later, I worked in the kitchen and then the commissary.

I was scared, and it was hard because I didn't know many people, how they react and what they did there. It was also hard because I couldn't or wouldn't accept the fact that I was in jail. To me it was just like I was having a bad nightmare, one I couldn't wake up from.

I was locked in at 11:00 p.m. and had to knock on the door to get an officer to let me out if I had to go to the bathroom.

Time was going by slow, and I'd stay in my room and cry. I kept asking myself Why? I had so many questions but no answers. I was confused, mixed up, lonely, scared. I was homesick: I missed Joe, Jeremy, Chris, and my parents.

During the Summer I lay out in the fenced-in yard behind Dorm 4 and also played softball. In September, a girl I knew came in. We walked around the track and talked. Now I knew someone I liked and trusted. We are still friends.

I heard the other women talking about commutation. I found out what it is: a reduction of your sentence through the Governor. In October, 1984, I applied for a hearing and in November got a letter saying it was denied. I hadn't served enough time. What a big letdown! I felt my case was an exceptional one.

I asked to receive counseling. At first it didn't help, as the woman made me feel worse. I don't believe she related to the fear and pain I went through with Joe. I stopped going, and she made arrangements for me to see Mary Maescher, a counselor who dealt with battered women. I saw her once a week, and it helped. I could talk to her and tell her what had happened. I looked forward to the weekends also; Chris (my boyfriend then, my husband now), Joe, and Jeremy came three weekends, and my mom and dad came with the two boys on the fourth weekend. After visits I would get "patted down" or strip-searched to make sure I didn't have any contraband, i.e., money or drugs.

November went into December, which should be a happy month, with Christmas coming, but it wasn't, since I couldn't go home. We were allowed to receive gifts and food that was unopened, but it wasn't the same. I missed my family so much.

Even after seven months I wasn't accepting the fact that I was in jail. The guards were nice and helped all they could, but I still wanted to go home (and I still do). I didn't think I belonged in jail. It wasn't fair: no one understood what I had been through or how it felt.

*a lotion that kills lice, etc.

I was still working, sleeping, reading letters, and writing, and still seeing my counselor. The days went by so slow, and the months seemed like years. I was in jail, and couldn't get out till my time was served. In May, 1985, the reality finally hit me. I wanted a special furlough to go home, but they denied it: I wasn't furlough-eligible yet. But they did give me a five-hour special visit with Chris, my mom, Joe, and Jeremy. Three hours were spent outside, playing ball and Frisbee; the other two hours were spent in the chapel, where I read stories to the boys, colored, and talked. That visit helped me a great deal.

The MCC really isn't bad. Weekdays you work, and sometimes weekends. On Saturdays they played Bingo for store cards; you could win up to \$2. On Saturday nights you could go to Catholic services and on Sundays you could go to other church services. You had a choice of working or going to school. Some of the jobs were automotives, woodshop, meat cutting (you could get a certificate), kitchen, commissary, or working for the teachers. In school you could get your G.E.D., or take typing, accounting (you could get a certificate in that, too), and learn to sew and cook in Home Ec. You could go out from 8:00 A.M. till dusk. The females did their own laundry two days a week. After getting up, you had daily cleaning, then went to the cafeteria for breakfast. Every day was the same.

There were two things at the Center you didn't have: your freedom, and being with your family all week. The medical and dental work was done there: nurses were there 24 hours a day, and the doctor came once a week. In an emergency, you would be taken to the hospital. The dentist came twice a week.

I looked forward to my furloughs, my weekend visits, and counseling. In September, 1985, I received my first furlough. Chris and my dad came to get me; the ride seemed to take forever. Joe and Jeremy didn't know I was coming home, and they were sure surprised. I was so good to be home! Chris and I played with the boys and then talked with my folks. After we put the boys to bed, read them a story, kissed them and told them we loved them, I went out into the living room. Chris had a candle lit on the coffee table, and he was lying on the shag rug. I lay beside him, face to face, and he handed me a little brown box. I opened it and saw the most beautiful diamond ring I ever saw. Chris asked me to marry him and put the ring on my finger. That night was so special to me. It's one I'll never ever forget! I never knew what love was really like before or that it could be so great. I said I'd marry Chris, and 48 hours later returned to MCC.

October and November dragged by; all the time seems to last forever in jail. On December 3, 1985, I was transferred to Penobscot County Jail in Bangor. The MCC was overcrowded. I was there for four days, then Penobscot was overcrowded, so I was moved to Kennebec County Jail in Augusta. There was such a big difference in the jails, but still a lot of the same rules.

On December 23, I went home for furlough. Chris came and picked me up. On the 24th we went Christmas shopping. Christmas of '85: What a day! It was great, seeing the boys rip open gifts, playing with all the toys, listening to laughter, the Ohs and Ahs, but mostly seeing the love we shared.

I went back to Kennebec on December 26, thinking, five more days left of '85, then it'll be '86, and I can't wait!

On January 13, 1986, I was transferred back to Penobscot County Jail. What a scary feeling! I didn't know the two guards, and they wouldn't tell me where they were taking me. I was afraid they were taking me out of state. One finally said I was going back to PCJ.

After being there a short time, I asked for a request slip. I then called Spruce Run and asked if there was any way I could receive counseling in the jail. She said they would come if the jail allowed it, so I made out a request slip and it was approved. I saw a counselor once a week. They have all helped me a great deal and given me so much support.

In February, I wrote the MCC for permission to marry Christopher Bean. It was granted. Chris came to visit with our boys on a Sunday. He brought in my wedding dress. Beautiful! It was pink and lacy. We decided to get married by the Justice of the Peace at my mom and dad's house. Chris's mom made the flower arrangements and my mom made the cake and ring pillows.

On March 30, 1986, I went on furlough, and on March 31 Chris and I were married. Our boys were ringbearers, Chris's dad stood up with him, and a girlfriend of mine stood with me. It was a beautiful day. The next day I returned to PCJ.

I was still seeing the counselors from Spruce Run. I saw a few women who had been beaten by their husbands or boyfriends and were in jail. I wanted to help them, and I hurt because I knew what they were going through. I gave them a Spruce Run brochure that says, "No One Has the Right to Abuse You," and we talked.

The last week of April, I put in a request to be a trustee. On May 3, I became a trustee. I cleaned offices and enjoyed doing it. When my counselor came that week, I told her my good news, about the trustee position. We started talking and I told her I wanted to become a counselor myself. She thought it was a good idea. I couldn't take the course yet because I wasn't eligible for work release. I asked the Captain if he could answer a few questions. He said he'd try. The first week in May, I wrote to the Judge who sentenced me. I asked him if there was any way he could help me so that I could do public speaking and TV interviews with Spruce Run. I told him of my progress and that I wanted to help inform other battered women that there is help for them. I said I wanted to start being the example he sentenced me to be. The following week I was called down to the Captain's office. I went down there, and then the Sheriff walked in and sat down. All I could think of was what did I do wrong? The Sheriff said he understood I wanted to do work with Spruce Run and battered women, and I explained. He said the Judge called him, and they would try to help. So, on May 21, 1986, I did an interview for Channel 2, and then, on June 3, I did one with Channel 5. I was so nervous and was just hoping I was doing OK.

I have tried to keep myself busy in jail and I've worked hard at rehabilitating myself with the help of others. I have written to and received very good letters from senators, representatives, candidates for governor, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), and authors whom I asked for help and support. I know one day I will help someone, even if it is only one woman.

In August, on my furlough, my lawyer came to our house and we started papers asking for a commutation hearing. He also had petition papers drawn up and they were distributed by Chris, who put them in stores and took them to work, and by Spruce Run, who put them in their office and shelter. My relatives sent them around too, for people to sign if they wish to support my commutation.

On September 12, Chris got my commutation papers back. We forgot to have them notarized. He did that and sent them in again.

On October 2, the females at PCJ were taken to the bunker in Old Town, as they are renovating the jail. On October 8, I went down to the jail to work. When I arrived, they told me Channel 7 was there and wanted an interview. I said yes; Mary C. came, too.

October 9 was a big day for me, a great experience. I was given a special furlough to go to West Market Square for a public speaking with Spruce Run. It was a rainy day, but we still had a good turnout. It had news coverage and people stopped to hear my story as well as two other former battered women's experiences. I'm glad I was able to do the public speaking, and the reward I felt and saw was great.

On October 31, I was told that a candidate for Governor was coming to see me on Monday, November 3. What a surprise! I was excited and nervous. I met with Sherry Huber, a very wonderful and caring woman.

In early November, Chris got a letter saying my commutation hearing was denied. The next day I called Mary Cathcart at Spruce Run and told her the bad news. Mary said she'd make some phone calls to see if she could find out why it was denied. Later she called back and said she had some great news: my commutation hearing was granted and the date had been set for December 17 at 10:00 A.M. Yes, it was "great news"! I was so happy. On November 20 I had a visit from a man from Probation and Parole. We talked and talked, and I showed him all the work I've done while in jail and what I want to do when I'm released. I also told him I was sorry for what I've done and realize now I could've done something about the abuse.

Jail has not been all good and pretty or a bed of roses, but it hasn't been the end of the world, either. I put my time to good use. I have rehabilitated myself with the help of others. I have learned a lot and grown to be a better person.

I know who I am, and I'm proud of it! When I am released, I will take the 44-hour course in crisis intervention counseling at Spruce Run, and become a counselor for battered women. I want to do all I can to stop domestic violence and help anyone who is in the situation I was in! As of now, I still have a year left in jail, and that is with all my good time.

I want to thank all of you who have helped me and given me your support. I have received very nice letters from people who either saw me on TV or read my experiences as a battered woman in Spruce Run's newsletter. I won't be in jail forever, and when I have served my time, I will be able to go home with my wonderful husband Chris and our two fine boys. Our life will be so different, and we won't live in fear or pain as I did before, and we will have lots of love and happiness.

NOTES FROM HANCOCK COUNTY

Hi! We want to introduce ourselves, Katey Branch and Brenda Catterson, with a little background information, and then share some of our dreams for the Hancock County outreach project.

I, Katey, am the new Program Administrator in Ellsworth. The last six years I have worked on integrating a more holistic perspective of our human experience into my work, spending two years as a Master's student and three as a university teacher. I was involved in the National Audubon Society Expedition Institute and the University of Maine at Fort Kent's Northeast Expedition. I've traveled all over the U.S. and Canada, exploring, studying, and experiencing environments, cultures, political systems, and personal reactions and feelings stimulated by the coursework. Most of the students were college-aged, and over the three or nine months we all became extremely close. I learned an amazing amount about domestic violence, family dynamics, and individual empowerment. The expeditions use consensus decision-making, to which I am dedicated. I'm delighted that Spruce Run works with this process. I also volunteered at Womankind, the DV project in Machias, and facilitated a battered women's support group. Here at Spruce Run I will be administering the Ellsworth office, financing, reporting, acting as liaison to Bangor, and, of course, providing direct services.

Hi! I'm Brenda, the new Outreach Coordinator for Hancock County. My husband and I just moved back here after residing in western Maine. I grew up in the Ellsworth area, and it's wonderful to be back "home" where my "downeast accent" is very natural and doesn't turn heads! My education consists of an Associate's Degree in Human Services, with specialization in chemical addiction counseling. I have worked in the social service field, in General Assistance, nursing home, and hospital settings. I'm excited to be working with everyone at Spruce Run and look forward to meeting all. (Brenda's first day here was Dec. 1!)

The following report is Katey's:

Well, the month and a half I've been here has shown me the inside, outside, and all around of Spruce Run. I can't say it's been easy looking over the budgets, catching up on years of how much SR has accomplished, sitting in marathon meetings, and staying up late for crisis counseling training. BUT it has been rewarding, and the uniqueness of a nonhierarchical organization has come to the rescue with support. We really do have an exceptional program which I am proud to be part of.

To catch you up on the Ellsworth end of things, the Hancock County Project Committee has grown with the addition of Vyveyne Ritchie, Dorcas Corrow, Jill Culver, and Robin Fox. We have a full staff of two! My crisis training just ended and I'll be open for direct service in Ellsworth every Monday. We have plans for opening the office on Thursdays also and perhaps going to other towns once a month on a court day for counseling and advocacy. That'll happen after Brenda is also trained. Other plans include working with Vyveyne on a prevention program for schools, getting as many people as possible to Ellen Pence's Community Response conference on January 7, doing another training for new volunteers in Hancock County, and generally letting everyone know we are here.

We all miss Katharine Storer, our former Hancock County staff person, but it's great to have her down the street in the District Attorney's office, where she's now the Victim/Witness Advocate for Hancock County!

If you have ideas or suggestions, let us hear from you!

THE NEW TREND?

One of the Fall's most exciting donations came from a local attorney, who explained that the \$100 was a contribution from a client in settlement of a criminal complaint for assault. The victim and her abuser reached an agreement in which the abuser had to donate \$100 to providing services to battered women!

BIGGEST CHRISTMAS PARTY HELD

As Spruce Run grows, so do our parties, and this year's Christmas party at Mary C.'s house brought large numbers of steering committee members, hotline volunteers, staff, and many former Spruce Run workers, along with their assorted families and other "significant others"! Hot spiced cider accompanied everyone's outstanding goodies, and the traditional singing of carols around the grand piano beside the Christmas tree was a highlight of a great afternoon. We discovered, among other things, that Francine plays the piano. All Spruce Runners seem to have so many talents!

MCFCFS CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The Children's Program Coordinators of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services present this report on our progress over the past year. We have been very active with both women and child victims of domestic violence.

Our primary goal is to intervene in the cycle of violence, with the intention of preventing children from becoming victims and abusers themselves. We provide a safe environment for children to develop trust and opportunities to talk about abuse.

The direct services we provide include crisis counseling, assessment, referral, opportunities for therapeutic play, community activities, and child care. We provide consistency of routine for children by coordinating continuance of their education. Follow-up occurs through interfacing with social service agencies and through direct client contact. Already in our work with peer support groups and individuals, we have seen improved self-esteem, communication skills, increased ability to name and express feelings, and development of skills to resolve conflicts in a healthy way.

Each program relies heavily on volunteers to carry out the Children's Program. We provide training, coordination, and ongoing supervision and education of volunteers. They help with child care, field trips, support groups, informal counseling, and, whenever possible, provide desperately needed one-on-one attention for children in the shelter. Other agency volunteers also receive training and ongoing education on children's issues.

Education is a strong component. We work with mothers individually and in groups, providing support and teaching parenting skills, such as nonviolent discipline, nurturing, building self-esteem, communication, empowerment. We've seen this help mothers and children let go of fear, rigidity, and tradition and start to develop loving, positive relationships.

Children's education takes a subtler path. Starting with a safe environment, we teach them nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts. Using special materials that address the needs of these children, we intervene in gentle and nonthreatening ways. We use creative problem-solving and cooperative play to teach children assertiveness and build self-esteem.

Schools are an integral part of our outreach. We do presentations on domestic and dating violence and provide input for curriculum development. Included in this prevention work is training for teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, in preschool through high school.

We educate the community about child victims of domestic violence. We sit on boards of directors, belong to local child abuse and neglect councils, respond to legislative and media issues, and network to coordinate and improve children's services. We are creating a slideshow about domestic violence, its effects on children, and services available to victims.

As a Coalition we have become acutely aware of the devastating effects of domestic violence on Maine's children. We have seen the tremendous impact our interventive work has made over this past year and look to the future as our preventative work begins to break the cycle of violence.

Our work with children and mothers has deepened our commitment and we meet the next year's work with enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,
Children's Program Coordinators of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Spruce Run
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