

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2010–2011



# Blackburn Center

AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Timeline...

In 1976, Westmoreland Alliance Against Rape organized as an independent offshoot of the Westmoreland County Conference of Economic Opportunity.

The community began supporting the agency's mission from the first days of operation, with needs list collections and financial contributions.

The agency's first volunteer training class was held in 1976. Thirty community members completed this training to become the agency's first group of volunteers.

The rape hotline in Westmoreland County began ringing on December 6, 1976. Services quickly expanded to include domestic violence issues.

1976

In 1978, the total agency budget was \$28,000.

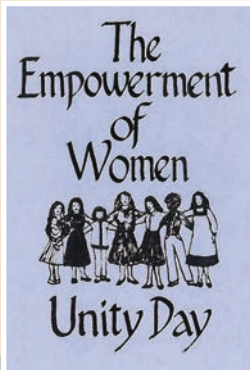
Westmoreland Alliance Against Rape became Women's Services of Westmoreland County in 1978.



1979

The first shelter for battered women and their children opened its doors in September 1979. The administrative/counseling offices were in the same space – using a corner of the kitchen for some administrative staff.

In the early 1980s, the agency developed school-based education programs on sexual abuse prevention and began to present in school districts across the county.



The agency began observing the National Day of Unity on October 17, 1981 to commemorate those who died as a result of domestic violence, and to offer support to surviving victims. This activity also served to alert the community to the gravity of the issue.

1980

The agency experienced a dramatic increase in requests for services to child sexual assault victims in November 1982. This closely followed the airing of the TV movie, "Something About Amelia," which dealt with the issue of incest.

The shelter moved to its second location in 1983.

The administrative office moved to the second floor of the Redstone Presbytery building in 1983. There were only four offices and a large closet that doubled as an office. All staff shared space – and some had only a drawer in a desk.

Legislation enacted in February 1985 made it a second degree felony in Pennsylvania to sexually assault your spouse. Before this new legislation, rape laws excluded spousal sexual assault.

In the late 1980s, the agency expanded its school-based education programs to include domestic violence.

1985

The shelter moved to its third – and current – location in 1986.

The administrative/counseling office moved to its third location (in the basement of the Law and Finance building on Pittsburgh Street) in 1986.

The agency sponsored a series of fundraising events in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ranging from fashion shows to sports auctions to dance concerts to performances by a choir from Wales.



The agency sponsored events to include the community in the call to action to end domestic and sexual violence. In the 1990s, these included *Take Back the Night* Marches and Rallies, *An Empty Place at the Table* displays, and a poetry reading.



In the 1990s, the agency added dating violence/date rape to its school curriculum. During these years, the agency reached

the distinction of touching every school district in the county with education programs.



In 1997, the agency formally adopted the model of therapeutic services for victims of sexual violence – expanding on the existing counseling that was being

provided to sexual assault clients. The Center also began using dogs (Bella and Charlie) in therapy services.

The Center completed the shelter expansion and renovation in 1998. The shelter gained an accessible suite for clients, a playroom on the first floor, office space for shelter staff, a smoking room, a group room in the basement, kitchen upgrades for accessibility – and improvements throughout.

The HERO Project, a public awareness campaign targeted at potential protectors of children, was launched in 1998 by a group of agencies and businesses. The Center was the lead agency for this initiative. The materials developed through the HERO Project won several Addy awards in Pittsburgh.



## 1990

Women's Services was approached by the Westmoreland County Prison in 1992 to begin group counseling services to women inmates who were victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, funding became available for enhanced legal advocacy services. The agency expanded staff with these available funds and has been able to provide services at all 18 district justice offices in the county, during Protection From Abuse hearings at the courthouse, and during criminal trials.

The agency launched the Clothesline project in the mid 1990s, to raise awareness in the community about sexual and domestic violence.

Women's Services of Westmoreland County became The Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence in 1996. The name change was prompted by several concerns, including the confusion about the agency's purpose and gender exclusivity.

The Center launched a billboard campaign in the mid 1990s to alert people to the availability of services.



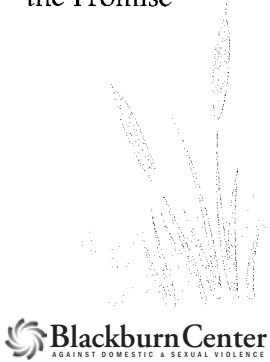
The Center launched a successful capital campaign, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, in 1996 to raise \$1,000,000 in support of shelter renovations, equipment upgrades and program expansion.

## 1998

The Center continued to conduct fundraising events in the later 1990s, with one of the most successful an Italian Feast at Rizzo's Malabar Inn in Crabtree. The agency held this event for five years.

In 1999, The Center expanded domestic violence services to include follow-up contact with former shelter residents for up to twelve weeks. The time following a shelter stay can be the most difficult – and dangerous – time for a battered woman.

Pursuing  
the Dream,  
Honoring  
the Promise



In 2002, The Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence became Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence: honoring the vision of one of the agency's founding mothers.

Also in 2002, the agency renovated its administrative/ counseling offices to make better use of the space and create a more welcoming environment for clients, volunteers, visitors and staff. This was accomplished through a mini-capital campaign.

2001

In March 2001, the agency expanded its counseling services to include outreach to clients through other service providers and facilities across the county ... in an effort to reach victims of domestic and sexual violence who did not have the resources to travel to Greensburg.

The agency marked its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an event for donors and partners in fall 2001.

The agency launched its first Men Against Sexual Violence activities in 2003.

To "brand" the new agency name, Blackburn Center conducted a public awareness campaign in 2003 that included posters, billboards print ads, and matchbooks. The agency also launched its first website at this time.



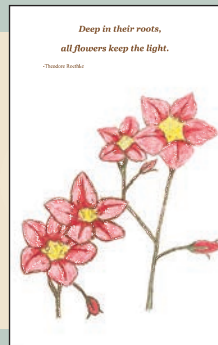
The agency adopted a position statement on Social Change/Transformation in 2004. This was developed over an 18 month period by a work group of staff, board, volunteers and community members.

In 2006, the agency convened a group of staff, board and community partners to develop messaging related to social transformation. This group met over a ten month period and developed the theme line: *Challenge the Power. Demand Change.* This theme line was incorporated into website design, newsletter and

**CHALLENGE THE POWER.  
DEMAND CHANGE.**

brochure content, postcards and window clings. It was

the first time the agency named the oppression of women as the root cause of domestic violence and sexual assault in such a proactive fashion.



Fundraising in the early years of this new century? A Golf "Ining" and Silent Auction at the Promise of Light/Giving Thanks event, and the launch of the Mother's Day/All Occasion Cards.



2006

In 2007, the agency launched Una Sera del Dare (*An Evening of Giving*) as its annual fundraising event. This event continued through 2011.

2008

Blackburn Center began a formal partnership with Seton Hill University in 2008, to develop primary prevention activities on campus that can be tested for impact. This project was expanded in 2009 through VAWA funds the agency received specific to a campus outreach project. The project, now called STAR (Social Transformation through Advocacy and Resolve), will be adding the Red Flag project in 2012.

In April 2011, Blackburn Center held its first *Walk a Mile in Her Shoes* event, to raise awareness in the community about gender violence.



**Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®**  
Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence

2012

In FY 2011/2012, Blackburn Center's budget is \$1,301,487. The agency has grown in response to community needs and as a direct result of the generosity and unwavering support of the Westmoreland County community.

# Our Mission

Blackburn Center actively advocates for the rights of all people to live free from violence and oppression in their homes and communities and provides supportive services to survivors of all forms of domestic violence and sexual assault.

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PO Box 398  
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of Westmoreland County  
Donor Designation 382

## Annual Report 2010–2011

### Dear Friends,

In 1975, a group of individuals in Westmoreland County were concerned about the reports they were hearing of rape victims who had no place to turn for help. They joined forces, developing a short-term solution of services for any victim in need, and a long-term vision of communities free from violence and oppression. The mission of what is now Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence was seeded from the concern of community members and cultivated by the energy and passion of a group of founding mothers who gave the first call to action in Westmoreland County to stop this violence.

By December 1976, Westmoreland County's rape hotline took its first call, with services quickly expanding to include victims of domestic violence. And the agency launched public awareness and education activities ... for the first time in Westmoreland County, people began to talk about these issues. And these services and conversations continued and grew.

Shortly after Blackburn Center's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we embarked on a project to clarify our work in a key part of our mission: *to actively advocate for the rights of all people to live free from violence and oppression in their homes and communities.* After more than 25 years of service in the community, we acknowledged that the majority of our work had been focused on client services, basic outreach to increase awareness of the existence of our services, and focused education efforts targeted to women and girls to reduce the risk of victimization. While those efforts were vitally important to the community, we needed to add to them if we were to have any impact on the part of our mission dedicated to ending this violence. In the ten years since, we have made great strides in renewing our energy to transform our culture so that we are focusing on the responsibility of perpetrators, understanding the social norms that perpetuate gender violence, and changing the community's acceptance of domestic and sexual violence as inevitable.

Since our earliest days, the vision and passion of community members has driven Blackburn Center's mission. That is as true today as it was 35 years ago. In this 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Blackburn Center's annual report, we invite you to visit our new micro-site ([mediahurts.org](http://mediahurts.org)) to learn more about our efforts to change the conversation about gender violence and to find out how you can continue to be part of the solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Polinsky".

Linda Polinsky  
President, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann M. Emmerling".

Ann M. Emmerling  
Executive Director

*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.*

# Supportive Services

Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence provides supportive services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, and sexual harassment. In addition, the agency provides education in the community about these issues.

All client services are **free** and all information is **confidential**.

## 24-Hour Hotline

- The hotline provides 24 hour crisis counseling to survivors of sexual assault, incest, domestic violence, and sexual harassment.
- The hotline can be the first contact victims have with an organization dedicated to their safety and healing.
- The hotline is available to everyone – victims, their family and friends, and professionals who seek information about how they might better meet the needs of their clients who are victims.
- Counselors have received training in the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault and understand the complex issues involved.

## Shelter

Temporary emergency shelter is available to battered women and their children. The shelter provides a safe, comfortable haven where a woman can plan for her future. Residents can stay up to 30 days in a six-month period.

## Counseling & Therapy

In-person counseling is available for women, children, and men, by appointment. Longer-term therapy is provided for sexual assault survivors and their significant others.

## Support Groups

Blackburn Center staff provides weekly support groups for victims of abuse. Groups may be offered for:

- Female victims of domestic violence
- Children of female victims of domestic violence
- Incarcerated females (County Prison)
- Adults sexually abused as children
- Sexual assault/harassment victims
- Significant others of sexual assault or domestic violence victims

## Medical Accompaniment

Medical advocates meet victims of domestic or sexual violence at the emergency room of any Westmoreland County hospital, 24/7, to provide support during medical examinations and information about resources and options available.

## Legal Accompaniment

Legal advocates accompany victims of domestic or sexual violence through the legal system and provide support and encouragement and help victims plan for safety.

## Community Education Programs

Blackburn Center can provide a speaker for any organization interested in learning more about the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault.

## Student Awareness Programs

Blackburn Center provides student awareness programs to Westmoreland County schools, pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and area colleges.

## In-Service Trainings

Blackburn Center provides training on the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment for professionals (police, paramedics, medical personnel, teachers, counselors, etc.).

## Blackburn Center 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](http://www.blackburncenter.org)

“Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.”

– Marian Wright Edelman –

## Statistical Summary

**24-hour hotline providing crisis counseling, information, and referrals.**

**Individual counseling and therapy.**

**Group counseling and therapy.**

Number of hotline calls .....	3,463
Number of counseling hours provided .....	10,401
Total number of new clients .....	3,026

**Emergency shelter for battered women and their dependent children.**

Days of shelter provided .....	5,058
Women and children sheltered.....	190

**Medical advocacy/accompaniment at hospital emergency rooms.**

**Legal advocacy/accompaniment at PFA hearings, District**

**Justice hearings and trials.**

Medical advocacy contacts .....	75
Legal advocacy contacts .....	1,895

**Student awareness programs in Westmoreland County schools, preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and area colleges.**

School programs – domestic violence .....	350
School programs – sexual assault .....	2,252
Students and teachers participating in domestic violence and sexual assault awareness programs (unduplicated) .....	21,348

**Community education programs including speakers for organizations and community groups.**

**In-service trainings for police, medical personnel, teachers, counselors, social workers and other professionals.**

Community programs and trainings to professionals	
Domestic violence .....	121
Sexual assault .....	100

## 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.**

## Financial Statement

### Revenue and Support

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence .....	351,531
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape .....	262,361
Victims of Crime Act .....	176,340
STOP Violence Against Women Act.....	56,022
Other Government Funding .....	78,860
Contributions.....	336,282
Other Income .....	<u>73,328</u>
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>\$1,334,724</b>

### Expenses

Program Services .....	1,040,735
Management & General .....	184,240
Fundraising .....	<u>44,870</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,269,845</b>

Amount of each \$1 spent on Program Services\* \$0.82

\*see page 3 for full list of Program Services.

**“I would thank you  
from the bottom of  
my heart, but  
for you my heart  
has no bottom.”**

– Author Unknown –

We extend our sincere appreciation  
to all of our supporters.

Blackburn Center has endeavored to include everyone who supported our agency in the 2010/2011 fiscal year; we apologize if we have made an error.

Please telephone the administrative office at 724-837-9540, x101 if a correction is necessary.

**Support from the community, through contributions and governmental support, is invested in services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, and education programs for the community.**

# Donors

## Annual Report 2010-2011

The levels of giving represent  
the total of gifts from

July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

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akoya  
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Alpha Business Forms, Inc.  
AmeriGas  
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Arbor Industrial Supplies, Inc.  
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Human Services Development Fund  
Kennametal Foundation  
Millstein Charitable Foundation  
PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
PA Coalition Against Rape  
PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency  
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