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Spruce Run News (Summer 1986)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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SPRUCE RUN

Services for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Volume XIII, No. 1
Summer, 1986

Hotline 207-947-0496

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

NATIONAL COALITION TO HOLD THIRD CONFERENCE

It has been four years since the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence last called together its nationwide network of people concerned about battered women and their families. Finally, the Third National Conference is on the way. The four-day conference entitled THE BATTERED WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: BUILDING A NON-VIOLENT WORLD, is co-sponsored by NCAADV and the Illinois Coalition and will be held July 15-19, 1986, at Washington U. in St. Louis.

"It's time for the battered women's movement to come together to talk about how we've grown, what changes in thinking, policy, and practices we've made, the losses we've suffered, the new visions we have, the herstory we've created, and the direction to take for the future," says Suzanne Pharr, one of the organizers.

Empowerment of battered women is a primary focus of the movement; preceding the conference is a special one-day INSTITUTE FOR BATTERED WOMEN. Actress Judy Carne, former battered wife of actor Burt Reynolds, will be the keynote speaker at the Institute.

The future figures prominently in this conference. Four sub-themes will be discussed:

- Empowering battered women and their children
- Making social change through education, advocacy, prevention, and organizing
- Building unity and solidarity: diversity as strength
- Strengthening our movement on the local, state, regional, and global levels.

- NCAADV VOICE

1985 CLIENT STATISTICS

Adult clients served	519
(511 women, 8 men)	
physical abuse	237
mental abuse only	175
sexual abuse only	3
Total Shelter Bed Days	2163
Adults sheltered	60
Children sheltered	80
(total children served) ..	99
Relationship of Abuser	
spouse	264
ex-spouse	24
cohabitant	80
ex-cohabitant	15
parent/child	30
friend	27
other	19
Police involvement at intake.	69
Alcohol involved	
victim	45
abuser	199
Other drugs involved.....	
victim	14
abuser	54
Referred by	
self	233
friend/relative	75
Dept. of Human Services..	13
counseling serv./therapist.	32
legal	25
medical	27
law enforcement agency....	25
media	39
other	10
other domestic viol. proj..	22
clergy	5
Families denied shelter	35
Increase in counseling hours.	36%

Spruce Run's staff and several volunteers and formerly battered women plan to attend the conference. We are grateful to our friends who have helped to "sponsor" us to make this trip. Mary C. and Peggy D. will present a workshop on "Changing the Church's Response to Family Violence."

COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROGRAM

(The following article describes what our sister project in Rockland, New Hope for Women, is doing. We are beginning to lay similar groundwork in Hancock and Penobscot counties. It's exciting!)

If family violence is ever to end, we must begin putting the responsibility for the abuse where it belongs--on the abuser. For too long we have blamed the victim for her entrapment rather than seeing that the abuser keeps her there through a constant effort to control and dominate her. Because the acceptance of this domination is so socially ingrained it requires all of us to look within and examine how we feel about this situation and then ask ourselves how determined we are to make it stop.

Research has shown that counseling abusers, by itself, has no significant effect on stopping further incidents of violence. In the Minneapolis Police Experiment it was shown that the number one deterrent to further violence was to arrest abusers.

A Community Response Program is an effort to coordinate consistent treatment of abusers by using every component of the criminal justice system, the domestic violence project, and an abuser group treatment program. A monitoring agent is established and contracts are negotiated so that officers arrest automatically with probable cause of assault; advocates from the domestic violence project assist the victim with information and emotional support through the prosecution; and abusers receive increasingly harsh sentences for

In the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Program, a convicted abuser is given the choice of 30 days in jail or 26 weeks in group treatment, which emphasizes abuse as a means of control and strives to break that pattern with participants. If he chooses treatment, any absences or further incidents of violence are reported to his probation officer and often result in revocation of probation.

The effect of this program in Duluth has been very significant, as Police Chief Eli Miletich testified in the Maine Legislature in 1985, on behalf of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services' efforts to secure funding for Community Response Programs in Maine. Police injuries on domestic violence scenes had decreased substantially, prosecutions had risen, and coordinating efforts among respective agencies were sound and productive. Programs have begun in Portland, Augusta, and Sanford from State funding this year. We hope that the success of these pilot projects begun in Maine will eventually secure funding for a statewide effort.

—New Hope for Women

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY

Spruce Run staff honored all our wonderful volunteers at a party May 2. Approximately thirty volunteers--hotline counselors, steering committee, and others--enjoyed pizzas and entertainment by staff. Particularly memorable was the song composed by Norma M. and performed by the staff. Volunteers were given certificates of appreciation and special "Guilt Club" membership cards.

Spruce Run relies on volunteers for hotline counseling, fundraising, leading children's activities, and many other services. We need and love them!

CHERYL'S STORY

(This story was written by Cheryl Murchison Bean, who is serving a 6-year sentence for manslaughter and who wants to become a Spruce Run volunteer. She is willing to speak to groups about her experience; speaking engagements can be arranged by contacting Spruce Run: 945-5102.)

My name is Cheryl Murchison Bean, and I was a battered woman. I was brought up in a loving family where there was no violence. I did not have any problems in making friends, and I participated in school activities such as cheerleading, chorus, and volleyball. I was a pretty happy kid.

A cousin introduced me to Joe Murchison in March of '76. He was nice to me. At last I had met a guy to fall in love with. In October '76 I asked my mom and dad if we could get married, and we did, on December 10, 1976. I didn't know how much that marriage certificate was going to change him and how drastic my life was going to be.

The first abuse I experienced was being pushed or slapped, but it got worse. The mill where Joe worked went on strike; we were only getting \$35 a week from the credit union, so I got a job at the local nursing home. One night Joe started punching me with his fists because the house was a mess. I was so shocked that all I could do was cry and rub the places where he hit me. Joe calmed down and said he was sorry, that he was under pressure because we had a lot of bills and he didn't know when he'd go back to work. Joe said he loved me and it wouldn't happen again. I believed him.... When I found out I was pregnant, he was happy and so was

I. In my seventh month we were painting the trailer; Joe noticed that I had got a little bit of brown paint on the off-white color; he got mad and shook the ladder so hard that I fell off. He just stood there laughing. Later that day I noticed I was spotting. I told Joe, but he didn't care.... When our first son was born two months premature on September 2, 1979, Joe told me that if the baby died, I would die too.... I had my second son, Jamie, less than a year later. When I went home afterwards, Joe beat me because he didn't want another boy. I told him he determined the sex of the baby, but he just kept hitting me and said he wished Jamie would die. Three months later, I found my baby was blue, had stopped breathing, and was cold. The autopsy report said Jamie died of SIDS. Joe and his mother said I had dropped Jamie on his face and killed him. After I had my third son on September 18, 1981, Joe started punching me because the baby was not a girl.

Joe's mother knew about the beatings. One day she told Joe that if he didn't stop beating me, I was going to leave him. After she left, he went into the bedroom and got his 30-30 and put it in my face and said that if I ever left him he would find me and kill me and whoever else had helped me. I was scared to death of Joe, and I really believed he would do it.

After we moved into another trailer in West Enfield, Joe started going out more; he'd take minors and buy them beer, and he would go out with other girls. He started beating me a lot more. Before he left for work, he'd make up a list of things for me to do: feed and clean the dogs three times a day, weed the garden every day, go to the dump, get the car fixed, clean the house, tend to the kids, mow the lawn with the hand mower, and whatever else he

wanted done, plus have his supper made when he came home. Joe gave me only \$25 a week for groceries, and more than half of that went to dog and cat food. Joe did not give me any money to buy myself or the kids clothes; I got them from the man at the dump, who would save things for me. Joe made good money; he would go out and buy things he wanted for himself, such as a brand-new car

By March of '83, the beatings came on a daily basis: no matter what I did, he beat me. I had no self-confidence; I believed what he and his mother told me: I was a good-for-nothing bitch, I couldn't do anything right, I was an unfit mother, I was the ugliest looking thing that he ever saw, because I had bruises and scars on my face that he had put there.

Joe worked the four-to-twelve shift. He wanted me to have a meal waiting when he got home around one in the morning. When he found me sleeping, he would let himself in the house, grab me by the throat, and start punching me. Then he would go and wake the kids so I could not go back to sleep. Joe started abusing the boys a lot, too.

One morning when Joe went to work, I decided to leave. I didn't know where to go, so I just started to pack things in the truck. I never saw Joe's mother drive by, but she saw me; she called Joe at the mill and he came home. He started chasing me all around, throwing me, punching me in the face, kicking me. He said I would not leave there alive. He ripped up my driver's license and took my keys and drove the truck around so that it would run out of gas. He had kicked and hit me so bad that I was unable to move. I never tried to leave him again.

Joe would make little Joe push Jeremy on the floor, sit on him, and hit him. Little Joe would cry because he didn't want

to hurt his brother, but if he didn't, then his father would hit him. I was not allowed to pick Jeremy up when this was going on; when I did, Joe would take Jeremy from me and start hitting him. Little Joe was almost four years old and he wasn't talking. His father would try to get him to say something, and when the boy couldn't, Joe would slap him in the mouth and say, "Talk, you bastard, and I will stop hitting you." Little Joe would just scream. One day Joe got mad at Jeremy. He made him lie on the floor, and he put his feet around the boy's head so he couldn't move. Then he made me come over and he held me by the hair of the head while he urinated on Jeremy's face. I begged Joe to stop, but he started beating on me because I was taking up for Jeremy.

I was so black and blue all the time, I couldn't even think straight. I wasn't allowed to wear shorts or anything cool; he made me wear long sleeves and turtle-necks and jeans. I was always making up lies about how come I had a black eye or bruises. The only one who knew the truth was Joe's mother. I was not allowed to go anywhere except his mother's house. I was not allowed to phone my mom and dad because it was long distance. Joe would call from work to make sure I was always home. I was so afraid of Joe now that if he even came up behind me, I would jump. It would rip him off when I did that, and he would hit me and throw me around. Joe's threats were bad, and he would stab me with everything from nails to knives, and also hit me with everything from hands to hammers to golf clubs.

In August, 1983. Joe came home and took two pills out of his pocket. He shoved them in my face and said he was going to kill me with them. They were red-and-white capsules with "Tylenol"

printed on them. I didn't know if Joe was telling the truth or not, and I never mentioned the pills again, nor do I remember seeing them until September 19, 1983. That night Joe came home and went in the bathroom to get ready for bowling. Soon he came running into the kitchen, grabbed me by the neck, and started pounding me in the face with his fists. He said his shaving cream was all over the medicine cabinet, and I should go in there and clean it up. After he left, laughing at my ugly face, I went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror; my face was all puffed up, swollen, and black and blue. I started to clean out the medicine cabinet. Joe had asthma, and he had a spin-haler container that he put all his pills in when he went to work. When I opened the spin-haler, there were two Tylenols in it, so I put those two back in the Tylenol bottle and put everything back into the cabinet. I went back into the kitchen and then remembered the two pills Joe had brought home that day. I went back and dumped all the Tylenols out on the counter. They all looked the same to me. I thought about dumping the whole bottle down the toilet, but Joe had just bought that bottle and I didn't have any money to buy more. I knew that if Joe came home and saw that those two pills were not in the spin-haler, he would make me take the whole bottle of Tylenol. I was scared to death and didn't know what to do. Finally I put two Tylenols back in the spin-haler container and put the rest back in the Tylenol bottle.

Joe came home around 9:30. I had a tuna casserole ready but he also went to McDonald's and got some stuff. Little Joe had been fussy and cranky all evening. I got Joe's supper on a plate and took it to him on the couch; he never ate at the table. Then I

took little Joe with me into the bathroom and got all Joe's asthma medicine and put it in the bedroom like he always had me do. Joe gave little Joe a hamburger and French fries but it didn't agree with him; he was throwing up. After eating and checking the bathroom to see if I had cleaned it up, Joe went to bed. Joe then yelled at me to get him some Tylenols but I couldn't because little Joe was throwing up. Joe got up, went into the bathroom, and got some Tylenols, then went back to bed. Fifteen minutes later, Joe asked me when I was coming to bed. I said in just a few minutes, as little Joe was just going to sleep. Five minutes later I got into bed myself. I had just got comfortable when Joe told me to get up and call the ambulance because he couldn't move. He started having a convulsion. The ambulance came, they put him on a stretcher and took him to the hospital in Lincoln. He went on having convulsions while I waited in his room. They decided to move him to Eastern Maine Medical Center. I drove there in the car. When the ambulance arrived at EMMC, they told me Joe hadn't had one convulsion all the way down. I thought that was a good sign. Then the doctor asked to see me; I went in with my mom and dad, and the doctor said Joe had passed away. I just sat there and looked at him; I didn't know what to say. Then I started crying. He asked if I wanted an autopsy done, and I said yes.

The next day two detectives came to my house and told me they were investigating Joe's murder. I said What? and they said Joe had died of strychnine poisoning. I had never heard of the stuff, and I asked my dad what that was. The detectives searched the house but didn't find anything. After Joe's funeral, the detectives asked me to take a polygraph test. I said

yes, as I didn't have anything to hide.

On November 2, 1983, I went to the State Police Barracks at Orono, and met the two detectives who drove me to Augusta for the polygraph. They asked me if I tampered with the pills and I said no. I had them stop, and he told me the machine said I was lying. We sat and talked, and then he told me to tell him what happened. I said if I tell you, will you let me go home? He didn't answer, so I told him about the night Joe died. He left, and then came back with the two detectives. They had a warrant for my arrest.... My parents and my sons met us back at the Orono barracks. I went in and told them I was under arrest for Joe's death. I asked my mom if she would take care of Joe and Jeremy for me, and my mom and dad told me they loved me and would stand behind me. Then I was taken to the Penobscot County Jail.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Spruce Run has just graduated nine new children's workers, two of whom are friends from Womancare in Dover. Hurray! Most of these wonderful women have fulltime-plus lives, but will be a child's "buddy" or assist with an activity.

Children's workers' training was an exciting, poignant, fun, challenging, warm, and hard-working time. The sharing and touching of each other's lives brought the group together in a very special way--truly an experience no Spruce Runner should be without! Applications are now being accepted for Fall training. Sign up early to guarantee your space!

Prevention is a key factor in breaking the cycle of violence. Children's Services and Community Education are working with the Child Abuse and Neglect Council to

design and implement a curriculum for schools on dating violence. This year we spoke to classes at several local schools. Next year we hope to extend this service to all the high schools in Penobscot and Hancock counties.

We will be offering training for school speakers; please call for more information.

The Children's Wish List includes: small table and chairs, books (non-sexist and empowering), Fisher-Price play house, clay, and more warm, caring people to spend time with our kids.

- Norma Mallory

ANN SCHONBERGER NAMED VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR FOR '86

Dr. Ann Schonberger has been chosen Volunteer of the Year by the Spruce Run staff. As a Steering Committee member for eight years, Ann has devoted many hours each week to Spruce Run, and has served three separate terms as President of the organization. In 1983, she co-chaired the successful Capital Funds Campaign. She has spearheaded many fundraisers and has just hosted the gigantic June yard sale for the sixth time. Ann has also attended state and United Way budget hearings, developed new funding sources, particularly for outreach in Hancock County. She has supervised staff members, given speeches to church groups, helped with grant writing, and recruited numerous volunteers and new members.

When Ann Schonberger volunteered for the Steering Committee in 1978, Spruce Run had a few CETA workers and a dozen volunteers; now seven staff members paid by the State and United Way supervise 40 volunteers in two counties. Our growth has resulted from the dedication of Ann and other women who, like her, are committed to ending violence against women.

THANK YOU, ANNI!

ONE WOMAN'S STORY

(In Fall, 1986, Mary Cathcart of Spruce Run taught a short course in "Family Violence" at the Bangor Theological Seminary. The following passages were taken from a journal by a woman student there.)

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of family violence for me is that except in certain knowledgeable places--shelters and women social workers--it has been taken for granted and the victim has been blamed. There has been little reinforcement by friends, families, society, ministers, police in recognizing that battering is very damaging, physically and emotionally, and that it is not acceptable behavior. Trying to swallow the "shoulds" in this case can make one even sicker and less capable of ever getting out of a battering situation.

The danger to me of hanging on to religious faith in these circumstances, doing one's "duty," is frightening. I wonder if some women don't believe that they are evil and deserve this kind of punishment, that it is God's will for them, instead of seeing that God can empower them through this experience with the help of others. When a woman stays, she is shackled with guilt, duty, and responsibility and does not realize she has basic rights as a human being.

I personally am so afraid of being hit, hurt, and emotionally abused that a relationship with a man is frightening to me. My father used corporal punishment, and to this day, when I think back on something I'm not comfortable with having done, I can feel my bottom get hot from a spanking. I was beaten once physically by a man, when I was in the middle of Wyoming 2000 miles from home. I chose to tough this out and not say anything about how much I hurt.... This man displayed similar characteristics to other bat-

terers. When another man helped me carry the food home, I was accused of making eyes at him. The absurdity of the situation surprised me. I continued to accept this hotcold relationship until one night I was raped and was terrified and realized I had to leave. As soon as he went to work, I packed up everything and was afraid that he would follow me out to the airport and hit and try to stop me....

To this day I still hold all the blame and shame for what happened and berate myself for being so stupid. I guess I'm not ready to go through the pain of unlocking those feelings. I grew up thinking my job was to obey, and quickly, and that women were secondclass citizens: my dad could go out and have affairs and abuse my mother verbally and withhold money from the family while he gambled on the stock market. I felt absolutely powerless and believe my mother also felt powerless. This does anger me: that I was taught to expect that secondclass treatment was not only all I would get but all I deserved.

YARD SALE SUCCESSFUL

The annual June yard sale was a tremendous success, thanks to coordinators Linda Z. and Carol L. Many thanks to them, to Ann S. for hosting, and to the husbands who helped out by loaning trucks, as well as to the many volunteers and friends who worked long hours.

SHELTER WISH LIST

Well, here it is again--the list of requests, needs, and wishes. It would be great if we could pick up your donations, but we can't, so please keep that in mind. Also, please make sure items are in working order. We haven't the time nor the skills to do repairs.

Items marked ** are highest priority. Those marked * are also always needed.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS:

disposable diapers*
car seats
strollers
water toys (rubber duckies)
rubber sheets
crib sheets
crib bumpers
felt-tip markers
watercolors & brushes
clay craft
craft paper*
sketch pads*
colored pencils*

LINENS:

sheets, double & single
blankets, double & single
pillows & pillowcases
towels
washcloths
dishcloths
kitchen towels

KITCHEN ITEMS:

canned goods and other non
perishables
pots & pans
bowls, cereal & mixing sizes
storage containers
flatware
kitchen tools: knives, can open-
ers, wooden spoons*
tin foil, sandwich bags, etc.

READING MATERIAL:

magazine subscriptions
books
cookbooks**

WRITING MATERIALS:

stamps**
stationery**
pens**
envelopes**
journals**
notebooks**

TOILETRIES:

hairbrushes*
combs*
deodorant*
tampons & sanitary napkins*
shampoo & conditioner*
skin lotion*
soap*
toothbrushes, toothpaste,
& dental floss*

MEDICAL SUPPLIES:

ace bandages
ice bags
hot-water bottles
heating pads
tweezers
nail clippers
over-the-counter medications such
as mercurochrome, bandaids, hydro-
gen peroxide, etc.

CLEANING SUPPLIES:

brooms
dustpans
mops
buckets
wastebaskets
trash bags
paper towels
toilet paper
rug cleaner
dish soap
laundry detergent
upholstery cleaner
floor cleaner
bathroom cleaner
tissues

MISCELLANEOUS:

alarm clocks
flashlights
light bulbs
batteries
lamps

We are pleased to have a student intern, Susan Mazza, from Pennsylvania State. She is working halftime in Ellsworth and halftime in Bangor, counseling, assisting staff, doing bulk mailings and other helpful tasks.

Our outreach is bringing us more clients: our statistics increased by 35% in the past year there! Our Ellsworth office opened in March, providing services one day a week. We hope to open more days when our funding becomes stable and we have a fulltime staff person. Katharine S. continues to work halftime there. Our Hancock County Project Committee consists of people from all over the county. A major activity has been developing relationships with law enforcement and court systems.

We received a grant from the Maine Community Foundation to help us set up and maintain the office, and the Hancock County Commissioners provided money for phones. Our fundraisers have brought in another \$4,000. It is rewarding to see our support grow.

Consistent, stable funding sources appear to be out of our reach for at least one if not two more years, so we are organizing an individual donor drive this summer. We intend to approach people in the county for sizeable donations based on our program plan for the coming year. If you can assist us in fundraising, please phone Katharine (667-9489).

THANKS

Special appreciation goes to Color Concepts Inc. of Brewer for donations and support.

Wifebatterers can be found in every age group and socioeconomic level: "You wouldn't be able to pick one out on the street," says David Adams of EMERGE, a batterers' program in Boston. But counselors say that abusive men generally share certain personality traits that contribute to their violent behavior, including:

- Low selfesteem resulting from physical or sexual abuse, disapproval or neglect by an alcoholic or authoritarian parent.

- Extreme insecurity and inability to trust others. Batterers have difficulty establishing close friendships and tend to be particularly critical or jealous of their spouses.

- A "need to control" relationships which stems from a rigidly traditional view of sex roles and parenting.

- A "JekyllandHyde" type of personality. Very few batterers have previous criminal records or display generally violent behavior. In fact, they can be extremely passive in the face of conflict and bottle up their emotions until they explode in anger.

- Related drug or alcohol problems, sometimes used as an excuse for "losing control" when "provoked" by the spouse.

- A tendency to see themselves as locked in a struggle for survival in a "dog-eat-dog" world.

- An inability to nurture others or express need, a fear of intimacy and being "vulnerable."

- Strong feelings of guilt and failure: "No matter what I do, it's not enough."

- Denial of responsibility for their behavior.

- USA TODAY



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