

Coalition Chronicles

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNTS



On November 2, 2006, 1,243 of 2,016 domestic violence programs across the country participated in the National Census of Domestic Violence Services. Designed to address the safety and confidentiality needs of victims, the Census collected an unduplicated, non invasive count of adults and children who received critical support and services from their local domestic program during a 24 hour period. While all of the domestic violence programs were not able to participate, this Census does provide a glimpse of the demand for help but remains an undercount of the actual number of victims who sought and received services. During this 24 hour period more than 22,000 victims of domestic violence received housing services either in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

In total, 47,864 adults and children were helped.

- 14,344 adults and children found

refuge in emergency domestic violence shelters

- 7,933 adults and children were living in transitional housing programs, designed specifically for domestic violence survivors
- 25,587 adults and children received other services such as counseling, legal advocacy and children's support services

During the 24 hour survey period, local and state hotline advocates answered 15,431 calls and the National Domestic Violence Hotline answered 1,213 calls. Advocates responded to almost 17,000 calls in the survey period which equals **more than 11 hotline calls every minute**. Local domestic violence programs also provided school based prevention, early intervention sessions and awareness trainings throughout their community. 40,120 were trained during the 24 hour Census period. While a great number of victims access and receive assistance, a substantial unmet demand for services remains. In one 24 hour period, a total of 5,157 requests for services went unmet due to overflowing shelters and limited staff resources. This unmet demand highlights the need for additional funding and support not only in Connecticut but throughout the country.

The National Network Against Domestic Violence administered the National Census of Domestic Violence Services in November 2006. The survey began on November 2, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. EST and ended on November 3, 2006 at 7:59 am EST. The survey was designed to collect information about the number of victims being served and the types of services being provided, without collecting information that could identify any specific victim seeking services at a participating domestic violence program.

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*If you need help
or just someone
to talk to,
call our confidential
domestic violence hotline
1-888-774-2900*

**Visit us online at
www.ctcadv.org**

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National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

On February 8, 2007 the National Domestic Violence Hotline launched the Teen Dating Abuse Helpline. The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline is a resource that can be accessed by internet or phone. This new program uses telephone and the web to reach teens experiencing abuse.

The Helpline and **loveisrespect.org** offer real-time one-on-one support from trained advocates. Teens and parents anywhere in the country can call toll free, 866-331-9474 or log on to the interactive Web site, loveisrespect.org, and receive immediate, confidential assistance. In addition to a toll-free phone line, loveisrepect.org will be the first interactive dating abuse



website, staffed by trained advocates, where teens can write and immediately get assistance in a one-on-one private chat room.

All communication is confidential and anonymous.

WANT TO HELP...THINK ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Ever feel like you wanted to get involved but just didn't know where to start? CCADV has the answer. For the past eleven years, CCADV has been holding statewide certification trainings to prepare individuals to work with victims of domestic violence in their local community. This is a great way to get started!!

Certification training includes information in the following areas:

- The dynamics of domestic violence
- Crisis intervention strategies and techniques
- Safety Planning - Woman Defined Advocacy
- Communication skills
- Working with diverse populations
- Legal protections and options available to victims
- State and community resources for domestic violence victims
- Confidentiality policies and protections
- Self-care

The next certification training will be held on May 22-25, 2007 from 10:00 am-4:00 pm daily at our office in East Hartford. If you are interested in attending the training or you need additional information, give us a call at 860 282-7899.

MEMBER PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Susan B. Anthony Project

Susan B. Anthony Project works to promote the autonomy of women and the safety of all victims of domestic abuse/sexual assault in Northwest Connecticut as well as to promote community action toward ending domestic violence and sexual abuse. After several years of fundraising and working on building improvements, they celebrated the success of the Rebuilding Lives Campaign and moved into new headquarters in March 2006. They now have plenty of comfortable, private space to meet with individuals and groups, and they have a bright, cheerful children’s room. In addition to having a new space, they’ve added to their staff and are especially pleased to have extended the

hours the shelter is staffed. More good news came last fall when they received an additional two years of funding for our Community Partnership Team (Rural Grant). This funding, from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women, supports the coordination of the Northwest Connecticut Community Partnership Team. In this first year of our new funding, they will focus on coordinating services for the Latino communities, and in the second year, they will focus on services for teens. The project has many dedicated “partners” in law enforcement, healthcare, clergy, and the Latino community collaborating with them to achieve their goals of:

- Enhancing the safety of abused victims in rural northwest Connecticut
- Improving access to services and interventions for victims
- Enhancing community awareness and understanding of domestic violence
- Promoting greater offender accountability

They have been blessed with a very generous supportive community and they know that they wouldn’t be as strong as we are today without the support of many wonderful people in Torrington and the surrounding communities.

The Center for Women and Families and
The Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts
present

A Conversation with
CHRIS HANSEN NBC DAYLINE CORRESPONDANT
As seen on NBC Dateline's "to catch_a predator"

- Keep your kids safe on the net!
- Watch clips and hear about some of Chris's most interesting cases!
- Ask questions, get answers, and more!
- All proceeds benefit The Center for Women and Families!

Thursday, May 17, 2007 - 7:30 PM
Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts
Sacred Heart University
5151 Park Avenue, Fairfield
For Tickets
(203) 371-7908



“Silent No More” Auction & Reception
to benefit Prudence Crandall Center

Friday, June 1, 2007
Central CT State University
New Britain

For further information call 860 225-5187

Tsitaridis vs. Tsitaridis

Domestic violence victim not required to reveal her location to retain her rights

On March 14, 2007, the Connecticut Appellate Court decided that a victim of domestic violence is not required to tell her abuser of her location when she flees her abusive home. The Court reversed the decision of the trial court which ruled that by fleeing and remaining in hiding, the woman had lost her right to present claims in the divorce action filed by her husband.

Connecticut Legal Services' attorneys Michael Burns and Claudine Siegel brought the question before the Appellate Court on behalf of a 73-year old immigrant woman, Stefania Tsitaridis, who testified that her husband physically and emotionally abused her. The appellate court decided that the woman, who fled her abusive marital home and did not disclose her location to her husband, did not lose her right to open the divorce judgment within four months of the proceeding, as allowed by State law.

Stefania, who speaks almost no English, feared for her safety and sought refuge at the local domestic violence shelter. She was then transferred to a different shelter elsewhere in the state. Her husband, not knowing Stefania's whereabouts, received the court's permission to publish the divorce notice in the local newspaper in lieu of the usually required in-person service of the papers. Stefania did not become aware of the divorce proceedings until after the divorce was granted, providing her no alimony or marital property. Under Connecticut State Law, a judgment of divorce can be opened within four months if there is reasonable cause to explain why a person was prevented from attending and presenting a case.

Connecticut Legal Services' attorney Michael Burns asked the court to open the judgment so Stefania could present evidence regarding the marriage, and to obtain financial orders. After describing the abuse she suffered at the hands of her husband before deciding to flee the home, Stefania also testified that her only source of income, social security, was terminated because it was based on her husband's income, for which she became ineligible when the divorce was granted. Burns argued that Stefania's reasons for withholding her location from her abusive husband, along with her loss of opportunity to obtain any of the marital assets, met the legal standard for opening the divorce judgment. The trial court disagreed, maintaining that it would not open the case because the husband had met the legal requirements by publishing the divorce notice and because Stefania had voluntarily kept her location a secret. Attorneys Burns and Siegel appealed this decision to the Appellate Court arguing that victims of domestic violence should not have to report their locations to their abusers after fleeing violent homes.

The Appellate Court agreed and reversed the trial court's decision stating that just looking at whether the husband had provided notice by publishing it in the newspaper is not enough and the court should have also looked to state law to decide whether it should set aside the judgment. The Appellate court stated that "the trial court failed both to make factual findings and to analyze whether the defendant presented sufficient evidence to establish reasonable cause and whether she was prevented from prosecuting the action because of mistake, accident or other reasonable cause."

The trial court will now be required to review its decision. "This case is very important to protect the safety and valid financial claims of victims of domestic violence," says Siegel, director of the CLS Family Violence Task Force. "They should not have to forfeit their right to challenge legal proceedings brought against them while they keep their locations secret. They deserve to have their day in court."

Stop Domestic Violence 24/7

If it hasn't happened already, you or someone you know will be affected by domestic violence.

The reality is:

- . Domestic violence occurs at all hours of the day and night;
- . Victims may only have one chance to leave;
- . Domestic violence victims need help immediately;
- . Due to limited funding, many of their needs go unmet, most often during the evening and overnight hours.

Please ask your legislator to support victims of domestic violence by providing 24 hour funding for your local domestic violence program.

**Help victims of domestic violence to increase their access to support, information and referrals
To promote their safety, stability, security and self-sufficiency
So they can safely return to their community.**

Become a voice for victims, Call or write your legislator

Dear Senator or Representative (Name):

As a constituent, I am writing/phoning to urge you to support any effort to increase access to services for victims of domestic violence. Rarely do victims get the help they need or the attention they deserve. We must provide quality community based services whether it is one o'clock in the afternoon or four o'clock in the morning. Victims have the right to have their needs met 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We cannot afford to let our inconvenience become a victim's endless nightmare. We must put victims first by offering comfort and support immediately after they are abused. Domestic violence isn't something that happens to someone else. It is our family, our friends, and our co-workers. We must work together to make every home a safe home. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Your Address)

If you don't know who your legislators are or you need their telephone number, log onto www.ctcadv.org and click the "Take Action" button. This will give you information and access to legislator information. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can phone the Town Clerk at your city or town hall. For more info, call the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 860.282.7899.

WOMEN'S CENTER OF GREATER DANBURY

2007 Raffle
1 PRIZE TO BE AWARDED

All-inclusive eight day stay at the Five Star Moon Palace Resort in Cancun. Airfare fom NYC included.

Drawing to be held:
Friday, May 18, 2007, 9:00 pm
Lounsbury House in Ridgefield

**Call 203.731.5200
for tickets**

TEA for TWO HUNDRED

A COTTAGE GARDEN TEA

Saturday, July 28, 2007 4-7pm
63 River Road, Washington, CT

to benefit
Northwestern Connecticut
AIDS Project
&
Susan B. Anthony Project

Hosts
Gael Hammer
and Gary Goodwin



Dancing with the Valley Stars

**A benefit for Umbrella's
domestic violence program**

April 28, 2007

7:00-9:00 pm

Club Ballroom, Derby

For more information
call 203 498-4981 ext 408





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OUR MISSION

The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a membership organization whose purpose is to work together to end domestic violence by changing the social conditions, beliefs and social actions that perpetuate abuse against women and children.

COALITION MEMBERS

The Umbrella Ansonia	Interval House Hartford	Domestic Violence Crisis Center Norwalk
The Center for Women & Families Bridgeport	Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis Meriden	Women's Support Services Sharon
Women's Center of Gtr Danbury Danbury	New Horizons Middletown	Domestic Violence Crisis Center Stamford
Domestic Violence Program United Services Dayville	Prudence Crandall Center New Britain	Susan B. Anthony Project Torrington
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