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Spruce Run News (December 1987)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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P.O. Box 653
Bangor, ME 04401

SPRUCE RUN

Services for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Hotline 207-947-0496

VOLUME XIV, No. 2
December, 1987



Dear Friends of Spruce Run,

This year has been another filled with many joys and a few sorrows. Most of the time our shelter has been full, full, full. In the first nine months of 1987, we housed 46 women with 69 children. Somehow we fit them all in despite a thorough renovation of the front two rooms and bath on the second floor.

Our staff and volunteer crisis counselors responded to telephone calls from 421 women and 14 men (abusers and concerned friends of abused women) in that nine months. Especially since DIAL HELP and Rape Crisis Center closed down, that phone has been busy! We are pleased to welcome the new volunteers for crisis counseling and children's work who recently completed training.

Our efforts to raise community awareness of domestic violence issues have been extensive. Last Spring the Maine Humanities Council funded our series of three feature films with discussion. The films--Smash Palace, Raging Bull, and Cries and Whispers--were terrific, and the discussions were very productive. In October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we mourned the victims and celebrated the survivors with a speakout in Bangor; the media coverage was excellent. November's evening seminar in Bar Harbor was well received by approximately 40 citizens of Mt. Desert Island. The Bangor Police Department requested and received training in responding to domestic violence calls. That kind of request we love to get!

We were all saddened by the recent deaths of two Maine women at the hands of men they had loved and trusted. It reminded us of work yet to do. We also remember Nancy A. Gentile and her enormous contribution to Spruce Run as an organizer par excellence. In all their memories, we'll continue to work.

The work Spruce Run does (along with other projects in the state) was recognized by the Legislature with adequate funding for the next two years. The United Way has been generous, as well. However, it is your support that makes this grassroots agency work. Whether you baked brownies, bought a sweatshirt, brought a load of paper towels for the shelter, wrote thank-you notes, called your legislator, sorted "treasures" for a yard sale, paid your membership, or helped in some other way, you are an important part of Spruce Run. We couldn't do without your support.

Our thanks to all of you for your help in 1987. May all our homes be peaceable in 1988.

Sincerely,

Ann Schonberger

Ann Schonberger
Chair of the Steering Committee

SHELTER WISH LIST

The second floor of our shelter looks beautiful! The front rooms, painted a pale peach, are particularly warm and inviting. The renovations not only gave the living quarters a fresh new look, but got rid of some old lead paint on woodwork and doors. Many thanks to Kathleen for planning it and to Noel, our builder, for his top-quality work.

Are there any would-be Santas out there looking for gift ideas for the shelter? Kathleen just made up a new wish list:

living room clock	porta-cribs
kitchen clock	strollers
alarm clocks	potholders
blow dryers	plastic glasses
pillows	magnets
stationery and pens	muffin tins
date books	crock pot
large cake pans	

We really appreciate all the donations to the shelter this year! Very special thanks are due the Zonta Club, who continue to supply us with so many necessities. Since our shelter opened in 1983, the Zontas have provided "ditty bags" for all our residents--soap, shampoo, toothbrush, comb, in fact, all those basics that people who must leave home in a hurry need to make them feel "at home" in a strange new place. The Zontas have also given us many other gifts for residents, such as a check for Thanksgiving dinner, special gifts for women and children, and all kinds of moral support, too! Thank you, Zontas!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW!

Spruce Run will offer a 40-hour course in crisis intervention counseling beginning in January. We always need new volunteers! Any woman who wants to work with other women and can make a one-year commitment can call 945-5102 for an application and more details. No prior counseling training or experience is required.

CHILDREN'S WISH LIST

Lynn B. has been making a list of young residents, both current and past, and asking them what they'd like this Christmas. She can tell people specific children's holiday wishes, and she also has given us a general list of toys we'd like to have for the shelter. (Lynn has even checked the prices in the Service Merchandise catalog so that anyone who wishes to donate the money for a particular item and have us do the shopping can do so; naturally, we don't care where you buy the gifts.)

Spirograph (\$6.94)
Kids' Dome Tent (\$14.97)
Nerf Indoor Golf Set (\$16.97)
5-piece Table-Chair Set (\$29.94)
Etch-a-Sketch (\$7.92)
Nerf Football (\$3.97)
Tonka Trucks (\$12.97 up)

We still can use the items published in the previous Newsletter, too:

Dolls/stuffed animals
Leggo toys
Preschool farm set
Animal flash cards
Puzzles (preschool)
Wiffle ball and bat
(fat kind or regular)
Kickball
Beanbag chair
Puppets
Easel, tempera paints
Paste, paste sticks
Multi-colored construction paper
Playdough and playdough toys
Wooden table and chairs
Play dishes and food
Chutes and Ladders game

Thank you for thinking of the shelter children when doing your holiday shopping. Most toys will be appreciated, but, please, no war toys or other violent toys.

SEMINAR HELD IN BAR HARBOR

Spruce Run and the Bar Harbor Congregational Church cosponsored an evening seminar, "Domestic Violence: The Community's Problem and What We Can Do About It," on November 18. Mary C. welcomed the audience and spoke of the need for everyone in the community to get involved in stopping domestic violence. She referred to the two recent murders of battered women in Maine, and gave statistics on the extent of the problem: our Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services provided hotline service to more than 4,000 citizens last year. Spruce Run's statistics show that nearly 70% of their Hancock County callers in 1986 came from Mt. Desert Island.

Two formerly battered women, Barbara and Deborah, spoke about their experiences. Barbara told how her abuser controlled her life in even small details, and Deborah read a letter to her sons, who are carrying on the cycle of violence in their verbally abusive treatment of her.

A panel of people in the community to whom victims of domestic violence often turn for help spoke: the Rev. Paul Gilbert, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Northeast Harbor, on the church's role; Robin F., a Spruce Run volunteer from the Island, on Spruce Run's services; the Rev. Sue Ingham, Bar Harbor Congregational Church, on General Assistance information provided by Jean Barker, Bar Harbor Welfare Director; Katharine J. Storer, victim/witness advocate, District Attorney's Office, Ellsworth, and Lt. Tim Jamieson, Ellsworth Police Department, on the changing response of prosecutors and police to domestic assaults.

After a period of questions and answers, the participants continued an informal discussion and enjoyed refreshments provided by the Church.

RUMMAGE SALE A SUCCESS

Once again volunteer Carol L. has held a tremendous Fall Rummage Sale at 77 Dirigo Drive, Bangor, with the assistance of many hardworking assistants. Our thanks go to Carol, Dorinda, Karla, Sylvia, Rosie, Linda, Dolores, Charity, Debbie, Jamie, Christy, Connie, and anyone whose name we've left out!

BANGOR POLICE TRAINING

Spruce Run is participating in six sessions of training in domestic violence at the Bangor Police Department. Sgt. Tim Reid, training officer in Bangor, invited Mary C. and Sue B. to speak at the training, along with assistant District Attorney Phil Worden and victim/witness advocate Sylvia Kelley; and Judge Margaret Kravchuk.

The two-hour sessions stress the duties of police officers under the Protection from Abuse Act and also inform officers about the services Spruce Run can offer to victims of domestic assault.

Spruce Runners are very pleased to have this opportunity to meet with police officers and talk about this problem. We are also encouraged to see how seriously most police treat domestic assault now. Most officers in the sessions seem to believe that arrest is the most effective tool they can use to reduce repeated assaults.

We hope to take part in a training in Hancock County in the near future.

SR ANNUAL MEETING HELD

The Spruce Run Annual Meeting took place October 23 at Hammond Street Congregational Church in Bangor. A large group of volunteers, staff, and other members and friends from both Penobscot and Hancock counties gathered to hear reports on the various activities and accomplishments of the agency in the past year. The group also elected two new Steering Committee members, Diane Bowman and Linda Zuch. After partaking of cider and Halloween cookies, we heard from two formerly battered women, Deborah and Diane, and several other members spoke briefly in affirmation of how much Spruce Run has meant to them. Even a few people who had dreaded spending their Friday night at a meeting agreed that Annual Meeting was a moving, worthwhile, and-yes-fun experience!

USING THE WELFARE SYSTEM: ONE BATTERED WOMAN'S STORY

My name is Joanne R. I am 24 years old, and I have three children aged 4½, 3, and 2. My children and I left my abusive husband's home in Marlborough, Massachusetts, on March 22, 1986.

We entered DayBreak, a shelter for battered women, in Worcester, and began our healing process. The children had severe bronchial infections. I too was suffering from a very bad cold as well as early malnutrition. I was emotionally and physically drained from 4½ years of severe abuse. In reality, DayBreak is a big, old house with flaking paint and poor plumbing. To me, however, it seemed like a mansion, and I was in awe of the endless luxuries. For instance, they had plenty of food and we could eat whenever we were hungry. I had a hairbrush, shampoo, a real bed, and I was even allowed to get medicine for my sick babies. I no longer had to fear beatings or mental torture. Most importantly, I began to value myself as a person.

My husband harassed my family, my friends, and even the shelter to such an extent that we were no longer safe. We came to Spruce Run on May 12, 1986, where we found the same support and encouragement that DayBreak had offered. We moved into low-income housing in early July. We have a whole new life now, one of good health and freedom. We have freedom to make friends, go to church, meet our personal needs, and even to express our feelings and ideas.

There are certain factors which have recently arisen that threaten our growth as productive citizens, and even our survival. I first applied for AFDC in May, 1986, in Bangor, where I was granted "good cause," and I was told that DHS would not give out my address. My case was moved to Rockland when we moved to another town. In November, I discovered that my ex-husband had been contacted for child support. He had consequently been told what county we lived in, and very probably even our exact location! I had never been notified of this, and I would not have learned of it except that I asked.

My ex-husband has not paid any child support yet, so it seems that the misguided efforts of the Department of Human Services have endangered a woman and three preschool children while doing nothing to ease the financial burden of the State of Maine. I phoned Augusta about this and was told that the agent responsible had quit and part of his file had been lost! No one could help me, and no one could do anything to move ahead with the State's case. I was appalled!

I also have run into a few snags with my finances. First, I want to thank everyone involved with awarding the raise in AFDC checks last Spring. I also want to tell you where that money went. I was given a \$20 increase. My food stamps were subsequently cut \$10 and my rent was raised \$9. Thank you for the dollar!

When I informed my DHS worker of my plans to attend college, she asked if I was going to get a Pell Grant (a federal education grant). I said Yes, and she told me that it would be considered income even though I would be using it to pay for tuition. She explained that my food stamps would be terminated, and my AFDC check would be cut back.

I don't want to be on welfare! I want to get a good job, support my family, and pay loans in order to repay what has been given to me. I am starting school at the University of Maine in September, where I will be studying for a degree in Veterinary Medicine. If my benefits are cut, I will not be able to survive and go to school. I feel that I have not only a right but a responsibility to further my education.

I must be honest with you: If the Department of Human Services tries to prevent my leaving the welfare system, I will be forced to take every legal action possible.

(Editor's Note: Joanne started school at UM in September. Like most single mothers who are also fulltime students, she is hardly ever home, and so we could not reach her for an update on her financial struggles. Joanne was one of a group of 7-8 former residents of the Spruce Run shelter who met with Human Services Commissioner Rollin Ives here last August.)

BATTERED WOMEN SPEAK OUT

Spruce Run's second Battered Women's Speakout was held Wednesday, October 21, at the Bangor Unitarian Church (rain space). An audience of 35 women and men heard the moving stories of five women who had experienced battering and have said No to the violence in their lives: Diane, Rachel, Cheryl, Connie, and Deborah. Spruce Run thanks those women and also salutes the courage of other former residents of the shelter who attended the Speakout and gave their silent support.

SPRUCE RUN WELCOMES NEW KID WORKERS

Lynn B. and LeeAnne M. have gratefully completed their first joint training effort, and we welcome six new volunteers who are working with children: Marilyn works in Hancock County; Mary Kay and Ida see individual children, work with groups during House Meeting, and take kids on field trips; Peggy sees individuals, does afternoon group activities, and reads books to the kids; Mona does support group and reads books; Sharon and Brenda are student interns who do kids' support group.

We also said Farewell last month to Karla, a longtime children's volunteer, who left last month for her new job as Children's Services Coordinator at New Hope for Women in Rockland. Congratulations, Karla! We look forward to working with you in your new job in the future.

COALITION SEEKS GRANT FOR STATE OFFICE

The Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services has grown: there are nine projects, six with shelters and three with safe homes, in the Coalition. We must go to the Legislature every two years for more funding, and we want to assure quality services--hotline, safe shelter, support groups--for all bat-

tered women and their children. Therefore, the MCFCS has decided it's time to set up a state office, with a paid Coordinator. The office will be located somewhere in Bangor. The Coalition will be seeking a grant to begin this state-wide coordination, and we'll keep you informed as plans progress.

HANCOCK COUNTY PROJECT INCREASES OUTREACH

Spruce Run's Hancock County Committee has made more outreach its primary objective for the next year. We plan soon to hire an Outreach Coordinator there, to work with Deborah to provide client services such as support groups and to do more community education. Those educational efforts are growing: this Fall we have spoken to the Ellsworth AAUW, Ellsworth Congregational Church, and Deer Isle Teacher Re-Certification Program; we are collaborating with the Hancock Child Protection Council on programs for Ellsworth High and other schools; we presented a domestic violence seminar for the public in Bar Harbor; and we have speaking engagements set in the near future for the Ellsworth Lioness, Ellsworth MEDNOW, and Mt. Desert Hospital. We also plan to present a workshop on how the church can respond to domestic violence for the Mt. Desert Island ministerial association.

Our Hancock County Committee is a small, hardworking, committed group that could use support. If you are interested in knowing more about the committee's work, please phone Deborah at 945-5102.

SPRUCE RUN NOW HAS SUPPORT
GROUPS IN BANGOR AND ELLSWORTH.
CHILD CARE IS PROVIDED. FOR
INFORMATION PHONE 947-0496 (COLLECT
IF YOU WISH).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Gov. John R. McKernan, Jr., proclaimed October "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" throughout Maine, and urged all citizens actively "to support...programs designed to reduce and eventually eliminate domestic violence." The Governor stated that the "U.S. Department of Justice...in 1986 reported that a woman is battered every 15 seconds and at least 2.1 million women were beaten each year from 1978 to 1982."

The national theme for the month was "A Safe Home When Home Isn't Safe." During October, a new program called Shelter Aid established the first national toll-free hotline for victims of domestic violence. The hotline number is 1-800-333-SAFE, and it is staffed 24 hours a day by people trained to give confidential information and referrals to shelters in local areas. Shelter Aid is sponsored by Johnson & Johnson and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. During October, coupons for nine popular products were published in newspapers across the country, and five cents for each coupon redeemed will be donated to shelters throughout the nation, including SR.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Why not become a member of Spruce Run? To do so, just fill out this form and mail it with your check to P.O. Box 653, Bangor 04401. Thank you!

YES, I'd like to help by becoming a
Spruce Run member.

Enclosed is \$ _____ . (\$10 suggested)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

As a member of Spruce Run, you'll receive our Newsletters, an invitation to the Annual Meeting, and the satisfaction of supporting social change.

NCADV PLANS CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE

Spruce Run staff and volunteers are already making plans to attend the fourth conference of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence next July 27-31, in Seattle, Washington. Those who were at the St. Louis Conference in 1986 still remember the feelings of affirmation and excitement they experiences through meeting with nearly 2,000 battered women's advocates from 48 states. Spruce Run will endeavor to raise enough money to send several formerly battered women and volunteers, as well as staff, to this major event.

The NCADV's next steering committee meeting will be held in Mexico City, in an effort to promote more cultural exchange of ideas and friendship. The Maine Coalition will send one representative to that meeting.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS GROWING

The Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services devoted a day-long meeting of staff members from all nine projects to planning and discussion of our children's programs. We received increased funding from the 113th Legislature for these programs, providing a children's coordinator for each agency in the MCFCS. Several complex questions were discussed, including: How do we integrate our children's programs into our work with battered women? How do we decide what our priorities are for children's programs, when we need both direct service to kids in shelters and also expanded educational programs for children and their teachers? Since we have only 30 days to work with shelter children, what will have the most impact to break the cycle of violence in their lives?

Anyone interested in working with kids and helping us resolve some of these questions may phone Lynn B. at 945-5102 to find out how to get involved.

The Web of Connection

There's a web that connects us
It stretches through time.
It binds us together
By heart and by mind.
Spun by our Mother
From ages ago
Tied to the earth and the tides that flow.

Through years of oppression
Our memories were lost.
We've forgotten together
The love and the cost.
Apart from each other
We're truly alone.
But deep in our hearts a voice calls us home

To the web of connection
Where we all belong.
It's the life we were born to
Before we were wronged.
We're spirit together
And shining we be
A tangle of light on the tides of the sea.

And though they seem broken, the strands they are strong.
They live in a touch, and they dance in a song.

Because we are women
We hold life in our hands.
We're kin to the ocean
The sky and the land.
And you are my sister
Though silent we be
The web that holds all enfolds you and me.

1987

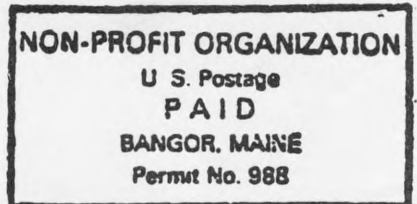
My journey beyond victimization has been a long, painful,
confusing, and sometimes lonely one. Yet I am growing in
appreciation of myself and others, and in that special kind
of strength that comes from having endured. It is my hope
that every battered woman can someday say

I am a woman
Lover of colors
Anger and pain have helped me to see
That I'm a survivor
A singer of my song
I'm finally knowing just who I can be.

Diane Bowman
June, 1987



Spruce Run
P.O. Box 653
Bangor, Maine 04401



please
remember
spruce run in
your holiday giving