



**BlackburnCenter**  
Standing together to end violence.

Spring 2020

# STANDINGSTRONG

Blackburn Center News

## **We're still here!**

**Blackburn Center provides essential services to our community, and we remain open in these challenging times so we can continue to provide these services.**

**For victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse and other crimes, we are still here for you.**

- **24/7 Hotline: 888-832-2272**
- **Emergency shelter for victims of intimate partner violence**
- **Phone-based counseling and therapy**
- **Phone-based support during emergency room visits and legal proceedings specific to the type of victimization**

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We hope this message finds you safe and healthy during these difficult and uncertain times. Because of the ongoing concerns surrounding COVID-19, this edition of Blackburn Center's newsletter is being distributed electronically only, rather than in print. Our Spring 2020 Newsletter includes:

- information about Blackburn Center's virtual education programs,
- an update regarding our response to human trafficking,
- an easy way to make donations to support the essential services that we continue to provide, through our annual All Occasion Card campaign,
- an announcement about GiveBig Pittsburgh, a fundraising effort to support nonprofit organizations as a response to the pandemic, and
- a thank you – attached separately – to the businesses, organizations and individuals who supported our Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event this year, even though we had to cancel it!

We appreciate you taking the time to read through all of this important information.

As we adjust to the changes in the world around us, we remain committed to our mission, our clients, and our community. Thank you for your continued support in standing with us to end violence.

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## Virtual Education Resources

Blackburn Center's Education Department has produced videos for children during this time of isolation and on-line learning. The current Empathy Series can be viewed on Blackburn Center's YouTube Channel. The Empathy Series includes the following:

- **A Parent's Guide:** a short video for parents and caregivers that introduces Blackburn Center's virtual book series for young children on Empathy Building. The first video in the empathy series is
- **Feelings video:** based on the book The Way I Feel by Janan Cain. This video helps children identify their feelings and know that it is okay to feel certain emotions.
- **Hands Are Not for Hitting** by Martine Agassi: teaches that violence is never okay. The video helps children identify feelings of anger and other strong feelings. The book illustrates how our hands are capable of positive, loving actions like being helpful, playing music, saying hello and goodbye, taking care of ourselves and others, and much more!

We will be adding more videos each week to this series. Please feel free to share these important messages using the link below:

<https://www.blackburncenter.org/empathy-series-resources>

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## Blackburn Center Leads Response to Human Trafficking in Westmoreland County

Human trafficking — also known as modern-day slavery — affects hundreds of thousands of people throughout the United States. It involves the use of fraud, coercion or force to make others provide labor or services, or to work in the commercial sex trade. In many communities, including here in Westmoreland County, victims of human trafficking are most often controlled through coercion by intimate partners, friends, or family members, experiencing a sense of entrapment and domination by their trafficker. While viral social media posts warn of the danger of being forced into human trafficking through kidnapping, in the vast majority of cases, people who engage in human trafficking use psychological tactics — not physical force — to take advantage of their victims.

As the agency in Westmoreland County focused on helping victims and survivors of violence and crime, Blackburn Center provides assistance to those who have been ensnared by human trafficking. Our work includes providing services to victims and survivors of human trafficking, as well as education and outreach efforts designed to raise awareness about this problem. In addition, we act as the lead agency for the Westmoreland County Human Trafficking Task Force. Importantly, human trafficking does not just involve forcing someone to engage in the commercial sex trade. It can happen in a range of industries, including hotels and hospitality, construction, health and beauty services, agriculture, domestic work, commercial cleaning services, and healthcare. Risk factors for human trafficking include recent migration or relocation, substance use, homeless or runaway youth, mental health issues, and involvement in the child welfare system.

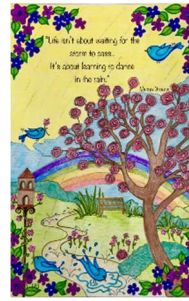
If you would like to learn more about human trafficking, including the signs of trafficking, visit our website at [www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org), or call us to schedule an education program or training (724-837-9540, X 103). You can also contact our hotline 24 hours a day at 888-832-2272 or 724-836-1122. Calls to our hotline are free of charge, confidential, and can be anonymous.

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## The Special Occasion Card:

### A Greeting with a Purpose



For 20 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. During this time of social distancing and staying safe, our all occasion cards make it easier than ever to send a card to a loved one, all while supporting our services.

This year's beautiful card, designed by a friend of Blackburn Center, features the verse:

*Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...It's about learning to dance in the rain. –Vivian Greene*

For each \$25 gift to Blackburn Center, we will send a card to the person you specify and will include a message specific to the occasion 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.")

You can make a donation and send a card (or cards) of your choosing via our website:

[www.blackburncenter.org/greetingcards](http://www.blackburncenter.org/greetingcards)

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.

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## Give Big Pittsburgh COVID-19 Response Campaign

Rather than waiting until the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (Giving Tuesday) to launch the fourth annual Give Big Pittsburgh campaign, Pittsburgh Magazine is jumping in now with the COVID-19 Response Campaign, an effort to assist in raising critical dollars — in the safest way possible — for nonprofits in Western Pennsylvania during this time of exceptional need.

This major fundraising event will support non-profits such as Blackburn Center that are providing essential services to those affected by the disease AND organizations whose operations have been disrupted by the economic shutdown deployed to fight the pandemic.

The campaign will kick off at midnight on Tuesday, May 5 and conclude at midnight on Sunday, May 31. Follow this link to donate to Blackburn Center:

[https://www.givebigpittsburgh.com/search?lat=&lng=&location=&page=1&query=blackburn&tag\\_id](https://www.givebigpittsburgh.com/search?lat=&lng=&location=&page=1&query=blackburn&tag_id)

More information regarding this event will be posted on our website: [www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org)

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## REMINDERS

### United Way Campaign

All Southwestern PA 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.

### 2018-19 Annual Report

To reduce costs and environmental impact, we will be posting Blackburn Center's Annual Report on our website: [www.blackburncenter.org](http://www.blackburncenter.org).

The 2018-19 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.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Blackburn Center has volunteer positions available. To learn about these opportunities, call our office: 724-837-9540, x114.



### Board of Directors

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### Blackburn Center

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

Follow us on Twitter: @blackburncenter

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[facebook.com/blackburncenterpa](https://facebook.com/blackburncenterpa)

## Blackburn Center Vision, Mission and Values Statements

### VISION

Blackburn Center envisions a world free from domestic and sexual violence and other forms of violence.

### MISSION

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.

### VALUES

1. Commit to outstanding services. (Client-driven services; continuous improvement through evaluation; competency focus; commitment to diversity)
2. Maximize resources through ethical stewardship. (Funds, staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, community relationships, goodwill, courage of spirit, reputation, opportunities, knowledge base/expertise, survivors' experiences)
3. Challenge the social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence. (Purposeful view of all aspects of the agency's work through a social transformation perspective.)

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 domestic violence and their dependent children. Blackburn Center also provides community education, school student awareness programs, and in-service professional trainings throughout Westmoreland County.

*Blackburn Center is funded in part by United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, 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.*