



## National Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Presidential Proclamation *Excerpts*

Every day, women, men, and children across America suffer the pain and trauma of sexual assault. From verbal harassment and intimidation to molestation and rape, this crime occurs far too frequently, goes unreported far too often, and leaves long-lasting physical and emotional scars. During National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we recommit ourselves not only to lifting the veil of secrecy and shame surrounding sexual violence, but also to raising awareness, expanding support for victims, and strengthening our response.

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.*

BARACK OBAMA

Sexual violence is an affront to our national conscience, one which we cannot ignore. It disproportionately affects women — an estimated one in six American women will experience an attempted or completed rape at some point in her life. Too many men and boys are also affected.

... Alarming rates of sexual violence occur among young women attending college, and frequently, alcohol or drugs are used to incapacitate the victim. Among people with disabilities, isolation may lead to repeated assaults and an inability to seek and locate help. Native American women are more than twice as likely to be sexually assaulted compared with the general population. As a Nation, we share the responsibility for protecting each other from sexual assault, supporting victims when it does occur, and bringing perpetrators to justice.

## SO WHAT CAN I DO? Plenty! Read on...

In the September 2006 edition of this newsletter, Blackburn Center introduced readers to a position statement on social change adopted by our Board of Directors. Through this position statement, Blackburn Center took a significant step in re-dedicating energy to the fundamental work that is needed to end domestic and sexual violence: challenging the social norms and beliefs that perpetuate this violence. If you've been reading the newsletter since that time, you have had a chance to learn more about the underlying systemic issues that are at the root of gender violence.

We know there needs to be more — more opportunities for action, more concrete things you can be doing to further this goal of challenging social norms, more guidance for business owners and community leaders about the part they can play in crafting solutions. We've identified some things that you can commit to, as you explore your role as an advocate for social change.

1. To change the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate gender violence, we must understand their origins. We're interested in hearing what you have to say about this. We plan to convene community conversations — to open a dialogue with anyone who has ideas to share and perspective to offer. And we're looking for community members who would be interested.
2. Blackburn Center has been very involved in the Status of Women in Westmoreland County project. The status of women in our communities is not what it should be — and touches lives in terms of economic justice, access to healthcare, opportunities to guide the future of the community, and the incidence of violence. These issues are interwoven, which means that they have a compounding effect on women. The good news, though, is that impacting one area can have a positive effect across the board. This initiative has several activities currently underway, and needs community support.
3. Volunteer to be a social change advocate — you may be writing letters or working on activities that call the community to action (see the article in this newsletter about "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes").
4. Volunteer to be a Blackburn Center crisis counselor. You will make an immediate difference for people whose lives have been turned upside down by domestic or sexual violence.

**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.**

See inside for more ways that you can help to raise awareness in our community!

April is **Sexual Assault**  
Awareness Month

If you'd like to learn more about any of these opportunities, please call Ann at 724-837-9540, x 115.



The chilly temperatures and drizzle on April 2 didn't faze the people of Westmoreland County as 300 supporters attended the first annual **Walk A Mile In Her Shoes®** event in this area. Inspired by the saying, "you can't understand another person's experience until you've walked a mile in their shoes," more than thirty courageous men wore women's shoes to walk, strut or hobble — and in a few cases, run — around the Lynch Field track. They were joined by other men, and women and children of all ages.

This tremendous show of support by the community demonstrates that gender violence is not just a women's issue. It takes the entire community — women and men — being conscious of the words and actions that marginalize women every day. To stop the violence we must demand an end to demeaning jokes, misogynistic ads, violent movies and video games. It takes the entire community educating ourselves, and especially our children, about the root causes of gender violence. It takes the entire community standing up and saying, "Enough! No more gender violence!" Only then will our community become a safer place for everyone.

*Social transformation begins with social engagement.*



## Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®

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

**Saturday, April 2, 2011**

*Sponsored by*  
 **Blackburn Center**  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

*Thank you  
 to our sponsors and supporters*

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 Skysight Photography  
 Target  
 The Chocolate Shoppe  
 The Supper Club  
 Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra

## The Special Occasion Card: A Greeting with a Purpose

Planting the seeds of promise to nurture a bouquet of hope.

For the twelfth year, Blackburn Center is continuing its spring tradition of providing a meaningful way for you to mark important occasions and to honor important people in your life: special occasion cards with an original sketch. This year's card, designed by Susanna Gardikes, a friend of Blackburn Center, features a poem from Chief Dan George.

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 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 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.

The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air,  
the fragrance of the grass speaks to me.

The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky,  
the rhythm of the sea, speaks to me.

The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning,  
the dewdrop on the flower, speaks to me.

The strength of the fire, the taste of salmon,  
the trail of the sun,

and the life that never goes away, they speak to me  
and my heart soars.

— Chief Dan George

### Seton Hill University Partners with Blackburn Center

Blackburn Center has an unprecedented opportunity with a project at Seton Hill University to make significant strides in its mission to transform the social norms that perpetuate domestic and sexual violence. Seton Hill has made an institutional commitment to undertake both campus-wide and curriculum-based activities to engage university students in Blackburn Center's social transformation goals. This is a long-term commitment: the two organizations are developing primary prevention strategies that will change attitudes and beliefs about domestic and sexual violence, and will test the effectiveness of these strategies over time — a span of 5 to 10 years at minimum.

The effectiveness of these activities will be measured with a survey that is administered to incoming freshmen, who will complete the same survey at the end of their senior year. The survey measures the impact of campus/course activities by assessing students' understanding of the root causes of gender violence, their attitudes and beliefs about these issues, and their commitment to supporting strategies to end gender violence.

### Stand Against Racism!

April 29, 2011

Blackburn Center joins the YWCA of Westmoreland County to raise awareness that racism still exists in our communities. Blackburn Center stands for the right of individuals to be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve and we commit ourselves to take action for peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

Please take a stand with us on April 29!

For more information about how you can participate, visit [www.StandAgainstRacism.org](http://www.StandAgainstRacism.org)

*Save the Date*

**Monday, September 19, 2011**

The Supper Club at the Greensburg Train Station

Join us for an abundance of exceptional hors d'oeuvres and desserts.  
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

**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](http://www.blackburncenter.org)

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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.*



United Way  
 of Westmoreland County  
 Donor Designation 382

## Annual Report

Again this year, to reduce costs and environmental impact, we have posted Blackburn Center's Annual Report on our website:

**[www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org)**  
 (Information and Resources/  
 Publications Library)

If you'd like us to send you a hard copy, call  
**724-837-9540, x101**  
 or e-mail  
[anita@blackburncenter.org](mailto:anita@blackburncenter.org).



PO Box 398  
 Greensburg, PA 15601-0398

Address Service Requested

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

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 women and children. In addition, 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 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.

### ■ KITCHEN

Baking pans: 9" x 13"  
 Coffee: regular & decaffeinated  
 Coffee creamer  
 Cooking oil  
 Cookie sheets  
 Drink boxes  
 Food items: any canned food,  
 other non-perishables, etc.  
 Food storage containers  
 Kitchen garbage bags  
 Small appliances: coffee maker,  
 can opener, knife sharpener,  
 microwave oven  
 Spices and condiments  
 Tea towels

### ■ BATHROOM

Bath mats  
 Heating pads  
 Over the counter medication  
 Paper products: toilet paper  
 Plungers  
 Shower curtains and rings  
***Towel sets***

### ■ BEDROOM

***Mattress pads: quilted, full***  
 Pajamas: children's all sizes &  
 women's one-size-fits-most  
***Sheet sets: full***

### ■ MISCELLANEOUS

Bottled water  
 Brooms

### *Gasoline cards*

***Gift cards: Walmart or Target***  
 Laundry detergent  
 Light bulbs: 60-watt & 3-way  
 Mops  
 Outdoor garbage bags  
 Play-Doh  
 Storage bins: 45 qt, clear plastic  
 with lids  
***Sweat suits: all sizes***  
 Underpants: women's sizes

### ■ PERSONAL CARE

*Hotel-size items are no longer needed.*  
 Conditioner  
 Lotion  
 Sunscreen: 4 oz size

**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.

**"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."**

*- Marian Wright Edelman*