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Spruce Run News (Spring 2002)

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Spruce Run

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Staff, Spruce Run, "Spruce Run News (Spring 2002)" (2002). *Maine Women's Publications - All*. 263.
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Spruce Run News

"Working for Peace at Home"

Spring 2002

207-945-5102 * FAX 207-990-4252 * Hotline 1-800-863-9909

Testimony for the March 2, 2002 Real Security Public Hearing By: Francine Stark

For a battered woman, "Real security" is rarely possible. At Spruce Run, we talk with people everyday whose lives are filled with real fear – of ongoing emotional pain, of physical injury, and of the possibility that their children will be similarly harmed. Their calls to us are part of their quest to find safety – to be free from this oppression. There are no clear answers. Each situation is unique, and our work is focused on listening to their feelings, exploring their circumstances, and considering the options that might reduce the abuser's ability to keep them trapped.

I am frequently asked what we need to do in order to help people be safe from abuse. For me this is central to what this hearing is about, because September 11 was a day of collective terror, interrupting the sense of safety that most of us have lived with all our lives. This sense of fear, new to the majority of people in the United States, is all too familiar to people in many countries around the world and to battered women everywhere.

Many people picture safety for battered women and their children as a hiding place, thinking that somehow they run to other places and create new lives. This is exceptionally rare. In fact, the vast majority of abuse victims are not willing to be stripped of their identities, their families and friends, their communities, their careers, and every other thread of their life, regardless of the risks they face. Instead, they put together a new life, taking reasonable precautions, using the systems and services available to them, often forced to greatly compromise their personal values.

A woman's "safety plan" to escape abuse and create a new life may involve any number of things and more: calling a domestic violence project for support, quitting her job, telling friends, family, and others private things about herself in order to enlist assistance, signing up for welfare and subsidized housing, calling the police and testifying in court. All of these things involve some loss of dignity, some possibility of increasing the danger she faces, and none of it guarantees her safety. And yet, rarely do women kill their abusers or seek revenge. In their quest for safety – for "real security" – women will usually do almost anything rather than inflict violence or consequences if they can find an alternative that allows them to feel at least marginally safe.

This extraordinary lesson from the millions of abuse survivors in our country should inform our national policies.

Continued on page 4.

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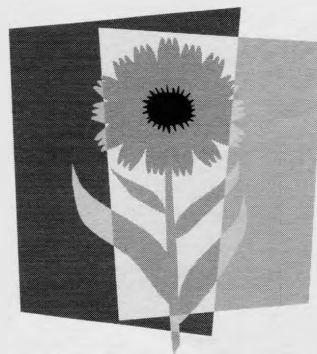
- Jacki's Story
- School Based Advocacy
- Shelter News
- Domestic Abuse Task Force
- Meet a Spruce Run Volunteer

Jacki's Story

I was in an abusive marriage for twelve years. I left with four small boys, and very little confidence. My ex-husband had stripped me of any shred of self-esteem that I ever possessed. I was afraid, insecure, and alone. He had convinced me that I could not make decent decisions, and in our marriage if I made what he considered poor decisions, I paid for it. He was emotionally and verbally abusive, and I have my share of memories with his hand around my throat and my back against the wall, and my feet nearly dangling. I

remember how hard it was to breathe like that. I remember how loud it sounded when his fist went through the wall next to my head.

But I do not have to deal with any of that now. I left him, and I have not gone back even once. He has no control over me anymore, and I make absolutely every decision that pertains to my boys or me. God is faithful, and I am doing a good job. I have been out of abuse for almost two years. I realized one day that I was really free. I was actually away from him. I could stand on my own two feet. That is what this poem is about.



"Change"

By: Jacki

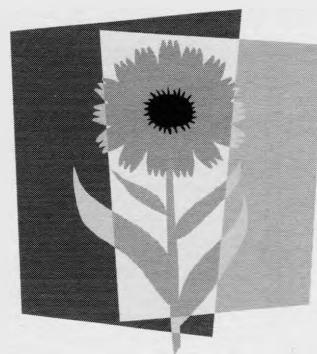
I caught her in a glance, as I happened to pass through,
She was there in the window and I knew what I must do.
I backed up to check, and no, she was not gone.
Her eyes were very blue, and her hair had grown long.

But that was not all of the change I could see.
Her head was held high and I said, "Hey, look at me."
Her shoulders were back as true confidence does;
Her arms were reaching out and well able to love.

Her steps were with purpose, and then taken without
doubt.

She was no longer looking for "any way out."
Her mind was unmuddled, and decisions were clear.
She no longer just survived and lived under fear.

The change was as evident as God's Word was true,
Her perspective ever altered, her life forever new.
Emphatically the truth had indeed set her free,
I looked at her once more and saw—it was me!





Meet a Spruce Run Volunteer!

Selina is one of our great hotline volunteers! She has been a hotline volunteer at Spruce Run since January, 2001 and has taken the most recent kid-worker training. She and her husband came to the U.S. from their home in India in 1973, and go back to visit family about once a year. When she isn't with us, Selina is a full-time housewife, supporting her husband and being with her kids. When she has free time, Selina loves to read fiction.

What made you decide to be a Spruce Run hotline worker?

I really wanted to spend some of my time helping out women in abusive situations. I thought Spruce Run would be a great way to do that—to learn more about domestic abuse and to also support the community to learn about it, too.

How often do you volunteer on the hotline?

I take about 3 shifts per month during the evenings. I answer the hotline from home and it is very convenient because it is relaxing and I have no interruptions.

What is it like taking a hotline call?

When the phone rings, I am nervous! But I compose myself, say a prayer, and just handle the call. And I know that my staff back-up will be there for me!

What do you like best about being a hotline volunteer?

It is very gratifying for the person on the other side to have a woman there to listen, to validate her experience, and you can hang up knowing you've done something to help her. It's great to hear that, although she is feeling desperate at the beginning of the call, by the end she is saying thank-you.

What would you like to tell people who are considering taking hotline training?

First, you have to be very committed and be willing to give it everything you've got. Do it with a whole heart. The training is sometimes strenuous, but also gratifying. While taking a hotline call can sometimes be a matter of life and death, it can also just be about being there for someone to talk to. Callers sometimes just want someone there to listen and not to simply tell them what they need to do.

Having just finished children's worker training, how was that similar to or different from hotline training?

Some of the training was very similar, but there were parts that were different. When you are working with kids, it is harder for them to talk in a way that makes them feel comfortable. In many ways it is more difficult than talking with an adult!

Do you have anything to add about your experience as a volunteer at Spruce Run?

I am really enjoying it. It is very gratifying and I love doing it! I have learned a lot and I am still learning! Thanks Jan, Rebecca and Amanda for being excellent trainers!

Thanks, Selina!

Want to Volunteer?

Spruce Run is looking for hotline volunteers! What does a hotline volunteer do?

- * Support and validate the caller's feelings
- * Explore options
- * Provide information about abuse
- * Provide information about resources, such as housing options or applying for TANF
- * Support and validate the caller's right to live a violence-free life

Hotline training will prepare you to work on our 24 hour hotline. Upon successful completion of training you can volunteer from our office during the day or from your home evenings or weekends.

Interested?

Call 945-5102. The next hotline training begins in mid-May, 2002. No prior experience is required.



Spruce Run Volunteers Honored

Long time volunteer **Nancy Johansen** was honored by Spruce Run at the annual Blaine House Tea in October 2001. Nancy's dedication to the welfare of battered women and their children, her empathy, her patience, her soft voice and gentle manner have helped hundreds of hotline callers to feel less alone in the world, to identify options and plan for the future. In her eight years as a Spruce Run volunteer, Nancy has provided more than 4000 hours of coverage for the hotline, mostly in the middle of the night. For the past several years, Nancy has also acted as a volunteer facilitator for weekly support groups, where her compassion, calming presence and knowledge of local resources have made her most beloved. Congratulations Nancy!

Also honored at the Blaine House Tea was **Dr. Eric Brown**, a faculty physician in the Eastern Maine Medical Center Family Practice Residency Program. He is a founding member of the Domestic Abuse Task Force and has been an activist within the medical community for training about and screening for domestic abuse. He has been a key instigator and supporter of domestic abuse training for physicians and other healthcare professionals. His tenacity and good heart have helped many families in their journey toward freedom from abuse. Congratulations Eric!

"Testimony," continued.

Battered women learn quickly that fighting back is very likely to increase the violence and have other negative consequences for themselves, their children, and people around them. Research has shown that since the development of services for battered women, the number of men killed by their female partners has sharply decreased, while the number of women killed by their male partners has remained about the same for many years. While abused women have consistently sought out and employed alternatives to violence, men who abuse have continued to feel entitled to have dominance over women's lives.

Perpetrators of domestic violence rarely face significant jail time, though the ability of the police to arrest and remove them from the scene of violence has saved countless lives. Having the abuser convicted for his violence does not, in and of itself, lead to real security for battered women. Abusers will likely continue to find ways of tormenting their victims. No matter what they do, some battered women never really feel safe, and many are angry about the lack of support they receive from the court system. In spite of all that, survivors of domestic violence create a sense of security by focusing on the things they must do to support themselves and their children now and into the future, building relationships and skills that will make their lives better.

Our real security will come not from our ability to kill but from our ability to enhance life both at home and abroad. Our production of weapons of mass destruction is no more correct than that of other nations, so we should not feel justified in punishing others for doing the same things we do. The rule of law -- commitment to fair hearings and reasonable consequences for criminal actions-- has been a great strength of our nation. Even though it doesn't always work, and sometimes the system fails, it is still the right thing to do.

As battered women have demonstrated, there are no guarantees of safety. So we should do our best to work for peace in our daily lives and maintain our personal integrity -- choosing life over death, freedom over revenge, and creativity over destruction.

Spring Events Raise Money for Spruce Run

On February 14-16, the University of Maine Student Women's Association put on *The Vagina Monologues*, a performance featuring UMaine students that addresses the issue of violence against women.

The performance was shown on three nights at Minsky Recital Hall and proceeds were donated to Rape Response Services and Spruce Run, who both work to end violence. The three performances raised over \$2,000 for Spruce Run. **We give our appreciation and thanks to all the hard work done by the organizers and performers of this event!**

Spruce Run held its annual "**Gala Dessert Party**" on March 23, 2002 at the Spectacular Events Center in Bangor. This event, in its 13th year, raised over \$4,000. The *Breakfast Rotary Quartet* kindly provided musical entertainment while Spruce Run staff, volunteers, and supporters enjoyed an array of delicious desserts displayed in a way that one Spruce Runner described as "just elegant!" Harry Potter memorabilia, gift bags of assorted Tupperware, and decorative pins were raffled off, along with the traditional dessert prizes.

Much of the planning and organizing for this event was done by Spruce Run's Fundraising Committee, including **Melissa Doyle, Andrea Dustin, Jennifer Henderson, Connie Marin, and Cindy Meservey**. Other volunteers helped out with tasks from selling tickets to lending a hand during the festivities. Without your generosity we would not have been able to put together such a successful event! A nod also to **Sheila Daigle** who gave much of her time and attention in planning and organizing the evening.

Thank you to **KISS 94.5** who gave us excellent coverage for the event throughout the evening.

Thanks to **Alice Clifford** for graciously accepting to "MC" throughout the evening!

We'd also like to give a hearty thanks to our sponsors:

Lemforder Corporation

Merrill Bank

Edwards, Faust and Smith, CPAs

Vafiades, Brontas and Kominsky

Scott McGarr, D.M.D.

Spruce Run extends much thanks to the hard work that went into both of these wonderful spring events!

Spruce Run Staff

Rebecca Hobbs, *Administrative Coordinator*

Sheila Daigle, *Office Coordinator*

Janice Archer, *Shelter Services Coordinator*

Francine Stark, *Community Response & Training Coordinator*

Amy Oliver, *Community Response Coordinator*

Jan Blake, *Children's Services Coordinator*

Amanda Cost, *School-Based Advocacy Coordinator*

Amanda Warner, *Legal Advocate*

Karla Bosse, *Legal Response Coordinator*

Lyn Carter, *Groups & BIP Coordinator*

Dorathy Chocensky, *Child Protective Coordinator*

Sherry Lane, *Transitional Services Coordinator*

Johnnie Walker, *Transitional Housing Coordinator*

Sue Hamlett, *Healthcare Response Coordinator*

Maureen Flagg, *Volunteer Coordinator*

Erica Watson, *Hotline Coordinator*

Tina Roberts, *Resource Development Coordinator*

Sue Bradford, *Program Planning & Integration Coordinator*



Take Note: Upcoming Community Events

"Domestic Abuse and the Workplace: Employers Working to Create a Supportive Work Environment"

A One-Day Business Conference Sponsored by members of the Maine Employers Against Domestic Violence

Thursday, April 25, 2002, Eastern Maine Technical College

For more information, contact **Judy Holt** or **Margaret Beckman** at 945-9431 or 1-800-834-0292.

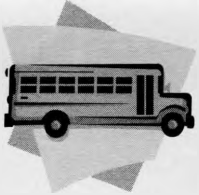
"The Culture of Violence: How it Impacts the Welfare of Children" Featuring **Jackson Katz**

A Conference for Professionals Who Interact With Children and Families

Wednesday, May 1, 2002, Bangor Civic Center

For more information, contact **Annie Allen** at 581-2398.

Spruce Run staff and the Domestic Abuse Task Force have been instrumental in helping to put these conferences together. Thanks to everyone who worked to make these events happen!



Area Students Receive Information on Healthy Relationships

Spruce Run's Community Response Program works to foster a coordinated community response to domestic abuse. One of the ways in which we work to prevent violence and abuse in our community is through our School Based Advocacy Program. Our School Based Advocate, **Amanda Cost**, offers middle and high school students the tools and skills needed to make it through the tricky world of relationship building—one of the most important aspects of our lives. Appropriate expression of feelings, communication skills, gender roles, and respectful interactions are some of the subjects covered during a presentation. Each presentation is tailored to meet the audience's needs, and can last from 2 hours to a whole semester or quarter. For more information about this program, call the Spruce Run office at 945-5102 and ask for Amanda.

Shelter Wish List

Pressing Needs:

Laundry detergent (liquid)
White bath towels
Dryer sheets
Standard size pillows
Writing paper
Diapers (larger sizes)
Toilet paper
Paper towels
The Bus tickets
Pots & Pans (assorted sizes)
Trash bags (bathroom & 33 gal.)
Lysol disinfectant spray
Twin size comforters
Pens
Stamps

General Needs:

Bottled water
Adult pain relievers (Advil, Tylenol)
Hairdryers
New women's underwear
Pre-paid phone cards
Bras
Soda (Pepsi, Coke)
Tampons—regular absorbency
Children's snacks
Quick meal foods (spaghetti O's, etc.)
Shaving cream
Baby wash & lotion
Colored chalk
Small alarm clocks
Hairspray
Curling irons
Napkins
Shampoo & Conditioner
Q-tips
First aid supplies
Moisturizer
Toothpaste
Dish/kitchen towels
Dental Floss
Panty liners
Sunscreen (adult & child)
Fabreeze

What Did Spruce Run Do in 2001?



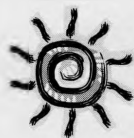
1,201 people used Spruce Run's Services;



113 women and 110 children who were not safe in their homes stayed in our shelter for a total of 2,626 days;



156 women and 73 children spent 1,650 hours in Spruce Run support and education groups;



We responded to 3,937 hotline calls, an average of 328 per month;



5 women and 14 children participated in Spruce Run's transitional housing program;



We provided 4,355 hours of community education and training.

Domestic Abuse Task Force Focuses on Prevention

The Domestic Abuse Task Force (DATF) of Penobscot County has been continuing its support for collaborative projects with Spruce Run and our community. They have most recently supported the transition of the Domestic Violence Investigator position at the Bangor Police Department, welcoming **Cathy Rumsey** to the position. We are happy to welcome Cathy aboard! The Task Force has also continued to provide support for our advocacy work at EMMC, CPS, district courts, Training and Development Corporation, and the TANF/ASPIRE office. During the year, various members of the Task Force have made calls to the Maine legislature urging them to support funding for our work. The Task Force has also continued to provide support for the development of conferences, such as a healthcare conference in October with the Maine Emergency Nurses Association and St. Joseph Healthcare, an Employer Conference scheduled for April 25, 2002, and the development of interactive theater. The task force was also involved in a candle-light vigil for victims of abuse held on February 5, 2002 at Grace United Methodist Church. The DATF may not have a large number of meetings, but it always accomplishes a lot!

Most recently the DATF has moved its focus to the issue of male violence. Last October, the Task Force held a joint meeting with the Task Force of Piscataquis County to attend a lecture given by Michael P. Johnson on *Gender, Control, and Domestic Violence* held at the University of Maine in Orono. In its most recent meeting this February, the task force watched the film, "Tough Guise" by Jackson Katz. Following the film, the Task Force engaged in a discussion led by a panel including **Sue Bradford** of Spruce Run, **Dr. Eric Brown** of EMMC Family Practice, and **Kathryn Maietta**, Clinical Director of the Batterers' Intervention Program.

Both the joint meeting with the Piscataquis Task Force and the meeting in February highlighted the gender-specifics of domestic violence. In his film, Jackson Katz made the point that men are most often both the victims and the perpetrators in 90% of all homicides (U.S. Department of Justice). The task force discussed how our culture impacts the use of violence in the hopes that we can better understand how to prevent domestic violence in our community.

The Task Force also viewed "Tough Guise" in anticipation of the SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) conference featuring Jackson Katz on May 1, 2002. During the conference Jackson will discuss how we can work toward ending violence in our community. Several task force members will be involved in workshop presentations and community action planning groups. (See related information on pg. 6)

The Domestic Abuse Task Force was formed in 1994 and has since held a strong presence in our community with the goals of public awareness, communication among agencies and institutions, and enhancing a coordinated community response to domestic abuse through education and training. For more information about the Task Force, call Amy at 945-5102 or Chief Don Winslow, Bangor Police Department at 947-7384.



Spruce Run Offers Education to the Bangor Theological Seminary

By: Elaine Tucker

During the fall semester of 2001, it was my pleasure to take over the co-teaching, with Marvin Ellison, of Bangor Theological Seminary's class on domestic violence. The course, which has developed over the years from being a three-hour presentation to a full semester's project, was created and refined by Spruce Run's Francine Stark and Dr. Ellison. It contains education about domestic violence, information on community resources and practice in creating sermons and workshops for the clergy. It was enlivened by presentations by representatives from law enforcement, medical, and church institutions and communities. The class found the presentation given by Jacki, a survivor of domestic violence, to be particularly relevant and inspiring.

For me, the course was a chance to see yet another perspective on domestic violence. I was used to regarding it as a crime, but at the seminary focused on it also being a sin. It was heartening to me to find the students so enthusiastic and involved in trying to define their roles in helping to keep victims safe while helping perpetrators by holding them accountable.

Over my many years of working with Spruce Run, I have certainly seen the devastating and deadly effects on women of the loss of their faith communities or the insistence of their clergy to stay in abusive relationships. I have also seen the relief and empowerment that the support of her church or temple can give to a woman of faith. I was, therefore, grateful to be a part of preparing new clergy members to rise, with commitment and courage, to their roles in communities with zero tolerance for domestic violence.



Shelter News!

The shelter has been a very busy place over the past year and particularly in the past six months. We sheltered over 220 women and children for over 2600 bed nights. The average length of stay has increased due to the lack of affordable, accessible housing in Penobscot County.

We had productive fall and spring shelter shutdowns. Three bedrooms were painted, the exterior fence was repaired, carpets were cleaned and a new TV and microwave purchased. The entire shelter has had new locks installed, giving a renewed sense of security to us and the women who use our shelter.

Our shelter has given women that we serve thousands of nights of safety from abuse. Unfortunately all that use is hard on the building. In the next few years there will be some significant renovations that will need to take place. We will be working hard to find the resources to undertake these projects. In the meantime the shelter continues to be a clean, safe, friendly place for the people who go there.

The success of our shelter is due in no small part to the dedicated shelter and hotline volunteers and the generous donations of supplies from members of the community. We would specifically like to mention our faithful shelter volunteer **Galen L.** Without his consistent dependable help we could not keep the shelter running as smoothly as it does!

How Can YOU Help?

When we all work together, our community becomes a safer place for families. We would not be able to offer our current level of services without the enormous support of our volunteers, members, and funding sources. There are many ways in which you can help us stop domestic abuse:

For more information about any of these opportunities, call 945-5102

➤ **Volunteer Your Time**

- Be a hotline worker (*no experience necessary: our next training begins in mid-May*).
- Be a children's worker (*no experience necessary: our next training begins in the Fall*).
- Join our Steering Committee.
- Join our Fundraising Committee.
- Other Opportunities: sorting donations, clerical help, and manual work.

➤ **Donate Goods**

See our wish list on page 6.

➤ **Participate in our fundraisers**

- Attend the "Dessert Party" every March.
- Participate in the regional "Walk/Run to End Domestic Abuse" every October.

➤ **Donate \$**

We depend on the generosity of our community for a significant portion of our budget. All donations to Spruce Run are tax deductible.

Your gift may provide:

- A surprise birthday gift for a child in our shelter.
- Educational materials for women using our support group.
- School clothing for children using our transitional housing program.
- Long-term stability for Spruce Run through our Endowment Trust.

➤ **Get Involved**

The Domestic Abuse Task Force (DATF) meets quarterly (see related article on pg. 7). New members are always welcome!

Spruce Run Education Group

If you have ever felt either physically or emotionally hurt by someone you love, this group is for you.

We will talk about:

- * The patterns of abuse
- * Why does abuse happen?
- * Survival skills
- * Healthy relationships

WHEN? Tuesday evenings from 6-8pm
10 weeks beginning April 30

WHERE? Spruce Run's Resource Center in Bangor

To sign up or get more information, call 1-800-863-9909 and ask to speak with Maureen, Sue H. or Lyn

Spruce Run is funded by the Maine Department of Human Services, the Maine State Housing Authority, the United Way of Eastern Maine, and your generous contributions.

Spruce Run Services

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, the following services may be helpful:

24-Hour Hotline

We offer support, feedback and information about options, with the firm belief in one's right to make one's own decisions and act on one's own behalf.

Advocacy

Advocates are available to offer information and support at TANF/ASPRE, local hospitals, Penobscot County District courts, Child Protective Services and some schools.

Support/Education Groups

Women meet weekly to help each other by sharing experiences and offering encouragement and understanding to one another. They may bring their children to a children's group at the same time. Education groups provide insight to how our society and culture influence and respond to domestic abuse.

Children's Services

We give children the opportunity to talk about their feelings in a safe and fun environment in groups and when they are in shelter.

Shelter

We provide emergency shelter for victims of domestic abuse and provide information about other shelter and housing options.

Training and Education

We provide training, consultation, and education sessions about domestic abuse for schools, employers, service providers, and others to foster a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

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