



Blackburn Center

AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Eighteenth Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Excerpts from a statement from The National Network to End Domestic Violence

September 13, 2012 commemorated the 18th Anniversary of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This landmark law, passed in 1994, has forever transformed and improved our nation's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

VAWA supports effective coordinated community responses, leveraging state and local resources to address and prevent these serious and pervasive crimes. Such coordinated community responses have been at the heart of our nation's progress toward reducing domestic and sexual violence. Since VAWA first passed, more victims feel comfortable coming forward, crime rates have decreased, laws against domestic violence have been strengthened, and communities across the country are safer and more secure.

VAWA has been reauthorized twice since 1994 and each reauthorization has built upon the successes of the past and improved coverage, protection and services for victims. Despite successes, VAWA has expired – jeopardizing current protections and failing to address important safety issues. In 2012, Congress must pass a strong, bipartisan VAWA

reauthorization that safely and effectively protects all victims. Specifically, it must include protections to meet the urgent needs of Native American women, immigrants, LGBT victims, those on college campuses and Communities of Color. The law must reauthorize the key grant programs in order to improve and expand

services to victims in need. It must build upon the landmark housing protections that ensure victims are not evicted from subsidized housing based on the abusive actions of their perpetrators. It must efficiently support local programs to ensure the stability of services to victims.

"Today as VAWA turns 18, we consider the young

people born in 1994 who will benefit from VAWA but know that it falls short to meet their needs and many other victims' needs," said Paulette Sullivan Moore, NNEDV's Vice President of Public Policy. "We must continue to improve the protections under VAWA in order to ensure that they, and all victims, will be safe from violence and abuse. Without a strong VAWA reauthorization, such protections are still not available."

Stay informed about the status of VAWA through NNEDV's website: nnedv.org.

"Today as VAWA turns 18, we consider the young people born in 1994 who will benefit from VAWA but know that it falls short to meet their needs and many other victims' needs..."

URGE your Member of Congress to prioritize post-election passage of a VAWA reauthorization bill that safely and effectively protects all victims. Visit www.congress.org for information on how to contact your US Senator and Representative.

Mourn
Celebrate
Connect

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

mediahurts.org

In Blackburn Center's last newsletter, we introduced you to a new public awareness campaign we launched in April 2012 as part of our ongoing commitment to address the root causes of gender violence. If you haven't had a chance to visit our updated website, mediahurts.org, do it today! And when you visit the site, take the opportunity to:

- Understand why we have to consider the root causes of gender violence if we're going to see any positive change.
- Identify the REAL actions you can take to be part of the solution.
- Provide us with your perspective on this issue.

And check out our new Facebook page for even more information:
www.facebook.com/blackburncenter.pa

It's 8 pm.
Press here to see a woman raped.



Or click mediahurts.org
to help stop it.

Invisible No More

The number is staggering: 19,000 servicemen and women in 2010. 19,000 of our brave women and men – who have dedicated their lives to serving our country – met the same fate in 2010. These 19,000 men and women were not killed in the line of duty. They were not injured in the line of duty. The reality is perhaps more shocking: in 2010 alone, 19,000 service women and men were raped or sexually assaulted in the military. Compounding this, only 13.5% of the victims of military rape or sexual assault report the crime up the chain of command.

These statistics – prepared and released by the Department of Defense – set the background for the incredibly powerful documentary *The Invisible War*. Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Kirby Dick, this 2012 documentary has already changed military policy. On April 14, 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta viewed the documentary *The Invisible War*. Two days later, the Department of Defense announced a change in the way that sexual assault and rape cases are handled by the military, removing some of the discretion given to lower-level commanders in reporting rape and assault cases.

The film tells the stories of former military – largely women – who have suffered rape and sexual assault at the hands of fellow service members. These cases span the decades, from a male soldier brutally gang-raped in a chow hall in the 1970's, to a female sailor repeatedly drugged and raped in the 1980's, to the Tailhook scandal of the 1990's, to the 2010 case of a female Marine raped by her commanding officer after being ordered to drink with him beforehand. While the facts of each rape and assault differ, a common thread binds these survivors' stories together: none of them received assistance or support from the military and none of them saw their attackers punished.

In addition to a lack of support and justice, these survivors were often treated as the wrongdoer. Several women highlighted in the film were charged with adultery, conduct unbecoming an officer or public intoxication as a direct result of reporting their rapes. Another woman – a nine and a half year veteran of the Army – was denied military benefits after leaving service. Yet another woman is still battling the Veterans' Administration for coverage for medical treatment for the injuries that she sustained in her rape. Almost all of the survivors profiled had attempted suicide as a direct result of their rape or sexual assault.

One of the biggest obstacles to ending this epidemic of military rape and sexual assault is the system itself. Victims are required to report the crime to their commander, who may be a friend of the perpetrator or may have committed the crime himself. Commanders have a disincentive to report these crimes up the chain of command, as doing so would demonstrate a lack of control over their unit. Tellingly, the cases that are reported rarely result in real justice for the victims. In 2010, 3,158 cases of sexual assault or rape were handled by the military justice system. Of those 3,158 cases, only 175 of the attackers received a sentence of jail time.

There is hope on the horizon, however. This film – which featured interviews from both Republican and Democratic Senators and Representatives – has grabbed the attention of politicians from both sides of the aisle. Representative Jackie Speier of California has introduced HR 3435, The STOP Act, which would take cases of rape and sexual assault out of the normal chain of command and place them in the jurisdiction of an impartial office within the military, but staffed by civilian and military experts. A group of survivors is seeking a similar result (an ability to report these cases to civilian authorities) via a lawsuit against the Department of Defense. This lawsuit – featured in the film – was dismissed by a federal district court in December 2011, but has been appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Invisible War is currently available for download online, and will be released in DVD format on October 23, 2012. See the movie, and spread the word about it. Contact your United States Senators and Representatives, and demand that they act to change the system of military justice for rape and sexual assault crimes. Educating yourself about the military rape epidemic is just the first step to ensure that these victims are no longer "invisible," and that these crimes will no longer be seen as inevitable.

REMINDERS...

■ 2012 Annual Report

Again this year, to reduce costs and environmental impact, we will be posting Blackburn Center's Annual Report on our website: www.blackburncenter.org Watch for the 2011/2012 report in December 2012. And, please let us know if you'd like a hard copy sent to you; call 724-837-9540, x104.

■ Are Taxes On Your Mind?

As the tax year draws to a close, here's something to remember: you can donate your car, motorcycle, truck or boat to Blackburn Center and receive a tax deduction. For more information, call us at 724-837-9540 and ask for someone on the Administrative Team.

■ United Way Campaign

All Westmoreland County 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.

**CHALLENGE
THE POWER.
DEMAND
CHANGE.**

Domestic and sexual violence are rooted in an imbalance of power between men and women. Our society accepts violence against women as normal and inevitable. For Blackburn Center to fulfill its mission to end domestic and sexual violence, we must challenge this imbalance of power that supports the oppression of women.



VISIT US ON FACEBOOK | <https://www.facebook.com/blackburncenterpa>



Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®

The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence

In Westmoreland County, presented by Blackburn Center

We had 300 people at our inaugural event in April 2011, and jumped to 400 people in April 2012. Our goal for 2013 is to top 500! We want to fill that track at Lynch Field. We know we can make it with your help. You can:

- Mark the date in your calendar NOW: April 20, 2013.
- Tell your friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors about this important – and FUN – event.
- Gather a team to join the more than twenty teams that walked this past year.

For individual and team registration information, and details about sponsorship opportunities, please call 724-837-9540, X104.

ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO Walk a Mile in Her Shoes?

This annual event sends two clear messages:

1

Most men don't condone violence. (In fact, the majority of men are good guys who care!)

2

Sexual and domestic violence are not just "women's issues"—they impact everyone, women and men, and we can ALL make a difference by challenging the social norms that perpetuate this violence.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
APRIL 20, 2013**

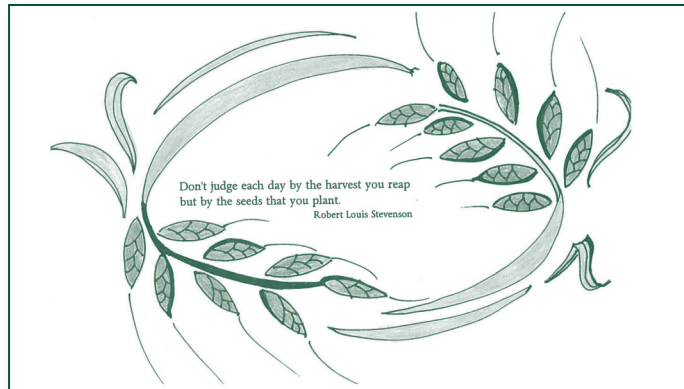
Lynch Field, Greensburg, PA

MANY THANKS

to those who supported the Special Occasion Card: A Greeting with a Purpose

In Memory

- Louise Barton
- Ina Seibert
- Ella Beveridge
- Ina Seibert
- Paul Carmichael
- Joe and Patty Kemerer
- Mariann Cute Clark
- Anonymous
- Barbara J. Dorundo
- Georgine Dorundo
- Frances Fontanesi
- Sharon Bartolotta
- Sue Goettlicher
- Mr. and Mrs. John Goettlicher
- Julia Hinger
- Barbara Nakles
- Clara Hoffman
- Jim and Jackie Timko
- Lenore Huffer
- Ina Seibert
- Pamela Kaetzel
- Georgine Dorundo
- Mothers
- Anonymous
- Joseph Mott
- Georgine Dorundo
- Mary B. Potocnik
- Mary Catherine Motchar
- Alice Rush
- Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Delaini
- Marie Timko-Lawrence
- Jim and Jackie Timko
- Mary Louise Rush Truxal
- Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Delaini



Vivian and James Wilhite
Anonymous

In Honor

- Donna Chanon
- Virginia Turner
- Catherine Cook
- Jeanne M. Cook
- Elizabeth Courtney
- Patti Benton
- Raymond Dorundo, Sr.
- Georgine Dornundo
- Julie Ebersole
- Berny and Betsy Borza
- Rachel Hatch
- Glenn and Rebecca Davidson
- Jacquelyn Kwiatkowski
- Deirdre Kwiatkowski
- Rosemary Lewis
- Morrison Lewis

- Alyce Markovich
- Helen Hopkinson
- Jean McKenna
- Ann, Ernie, Sam and Jake Emmerling
- Carmella Neil
- Calli-Marie and Alasandra
- Mary Quenzler
- Rob and Kim Stanko
- Ann M. Schrems
- Bill, Cathy and Jessica Reeves
- Polly Shermer
- Patti Benton
- Sarah Stanko
- Kim and Rob Stanko
- Sara Waugaman
- Anonymous

General

- Anonymous
- Jeanne Anton

- Tara Bird
- Harry and Gayle Blansett
- Anthony John Botti
- Michael Bove
- Sally Brautigam
- Gina Burkett
- Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cazden
- Suzanne Conley
- Dr. and Mrs. William B. Courtney
- Linell Davis
- Robert Davis
- Rich and Roz Douds
- Mrs. Virginia Essey
- Rebecca Gardner
- Kathy Hager
- Richard M. Harrold
- Tim and Diane Johnson
- JoAnne Kaylor
- David and Terry Kelley
- David and Cathy Mastrocrocco
- Ruth McDonald
- Jean McKenna
- North Huntingdon
- Bible Study Group
- Rehoboth Deacons
- Karen Rich Douglas
- Thomas and Diana Roberts
- Irene C. Rothschild
- Frances Sabo
- Stephen Slobodnik
- Donald J. Snyder, Jr.
- Frank and Mary Stillman
- Nancy Wallace
- Stephen and Linda Zimmerman

Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence 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, and sexual harassment; emergency shelter is 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.

Contact Information

Office 724-837-9540
 Fax 724-837-3676
 Hotline 724-836-1122
 Toll Free Hotline 1-888-832-2272
 Website www.blackburncenter.org

Board of Directors

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Blackburn Center is funded in part by United Way of Westmoreland County, PA Department of Public Welfare funds, including Title XX and Act 44 funds, foundations and local contributions.

A copy of official registration and financial information for Blackburn Center may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

LIVE UNITED United Way of
 Westmoreland County
 Donor Designation 382



PO Box 398
 Greensburg, PA 15601-0398

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Permit No. 648
 Greensburg, PA



As the holiday season approaches, please keep our needs list (BELOW) in mind if you're looking for an alternative to traditional gift-giving. Making a gift of items from the needs list, or donating the financial resources to purchase those items, is a wonderful way to honor someone special in your life. We'll be happy to send a card acknowledging your gift. Donating items helps to sustain the shelter program, and maintain the support groups the agency provides for women and children. Some of these items are made available to women and their children who are establishing their own homes and need support with basic household items.

Please put the items in ***bold italics*** at the top of your shopping list, and help Blackburn Center manage donations by bringing new items. If you have used items to donate, the agency can provide a list of thrift shops in the area that make items available to Blackburn Center shelter residents at no cost to them.

NEEDS LIST Your contributions have a direct impact for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

THE HOLIDAY GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING...

KITCHEN

- Baking pans: 9" x 13"
- Can openers (hand-held)
- Coffee (regular)
- Coffee creamer
- Cooking oil
- Dish drainers
- Dishpans
- Drink boxes
- Flatware***
- Food items: any canned food, other non-perishables, etc.
- Clear plastic storage boxes with lids***
- Tall kitchen garbage bags
- Packaged snacks for lunches
- Paper products: paper towels, napkins
- Paper towel holders
- Skillets
- Small appliances: coffee maker, can opener, knife sharpener

- Spices and condiments
- Tea towels and dishcloth sets
- Zip-lock bags (gallon size)

BATHROOM

- Bath mats
- Heating pads***
- Paper products: toilet paper
- Plungers
- Shower curtains and rings
- Soap dispensers
- Toilet brushes
- Bath towels: durable***
- Wastebaskets

BEDROOM

- Alarm clocks***
- Bed pillows
- Bed-in-a-bag sets
- Blankets: twin & full
- Mattress pads: quilted, twin & full

Nightgowns: women's one-size fits all

- Pajamas: women's one-size-fits-most & extra-large sizes, teen boys***
- Sleep shirts: large & extra-large***
- Slippers with gripper soles***
- Wastebaskets

MISCELLANEOUS

- Baby monitors***
- Batteries: AAA
- Bottled water
- Brooms
- Buckets
- Canvas storage cubes: 10 1/2"W x9"H x7"D***
- Diapers: size 3 & 4***
- Extension cords
- Flashlights
- Gasoline cards: GetGo or Sheetz***
- Gift cards: Walmart or Target***

- Hair dryers
- Laundry detergent
- Light bulbs: 60-watt & 3-way
- Mops
- Nasal aspirators
- Outdoor garbage bags
- Phone cards
- Play doh
- Sunscreen
- Sweat suits: all adult sizes***
- Telephones
- Tool kits
- Umbrellas***
- Underpants: women's & teen boy sizes

PERSONAL CARE

- Hotel-size items are no longer needed.*
- Shampoo
- Conditioner

PLEASE NOTE: Deliver donations to Blackburn Center's administrative offices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 4 pm. Please call if you cannot bring your donation during regular business hours. We can make other arrangements if necessary.