

Beginnings



Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence

Spring 2008 Volume 30 Issue 1



***Celebrating Women of the Coast – 30 Years of Celebrating Women
30th Anniversary of the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence***

Center Board of Directors and Staff

The Gulf Coast Women's Center is very proud of the commitment from the Board of Directors and the Staff.

2008 Board of Directors

Darlys Alford, PhD, President
Norma Johnson, Vice President
Julie Kilduff, Treasurer
Valerie Dobson, Secretary
Captain Mick Sears, Member at Large
Cyrellia Toney, Member at Large
Angie Bridges, Ph.D
Cynthia Childers

Patricia Davis, PhD
Mary Kay Deen
Lydia Dougherty
Lena Melton, Ph.D.
Kim Phifer Starks
Betty Spencer
Susan J. Varnes

Welcome to Our New Staff

Paige Chatman
Gayle Frings
Robin Gessner
Lawana Hailey
Julie Hess
Nicole Kidd
Jeffrey Pounders
Sally Smirthwaite

Look for the Center's New Website

gcwcfn.org



Board Member,
Betty Spencer,
assists a volunteer
in preparation for the
Celebration of
Women event.

Crisis Line

**1-800-800-1396 or
(228) 435-1968**

The mission of the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence is to support and serve victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and family members of homicide victims; educate the community; and act to reduce incidences of violence.

When It's Time to Let Go

**When you are walking around on eggshells,
When your hope, your dreams and your spirit fails.
It's time to let go.**

**When you say yes out of fear, instead of saying no out of love,
Or when a simple push becomes a fearful shove.
It's time to let go.**

**When you have no peace in your home,
When you cry out for help and your support system is gone.
It's time to let go.**

**When you have found yourself speechless,
Searching for words,
When your prayers seem like they are no longer heard.
It's time to let go.**

**When all you have done is not good enough,
Hopefully you'll realize that life isn't so tough.
Let Go.**

**For it has to be better ways and better days.
You'll take back control and your life will be okay. – Anonymous**

Outreach Prevention Education

By Karen Henson, Prevention Educator

Outreach Violence Prevention Education had been provided to students in all six of our participating counties during the summer of 2007, and during the 2007-2008 school year. Several thousand students in our local elementary, middle, and secondary schools have received direct instruction in the prevention of bullying, fighting, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and more.

Various curriculums are used, such as Hands Are Not For Hurting for elementary students, and Respect, Safe Dates, and others for secondary students. Instruction is based on the requests and needs of individual teachers, counselors, schools, and districts. Some request small group instruction, while others prefer to combine various groups or classes in a large group setting. The Prevention Educator often presents to entire schools over the course of a few days or a week.

Besides traditional school settings she also presents at alternative schools, juvenile detention centers, churches, community organizations, adult treatment centers, teacher and social worker staff development sessions, health fairs, boys and girls clubs, summer camps and more. Several schools and districts have adopted character education programs, some of which are conducted daily, while others are held periodically throughout the school year. Thus, the Center's violence prevention programs are a great complement to these programs with the material presented often going hand-in-hand.

If you are interested in any of the Center's educational programs please contact, Kay Harris at 228 436-3809 or at kharris@gcwcfn.org.

**Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence
Statistical Information
January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007**

Total Number of Unduplicated Individuals Served:	2,818
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Total Domestic Violence Victims Served (Women and Children)	627
Total New/Reopened	545
Total Carryover	82
Total Nights of Service	11,013
Individual Counseling Sessions	1,775
Group Counseling Sessions	1,109

SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM PROGRAMS

Total Sexual Assault Victims Served (Women and Children)	289
Individual Counseling Sessions	879
Group Counseling Sessions	26
Family Counseling Sessions	109
Hospital Contacts	98

FOREVER CHANGED (SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS PROGRAM)

Total Survivors/Families Served	97
Total Number of Individual and Family Counseling Sessions	140
Total Number of Monthly Support Group Sessions	39
Total Number of Duplicated Group Participants	124
Total Number of Legal Court Advocacy	134

CRISIS HOTLINE

Total Number of Calls	14,876
Total Number of Crisis Calls	8,056
Total Number of Information and Referral Calls	6,820

EDUCATIONAL/PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Total Number of Educational Programs	486
Total Number of Attendees	9,969
Total Number of School/Youth Programs	249
Total Number of Community Education Programs	196
Total Number of Specialized Programs	41

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Total Number of Children Served		314
Total Number of Domestic Violence Children	266	
Total Number of Sexual Assault Children	48	
Total Number of Children enrolled in Preschool.....	24	
Individual Counseling Units		813
Family Counseling Units		682
Group Counseling Units		569
Preschool Hours		6,728
Child Care Hours		4,441

COURT ADVOCATE PROGRAMS

Total Number of Interventions by Court Advocates		3,036
Total Number of Information and Referrals Given.....		1,519

BATTERERS PROGRAMS

Total Number of Batterers participating in program		188
Total Number of New/Reopened	133	
Total Number of Carryover	55	
Total Number of Sessions conducted		144

LEGAL CLINIC

Total Number Accepted, Advised or Referred		98
Total Number of Legal Clinic Referral	168	
Divorces		32
Child Custody		38
Protective Orders		26
Child/Spousal Support		26
Paternity		1
Other Family Law		5

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Total Number of Volunteers		418
Total Number of Recruited Volunteers	61	
Total Number of Rape Crisis Line Volunteers	100	
Total Number of Volunteer Hours Served		19,882
Total Number of Volunteer Training Sessions	22	

**Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence
PO Box 333 Biloxi, MS 39533
Services and Programs**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Domestic Violence Crisis Line 1-800-800-1396 or 228 435-1968

**Domestic Violence Shelter – Crisis and Transitional
Counseling for both residential and nonresidential adults**

Individual

Group

Life Skills

Outreach Counseling in six southernmost counties of Mississippi

Case Management

Court support/Advocacy

Information and Referral

SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM PROGRAMS

Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1-800-800-1396 or 228 435-1968

24 hour Emergency Response/Volunteers

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner trainings

Sexual Assault Response Team participant

Counseling for both residential and nonresidential adults

Individual

Sexual Assault Groups

Incest Survivor Groups

Outreach Counseling in six southernmost counties of Mississippi

Case Management

Court support/ Advocacy

Information and Referral

FOREVER CHANGED (SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS PROGRAM)

228-868-4150

Counseling for both residential and nonresidential adults and children

Individual

Group

Outreach Counseling in six southernmost counties of Mississippi

Case Management

Court Support/Advocacy

Information and Referral

CRISIS HOTLINE

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1-800-800-1396 or 228
435-1968**

24 hours a day 365 days a year

EDUCATIONAL/PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Community Education
School Education Programs
Public Awareness
Fundraising
Public Speaking
Advocacy

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Counseling for domestic violence and/or sexual assault
 Individual
 Group
 Family
Parenting
Prevention Education Programs
Therapeutic "Incredible Years" Preschool Program
Child care
Advocacy
Interagency representation
Tutoring
Information and Referral

COURT ADVOCATE PROGRAMS 228-868-9324

Court Accompaniment/Support
Advocacy
Statistical Data collection
Repeat Offender List
Information and Referral
Public Representation of programs

BATTERERS PROGRAMS 228-868-9324

Domestic Violence Intervention Program – Duluth Model
 Court ordered Anger Management classes
 Men's groups
 Women's group

NORTHCUTT LEGAL CLINIC 228-864-7144 or 228-868-7254

Civil legal services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and
stalking
 Protective Orders
 Divorce
 Child custody and visitation/child support/paternity
 Problems related to:
 Housing/Credit repair/employment/public assistance/immigration

Remembering

Brenda Monroe, Outreach Counselor

The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence has spent 30 years offering safety and support to women and men who have found themselves in a domestic violence relationship. Each time a newsletter is sent out we share the staggering numbers of victims and services the Women's Center has provided throughout the year.

We work very hard and we are all proud of the work we do; actually it is more of a calling or a passion than a job. We are also very proud that most of the people we serve move on to a peaceful, domestic violence free home life; but a few do not. The ones who do not make it out of their domestic violence relationships are the ones I want to remember.

In the last six months of 2007, three of our clients died. They didn't die due to car wrecks or natural causes. Homicide and suicide took these young women from us. Extreme frustration and desperation took these young mothers from their children. Terror and fear took these three women to a premature and violent death.

What is the difference between the hundreds of clients that turn their lives around and get themselves and their children out of the violence, and the ones whose escape is by death? I wish I knew!

We have lethality measures to help assess the danger someone finds themselves in, but there is no way of predicting the "last straw". For some battered women the "last straw" is when she turns the beating and threats into the last time by taking her own life to finally stop the violence. For some the last straw is when he partner finally carries out the threat, verbalized so many times. "One of these days I'm going to kill you", he threatens; and then he did.

There is no sure way of knowing which client is just days away from death due to a domestic violence relationship. Unfortunately, statistics warn us that the most dangerous place for a woman in the United States is in her own home. The leading cause of death for pregnant women is homicide by an intimate partner. What we can know with certainty is that anyone living in domestic violence is always in danger of being physically disabled or killed.

The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence will continue the work of providing the much needed services to victims of domestic violence, and as we do we will remember the precious women we lost in 2007. May they have the peace now that they did not have while they were with us. Thank you for supporting our work.

Celebrating Women of the Coast 2007 – 30 Years of Celebrating Women

The inaugural Celebrating Women of the Coast was held in October 2007 to celebrate the thirty years that the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence has been providing services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault on the Gulf Coast. Our host, the IP Casino and Resort, provided an enchanted atmosphere, wonderful food, and great hospitality. Our honoree guest hostess, Rhonda Weidner, was charming and gracious. And Full Cycle set the mood with their unique blend of contemporary, folk, and rock music.

The evening was a wonderful success. The silent auction included many wonderful items, such as original art and jewelry. Special THANKS go to Jane Philo and Sandra Morrison for sharing both the history and the future vision of the Center. The Center is already looking forward to our next Celebration in October 2008. If you would like to be a part of this incredible event, please contact Lisa Wilbourn at 228 436-3809 or at lwilbourn@gcwcfn.org.



The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence Staff and Board Members present Elaine Stevens, Public Relations Director with the IP Casino and Resort an award for hosting Celebrating Women of the Coast 2007.

Rhonda Weidner receives an appreciation award for her support of the Center in 2007 from Lisa Wilbourn and the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence staff at a luncheon.



Pictures from Celebrating Women of the Coast 2007 30 Years of Celebrating Women



silent auction items



Ken Worley, Peggy and Kerwin Cuevas, Jeff Teason and Stacey Myers



Kaye Harris, Laura Milam, Lynn Stalnaker, Lisa Wilbourn, Robin Fairley, Doris Weaver, and Leah Campbell



Volunteer Coordinator Mary Buffington and volunteer at the Saturday Celebrating Women Festival in War Memorial Park



A display of domestic violence t-shirts created by survivors on display at the Saturday festival

A Very Special Thank You to Everyone Who Sponsored and/or Donated Items to Celebrating Women 2007

Shear by Design Hair Salon
Regan G. Carney
Drinx Fine Wine & Spirits
Mary Ann Rich
Sarah Myers
Isle of Capri Casino
Lori Gordon
Judi Buchanan Flutter-By Pottery
Joy C. Panks & Pamela S. Collins
Deep South Tailgating
Pink Heart Funds, JoAn Niceley
Betty Spencer
Carla Bracey/Ann Magee
Frank L. Conaway Jr. DMD PC
Zita Waller
Caty Mahoney Tickled Pink Gift
Boutique
Vrazel's
Vrazel's
Deborah Kennedy Designs
Kyung Ai Park
Jimmy Stroud
Kathryn Taylor Gray
The Purple Snapper
Randy Temple
Heaven Scents Candles
Dawn Cook/Caly's Jewelry Creations
Laurie Johnson
Kathe Calhoun
MS Hancock County Tourism Bureau
Balstrop Gallery-Talle Johnson
Balstrop Gallery-Blake Edwards
Laife Altazan

Rhonda Weidner
Ginger Finnan
Friends of the Animal Shelter in
Hancock County
Lisa Howell Photography
Ancient Oaks Day Spa & Salon
Gulf Hills Golf Club
Isle of Capri Casino
Bonefish Grill
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
Sunkist Country Club
Mockingbird Café
Bayou Vista Golf Course
Treasure Bay Casino & Hotel
A Perfect Image Photography
Winona Knott
Harrison Co. Gem & Mineral Society
Mary & Ken Davidson
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
Di Fillhart
Cathie Milner
Yuki Northington
Silver Moon Photography - Parker Deen
Steve Hill Photography
Scharenne Herrington
Lisa Wilbourn
Tony Howe
Maggie Mays
Lynn Stalwaker
CJ's Food & Market
Linda Farve
Carter Church
M.C. Drake
Negrotto's Gallery
All Phase Electric
Ken Davies
Patricia Coley
Jackies & Co.
Cyrellia Toney
Joan Coleman
Caroline Roberts
Linda Hill
Elizabeth Huffman

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**FOREVER CHANGED SUPPORT GROUP FOR
SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS
CEREMONY OF REFLECTION
DECEMBER 13, 2007**

The annual Ceremony of Reflection for the Forever Changed Support Group for Survivors of Homicide Victims hosted by the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence was held on December 13 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Gulfport. The Ceremony gave Survivors from the six lower MS counties the opportunity to share their holiday reflections on the loss of their loved ones. A Memory Tree Ceremony gave Survivors a chance to hang a meaningful ornament on the tree and talk about a cherished or humorous memory of their loved one. During the music, dinner, and candle lighting, laughter and tears were shared by the 24 who attended.

Public awareness for the Survivors of Homicide Victims is promoted during the year at the April National Crime Victims Rights Week activities and the September 25 National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims. The December Ceremony of Reflection is a special time dedicated to Survivors and their families for sharing and reflecting on their loved ones' lives. The Memory Tree and the ornaments on it will be used each year for this celebration.

The Forever Changed Group and it's members are a great resource for anyone enduring the loss of a loved one to murder, manslaughter, or related violent death. Some have experienced the loss for 10 years, some for a few months. There is strength and wisdom in the group. It is a place to share and to receive. The group meets twice a month, once in Gulfport, and once in Pascagoula. If you know of someone who needs this support group, please let them know Forever Changed is available. Call 228-868-4150 for more information.

Doris Weaver, Advocate
Survivors of Homicide Program

Center's Speakers Bureau

The Center provides speakers to schools, community groups, and other agencies on a number of topics involving family violence, sexual assault, children exposed to violence and related prevention issues. Please contact the Kaye Harris, Special Programs Director, for more information.

(228) 435-3809 or kharris@gcwcfn.org

**Appointments for Counseling for
Adults and Children can be made by
calling (228) 374-4031**

Northcutt Legal Clinic

"Civil legal assistance for domestic
violence and sexual assault victims"

228 864-7144

Thank You!

To all those in the community who support the Center each year like these individuals and businesses.



Sandra Morrison, Executive Director accepting a check from Northrup Grumman representatives

IP Casino
Bancorp South
Bel-Aire Baptist
Bethel Lutheran Church
Bible Baptist
Biloxi Regional Hospital
Calvary Independent
Catholic Youth Organization
Church of Christ
Church of God
Commission Road Baptist
Corso INC
Delta Kappa Gamma
Diamondhead Community Church
Domino's Pizza
Eastern Star
Edgewater Rotary
First Baptist
First Baptist Church of OS
First Christian Church
First United Methodist
Furniture Factory Outlet

Garden Park
Greater Mt. Zion
Gulf Hills Women's Golf Association
Handsboro Baptist
Harrison Central High School, Art Club
Jackson Hewitt Tax Service
Keesler Ladies Golf Association
Local 2249 Women's Committee,
Long Beach Presbyterian
MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
Midnight Stars
Moose Lodge
MS Gulf Coast Dart Assoc
Our Lady of Lourdes
Pink Ladies
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
St. Joseph Catholic Church
St. Mary's Guild
St. Matthew Women's Guild
Starks Contracting
Trinity Episcopal Church
Trinity Pentecostal

**For about \$21 a day a victim of domestic violence can receive the following services from the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence:
A safe place; 3 meals and snacks; clothing; personal hygiene; 24/7 crisis intervention; childcare; individual and group counseling; prevention education; parenting support and education; lifeskills training; transportation; education/job training; phone and computer access; and individual, group and family counseling for their children.**

YOUR SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT TO OUR PROGRAMS IS INVALUABLE. PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN PLEDGING A MONTHLY DONATION TO THE GULF COAST WOMEN'S CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE, INC.

_____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ a month.

I'd prefer to make a one time donation of \$ _____.

_____ Please make my donation in Memory or in Honor of _____.

Donor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please complete if this is an Honorarium or Memorial:

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

Occasion: _____

Please send an Honorarium or Memorial Card Memorials and Honorariums are acknowledged.

To: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please mail to:

Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence, Inc.

P.O. Box 333 Biloxi MS 39533

All contributions may be tax deductible as provided by law.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

by Kaye Harris, Special Programs Director

The Month of April brings with it thoughts of new beginnings and warm weather, but unbeknownst to many April is also **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)**. This directed effort for national awareness and education about sexual assault brings attention to the all too prevalent reality of this heinous act. Sexual Assault is defined as any kind of sexual activity that is unwanted, enacted by one person on another without consent- it may include the use of physical force (but many sexual assaults do not), and it involves some combination of coercion, threats and intimidation.

According to the *National Criminal Victimization Study* (2001), 248,000 people over the age of twelve reported being raped. An American citizen is sexually assaulted every two minutes. However, only 38% of sexual assaults are reported to the police and even more horrifying, less than half of those arrested for sexual assault are ever convicted.

The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence Rape Crisis program accomplished great things in 2007. First and foremost, we provided services to 289 adult and child sexual assault victims. In an attempt to help prevent sexual violence through education, the Center offered almost 500 education sessions to almost 10,000 people and another 21,000 received information regarding the Center at area fairs and festivals. The audiences ranged from children, k-12 and university students, to law enforcement officials, DHS workers, mental health professionals, medical personal, and community members.

One of our most important achievements was the development of the Jackson County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). As the first SART on the Coast, the Jackson County team will act as a model for future teams.

ABOUT SART:

What is SART?

SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) is a county-wide victim-sensitive program designed to provide a multidisciplinary team approach to sexual assaults. The team consists of first responders such as, a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) who provides forensic evidentiary examination and medical support, a law enforcement officer who conducts the investigation and provides emergency assistance and a victim advocate who is there to provide emotional support to the victim. A representative from the District Attorney's Office is also on the team. The State Victim Compensation Board pays for the forensic examination and any medical cost that are directly related to the crime.

The **mission** of the SART is to promote social change that fosters a society responsive to victims/survivors, their families, the community and that holds offenders accountable.

What is a SANE?

A SANE is a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, usually a registered nurse (R.N.), who has advanced education and clinical preparation in forensic examination of sexual assault victims. In the 1990s, sexual assault nurse examiner programs sprang up in hundreds of communities across the country to address the inadequacy of the traditional model for sexual assault medical evidentiary exams. Those who work with sexual assault victims have long recognized that victims are often re-traumatized when they are seen in hospital emergency departments for medical care and forensic evidence collection. Not only did victims have to wait for long periods of time to be examined, but those who performed the exams often lacked training and experience in working with sexual assault victims and in gathering forensic evidence. SANE programs have made a profound difference in the quality of care provided to sexual assault victims. SANE programs offer victims prompt, compassionate care and comprehensive forensic evidence collection. In addition to helping preserve the victim's dignity and reduce psychological trauma, SANE programs are enhancing evidence collection for more effective investigations and better prosecutions.

Where are SANE Units on the Gulf Coast?

Biloxi Regional Medical Center
150 Reynoir Street
Biloxi, MS.
228. 432.1571

Memorial Hospital, Gulfport
4500 Thirteenth Street
Gulfport, MS
228. 867.4000

Ocean Springs Hospital
3109 Bienville Boulevard
Ocean Springs, MS
228. 818.1111

Singing River Hospital
2809 Denny Av.
Pascagoula, MS
228. 809.5000

UPCOMING EVENTS:

In recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Center will host a spring fashion show, **Romance with Respect An Evening Under the Stars**, at the IP Casino Resort and Spa's Quench poolside restaurant & lounge. The date for the event is April 29, 2008 from 6-8 pm. For tickets & further information, please call 228. 436.3809.

Shelter Wish List

Liquid Hand Soap Bathroom Cleaner 409 Windex Tylenol Laundry Detergent Paper Towels	Liquid Dish Soap Lysol Spray Toilet Cleaner Pepto Bismal Benadryl Baby Wipes Alarm Clocks	Orange Cleaner (Spray) Walmart Gift Cards Bleach Children's Tylenol Paper Plates Band-Aids Linens	Pajamas Slippers
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The Center is in the process of updating its mailing list and will now be able to email the newsletter and other items of interest to you. Please contact Mary Buffington with your updated information and/or email address at mbuffington@gcwcfn.org or at 228 432-2358

The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence (Center) is a United Way Agency. The Center's services and program are funded in part by VOCA, VAWA, OVW, the Mississippi Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, the Foundation of the MidSouth, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Jackson County, the City of Biloxi, and caring individuals and businesses on the Gulf Coast. The Northcutt Legal Clinic is funded in part by the Mississippi Bar Foundation Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA).

Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence



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PO Box 333
 Biloxi, MS 39533

**Gulf Coast
 Women's Center for
 Nonviolence**

Contact Information
PO Box 333
Biloxi, MS 39533
**Domestic
 Violence/Sexual
 Assault**
 Crisis Line
 1-800-800-1396 or
 (228) 435-1968 or
 (228) 875-5433