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Spruce Run News (January 1982)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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Spruce Run Association

P. O. BOX 653 - BANGOR, MAINE 04401

SERVICES FOR
ABUSED WOMEN
207/947-0496

January 1982

WHAT WE DO

Spruce Run is a non-profit organization that provides services to women in crisis and abused women. We do not have a shelter, but make referrals to one. A counselor is available by phone 24 hours a day. Counseling is also available at our office. Further we give information about and make referral to other services such as food stamps, general assistance, parenting classes etc. We also provide information about protective orders and pro se divorce. We encourage clients to advocate for themselves, but provide that service when needed. Through our community education program we familiarize the public with our services and inform them of the causes of domestic violence, the issues involved, and directions for change.

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In the past two years Spruce Run has served more than eight hundred families.

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WHO THE WORKERS ARE

SUSAN who lives with her family on the edge of a lake has been working for Spruce Run for seven years as a steering committee member and as a crisis intervention counselor in the early years. This past year she assumed the role of Fundraising Developer, a full time VISTA position. In that role she gained notoriety as the editor of the popular Spruce Run cookbooks. She has now returned to school to continue her education, but continues to support Spruce Run by taking an active role on the shelter committee and by adding vigor and expertise to the fundraising committee. Further, she will soon be available for speaking engagements.

MARY who has been known to get up at 5:30 on Sunday mornings to take her son to hockey practice and who spends Wednesday afternoons transporting her children to four shifts of music lessons got lots of experience in transporting women

(cont. p.2)

GOOD NEWS AND GOOD FORTUNE

The past year has provided Spruce Run with good fortune in a number of ways. In the summer we received a gift which amounted to approximately \$30,000 designated for the purpose of acquiring a shelter. Last November, the women's trio County Down who perform vocal and instrumental music, did a benefit concert for us and raised almost \$1,000. In December we received another gift for \$1,000 for our shelter fund, and in January were surprised to receive a check in the mail for \$10,000 also designated for the shelter fund. Our excitement about and appreciation for these gifts can hardly be expressed. For the first time, having our own shelter is more than a dream, it's a plan. (Of course, to open a shelter means providing a more comprehensive program, meeting fire and city regulations, furnishing it, adding another staff person, and paying a mortgage, all major ongoing expenses.) Fortunately, a few people have come to us from the community expressing an interest in forming a group, the friends of Spruce Run who might raise money (cont. page 2)

to aid our plan to open our own shelter.
We are heartened by this community support.

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VOLUNTEER CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING

Our volunteer training is an essential part of our program as we rely so heavily on volunteers to provide round the clock availability of crisis counselors. The training session is now 40 hours and was provided twice in 1981. In this intensive training volunteers deal with the basic causes of domestic violence, the issues that come up in counseling battered women, and familiarize themselves with area resources. Most of all they learn our method of crisis counseling and practice a lot. We are hoping to have three sessions in 1982. Each group will be trained by one staff member and one volunteer counselor with staggered two session terms. The next training session will begin in February and Martha and Sue will be the Trainers.

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INTRODUCTION TO SPRUCE RUN COUNSELING

The battered woman has often come to believe that her situation may be her own fault and that she cannot effectively take steps to change her life in a positive way. To take control of her life, she must be able to feel that what she does makes a difference. Therefore, we are careful not to assume an authoritative posture by giving advice, telling her what to do, or rescuing her as that would rob her of the opportunity to regain control of her own situation. Our counselors take a supportive, exploratory role based on respect for the woman and the belief that with information that broadens her perspective and options and support for her right to make choices, she can and will make decisions which constructively improve her situation.

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Now available at our office: NAN'S custom designed stationary and CHAPTER 2 of the Spruce Run cookbook, 34 Undocumented non-violent uses for Chocolate

to and from the shelter in her early days as a Spruce Run volunteer four & a half years ago. Though she immediately joined the steering committee, little did she realize that her involvement would turn into a fulltime volunteer job. She took on the project of writing a grant to the Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy to study domestic violence, police reaction, and possible training ideas for the police. When we received that grant, she became the director of the project which involved humanists researching the issues and culminated in a conference on domestic violence and later police training. She has been a trainer for three volunteer groups. Presently she volunteers as a counselor in our office, is co-ordinating the search for a building for shelter, is active on the shelter committee and the volunteer committee and has completed the speakers training.

SHEILA who works for Diocesan Human Relations Services and tells the best bad jokes of anyone we know has been a trusted and true volunteer for the past four years. In addition to being a crisis counselor, she took part in the police training, set up the initial cataloging of index cards for our library donated to and worked at yard sales, and "baked and burned" for bake sales. She now serves on the volunteer committee and has participated in shelter and steering committee meetings.

BARB who lives happily with her husband and child has also been a volunteer with Spruce Run for the past four years. In addition to her job at St. Andre's, she finds time to continue as a crisis counselor on our hotline, transport clients, visit them at the shelter, and has often been there when we unexpectedly needed someone to cover the phone at the last minute. Further she consistently comes through with delicious taste treats for our bake sales.

Ann, a university professor, lives with her husband and two children and has been with Spruce Run "so long I can't remember, probably since '78"(cont.p4)

The BAD NEWS or the reality is...

Due to the fact the the United Way did not reach it's goal this year, we will not be receiving \$2,970 that we were counting on for our 1982 budget. Further, we will be getting \$6,669 LESS than we are presently getting from the State Bureau of Social Services. This is the result of the very limited funds for social services which now must be shared with new and much needed projects serving battered women in Washington and Piscataquis counties. So, while we are thrilled with the designated donations which will enable us to purchase a house, we are frustrated by a budget so reduced we can't run our program.

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QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED ABOUT BATTERED WOMEN

WHY DOES SHE STAY?

Many people make the false assumption that the battered woman stays in an abusive situation because she enjoys being beaten. Experience and research tell us that this is not the case. The battered woman who remains in the relationship does so for a number of reasons:

1. Usually she is dependant upon her husband financially. Even if she has a job, it is unlikely that she can support herself and her children. She usually has no place to go.
2. Like most women, she has been taught that to be successful as a person she must be successful as a wife and mother. Her identity is based on being nurturing and to leave her husband or family would mean that she had failed as a woman.
3. When she's been abused, she begins to believe that she deserves it, that she's done something wrong or failed to take care of his needs.
4. She's isolated physically and socially as her husband usually controls money and transportation. Friends are often afraid of him and shy away.
5. She tends to deny and understate her situation to others for fear of social condemnation (it doesn't happen to nice people) and they may think it's her fault.
6. She hesitates to seek help because she feels shame, guilt, self-doubt, and is often discouraged by people in the "helping" professions who may discount her fears or blame her. ie "It can't be that bad.", "Have you ever considered how he must feel?" " Well why do you stay?"
7. She's terrified that he will follow her, hurt her more if she dares to leave and at the same time may be terrified of being on her own.

8. She may love her husband very much in other ways. He may have many good qualities and because he promises he will change, that it won't happen again she hopes that he can and will change.

ISN'T THIS MOSTLY IN LOW INCOME FAMILIES?

Battering has no class or economic boundaries. It happens in all classes and all professions. There are economic issues however. The frequency of battering increases with unemployment. The fact that women in middle and upper income brackets are seldom able to earn wages comparable to those of her husband means that to leave means totally changing life style and that which she feels is necessary for her children. In other words to leave is to become low income.

ARE THE WOMEN WHO GET INTO THESE RELATIONSHIPS EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED?

The evidence is that this is not the case. Lenore Walker author of The Battered Woman states, "Women suffer from situationally imposed emotional problems due to their victimization. They do not choose to be battered because of some personality deficit, but develop behavioral disturbances because of the battering."

HOW CAN WE AFFORD TO PAY FOR SERVICES TO BATTERED WOMEN MUCH LESS PREVENTION?

The cost of supporting services to battered women and funding programs for prevention ie. non-violent conflict resolution programs in the schools and public education about the causes would cost much less than the costs we already pay (cont. on page 7)

SEEKING SHELTER

The shelter committee was set up for the purpose of searching for a house which we could purchase to establish an emergency shelter facility for battered women and their children. This committee gathered information and examined other shelter programs. Then it set guidelines based on our own projected needs. Noting budgetary limitations and taking into consideration zoning laws and our own guidelines, this committee began the search for the appropriate building. This search continues and we are currently interested in a building in Bangor. The donations that we have received enable us to make a down payment and minor renovations on a building, but the shelter committee has pointed out that to provide the comprehensive services of a shelter project efficiently and effectively we will need funds for an additional staff person and increased operational expenses.

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THE PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ACT

The protection from Abuse Act was developed by Pine Tree Legal Assoc. and the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services and took effect in July 1980. In Oct. 1981 the Maine Civil Liberties Union published an evaluation of that law. Their findings coincided with our experiences with that law. Battered women are using the orders for protection. For those abusers who respect the legal system, the orders act as a deterrent to further abuse. In allowing the courts to determine temporary custody and property rights, the law stabilizes volatile areas of conflict, leaving time for the family to deal with the issues of violence and abuse. Before this law took effect, women who were abused usually had no choice but to flee the home -- with or without the kids, and without most personal belongings necessary for day to day life--leaving the abuser in full possession of the family resources. The law gives a clear social message that violence in the home is a crime thereby providing social support to the victims of these crimes. We and the MCLU have found that police are fairly responsive and like the law as it gives them specific powers to act upon in "domestic disputes". It increases the workload on court clerks, but they are bearing with it. Judges have been fairly cooperative, although the pro se aspect bothers some of them and they certainly don't appreciate the people who obtain emergency orders but fail to attend the hearing. Generally the law fills the intent.

WHO THE WORKERS ARE (cont.)

She joined the steering committee because she wanted to be involved with a grassroots feminist organization. She also serves on the executive committee for the Women in the Curriculum project at U.M.O. She has graciously hosted steering committee meetings in her home and our annual yard sale in her yard for the past three years. She has contributed numerous baked goodies and other goods. She helped paint our old office, had input into the police training, served as chairperson of the steering committee, and is presently active on the community education committee and the fundraising committee.

BARBARA has a background in nursing and now works as a case worker with a private adoption agency. She's also the mother of four children. She's been involved with Spruce Run for about two and a half years as a member of the steering committee. She has baked for bake sales, donated to yard sales, participated on hiring committees, and last year organized the membership drive. She recently completed the public speaking training and is available for speaking engagements with a special interest in parent/teacher organizations. Currently she is active on the shelter committee and the community education committee.

NANCY who has a dog named Mitra, is totally devoted to reading the BDN, and upon occasion pretends to be perfect, became a Spruce Run volunteer about five years ago. At the same time she joined the steering committee. A year later she was hired as a paralegal and was instrumental in forming the state coalition and in initiating the pursuit and acquisition of state funding. She served as chairperson of the state coalition. Two and a half years ago she was hired as director of SR. For the past year she has represented Maine and New Hampshire on the steering committee of the National Coalition vs. Domestic Violence. She was trainer for the last two groups of volunteer crisis counselors. Currently she is holding the position of administrator which includes preparing budgets, contracts, fiscal reports and sharing responsibility for statistics etc. Further she is active on the volunteer committee, the contracts committee, and the membership committee.

THE WAY WE WORK

Spruce Run began as a woman's discussion group in 1972 which quickly recognized the need for services to women in marital crisis and danger. Therefore, the Spruce Run Assoc. was incorporated in June of 1973. From that time until 1977 it was a totally volunteer organization where women came together as equals, sharing information and decision making with no one person in authority. With the addition of ceta staff in 1977 and state funding in '79 tasks became devided and a typical hierarchy evolved placing some persons in positions of power over others. This past year we developed a philosophical base which necessitated changing our structure. To quote part of our philosophical statement, "The source of abuse is power imbalance." ... "Acknowledging the recurring, on-going nature of power imbalances, we believe that we must engage in continuing struggle (personally and collectively, professionally and politically) to equalize the power imbalance." We decided that to equalize the power imbalance within our organization, we needed to develop new staffing, to re-define responsibilities of the various components of our structure: staff, volunteers, steering committee, and membership, and then to examine the relationships between ourselves, clients, and other agencies. We followed the basic premis that we needed to increase information to and solicit input from all those involved.

As a result, we took two steps. First we did change our staffing, making an effort to spread the knowledge and practice of what we each do with others and to include personel wants and needs as well as agency needs. The positions we now have are: counselor/advocate, administrator, counseling coordinator and community education coordinator. We try to share areas of expertise rather than monopolize them. The second step was the formation of committees comprised of steering comm. members, staff, volunteers, and interested members. The committees are: Fundraising, Community Education, Contracts, Shelter, Volunteers, Membership, Legislative, and By-Laws. The third step, redefining responsibilities and relationships between ourselves is now underway and is being facilitated by the By-Laws committee.

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WHO THE WORKERS ARE (cont.)

TERRI, a former potter who is presently employed as a librarian, completed her crisis intervention training in September 1977. The following summer she joined the steering committee. She has been active as a representative to the coalition, chairperson of the steering committee, pioneered a grant, and developed the bibliography used for the Police Training. Since Terry joined SR she has had two children, but she continues to be active on the steering committee, co-ordinating the annual Mother's Day carnation sale and serving on the fund-raising and contracts committees.

MARTHA came to Spruce Run a year ago because she was interested in being trained as a crisis counselor. She holds down a fulltime job AND currently is one of our volunteer crisis counselors. She is also a steering committee member, an active member of the shelter committee, the legislative committee, and the volunteer committee. She liked our crisis training so much that she became one of the trainers for our last training session and is going to be a trainer again in February.

PAM brings to Spruce Run a warm sense of humor and many years of experience working with people in a counseling capacity. She completed the crisis intervention counseling training a year ago and since then has been covering our crisis line from home, transporting clients to shelter, and advocating in their behalf. Further, she has often come to our rescue when we needed someone to do office coverage on quick notice!

MARY, a previous paralegal at Pine Tree, was a drop out of the first volunteer training session, but continued to provide technical aid and served on the steering committee for two years. She went to Washington where she worked as a field worker for Food Research and Action Center (a public interest advocacy group dealing with Federal food programs), organizing in mountain plains states. She rejoined the steering committee in 1980 when she returned to her humble yet charming abode here in Maine. Now in addition to her job as a (cont. p6)

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SPEAKER'S TRAINING

Most of '81 we did not have a community education program, tho' did manage to do speaking engagements upon request, a couple of workshops, and conferences in Blue Hill and Bar Harbor. This fall however, we held our first speakers training program where six Spruce Run workers prepared to represent Spruce Run to the community. We are also now providing a workshop each semester for students who are interested in doing projects or papers on Spruce Run.

If you are interested in having a speaker address your organization, call the office and we will try to accomodate you. We now ask for a donation to cover travel expenses and speaker's time. Call a month ahead.

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POLICE TRAINING

The Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy funded a project in which scholars in the humanities, police officers, and SR counselors cooperated in planning a program for training police to intervene more effectively in domestic violence. The humanists studied the problem by reading books and articles and by attending workshops with local police officers, attorneys, and counselors. Then, after much discussion and reading, the humanists wrote papers and worked with Mary and Marian on a two-day police training workshop which was held at the Bangor Police Department last April. The workshop included an analysis of and police responsibilities under the Protection from Abuse Act, an overview of the family dispute, a look at cultural factors that perpetuate domestic violence, and the application of various communication techniques. We used a client explaining her situation on tape, the reading of a short story tracing an abuser's day, a live dramatization of a family dispute, and roleplays which involved the police. About 40 police officers attended and we were pleased by their evaluation of the course. We plan to conduct a similar workshop in Ellsworth with the cooperation of Hancock Co. D.A. Michael Povich in March.

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80% of the men who batter were either beaten as children or saw their mothers beaten by their fathers.

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WHO THE WORKERS ARE (contd.)

Northern Field Representative of the Maine Human Rights Commission. Serving as chair of the steering committee, she is an active member of the legislative, shelter, and by-laws committees and coordinated last year's Valentine's bake sale. We're hoping that she will someday explain cookies with pants...

KATHY has a background in public health, with an interest in women's health and family planning. In addition to working in occupational health, she found time to join the steering committee last July, and is a member of the community education committee, coordinated the October bake sale, and has baked for others.

NAN, an avid, daily figure skater who has a busy schedule studying and teaching calligraphy and running her own calligraphy business, went through crisis counseling training a year and a half ago, and has been a valuable counselor for the past year. She is now benefiting SR by doing graphics for a variety of uses, including: personalized bookmarks, flyers, tickets, posters, and stationery, all custom designed for SR.

ELAINE, having been in the Peace Corps, traveled and lived all over the world, finally settled in Maine with her husband from Germany and her three daughters who were born in Malaysia. We are fortunate to have her as one of our newest volunteers who completed the crisis counseling training last fall and has been doing crisis counseling ever since.

JEAN loves her rural environment, worked two years as a counselor in a psychiatric clinic, and has previous experience tutoring children who have mental retardation. In addition to her busy family life (she has 3 kids), she's employed part time, and is one of our newest volunteers. In addition to working as a crisis counselor, she recently completed the SR speaker's training and was the first to put it into practice with a marathon of speaking to 5 classes in a row at Hampden Academy.

This is a random selection of the many valuable women who work at Spruce Run. The others are Sue, Connie, Anne, Lynn, Lynne, Marie, Cathy, Nancy. (contd. p7)

FUNDING ENDEAVORS PAST AND PRESENT

In 1981 we held our usual Valentine's day bake sale, U.M.O. football bake sale, and a crafts and baked goods sale at Christmas. We held our annual Mother's day carnation sale, annual yard sale, Old Town Rotary flea market. Extra special fundraising event was the County Down concert which was an exciting performance, an enjoyable evening. The first two chapters of the Spruce Run cookbook, #1 The Dreaded Zucchini Plus and #2 34 Undocumented, Non-violent Uses for Chocolate were the result of Susan's efforts and she's planning to eventually turn it all into a real Spruce Run cookbook. Meanwhile, The Dreaded Zucchini Plus was a sell out!

Upcoming fundraisers are:

Feb. 12 U.M.O. Valentine's Bake Sale
March 27 & 28 Rotary Club Flea Market
May 9 Mother's Day Carnation Sale
June 25 & 26 Yard Sale
Labor Day Shopping Spree (raffle)

If you'd like to help with any of these, please call.

Funding sources:

Local fundraising events and membership dues (\$10)

The United Way of Penobscot Valley

Donations from individuals

The State of Maine Bureau of Social Services

Donations from churches, clubs, and other groups concerned with social issues

In-kind donations: time, supplies, rummage or baked items, space

All donations are tax deductible.

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QUESTIONS (cont.)

in police time (65% of their calls are 'domestics'), in court costs and time, in sick time taken by battered women as a result of their injuries, in Medicaid stitches and hospital rooms used to patch up victims of abuse, and for special education for the children who have learning and emotional problems because they come from violent homes.

ARE THERE MANY BATTERED WOMEN IN MAINE?

According to the Attorney General's office there were 48,000 in a one year period.

WHO THE WORKER'S ARE (contd.)

another Nancy, Michelle, Dottie, Ruth, Pat, Marquetta, Joan, and Marian. The profiles of our workers will be continued in our next newsletter.

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Spruce Run was a founding member on the Maine Coalition of Family Crisis Services which cooperates in the sharing of state funding for projects serving battered women. The Coalition also shares information and works together to provide statewide services to women.

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Spruce Run is also a member of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Nancy has served on the steering committee of that organization for the past year representing Maine and New Hampshire. The NCADV provides an opportunity for national and regional networking of projects serving battered women. It also functions as a national voice for battered women's services in federal legislation. In 1980 NCADV put on the first national conference on battered women in Washington, D.C. In 1982 NCADV will be putting on another national conference, August third to August seventh in Milwaukee.

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SPECIAL SPECIAL Just out the revised edition of The Dreaded Zucchini Plus, it is now available at our office.

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The saying "Rule of thumb" came from an English law which was thought to be progressive and humane in it's time that stated a man could not beat his wife with a stick larger than the circumference of his thumb.

* *

90% of the assault victims in this country are women.



