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## New Hope for Women Newsletter (Spring 2009)

New Hope for Women Staff

*New Hope for Women*

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# Spring 2009 Newsletter



## **NEW HOPE** *for* **WOMEN**

New Hope for Women offers support to people in Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo counties affected by domestic and dating violence and provides resources to assist our communities in creating a safer and healthier future.

# Homeland Security

One of the most profoundly disturbing events of the December holiday season involved the man in Covina, California who dressed up as Santa and arrived at the door carrying a gift-wrapped package so he could gain entry to a house and kill his ex-wife and several other members of her family. Although the first report of the carnage that I read didn't provide any information about the relationship between the killer and his victims, I thought, as I often do when reading similar stories, that this was another case of domestic violence.

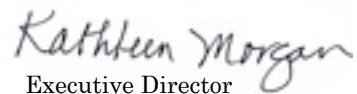
Those of us working with victims have long considered batterers domestic terrorists, and the killer in California reinforced that view. He began planning for the attack months in advance. He had solved the problem of how he would gain entry into a house where he was not welcome. He had purchased and put together the weaponry necessary for his task. He obviously intended to do as much damage to as many people as possible, without regard to gender or age. He would have wiped the family out if he could have done so. He did not intend to be a suicide bomber, for he had an escape plan and killed himself, according to reports, only after he was burned by the fire bomb he created to kill his ex-wife and in-laws. The scale of his cruelty and bloodshed, though staggering, is small in comparison to other terrorist attacks. However, if one were to consider the attacks of all the domestic terrorists, the amount of destruction would be difficult to believe. According to FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports, an average of

2,218 people per year were killed by their intimate partners between 1976-2004.

The connection was a bit more explicit and closer to our homes in recent reports from Belfast that a man killed by his wife had in his home the ingredients necessary for making dirty bombs. One of the articles included the information that he had been physically abusive to his wife for years, and another stated that he had been involved in several domestic assault incidents, as victim and as suspect.

We think differently about batterers or abusers when we think of them as domestic terrorists. It is easy to write off one batterer; collectively they are far more frightening.

The power of a community at work together will bring about an end to this homegrown brand of terrorism. Come join with us. There is plenty of work to share, and plenty of change to make. The work is difficult, and sometimes frustrating, but I can promise you that it is also profoundly rewarding.

  
Kathleen Morgan

Executive Director

# Fun & Funds

New Hope for Women will be the beneficiary of five upcoming fund-raisers.



**Mark your  
calendar**

## Friday & Saturday, May 8th & 9th

Rockland writer Kendall Merriam has created three short monologues highlighting the life-perspectives of three very different women. Actress Ruth Monsell will be presenting these pieces on May 8th and 9th, 7:30 PM, at the Waldoboro Theater Annex. Musicians Carol Preston, violin, and Judy Falconer, flute, will be performing in the intervals between monologues. Tickets are \$7.00 and are available by calling Kendall at 594-0942. Refreshments will be served. Since seating is quite limited, reservations are strongly suggested.

## Saturday, June 6th

Midcoast Community Chorus Concert, Strom Auditorium at Camden Hills Regional High School, 7:00 PM. We are delighted that this talented, energetic musical group selected New Hope for Women to receive funds raised by this major event. Get tickets early! The MCC's winter concert sold out well before the performance. We will be selling cookies and water at intermission. For more information, check [mccsings.com](http://mccsings.com), the group's website. Ticket prices are: \$25.00 for premium reserved, \$22.50 for reserved, \$15.00 for general admission.

## Wednesday, June 17th

"Cruise for Hope," an evening on the Harbor Princess, Boothbay Harbor, 6:00 – 9:00 PM. This event features music by the band Cahoots, light buffet, and cash bar. The Boothbay Harbor Domestic Abuse Prevention Council is co-sponsoring the cruise. Tickets are \$25.00 with all profits benefiting New Hope.

## Thursday, June 25th

Art Auction and Show, Carver Hill Gallery in Rockport, 6:30 – 9:00 PM. Many area artists are contributing works or offering a percentage of sales to benefit New Hope. The evening will feature live music, hors d'oeuvres, wine, and superb art. Buyers wanted! Tickets for the event are \$35.00. Contact Jana Halwick at the gallery (236-0745) or Glen E. Rainsley at New Hope (594-2128) to reserve tickets.

## Saturday, September 5th

Designing Women Craft Show, First Congregational Church in Camden, 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM. This show features the work of talented crafters. Entrance donations go to New Hope. We will also be serving a luncheon.

These fundraisers all present volunteer opportunities, especially if you enjoy baking, cooking, serving, and selling. If you can help with any of the events, please contact Glen by email ([grainsley@newhopeforwomen.org](mailto:grainsley@newhopeforwomen.org)) or by phone (594-2128). Thanks!

Watch for announcements in the newspapers and on our website about other possible fundraisers, including the 2nd annual Stiletto Run and the 2nd annual Volleys Against Violence tennis tournament.

# Helping Create a Community Response to Domestic and Dating Violence

One of the most pervasive myths about domestic violence is that it is a private family matter that only affects those directly involved. We have all heard the expressions that support this: “A man’s home is his castle,” “Don’t meddle in your neighbors’ business,” “What happens in the family stays in the family,” and, “Don’t air your dirty laundry in public.” We treasure our privacy, and have a healthy respect for the privacy of others. The mandate to respect privacy and the desire to help can create a real tension when one is faced with making a decision about whether to intervene or not.

Domestic and dating violence are not just family problems. They are crimes that cause serious harm to the victim and the children, and have significant repercussions for the entire community. The Maine Attorney General’s Office estimates that the financial cost of domestic violence in Maine each year is in excess of 1.5 billion dollars and includes costs of special education, mental health services, child protection services, law enforcement services, judicial and corrections costs and the costs to employers for lost productivity. A 2005 Maine Department of Labor study found that 87% of victims were harassed by their abusers at work. A MDOL survey of abusers from 2004 found that 78% of abusers used workplace resources to harass their victims. 21% of those abusers violated an existing court order by contacting their victim at work. Multiple studies confirm that the most significant risk factor for choosing physical violence as way to get what one wants is for a young boy to have witnessed his father abusing his mother. We must be aware of the impact of violence on our community, and be willing to step over the boundary of privacy to offer assistance. Being able to recognize violence, name it, express concern about its consequences, and provide resources can be helpful to everyone involved. Consider introducing the subject at a time when you can speak to the potential victim alone. Speaking about abuse in a general way, or saying that you are concerned about a friend or family member’s safety, and offering the New Hope for Women hotline number can be enough to help lift the barriers of silence and denial. Most batterers blame their victims for their abusive behaviors, and most victims internalize the blame, believing that they somehow deserve the abuse. Speaking up helps end the isolation.

When victims reach out for help, it is important to believe and support them, however unexpected the disclosure may be. It is helpful to support the victim’s decisions, even if you may not understand them. Suggest options for your friend or family member, and keep in mind that she is in the best position to know what may work for her. Emphasize the strengths and skills the victim can draw on, and trust her to use those skills. Remember that the New Hope for Women hotline is available for victims as well as for concerned community members. Above all, remember that batterers are dangerous, so safety for everyone, including you, is of primary importance.

Batterers function best behind closed doors, when the community looks the other way. When community members are involved in educating themselves and assisting victims, we make the first step toward ending domestic and dating violence. The more people get involved, the easier it will be, and the better results will be for victims. If you would like to have a presentation or a training for a group within your community (law enforcement, legal, medical, religious, social), or develop policies for your workplace, or would like to join in some other way in helping New Hope for Women end domestic and dating violence, call us.

## Community Educator appointed to Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel

In 1997 the Maine Legislature charged the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse with the task of establishing a Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel. The Panel compiles data related to domestic and sexual abuse, reviews all cases of domestic abuse homicide, and recommends possible systematic changes that could prevent future deaths. Panel members also work with experts from a variety of disciplines in the state to identify domestic abuse trends in Maine. The identified trends have a significant role in the planning of the prevention and intervention work done by the statewide coalition of domestic violence projects.

Eleanor Hutchinson, Community Educator for New Hope for Women, was appointed to this Panel in January, for a term of two years.

# Red Flags of Abuse

## How can I tell if someone I know is being abused?

All intimate relationships have problems. Sometimes it is difficult for family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors to decide when it is appropriate to intervene. The following questions may help you determine if someone you know is in an abusive relationship:

- Is the individual required to check in constantly or ask permission before participating in activities?
- Does the individual lack access to the family's financial resources?
- Has the individual stopped spending time with friends and family and withdrawn from activities?
- Have you noticed behavior changes in the children?
- Does the individual appear frightened, exhausted, or on edge?
- Have you noticed bruises, scratches, or other injuries?

## What can I do to help?

While you may not feel as close to your friend as you once did, this is probably a result of isolation orchestrated by the abuser. There are many ways for you to support a friend or family members in an abusive relationship.

- Become informed about domestic and dating violence. Call New Hope for Women's hotline to talk about your concerns.
- Talk to your friend about abuse in a general way. Make a clear statement that no one deserves to be abused.
- Let the individual know that you care and are willing to listen. Don't blame your friend for the abuse, or underestimate the potential danger.
- Victims of domestic and dating violence live with emotional as well as physical abuse. Emphasize your friend's strengths and skills.
- Remind your friend that even a push or shove can result in serious injury. Say, "I'm worried about your safety."
- Encourage your friend to contact New Hope for Women.
- Domestic violence is a crime. If you know that a violent incident is occurring, call the police.

# AllStarz!

Teaching children

New Hope for Women will be hosting the award-winning Deana's Educational Theater this fall. This Massachusetts-based theater group promotes healthy relationships, performing before audiences of all ages throughout the United States and abroad.

New Hope is committed to supporting local elementary schools in creating a culture of healthy interactions and no tolerance of bullying. As part of this effort, Deana's Educational Theater will be performing *AllStarz* to students in kindergarten through second grade in five Knox County schools.

This production teaches children about the harmful effects of bullying, as well as safe and helpful ways to respond if they witness an act of bullying. The actors demonstrate what bullying behavior looks like, and how to substitute hurtful behavior with behavior that is inclusive and promotes friendships. Each of the performances concludes with a discussion, which allows the children to process what they have seen and suggest ways to prevent and address bullying in their own schools.

The bullying tactics of children are not unlike the behaviors abusers use to gain power and control over their partners as adults. Children who learn at an early age how to conduct themselves without resorting to tactics of control will have a better chance of developing healthy and supportive relationships as they mature.

Our thanks to the Knox County Fund of the Maine Community Foundation and the Rockland Rotary for their financial support of this project.

## Cell phones can save a life

As of January, 2008, Maine residents are required by law to recycle old cell phones. Donating your used cell phone to New Hope for Women can make a tremendous difference in the life of someone who is isolated by an abuser.

The used cell phones New Hope receives are exchanged for TracFones and TracFone minutes. A traditional cell phone bill can provide an abuser with information about a victim's support system, i.e., friends, family members, and New Hope for Women. A TracFone, which allows clients to make and receive calls without producing a record, can be a safety line for many clients. Some abusers don't allow victims access to a telephone at all, resorting to the tactic of taking the phone with them when they leave. Cell phones then become a lifeline.

Please consider having a phone drive at your work, in your neighborhood, or at one of the organizations to which you belong. We will be happy to assist by providing donation boxes.

## Holiday Spirit



**Front Row (from left):** Erika Stone, Dottie Morley, Sandi Caron **Back Row (from left):** Betsy Macdonald, Jane Enman, Cathy McKeown, Mary Sargent

Pictured above are some of Santa's Helpers from the Pen Bay Human Resources Department who sponsored a NHFW transitional housing family for the holidays this year.

Other groups that assisted in making the holidays possible for New Hope clients include Belfast Area High School teachers, Full Circle Family Medicine, and the vocational rehabilitation division of Women, Work and Community in Augusta. Our thanks to you all for your generosity and holiday spirit!

## Special Thanks

A special thanks to CedarWorks for their generous donation of the lookout play structure (below) to one of our Transitional Housing units. This gift will be a great benefit to young transitional housing residents for years to come.



Our thanks to Chuck Dorr for donating a beautifully crafted sign (below) used in New Hope's community awareness display to honor those who have died due to domestic and dating violence.



# Remember my name

## **Rosalie Shedd**

Age 70 / Dover-Foxcroft, Maine

Strangled, beaten and suffocated in her home on October 22, 2008.  
Michael Toby, her 53-year-old brother was charged with murder.

## **Matteo Hanson**

17 months old / Wilton, Maine

Died from blunt force trauma on November 29, 2008.  
His mother's boyfriend, David Cook, 20, was charged with manslaughter.

## **James Cummings**

Age 29 / Belfast, Maine

Shot to death by his wife, Amber Cummings, 31, inside their home on December 9, 2008.  
She has been charged with murder.

## **Christopher Spampinato**

Age 39 / Wells, Maine

Died January 17, 2009, from burn injuries sustained January 8.  
He was doused with gasoline while he slept in his apartment, and then he and the apartment were set on fire. His wife, Kimberly Spampinato, was charged with murder and arson.

## **Winston George**

Age 45 / Old Orchard Beach, Maine

Found strangled to death inside his home on June 20, 2008.  
Jeffrey William, 44, and Rennie Cassimy, 47 were arrested in New York shortly after the death and charged with murder. George's wife, Darlene George, 42, was also arrested for murder in March of 2009.

Of the 31 homicides in 2008, 20 (64%) were due to domestic violence.



# Domestic violence is a crime.

24 hour crisis hotline | 1-800-522-3304

**Belfast**  
111 Church St.

**Rockland**  
93 Park St.

**Damariscotta**  
17 Water St.

**Boothbay Harbor**  
115 Townsend Ave



New Hope for Women is a non-profit organization funded by the Maine State Department of Health and Human Services, United Way of Midcoast Maine, United Way of Eastern Maine, United Mid-Coast Charities, and local donations.

*Return Service Requested*

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