

Beginnings

Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence

Fall 2008 Volume 30 Issue 1

Serving Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone, and George Counties



***Elaine Stevens, Public Relations
Manager accepts the
2008 Jane Philo
Award of Excellence
for the JP Casino-Spa-Resort***

The Jane Philo Award of Excellence

In recognizing the community for its support of the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence the first time since Hurricane Katrina devastated our coast, the Center's staff decided that it was imperative to create an award that recognized an individual or business that excelled in supporting not only the Center but the entire Coastal community.

It was a natural progression of developing the special award; to know that the qualities we were looking for in a community supporter had been modeled for us, in over twenty years of service by Jane Philo, Executive Director of the Center from 1983-2004.

This year's recipient was the IP Casino-Resort-Spa for "exhibiting the qualities displayed by Jane Philo in her service to victims and our community: Visionary ideals, goals, and plans; leadership; commitment; advocacy; determination; service to the immediate community and beyond; grace under pressure, and persistence."

The Center thanks the IP Casino-Resort-Spa for their continued support and Jane Philo for her visionary leadership.



Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence, Inc.

Serving Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, Stone, George and Pearl River Counties

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Greetings,

As the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence celebrates another year of service to our community, the counties of Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone, and George on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, we would like to thank everyone who has made our successes in the last year a possibility. To all of our government officials, funders, volunteers, advocates, community partners and neighbors – we could not provide the comprehensive services to victims without your help. Your willingness to provide support and services to the Center allows us to achieve our mission: to support and serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and family members of homicide; to educate the community; and to act to reduce incidences of violence.

As we look to the year ahead, the Center continues to face many challenges. The ongoing staffing shortages that have plagued the Coast since Katrina; funding cutbacks at all levels; and an increase in victims seeking services, are all placing additional burdens on our caring staff members. However, with your assistance the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence will remain a strong staple of the Gulf Coast community and a place of refuge for many.

So as the Center begins its 32nd year of service to the Gulf Coast, let's all try to strive to achieve the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he said: "Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him."

Sandra K. Morrison, ACSW, LCSW
Executive Director

Center Board of Directors and Staff

Board of Directors

Darlys Alford, Ph.D
Angie Bridges, Ph.D
Cynthia Childers
Patricia Davis, Ph.D
Mary Kay Deen
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Julie Kilduff
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Gina McKnight
Jennifer Cox
Wanda Lynn Mayer
Dejha Weathers
Bianca Brooks
Tammy Thompson
Sharri Herring
Cherri Seymour
Shirlee Baldwin

Hancock County – Road to Recovery

Article Submitted by Brenda Monroe, Outreach Counselor

I had an experience the other day in Hancock County that has renewed some of my faith in good people. These good folks are from all over the country and they are here to assist Hancock County's recovery efforts. They are varied in ages, denominations, occupations, ministries, and hometowns, but what they have in common equals to good works in Hancock County.

These good people requested some training about domestic violence because they have recognized a very real need within the communities they are serving. They wanted information about the dynamics of domestic violence and how they can recognize and help the victims and what resources are available. This group was attentive and showed up with a genuine interest and a lot of specific questions.

Sometimes those of us who work in violence prevention and crisis intervention wonder if anyone else is paying attention to the amount of violence we have in our families and communities. I meet people daily who are aware of a couple in their neighborhood fighting to the point of disturbing the peace and their assessment is that she must like it to stay. Maybe she should just keep her mouth shut or figure out how to keep him happy. There seems to be so much violence and so much ignorance about the violence. After a few years, one begins to lose faith in people. Thank goodness a group of good people in Hancock County did not want to be ignorant about violence.

I was the trainer at this workshop but I am the one who gained the most that day. It was a pleasure to be around people who were hungry for information so they can actually go back out in the community and help victims of violence. Remember they came to assist in the rebuilding of Hancock County not to do crisis intervention in domestic violence but they saw the need and acted. That day about thirty people received a lot of information and I received a renewed faith in good people and for that I want to say a sincere thank you.

Brenda Monroe
Outreach Counselor

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

Check out our Website

gcwcfn.org

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.

Northcutt Legal Clinic Receives Office on Violence Against Women Legal Assistance Grant

The Center was recently awarded funding from the Legal Assistance for Victims Grants Program from the Office on Violence Against Women to enhance the services provided by the Northcutt Legal Clinic. The Clinic will now be able to provide free civil legal services for adult and youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, in our own six county service area, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone and George. We will also expand services to assist the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter (DAFS) in Laurel with legal assistance for victims in their eleven county service area, Covington, Forrest, Greene, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Perry, Smith, and Wayne.

Harry Yoste, Clinic Director, says: "Expansion of legal services for victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault to the south central area of Mississippi will respond to a great need in that area. Resolving issues of divorce, custody, support, and protection can help victims move on with their life so that they can take care of themselves and their families. I look forward to working with our new attorney, Shirlee Baldwin, and with the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter to provide the services needed by victims in the expanded service area."

Becky Sims, Executive Director of the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter, Inc. says that she is very excited about the opportunity to partner with the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence to provide the services of the Northcutt Legal Clinic to our eleven county service area. "This partnership will allow our clients to access civil legal services at no cost in a manner that has not been available for some time."

Named for law enforcement officer, James Northcutt, who died in the line of service on a domestic violence call, the Northcutt Legal Clinic will ensure victim safety and continuity of services as civil legal services are an integral component of the comprehensive victim services offered by the Center. The Clinic welcomes Sharri Herring as the Coast Contract Attorney, Shirlee Baldwin as the DAFS contract attorney, and Gina McKnight as the Legal Advocate.

Northcutt Legal Clinic

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

228 864-7144

Celebration Dinner

With the generous contribution by Mary Mahoney's Restaurant and other community donors, the Center hosted its annual Celebration Dinner. This dinner has been in place for many years and is designed to show appreciation for the work individuals who have been affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, or homicide have been through to recover from their traumatic experiences. This year's event that was held on October 14th had an attendance of more than 40 survivors. Many of the attendees read poetry they have written addressing their recovery, spoke about their personal experiences with abuse, and highlighted the personal growth they have made. The Center will continue to host this event annually in efforts to assist survivors recognize their recovery and continue to work toward the goal of overcoming the effects of traumas they have experienced in their lives. The Center extends a very special thank you to Bobby Mahoney for his continued support of this event.

**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.

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 Special Programs Director for more information.

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

2008 Community Recognition

On September 30, 2008, the Center held its first Community Recognition Event since before Hurricane Katrina. The IP Casino-Resort-Spa was a gracious host for the special evening in the lovely Carnaval de Brasil. The staff would like to again thank all of our community supporters for all that they do for the Center.

Awards and Certificates of Appreciation were given in nine categories. Listed below are the 2008 recipients.

Community Partner Award – Keesler Air Force Base

Retail Business Award – Walmart Ocean Springs; D'Iberville, and Gulfport

Retail Business Certificates of Appreciation – Cato; Starbucks – Hard Rock; Starbucks – Biloxi

Media Award – WLOX TV

Media Certificates of Appreciation – Sun Herald; Mississippi Press; Mississippi Media Broadcasting

Community Neighbor Award – Gulf Coast Home Builders Association

Community Neighbor Certificates of Appreciation – Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs; Edgewater Rotary; Antique Auto Show; Pink Ladies; Blue Knights; Iron Horse Community Church; Red Hatted Stepchild #25608; Diamondhead Community Church; Harrison County Board of Supervisors; D'Iberville Moose Family Center #332; D'Iberville Moose Family Center WOTM #528; Westminster Presbyterian Church

Business/Industry Award – Northrop Grumman

Business/Industry Certificates of Appreciation – Chevron; People's Bank; Hancock Bank; Garden Park Hospital

Casino Certificates of Appreciation – Treasure Bay; Beau Rivage; Isle of Capri; Boomtown

Outstanding Individual Service Awards – Connie Rocko; Judy Guice; Wayne Buffington

Outstanding Individual Service Certificates of Appreciation – Linda Hill; Candi Sims; Marie Hamilton; Laurie Johnson; Aleta Donigan; Tammy Little

Volunteer Certificates of Appreciation – Angel Myers; Angela Downs; Angie Bridges; Allen Garner; Chris McGill; Cindy Horn; Dr. C. Mark McRaney; Donna Stewart; Hope Thornton; Jennifer Garraway; John Flowers; Laurie Porco; Captain Mick Sears; Tobby Nix; Michelle Stogner; Barry Newman; Elizabeth Waters

Outstanding Volunteer Service Award – Carolyn Riser

Outstanding Volunteer Service Certificates of Appreciation – Renee' Paquin; April Duncan; Katrina Jackson; Josephine Johnson; Rochelle Lacoste; Lori C. Weiher; Mary Ellen Spalding; Lois Leaghty; Sonya Ramsey; Christine McGill

Employee of the Year – Mary Buffington

Jane Philo Award of Excellence – IP Casino-Resort-Spa

Gift of Giving

FAMILY SHOPPING EVENT AND BENEFIT SALE FOR THE

Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence

Saturday December 6, 2008

**8:00 – 9:30 Breakfast with Santa at Strami's
Sunday, December 7, 2008**

**2:00 – 5:00 Pictures with Santa, Train Rides & more
5:00 Grand Prize Drawing**

Exclusive Shopper's Coupons: \$5.00 – for special offers, discounts, and promotional items at participating merchants

Participating Merchants: All Wrapped Up; Anthologies; Coffee Fusion; GaGa's; Hallmark; Holeshoot Motosports; Next Generation; Simply Elegant; Sonic of D'Iberville; Sports Shack; Strami's; Whataburger

Sponsors: High Cotton; Outback; Vintage Wine and Liquor; City of D'Iberville, Coast Transit Authority, Biloxi Tour Train, Sorg Printing



Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi – Ocean Springs Adopts the Center

The Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs is a volunteer organization of women who render charitable services which are beneficial to the general public with a particular emphasis on children. Its mission is improve the community by meeting the physical, medical, financial, and educational needs of the children, youth, and families in our service area.

Recently, the Jr. Auxiliary completed a major facelift to a common area in the facility that is used as a den for all the children at the shelter. JA members scraped wallpaper, painted, drilled, steam cleaned, and even poured concrete. In addition, new furniture was purchased for the shelter and included a couch, media cabinet, table/chairs, and rug. Along with new furniture, a flat screen TV and a Wii game was donated by BOSJA. Activities for the children were also included in the remodel and a mural was painted on the wall to brighten the room.

“Our goal for this project was to create a peaceful haven for all the children to escape to, forget their problems, and just be a kid. They have already lost so much that we wanted them to have a place that felt like a home and not a facility”, said Bethany Dill, BOSJA Rooms of Hope Project Coordinator. – Christy Walker Public Relations Chair BOSJA



1st Annual Romance with Respect



In recognition of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence and the IP Casino Resort & Spa, hosted an elegant fashion show on April 29, 2008. Many of the models were staff and clients of the Center. The event, Romance with Respect an Evening under the Stars, was held at the IP's Quench poolside restaurant and lounge.

More the 300 people turned out for the event that was emceed by Harrison County Board of Supervisors President, Connie Rockco. USM's new head football coach, Larry Fedora, provided a moving keynote address and entertainment was provided by Eugene Euche.

A Very Special Thank You to all of the Event Sponsors:

IP Casino Resort & Spa

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Paragon Models | La Vita Bella |
| LIPRA DE' Events | Kasper |
| Peoples Bank | J. Nacole |
| Team Keesler | The Shoe Warehouse |
| Artrageous Design & Printing | Jones New York |
| Prime Outlet Mall | On a Pedestal |
| WLOX | Remax by the Gulf |
| Law Office of Judy Guice | Edgewater Rotary |
| Corban, Gunn & Van Cleave, P.L.L.C. | |
| Owen, Galloway & Myers, P.L.L.C. | |
| Adams Florist | Sun Herald |
| Center Stage, Inc | Motor Sports |
| First American Printing | Keesler Spouses Club |
| Lane Bryant | Mississippi Media |
| Petite Sophisticate | Jewlry by Melva's Designs |



Thanks also to the planning committee:

- Darlys Alford, President Board of Directors, GCWCFFN
- Mrs. Paula Gould, Keesler AFB
- Mrs. Charlene Touhill, Keesler AFB
- Ms. Elaine Stevens, IP Casino Resort & Spa
- Ms. Judy Guise, Esq.
- Ms April Johnson, LIPRA DE Events
- Mrs. Leesa Strawn, Paragon Models
- Mr. Ric Cugno, Paragon Models
- Mrs. Pam Morrison, Peoples Bank
- Mrs. Liz Waters, Keesler AFB



Staff Retreat and Team Building

On May 29th the staff of GCWC ventured out to MS Gulf Coast Community College's Jackson County Campus to take on the Ropes Course and to enjoy a day by the Bayou.



The day started with a coaching course by Laurie Johnson, Four Elements Coaching. During this course the staff was able to take a moment to learn more about their co-workers.



This day the staff put their fears aside and trusted their fellow co-workers to act as their support to conquer the ropes course.



The day was challenging, but was a great opportunity for all of the staff to get to know each other. The daily workload of the center does not allow for much down time to get to know your co-workers.

The staff retreat and monthly Fun Fridays have been funded by a grant from the Foundation of the MidSouth for Building Community Resilience.

Employee of the Year



Sandra Morrison presents Employee of the Year Award to Mary Buffington
Mary Buffington, Volunteer Coordinator was honored with
the Employee of the Year Award at the Community Recognition Event at the IP
on September 30, 2008

Highlights from Around the Coast

- Peoples Bank selected the Center as one of its annual charities.
- Center staff has recently met with the Stone County Board of Supervisors and court officials to increase programs in Stone County.
- Forever Changed, the support group for family members of Homicide Victims expanded to Pearl River County. Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Christian Life Assembly of God in Picayune.
- Americorps conducted a Necessities Drive for the Center at Yankee Stadium in Biloxi during July. Items received from this event included diapers, hair products, baby wipes, pillows, blankets, sheets, and cleaning supplies. Thank you Americorps!
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamations were presented to the Center staff from Hancock County Board of Supervisors; Harrison County Board of Supervisors; and the City of D'Iberville.
- Sandra Morrison, Executive Director, presented Domestic Violence 101 to raise awareness during Domestic Violence Month to Efitness & Wellness Center and the Coast Chapter of the Mississippi National Association of Social Workers.

Upcoming Events:

- Gift of Giving – December 6 – 7, 2008 Lakeview Shopping Village
- February 14, 2008 – 2nd Annual Romance with Respect
- April Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- April Child Abuse Awareness Month
- April 26 – May 2, 2009 National Crime Victims Right's Week

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
FOR HOMICIDE VICTIMS

"WE REMEMBER"

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008, 6:00 p.m.

On the Biloxi beach at the end of I-110

**THE FOREVER CHANGED SUPPORT GROUP FOR SURVIVORS OF
HOMICIDE VICTIMS HOSTED A TIME OF REMEMBRANCE FOR
HOMICIDE VICTIMS ON THE GULF COAST**

**Sponsored by the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence, a United Way Agency.
228-868-4150 or 800-800-1396**



Pictured above are Mark Spears, Jackson County DA's Office, Judy, Monet, Valerie, and Representative Brandon Jones at the Day of Remembrance

BASIC SAFETY PLANNING FOR VICTIMS:

Try to have the following items hidden in a place where your partner cannot find them: \$50 or more in cash; extra clothing for you and your children; important papers including bank account information, social security numbers, birth certificates, insurance policies, marriage license; list of important phone numbers; medications; extra keys for house and car; and any sentimental valuables or photos.

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 federal funding including grants from Victims of Crime Acts; Violence Against Women Act; the Mississippi Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Mississippi Department of Human Services; the Mississippi Department of Public Safety; Weed and Seed; Mississippi Development Authority; City of Gulfport Community Development Block Grant; the Foundation of the MidSouth, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, the City of Biloxi, United Way of South Mississippi; United Way of Jackson and George Counties; local government entities 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) and the US Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women's Legal Assistance Grant.

Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence

PO Box 333
Biloxi, MS 39533



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GULFPORT, MS



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

Crisis Line

1-800-800-1396 or
(228) 435-1968 or
(228) 875-5433