

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

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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.



United Way
 of Westmoreland County
 Donor Designation 382

This newsletter sponsored by
FISA Foundation

**“Working together,
 we can change
 attitudes, continue
 to support victims,
 and hold perpetrators
 responsible.”**

– Cindy Dyer, Director
 Office on Violence Against Women
 United States Department of Justice



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 Greensburg, PA 15601-0398

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

Blackburn Center needs items throughout the year to sustain the shelter program, and to support activities with children and in our support groups for victims. In addition, some of these items are made available to women and children who are establishing their own homes and need support with basic household items. We ask that all items be new.

Please put the items in **bold** at the top of your shopping list.

FOOD

Nonperishable food
 Coffee: regular and decaf
 Coffee creamer
 Drink boxes
 Packaged snacks for lunches
 Spices and condiments
 Sugar-free treats, drinks

CHILDREN'S ITEMS

Toddler car seats
Stroller
 Fabric markers
Baby wipes
 Disposable diapers (large sizes)
 Diaper rash cream
 Outlet plugs

GENERAL HOUSEHOLD

Cleaning products
 Laundry detergent
Fabric softener sheets
 Mops, brooms
 Paper towels, toilet paper
 Light bulbs (60 watt and three-way)
 Liquid hand soap refills

TOILETRIES

Hotel-size items no longer needed
 Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
 Hair brushes, hair dryers,
 curling irons

Hair care and skin care products for African-Americans

Shaving cream
 Denture adhesive
 Benadryl
 Calamine lotion
 Lip balm for chapped lips

Deodorant
 Disposable razors

BEDROOM

Alarm clocks
 Bed pillows
 Bed-in-a-bag sets
 Blankets: twin and full
 Crib sheets
Sheet sets: twin and full
 Mattress covers (vinyl, zippered):
 twin and full
 Mattress pads: twin and full
 Pillowcases (white)
 Plastic hangers
 Waste baskets
 Bedspreads: twin

KITCHEN

Aluminum foil
 Dish drainers, dishpans
 Flatware
 Food storage containers
 Kitchen garbage bags
 Paper products: paper towels, napkins
 Paper towel holders
 Plastic pitchers
 Plastic wrap
 Pots, pans and skillets
 Hand-held can opener
 Small appliances: coffee maker,
 can opener, knife sharpener,
 microwave oven
 Waste baskets
 Zip-lock bags, gallon-size

BATHROOM

Bath mats
 First aid and healthcare supplies

Heating pads
 Plungers
Shower curtains and rings
 Soap dispensers
 Toilet brushes
Bath towels, hand towels
 Waste baskets with step-on lids

CLOTHING

Sweat suits (women's M, L, XL)
Nightgowns: women's one-size-fits-all
Pajamas: women's one-size-fits most
Underwear (women's, sizes 5-8)

MISCELLANEOUS

Phone cards
Gift cards: small denominations
 Wal-Mart, Target, grocery stores
Gasoline cards (\$15, \$20)
 Batteries: AA and 9-volt
 Bottled water
 Bucket
 Extension cords
 Outdoor garbage bags
 Telephones
 Tool kits
 Umbrellas

Please consider contributing funds to support two special needs in the shelter:

Pots and Pans: the shelter kitchen gets a lot of use throughout the year, and is in need of durable pots and pans.

Sewing supplies: shelter residents need sewing supplies for mending and repairs.

PLEASE NOTE: Deliver donations to Blackburn Center's administrative offices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 4:00 pm. Please call if you cannot bring your donation during regular business hours. We can make other arrangements if necessary.



Blackburn Center

AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Life for Sale

According to Naomi Johnson of Longwood University in Virginia (Newsweek, March 17, 2008), references touting or denigrating specific brand-name products, including cigarettes, alcohol, prescription drugs, clothing, and cosmetics, have made their way into best-selling novels read by teen girls.

"The ... books I read as a kid were about life lessons and defining yourself," says Johnson.

"The life lesson here is that you can buy your identity."

April is **Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Awareness Month**

Be part of the solution – become informed, speak out, demand change!

Check out page 2 for information about the HERO Project and Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV) activities.

A LETTER TO MY SON ON HIS FIRST BIRTHDAY

James:

I read this today: *The societal structure that supports the control by one group of "a disproportionately large share of power" results in a culture that expects coercion and control to be a part of relationships.*

You're way too young to understand this, and I'd like to think that by the time you and your sister are grown up, words like "power" and "control" and "coercion" and "abuse" will no longer be part of any kind of relationship between people. But I know this won't happen by itself.

As you grow, your mother and I will teach you that being decent, caring, fair-minded, and responsible is what makes a real man (the same things that make a real woman) but some people still think that men are supposed to be in charge of women and that being a real man means being tough and mean. I promise to work hard to change that.

Some people still think that only men should be in charge and that women should always do what men tell them to do. I promise to work to change that.

Some people still think that when a man hurts a woman, it's because the woman did something wrong. I promise to work to change that.

Some people still think there are jobs for men (like boss) and jobs for women (like helper). Some people think only girls should be allowed to cry and only boys should be allowed to get dirty. I promise to work to change that.

Some people still think that children are lying if they say a family member or close family friend touched them in a "private place." I promise to remind them to believe their children and to remind them that most of the time, the bad guys are not strangers.

Changing the world won't be easy, James. I will have to speak up and say things people sometimes don't want to hear. I will have to write letters and make phone calls and maybe even stop buying certain things. Your mom and I may have to say "No" to some of the things you want us to buy for you and "No" to some programs you want to watch on TV.

Mostly, I will have to remind people that pretending not to notice, or saying "it's really none of my business" is not okay. Most people don't do bad things, but most of us do see, or at least know about, the bad things being done. We have to say "No!" We have to make sure the people who do the bad things know what they're doing is wrong. Otherwise, they'll just keep on doing them. I promise to work very hard on that.

Love,
Dad

Children and Abuse

Domestic violence and sexual assault are usually seen as adult issues, but they can have devastating effects on children. It is a mistake to assume that just because children are too young to understand adult violence or too young to know what sex is, they are not affected by abuse. Children who are exposed to domestic violence or who are sexually abused have the best hope of recovery if there is an adult nearby who will listen, believe, and care enough to act.

(www.blackburncenter.org)

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.

Ending child sexual abuse requires ending other forms of **OPPRESSION and VIOLENCE**

Child sexual abuse is a form of violence that is an outflow of systems of oppression ...

If we want to end child sexual abuse, we have to participate in movements and organizing that also address larger systems of oppression.

When we make child sexual abuse a problem of the individual, we fail to understand the root causes of the issue and then are ineffective in changing the social conditions that make child sexual abuse so widespread.

– Generation FIVE, generationfive.org

Challenging gender attitudes and media messages is not easy, but the men and women of Blackburn Center's Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV) Taskforce of Westmoreland County have been at it for several years. Through



speaking engagements, panels, pledge signing events and other activities, MASV focuses attention on the myths surrounding date rape and sexual assault. Many forms of media and technology perpetuate these myths by over-sexualizing girls and women. The result is a wide-spread societal acceptance, even expectation, of sex and violence in our culture, along with a tendency to blame the victim instead of the perpetrator.

Included in MASV's message is the recognition that men and boys can also be victims, and that sexual violence affects family members and friends as well as the victims themselves.

The most recent addition to MASV in Westmoreland County comes from the University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg (UPG). Led by student Chad Smith, the UPG Men's Group has carried out education and training programs throughout the year, both on and off campus. This spring, Chad will speak to a teen father's group, and will attend the MASV State Conference in June, where the Westmoreland Taskforce will lead a workshop.

Like UPG, Seton Hill University has hosted MASV activities, including a public MASV Pledge signing and a panel discussion on the importance of having men involved in the movement against sexual violence.

All speaking and training events through Blackburn Center's Education Department include the MASV message, and several recent events for boys and young adult males have been led by members of the Taskforce. Westmoreland County's MASV Taskforce is one of the largest and most active of its kind in Pennsylvania. To schedule a speaker for your group or to find out more about volunteering with the Taskforce, contact Dottie at 724-837-9540 ext. 114 or via e-mail at DottieC@blackburncenter.org.

COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL FORMED FOR THE HERO PROJECT

Child sexual abuse is a crime that is committed every day, in every social, economic, racial, ethnic and religious group in the country. It happens in our cities, suburbs and rural communities. It is not typically, as some people think, a crime committed by a stranger. In fact, 85% of child sexual abuse cases are committed by family members, caregivers, neighbors and friends. In 2006 in the state of Pennsylvania, more than 4,151 reports of suspected child abuse were substantiated according to the Child Abuse Annual Report through the Department of Public Welfare. Child sexual abuse was involved in 59% of all substantiated reports.

Child sexual abuse is a national problem, but solutions begin in neighborhoods and communities, one step at a time. The HERO Project was launched in 1997 to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and encourage intervention when abuse is suspected. To expand the project's impact, Blackburn Center has recently convened a HERO Project Community Action Council.

This Council will lead regional grassroots efforts aimed at increasing the willingness of parents, relatives, teachers, caregivers and acquaintances to intervene to protect children, and report suspected child sexual abuse.

In order to communicate the problem and encourage people who suspect child abuse to report it, the HERO Project Community Action Council will take the message to neighborhoods, schools, universities, social service agencies and businesses to ease the apprehension felt by many child protectors about reporting abuse.

To learn more about child sexual abuse and how to report it, visit the HERO Project website at www.hero-project.org, Blackburn Center's website at www.blackburncenter.org, or call the HERO toll-free hotline at 1-877-874-HERO. To learn more about the HERO Project Community Action Council, contact Dottie at 724-837-9540 ext. 114 or via e-mail at DottieC@blackburncenter.org.

STEP IN, STOP ABUSE. BE A HERO TODAY.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF PROMISE TO NURTURE A BOUQUET OF HOPE.

For the past several years, Blackburn Center has offered a meaningful way for you to mark important occasions and to honor special people in your life – a special occasion card.

This year's card, designed by Holly Crowther, features wild flowers with a quote from Theodore Roethke, "Deep in their roots, all flowers keep the light." Each card will be hand-colored by a client or a friend of Blackburn Center, and your message will be added inside.

For each \$25 gift to Blackburn Center, we will send a card to the person you specify. For any level of giving, your name and the name of the person or occasion you honor will be included in the summer edition of our newsletter, and your name will appear in Blackburn Center's Annual Report. (If you prefer, we will list you as "anonymous.") We have enclosed a remittance envelope for your convenience.

We hope you will consider this a way of touching the lives of thousands of people in our community as you touch the lives of those you honor. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for sharing in our mission.

www.blackburncenter.org

As we've noted in recent newsletters, Blackburn Center has rededicated efforts to address an important part of our mission – **the rights of all people to live free from violence and oppression.** Our website is a core strategy for dissemination of information, both through e-mail communication and the creation of a comprehensive library of resources on the site. We have upgraded the website to be more reflective of our commitment to social transformation, to more clearly describe the impact of our services, and to provide tangible information to support our call to action to the community. To become part of the solution, visit us at www.blackburncenter.org.

More Ways to Help Blackburn Center...

Give us your old car (or motorcycle, van, truck, or boat) and receive a tax deduction. Call us at 724-837-9540 for details. If you do decide to make the donation, we will connect you to Goodwill Industries so you can make arrangements to have your vehicle towed.

Use GoodSearch as your on-line search engine, and **designate Blackburn Center as your charity of choice.** GoodSearch donates fifty percent of its revenue to the agencies designated by its users. The number of searches completed determines how much the agency receives. And the money donated comes from the advertisers. The users and organizations do not spend a dime.

CORRECTION

We extend an apology for having omitted the following donor from this year's annual report: Family Eye Care West.

Improving the Status of Women in Westmoreland County

Blackburn Center has joined representatives from a number of local organizations to launch an important project for our local communities: *Improving the Status of Women in Westmoreland County: A Strategic Approach.* This partnership brings together women leaders from the business, education and not-for-profit sectors who are collectively concerned about the status of women in our community and who want to lead systemic change.

Improving the Status of Women in Westmoreland County: A Strategic Approach will employ three strategies to improve the status of women in our community. The first step is to compile existing research and conduct additional research to assess the current status of women in the county across a variety of issues, such as pay equity, the incidence of violence against women, health concerns, and leadership opportunities. Using this information as a benchmark and call to action, the next step is to host a summit in fall 2008, convening community leaders from the public sector, businesses and nonprofit organizations. The goal of the summit is to raise the level of awareness of the status of women and to engage participants in prioritizing the key issues for action. The third strategy is to work toward systemic change on the issues identified at the summit.

Initial planning team members include representatives from Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, YWCA of Westmoreland County, Westmoreland County Commission for Women and Families, Seton Hill University, including E-Magnify, and the United Way of Westmoreland County and its Women's Leadership Council.

AN EVENING OF GIVING

Monday, September 22, 2008
Rizzo's Malabar Inn Restaurant, Crabtree

A sampling of Rizzo's cuisine and cocktails to support
one of our community's most urgent causes.

Una Sera del Dare

AN EVENING OF GIVING



Blackburn Center
AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT BENEFIT BLACKBURN CENTER AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Call **724-837-9540** for more information