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April is
**Sexual
Assault**
Awareness Month

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Greensburg, PA

Working Together to Transform Our Society

As a member of Blackburn Center's Board of Directors, I have witnessed remarkable change in our community and our organization over the past twenty years. This transformation can also be seen in my own involvement with Blackburn Center and my beliefs in the work that we need to do to end gender-based violence.

In the late 1990's, I started to donate to Blackburn Center because I believed in its mission and its role in Westmoreland County. I felt strongly that everyone should be able to live in a secure place. The fact that so many people in our society are not able to come home to safety greatly disturbs me, and made me want to get involved in a more tangible way. Learning more about domestic violence and sexual assault, I realized that the primary perpetrators are men. I knew a few bad men were giving our entire gender a bad name, and that it was up to men like me to make a change.

With that in mind, I decided to increase my role with Blackburn Center. I underwent training and joined the Speakers' Bureau. I began to speak to groups of men about gender violence, often asking them if they have wives, daughters or mothers, and relating the issue to these personal connections. Next, I was asked to join the Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV) group and the agency's Social Transformation Committee. Ultimately, I joined the Board of Directors. One of the unique aspects that I have found in working with Blackburn Center is that it strives to include men in its work, so that we can work collaboratively to transform society and end domestic and sexual violence.

Over the years, my beliefs about gender-based violence have evolved. When it comes to violence against women, men hold the power to change. We have to be involved in order for there to be an end to the violence. If men are the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence, and if we are the ones who are currently creating and enforcing the laws on domestic and sexual violence, then we must be involved in order to make the change. While the ultimate goal is for women to be equally involved in creating and enforcing

these laws, until that time, men must be involved in the work to end domestic and sexual violence. This is not a women's issue. It's a men's issue.

It is also a human issue. We should care about gender-based violence because women are people, and because violence is wrong—not just because we care about our wives, sisters, daughters and mothers. In my work with Blackburn Center, I have learned that the root causes of domestic and sexual violence are gender inequality and the objectification of women. Instead of focusing solely on protecting the women we care about, we should view women as equal partners in society. By doing this, we can truly reach a point where domestic and sexual violence are no longer acceptable.



I have been incredibly proud to see Blackburn Center take the lead on social transformation issues in Westmoreland County and throughout Pennsylvania. At the same time, our organization has maintained its commitment to providing high-quality services to victims of all types of violence and crime, and to the community as a

whole. This two-pronged approach will make sure that people continue to get the help that they need, while continually working towards the goal of ending gender-based violence.

We have made incredible strides in changing the conversation on gender-based violence in the past twenty years. Through the hard work and dedication of Blackburn Center, its staff, board members, and volunteers, I know that we can continue to make even more positive changes to our society.

Len Caric is a member of Blackburn Center's Board of Directors and has been involved with the agency for more than 20 years. He is the President of Uncle Charley's Sausage, is an independent film maker under his production company AmericanArkFilms and teaches Entrepreneurial Studies at Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper and Heinz Schools.



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.

Spring 2017

STANDINGSTRONG

Blackburn Center News



Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®

The 7th Annual Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence

Calling ALL Courageous Men of Westmoreland County!

We invite you to become actively involved in Blackburn Center's mission... to raise your voice (as you move your feet!) in speaking out against the social norms that perpetuate domestic and sexual violence.

Saturday, April 22, 2017

St. Clair Park, Greensburg

Registration: 9:00AM – 10:00AM

Walk begins at 10:00AM

Registration is \$5 for each participant.

Men, women and children are welcome.

Includes free event t-shirt (while supplies last).

Teams are encouraged! Form groups at work or school and walk as a team.

You may carry an identifying banner, but the banner must be pre-approved by Blackburn Center prior to the Walk.

To register or for more information:

blackburncenter.org/events or call 724.837.9540 x144.

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 all other crimes; emergency shelter is available to survivors of intimate partner violence and their dependent children. Blackburn Center also provides community education, school student awareness programs and in-service professional trainings throughout Westmoreland County.

We're here to listen. Reach out to us 24/7. No fees. No judgment. Just help.

We provide services for anyone whose life has been affected by any type of violence or crime.

- 24-hour hotline, providing support, options and community resources
- Counseling and therapy
- Accompaniment at hearings and trials
- Accompaniment at emergency rooms (for victims of domestic and sexual violence)
- Shelter (for victims of domestic violence and their children)

All services are confidential, can be anonymous and are available to women, children and men.

24-hour hotline 724.836.1122 or 1.888.832.2272, Deaf and hard-of-hearing may use VRS to call hotline



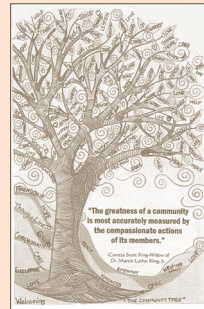
REMINDERS

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.

2015/2016 Annual Report

To reduce costs and environmental impact, we will be posting Blackburn Center's Annual Report on our website: blackburncenter.org. The 2015/2016 report is now available for your review. Please let us know if you'd like a hard copy sent to you; call 724.837.9540.



The Special Occasion Card: A Greeting with a Purpose

For 18 years, Blackburn Center has offered a meaningful way for you to mark important occasions and celebrate special people in your life through our Special Occasion Card. This year's card, designed by a Blackburn Center friend, features a verse from Coretta Scott King: "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

For each \$25 gift to Blackburn Center, we will send a card to the person you specify and will include your personal message inside the card. For any level of giving, your name and the name of the person or occasion you honor will be included in the fall 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 in this newsletter for your convenience. Please consider this way to touch 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.

Reaching Out to Underserved Populations

In over forty years of providing services to Westmoreland County, Blackburn Center has helped thousands of residents heal and regain a sense of hope after the devastating impact of domestic violence, sexual assault or other types of violence of crime. Yet despite reaching so many people through these efforts, we knew that in some situations, we were not reaching some of our most vulnerable citizens. That is why we have undertaken a new project designed to ensure that everyone who needs us has access to our services.

In 2016, Blackburn Center applied for and received a grant through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to start our UP program. UP stands for Underserved Populations, and is initially designed to reach four key demographics: residents of Westmoreland County who are (1) 60 and older; (2) dealing with mental health issues; (3) victims of human trafficking; or (4) live in outlying parts of the county. Based on our research, we knew that these groups of people had a need for our services, but may have barriers that prevented them from seeking help. This grant will help Blackburn Center close that gap, and make sure that every resident who would benefit from our services will be able to utilize them.

For example, we know that Westmoreland County is a geographically large area. At 1,027 square miles, it is the eighth largest county in the state and had a population of 359,320 people as of 2014. Public transportation is limited through much of the county, and cab service is either not available or expensive. The courthouse and many support services—including Blackburn Center's office—are located in Greensburg. This can present a challenge for a victim of violence or crime who wants to seek help, but lacks the means to travel to Greensburg. As part of the UP program, Blackburn Center has hired a credentialed therapist who is traveling to outlying areas of Westmoreland County to work with victims of crime and violence. Our UP Program team has identified safe sites in these locations where victims can access our services in a secure, confidential setting. We are continuing to identify these satellite locations so that people throughout Westmoreland County can receive Blackburn Center services. Our team is also working with businesses and organizations throughout Westmoreland County to raise awareness about Blackburn Center and the services that we offer so that fewer needs go unmet in our community.

We also know that Westmoreland County has a higher percentage of seniors than other counties in Pennsylvania, and than in the United States as a whole. Elder abuse is a growing crime, with some estimating that only 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse are reported. This represents another population that is underserved, and where our organization can improve its outreach efforts. Through the UP program, Blackburn Center is partnering with Westmoreland County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Senior Centers around the county to reach more seniors in Westmoreland County who may require our services. Our UP Program team is also visiting senior living residences and centers across Westmoreland County to spread awareness of our services, to be sure victims of elder abuse or their loved ones know how to reach us in their time of need.

In addition to outlying areas and seniors, Blackburn Center will also be working directly with local government agencies and organizations to implement strategies to reach victims of human trafficking, to train professionals on recognizing human trafficking, and to provide services to victims of violence and crime who are also dealing with mental health issues. Our next steps will be to expand our UP program to include people with physical disabilities and the LGBTQ community, with the ultimate goal to have addressed any barrier that would limit victims of violence or crime from receiving the services that Blackburn Center offers.

We Are Here For Westmoreland County

In times of societal and political change across the country, it is only natural that many organizations spring into existence to meet the needs of people who might otherwise be marginalized or overlooked. The spirit that moves individuals and communities to organize, reach out and lend a helping hand, and give voice for those who may otherwise be neglected is one that is fundamental to our nation's values. It is also at the heart of Blackburn Center's work right here in Westmoreland County.

For more than forty years, Blackburn Center has provided services to victims of violence and crime in Westmoreland County—and we will continue to be here for as long as we are needed. Our organization has long-standing roots and relationships in this community, working hand-in-hand with county agencies and systems, local schools, businesses, churches and civic groups to develop a network of services that are available both to victims of violence and crime and to the community as a whole.

Blackburn Center receives funding from federal and state government sources, as well as local sources such as United Way, foundations, community groups, businesses, churches and individuals in the community who believe in our mission.

When you give to Blackburn Center, your donation has a direct, tangible impact in Westmoreland County, supporting our mission to not only provide services, but to transform our society so that one day the violence will end.

In uncertain times, we must rely more on local support to continue our mission of providing services to thousands of individuals in Westmoreland County each year. These services include our 24-hour hotline, therapy and counseling, medical and legal advice and accompaniment, training and educational programs, and our campus-based programming at Seton Hill University, the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, St. Vincent College and Westmoreland County Community College. When you give to Blackburn Center, your donation has a direct, tangible impact in Westmoreland County, supporting our mission to not only provide services, but to transform our society so that one day the violence will end.

As the organization in Westmoreland County that provides services for victims of any type of violence and crime, including domestic and sexual violence, Blackburn Center is proud to have served this community for more than four decades. We invite you to join in our mission, and help us continue to support victims and enact change in the years to come. To learn more about our mission and how you can get involved, please visit our website at blackburncenter.org.

24-HOUR HOTLINE
724.836.1122
or 1.888.832.2272
Deaf and hard-of-hearing
may use VRS to call hotline

NEEDS LIST

A donation of items from the needs list throughout the year helps Blackburn Center sustain the shelter program, and helps to maintain the support groups the agency provides for victims of crime. In addition, some of these items are made available to clients – and their children – who are establishing their own homes and need support with basic household items.

Please put the items that are 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.

For more info about donation opportunities, contact: Blackburn Center, PO Box 398, Greensburg, PA 15601, 724.837.9540, blackburncenter.org

KITCHEN
Coffee (regular)
Coffee creamer
Cookie sheets
Cooking oil
Dish Sets - 4 place settings
Canned food & non-perishables including: soups, condiments (mayonnaise, mustard & catsup), jelly, cake & brownie mixes, canned tuna, chicken and other meats, canned or bottled juices.
Glass baking dishes
Paper towels & paper towel holders
Pots & pan sets, skillets
Small appliances: electric can openers, coffee makers, toasters, mixers, etc.
Zip-lock bags: 2 gallon sizes

BEDROOM
Alarm clocks
Bed pillows - machine washable & durable
Bed-in-a-bag sets
Garbage bags: 8 gallon size
Pajamas: summer-weight
Women's: XS, L, XL & 1X
Boys: 3, 6, 9, 12 & 18 months sizes 7, 10-12 & 14-16
Girls: 0-6 months, 9, 12 & 18 months sizes 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16
Infants: gender neutral
Slippers - all sizes

BATHROOM
Bath mats
Garbage bags: 8 gallon size
Toilet paper
Towels: durable bath and hand towels and washcloths

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS
Lotion
Lip balm

MISCELLANEOUS
Baby wipes
Bras - all sizes
Clear plastic bins (approx. 23 3/4" L x 16 3/8" W x 12 3/8" H - 66 qts.)
Fabric softener sheets
Flashlights
Gasoline cards: GetGo & Sheetz
Gift cards: Giant Eagle, Walmart, Shop 'N Save & Target
Juice boxes
Laundry detergent
Laundry baskets
Mops
Mr. Clean Magic Erasers
Outdoor garbage bags
Phone cards
Sweat suits: **Small, Medium, Large**
Telephones
Tool kits
Underpants: women's sizes 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Waste baskets

Items no longer needed at this time: Bars of soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes & Hotel-size personal care items