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Spruce Run News (Winter 2004)

Spruce Run Staff

Spruce Run

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Spruce Run News

"Celebrating 30 years of Working for Peace at Home" Winter 2004

207-945-5102 * FAX 207-990-4252 * www.sprucerun.net

Hotline 1-800-863-9909

I remember. . .

I was 15, he was 16.

I guess you could say it was love at first sight or at least infatuation on my part. I had all the symptoms, the rapid heartbeat, fluttering in my stomach when he was around. He made me feel special. We had everything in common.

In the years we were a couple, we fought, first verbally, then physically. Everyone would tell me that we fought because we loved each other that much, enough to care to take the time to argue. I remember feeling loved, but I also remember feeling afraid, hurt and humiliated. In the seven years we spent together, there were many good times, but also many more times filled with jealousy, rage anger, shame and regret.

I remember the first time he publicly hurt me. I wouldn't give his keys back to him because he was drinking. He kept throwing me down on the ground. There were lots of grown men standing around ignoring us. About the 10th time, I just lay there. I was too tired to fight anymore. It was then that one of the men came over to see if I was alright. I remember being shocked that he was not ashamed to hurt me in front of people and feeling ashamed myself for acting in a way that would cause him to get so angry. I

remember at 15 feeling more worried that people would think badly of him than being concerned that something was wrong with how he treated me; that I didn't deserve to be hurt like this.

I also remember how good it felt to have him apologize and promise never to do it again. I felt I had power over him because he was begging me to stay with him. And he was so good at being good to me when he was good to me.

But, it did happen again and again.

Even though the physical fights we got into (I did my fair share of starting them), did not

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**Coming soon....
to the Spruce Run Resource Center...**

*Work from your
home!*

*No experience
required!*

*Make absolutely
no money!*

**Hotline
Volunteer
Training**

*Make a difference in
your community!*

*FREE
Popcorn*



**YOU can be a Spruce Run hotline
volunteer!**

Call soon...Space is unlimited!

*Begins mid to late
January
(exact dates TBA)*

*Limited
Engagement!*

*Call
945-5102 NOW
and ask for
Maureen or
Tammy*

The critics rave. . .

"Hotline training gave me the skills to better communicate with family and friends as well as the people who call the hotline." -Johnnie W.

"It was much better than *Cats*. I went back again and again and again." -Sherry L.

"I made lifelong friends who share my deep compassion for all people." - Bri G.

"Sometimes there is good food!" - Janice A.

"I laughed, I cried, it reminded me of *Fried Green Tomatoes*." - Rebecca H.

"It totally changed my life. It's the best thing I ever did!" - Sue B.

occur all the time, they were scary. I always worked hard to justify them to the point that they seemed okay and normal.

The other part of my life that was normal at that time was not being trusted by him. I had never cheated, but he accused me constantly of sleeping with other guys. He did not want me to wear certain clothes. Any disagreement could easily turn into, "You're cheating on me; you're f***ing someone else."

I remember the last time, too. I remember shaking in the dark, watching him pound on my car, screaming for me to come outside. I remember asking myself, "What the hell are you doing here; how the hell did you get here?" I also remember telling myself I would never be afraid again.

I have spent a lot of years since I left him trying to forget, but I am now realizing that it is only in the remembering that I can completely heal. I still go through moments where I blame myself and even fleeting moments where I think I could have done a better job, worked harder at our relationship. I still could save him...maybe?

I need to have those irrational moments so I can remember just how much I was and still am affected by domestic violence. I think of it as a silent destroyer, a destroyer of the self.

I now watch other teens in similar relationships and I get such a feeling of desperation. I want to make them see that it doesn't have to be this way. "He has

only hurt me that one time," the girl says. I wish she would believe me when I say, from my heart and my experience, that it usually happens again.

I wish I could let her know that just because it isn't bad all the time, it's still bad for you. The most difficult thing for me is knowing and accepting that for myself. It was easy for me to justify leaving when I thought of the bad, just as it was easy to justify staying when I thought of the good. I have learned that I need to never forget the bad or the good. I need to be able to help others, especially teen girls.

And to do that, I remember.



Blaine House Tea Honorees 2003

The Blaine House Tea is held every year in October to honor individuals from around the State of Maine who have contributed to the effort to end domestic abuse. This year the event was hosted by Governor Baldacci, First Lady Karen Baldacci and the first dog, Murphy. Spruce Run was delighted to have the opportunity to honor Noel Tewes and Dawn Simpson. Following are the remarks delivered at the tea by Sue Hamlett, Spruce Run's Community Education Coordinator:

"Spruce Run celebrates its 30th anniversary this year and our first honoree has been helping us out for almost as many years. When Spruce Run acquired our shelter building in 1981 it needed a lot of work.

Noel Tewes didn't just do an excellent job of the years of renovations. He designed and remodeled the kitchen into an attractive and functional space. Children's playrooms have hand-carved, fantastical creatures all over the built in shelves. The play-yard features a fabulous castle. In fact, we probably have the only shelter in Maine that could be featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Noel's care and attention to detail, including aesthetic detail, reflects the value he places on the people who will use the shelter, who deserve both comfort and beauty.

But Noel's contributions don't end there. When Spruce Run acquired our Resource Center building in 1994, Noel started the renovation process all over again. Some of my coalition sisters in this room are familiar with the special and eccentric touches in that building—all Noel's doing.

We have a very lovely, large meeting room in our building which is used almost constantly for meetings, walk ins, hotline training, kid group. It's a very formal room with a chandelier and an intricately carved fireplace and mantle, which, when we bought the property was covered in lead paint which would take many, many hours to remove. We had decided that we'd have to take it off the wall and store it in basement but Noel and his family donated the many hours it took to do that job and give us the beautiful room we use every day.

Basically Noel will do just about anything we ask of him, within reason and sometimes even beyond reason. Just a couple of weeks ago Noel was engaged in sprucing up our Resource Center, including painting our front door. It was a damp day and as I left I found the newly painted door open and Noel sitting on the porch. When I asked him what he was doing, he said, 'I'm watching paint dry.'

"Dawn Simpson is a woman of exceptional elegance. The Oxford English Dictionary gives two definitions for this word: the first is "graceful and stylish" which is certainly fits Dawn perfectly. The second is "pleasingly ingenious and simple," and this fits too.

In her role as Director of the Social Work department at Eastern Maine Medical Center, Dawn has for many years provided an elegant model for how to engage effectively and creatively in a coordinated community response to domestic violence. Dawn has opened doors for Spruce Run and guided us every step of the way in gaining allies, credibility and visibility within an enormous institution. Dawn was instrumental in helping us place an advocate on site at the hospital and speaking as a person who worked in that position, Dawn simply incorporated her understanding of domestic abuse into all the aspects of her work and involved us whenever and however that was possible.

When we express a desire to accomplish a certain goal a typical Dawn response would be "let me figure out how to do that," and she'll get back to you in some ridiculously short time with a plan of how to negotiate the institutional culture in order to realize that goal in the simplest possible way.

In addition to her organizational expertise and commitment to integrating the issue of domestic abuse into hospital culture, Dawn has also been instrumental in assisting individual victims of abuse in the hospital setting. I know from first hand experience that Dawn will work tirelessly to plan for the safety and well being of a victim who is asking for help. I feel confident in saying that Dawn's willingness to dedicate her own time and energy as well as her ability to gather together an appropriate team of people to address any particular situation has prevented further abuse and may have saved lives."

Safe Campus Project

Spruce Run has a long history of collaboration with the University of Maine. In fact, our history tells us that without some of the radical organizers of the early 1970's who were also UMaine students, there might never have been a Spruce Run in the first place. Over the years our relationship has proved mutually beneficial: UMaine has been a source of everything from talented Steering Committee members, work-study students, and interns, to financial support and hosting of community vigils and speak outs. In turn, Spruce Run spends significant time each year speaking in classes, organizing around domestic violence awareness month, supporting student activists, providing training and consultation to campus police and other offices, and providing direct services to staff and students.

Our work on campus received a huge boost in 2001 when UMaine received a grant from the Department of Justice to create the Safe Campus Project. This Project, directed by Dr. Renate Klein, created a cohesive effort on campus to address relationship violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The existence of the Safe Campus Project not only enhanced our ability to serve the UMaine community, it also brought a wonderful opportunity for significant collaboration with Rape Response Services, our longtime ally in the work to end violence in our community.

As part of the Safe Campus Project, SR advocate Tina Roberts spends a portion of each week on campus and works closely with Project Coordinator Carey Nason to create a coordinated community response to relationship violence on campus. Tina provides direct service to staff and students, consults with University departments, and offers training and education programs. She also participates on the Safe Campus Project Task Force made up of individuals from across campus and the greater community, and developed a "Helpful Response" training for staff wanting to develop their knowledge and skills to be better responders to incidents of violence. In the past year we have trained Residence Life staff, the medical professionals at Cutler Health, staff of the Women's Resource Center, and many others.

If you would like more information about Spruce Run's involvement in the Safe Campus Project, please contact Tina at Spruce Run.

Spruce Run Endowment Campaign

Our sincere thanks go out to the wonderful volunteers who are working on this campaign to help ensure sustainability of Spruce Run's services in an uncertain funding climate. As of December 23, they had raised \$246,581.93, inching ever closer to the mid-way point of our campaign goal of \$500,000. We hope and anticipate that by the time this newsletter finds its way to mailboxes, the \$250,000 point will be surpassed.

In addition to the financial success of this campaign so far, it is gratifying to see so many people warmly responding to our requests for support. Many thanks go out to donors who have already pledged.

If you are interested in donating to the Endowment Campaign or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Karen at 945-5102.

*Happy
Birthday
to
Rape
Response
Services
celebrating
15 years!*

Meet a Spruce Run Volunteer: Sue W.

Sue Wengrzynek is a non-traditional student in the Social Work program at the University of Maine.

What inspired you to volunteer for Spruce Run?

I attended a workshop given by Kathy Walker of Rape Response Services for students in the social work department at the University of Maine. I was struck by her comment that the way to really get to know the resources available in the community was to work on a hotline. I was interested in the issue of domestic violence so I chose to train for Spruce Run's hotline.

What was your experience of Spruce Run's volunteer training for hotline workers?

Training was extremely detailed and intensive. I found it very positive, very worthwhile and a great learning experience.

Have your experiences as a Spruce Run worker changed you in any way?

Yes, definitely. I have discovered so much empathy and compassion for the people who use Spruce Run's services, as well as an understanding of how small the line is that separates me from the women I interact with on the hotline and in shelter. The differences between us are so much less important than the similarities.

As someone who is training for a helping profession, I am so glad to have gained valuable perspective about how helping can be about restoring power and not taking it away.

You've been a Spruce Run volunteer for two years. What keeps you coming back?

Every day I spend at Spruce Run, I walk out having learned something new. I enjoy being in the company of intelligent women. And, it's a lot of fun!

Spruce Run's Annual Gala Dessert Party will be held at the University College of Bangor Ballroom on Saturday, March 27th. **The Athena Consort** will provide entertainment and we welcome back the **Spontaneous Jazz Ensemble**, returning by popular demand. Advance tickets are available by calling Dorathy at 945-5102.

In addition to food, friends, and fabulous conversation, this year we'd like to offer our **First Annual Summer-Really-Is-Coming Silent Auction**. We hope that members of our community will share activities and things that help them make it through mud season. **We are seeking donations of auction items** including, but not limited to:

- ❖ a week or weekend at a summer camp;
- ❖ plants from your garden;
- ❖ a guided kayak trip;
- ❖ flowers and a lesson in flower arrangement;
- ❖ an origami, knitting, pottery, or other craft lesson or a product of your favorite hobby;
- ❖ sessions with massage therapists;
- ❖ cooking lessons;
- ❖ sessions with personal trainers;
- ❖ any summer activities or things to look forward to.

We are also looking for people who'd like to help coordinate the auction. If you'd like to donate an auction item or volunteer to help, please call Sue H. at 945-5102.

Spruce Run assisted 32 families who had used our services in 2003 with gifts for the holidays.

Thank you to the more than 30 donors (individuals and groups) who sponsored families.



Spruce Run Staff

Janice Archer, Shelter Services Coordinator

Sue Bradford, Program Planning & Integration
Coordinator

Lyn Carter, Legal Response Coordinator

Dorathy Chocensky, Resource Development
Coordinator

Amanda Cost, School-Based Advocacy Coordinator

Sheila Daigle, Office Coordinator

Maureen Flagg, Women's Advocacy and TANF
Coordinator

Tammy Gordon, Volunteer and Children's Services
Coordinator

Sue Hamlett, Community Education Coordinator

Rebecca Hobbs, Administrative Coordinator

Sherry Lane, Transitional Services Coordinator

Tina Roberts, Special Projects Coordinator

Francine Stark, Community Response Coordinator

Johnnie Walker, Transitional Housing Coordinator

Erica Watson, Hotline Coordinator

New Addition to Staff

We welcome **Tammy Gordon** to the position of Volunteer and Children's Services Coordinator. Tammy is new to the Bangor area. She is looking forward to meeting all Spruce Run's volunteers. If you'd like to hear more about volunteer opportunities, give her a call!

Michele Alexander

1966 - 2003

Michele Alexander was a much loved and valued member of Spruce Run's Steering Committee for almost four years. She died in a car accident on Tuesday, December 16, 2003.

Michele will always be remembered at Spruce Run for her dedication to the Steering Committee and to Spruce Run's mission, her contagious curiosity and appetite for life, her ready laugh, her optimism, her enjoyment of the present moment and anticipation of future joy.

Spruce Run's Steering Committee, staff and volunteers will miss her deeply. Our thoughts are with her husband, her 11 month old son Camden, and her family.



Contributions can be made in Michele's memory to either of two funds. For the Michele Alexander Scholar Award Fund, send contributions to: the University of Maine, Office of University Development, 168 College Ave., Orono, ME 04473-9966. Checks should be made out to the University of Maine and indicate that it go to the Michele Alexander Scholar award. For the Camden Alexander Scholarship Fund, send contributions to: the Bangor Savings Bank, 110 Park Street, Orono, ME 04473, in memory of Michele Alexander.

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 into 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

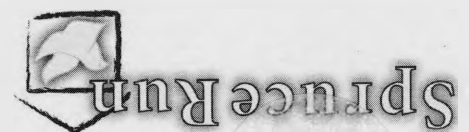
We provide training, consultation, and education sessions about domestic abuse for schools, employers, service providers, and others to foster a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

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

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