A Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

When Blackburn Center answered its first hotline call in 1976, the world was a very different place. Over the past 45 years, the agency has evolved to meet the needs of our community. Most recently, we have dedicated significant resources to providing culturally responsive services and outreach to diverse populations in the community who are underserved.

We know that domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of abuse and crime can affect anyone — without regard for race, religion, age, disability status, or sexual orientation. With this in mind, we have taken active steps over the past several years to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the community as a whole. For example, in 2016, we began our Underserved Populations program, which was designed to reach out to older people, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking, and those who reside in an outlying part of Westmoreland County. We know that these groups have a need for our services, but may have barriers that prevent them from seeking help.

In 2020, Blackburn Center continued our work in this area by committing both time and funds to implement a Racial Equity and Inclusion Framework through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This innovative, multi-faceted program involves seven steps to advance and embed racial equity and inclusion within our organization.

The steps included surveys and focus groups with current and former staff and board members, clients, volunteers, and community stakeholders; 18 hours of training for staff, board, and volunteers; a review of all agency policies and procedures; and the development of assessment strategies to continually measure impact.

This project, while focused on racial justice, is an important part of Blackburn Center’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for any marginalized or underserved groups in the county.

Our work to become more inclusive will ensure that everyone who needs us knows that they are welcome here.

We continue to work through existing partnerships with the Westmoreland County Diversity Coalition, the NAACP, PFLAG, Familia & Comunidad, and Westmoreland County’s Prioritizing Inclusivity Committee to enhance our service delivery model and extend a welcome to Blackburn Center’s services.

Each year, Blackburn Center helps thousands of residents of Westmoreland County. Our work to become more inclusive will ensure that everyone who needs us knows that they are welcome here. As we continue to learn and grow as an organization, our hope is that our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion will become one of our greatest strengths.

REMINDER: United Way Campaign
All Southwestern PA United Way agencies need your help, now more than ever. The stronger they are, the stronger we are. Please consider directing your contribution to the Community Impact Fund or to Blackburn Center. Blackburn Center’s donor designation number is 382.
Look at Our List, and Check It Twice

As the holiday season approaches, please make our needs list part of your gift giving. Making a gift of items from this list or donating the financial resources to purchase those items, helps us provide for the basic needs of our clients. Your donations throughout the year enhance Blackburn Center’s services and make the stay more comfortable for shelter residents. They can also provide a victim of domestic violence with basic household items as they establish a safe home for themselves and their children. They may even help to fill a grocery bag for clients who need an extra helping hand. A donation is also a unique and wonderful way to honor someone special on your holiday list. When you make your donation, we will send a card acknowledging your gift on their behalf.

You can view the needs list on our website: www.blackburncenter.org/shelter-items-needed. Please put the items listed in BOLD at the top of your shopping list, and help Blackburn Center manage donations by bringing only new items — no clothing, please. If you have used items to donate, the agency can provide a list of thrift shops in the area that make goods available to shelter residents at no cost to them.

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to provide services to our clients, including counseling, advocacy, and emergency shelter for victims of intimate partner violence. While we are currently accepting in-person donations for our programs, for your safety, there are other ways that you can help:

- Make a one-time or recurring donations via our website: www.blackburncenter.org/donate
- Send a check to Blackburn Center
- Purchase items from our Amazon wish list by scanning the code at right.

We appreciate your generous ongoing support of our work at Blackburn Center.

For more information about donation opportunities, contact Blackburn Center
P.O. Box 398, Greensburg, PA 15601
724.837.9540 • www.blackburncenter.org
For Blackburn Center’s services, call the 24/7 Hotline: 724.836.1122 or 1.888.832.2272

Please join us in thanking these sponsors for their generous support of our 2021 Walk a Mile in Their His Her Our Shoes event. We are especially grateful that they continued to support our event in its virtual format! For a full list of sponsors, visit our website at www.blackburncenter.org.

UNDERWRITING SPONSOR ($10,000)
W.N. Tuscano Agency Inc.

FINISH LINE SPONSOR ($7,500)
103.1 KVE and 103.9 KHB

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Remembering the True Victims (Lupson)
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Frank Kleshinski & Mary Ann Gawelek
Kepple-Graft Funeral Home
Jean McKenna
Penn Pals Fund
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RISE Dispensaries
Seton Hill University
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Walk a MILE in Their His Her Our SHOES®

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @blackburncenter
Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/blackburncenterpa
2021 ALL OCCASION CARD

For more than 20 years, Blackburn Center has offered a meaningful way to mark important occasions and celebrate special people in your life through our Special Occasion Card. For each $25 donation to Blackburn Center, a card is sent to the person specified with a personal message. Donations this year have been made:

In MEMORY of
Adam Antalik
Elizabeth Aukerman
Yolanda Botti
Viola Coté, John P. Gercher
and Andrew Markus
Marian Foster
Lillian Geiger and
Edna McAllister
Jean Glaseatter
David Glick
Gloria Hall
Clara Grace Hoffman
Maria Roskey
Isobel St. Pierre
Arlene Pasulka
Deirdre Stewart
John Swank, Jr.
Mary Lou Wade

BY
Lisa Antalik
Joelyn Aukerman
Mr. Tony Botti
Katherine Gercher
Dr. W Daniel Foster
John and Sandra Stutz
Mr. J. Anthony Glasstetter
Suzan Gingery
Oliver Hall
Jacqueline Timko
Janice Roskey
Marsha St. Pierre
Pat Bogdan
Pamela Sleazak
John and Susan Swank
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Smithston

In HONOR of
Cindy Arcuri
Mary Gercher
Jean McKenna
Arlene Pasulka
Tanya Scozio
Laura Shur
Bill and Jennie Struble
Susan Tanto
Phyllis Winchell

BY
Kathy Baughman
Katherine Gercher
Ann and Ernie Emmelring
Bryan and Patricia Bogdan
Barbara Scozio
Chris and Jayne Gall
Karen Struble Myers
Joyce Somers
Dr. J. Stephen Carter

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Joanne Reed
Karen Richter
Laurie Rosko
Ms. Lori Stripay
Jay and Mary Lou Tarara
James and Sharon Wilson
Ann Woodall
Tim Zona - Zona Plumbing Inc.

Please consider this way to touch the lives of thousands of people in our community requiring our services, as you touch the lives of those you honor and remember. Visit our website at www.blackburncenter.org/greetingcards to make your choice from several delightful options.

RED SAND PROJECT

This year, Blackburn Center, as part of the Westmoreland County Human Trafficking Task Force, again participated in The Red Sand Project. This art installation was designed to raise awareness about human trafficking. Volunteers across the world place grains of red sand in the cracks of sidewalks. Each grain of sand represents one of the millions of victims of human trafficking who have slipped through the “cracks” of our society.

In 2021, volunteers joined us at locations throughout Westmoreland County to place sand in highly visible locations, including:

Westmoreland County Courthouse  Delmont Library  Westmoreland Hospital
Latrobe Hospital  Frick Hospital  Westmoreland Transit  Union Mission
Seton Hill University  SPHS Monessen  New Kensington PD

If you didn’t get the chance to see this art installation in person, you can view pictures on our website (https://www.blackburncenter.org/post/join-us-to-raise-awareness-about-human-trafficking) or on our Facebook page. Thanks to all who participated and helped to raise awareness about human trafficking!
**Save the Date:**
**Walk a Mile 2022**

Are you ready to #WalkBlackburn? Save the date — **April 23, 2022** — for an important (and fun!) day in the community. Our annual Walk a Mile in **Their His Her Our Shoes** event is designed to raise awareness and take action to end gender-based violence in our community. Our hope is that we will return to St. Clair Park in Greensburg for our first in-person Walk since 2019. We will be sure to keep you posted on Walk details once we know more about community safety guidelines in early 2022.

For registration information and details about sponsorship opportunities, call us at 724.837.9540 x144, or visit our website. Be sure to thank our 2021 sponsors listed in this newsletter who supported our first-ever fully virtual Walk!

**Blackburn Center Mission Statement**
Blackburn Center advocates for the rights of all individuals to live free from domestic and sexual violence and other forms of violence by eliminating root causes and providing for the well-being and safety of survivors/victims.

Blackburn Center is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides 24-hour hotline services, counseling, advocacy and support groups to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment and other forms of violence; and emergency shelter available to survivors of domestic violence and their dependent children. Blackburn Center also provides community education, school student awareness programs, and in-service professional trainings throughout Westmoreland County.