

Serving families and the community

WOMEN'S CENTER

since 1975

Quarterly Newsletter - Winter Edition - March 2020

Upcoming FREE Support Group Series and Workshops

Due to concerns surrounding spread of the coronavirus, the Women's Center will not conduct any in-person appointments or meetings effective immediately and until further notice.

All support groups, workshops, training, and activities are cancelled, or will be rescheduled at a date and time to be determined.

This includes our **I AM OK 2** and **Project Be** support groups, which were scheduled to begin at the end of March.

Our dedicated staff will be available via email and phone during regular business hours, Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. You may need to leave a message, but they will respond as soon as possible.

Host a Third Party Fundraiser

"An Evening Together" - Postponed to Friday, June 19!

In light of the COVID-19 virus, our Annual Dinner has been postponed until **Friday, June 19th**. Don't miss out on this spectacular evening honoring Raffaele Gallo with our Founders Award, and celebrating Glori Norwitt for her 8 years of service as Chair of our Board of Directors.

We have many fantastic auction items in store:

A private oyster shucking event at Hummock Island, Westport for up to 30 people, VIP Tickets to the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2 tickets to Dave Matthews Band at Mohegan Sun with overnight stay and \$250 dinner at Tuscany, entire cast and executive producer Shonda Rhymes autographed script of the Grey's Anatomy episode, "Silent All These Years," tour of the Capitol with Senator Richard Blumenthal with an overnight stay in a king suite at the Four Seasons, Washington DC, Tandem skydive, and lots of gift certificates to area restaurants, brewery tours/wine tastings, trips, golf outings and more!



[Purchase your tickets to the event here.](#)

Our largest annual fundraising event; we need your support more than ever this year! With shrinking grant opportunities and cuts to federal and state funding, your attendance at this year's event will give us the boost we need to meet the



The Women's Center welcomes third party fundraising and promotional events.

A third party fundraiser is an event organized and promoted by an individual or group. You act independently, but with our knowledge and approval. Through the funds you raise, you make a valuable contribution to the vital work we're doing to end domestic violence and sexual assault.

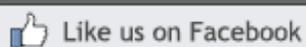
There is no limit to creativity when brainstorming ideas for successful third party events.

Here are a few ideas to consider:

- Yard Sale
- Hair Salon - Cut Out Abuse
- Birthday Donations
- Bake Sale
- 5K Run/Walk
- Pancake Breakfast
- Golf Tournament
- Bike/Dance/Bowl/Spin a thons

Engage your resources and encourage your friends and family to help you put the FUN in FUNdraising!

Contact our Special Events Manager, Linda Cummins at (203) 731-5200, ext. 232 linda.c@wcogd.org



demand for our programs and services.

NOTE: Tickets, advertisements and sponsorships already purchased, will of course, all be transferable to the new date.

If you are interested in donating to our silent or live auction, or would like to sponsor the event, please contact Linda Cummins at linda.c@wcogd.org or 203-731-5200 ext. 232.

From the President's Desk

Thank you so much to everyone who attended our 12th annual "Hearts of Hope" breakfast held at the Fox Hill Inn! Our heartfelt congratulations and sincere thanks to our incredible direct service volunteer, Felicia Paduano, who was this year's recipient of our Service Above Self Award. Felicia certainly exemplifies the spirit of this award for all she has, and continues to do, on behalf of the Women's Center.



Special thanks to John Royce, owner of the Fox Hill Inn, who generously donates the beautiful venue, wonderful food and his awesome employees volunteer their time so that we are able to have this sell-out fundraising event! This year's guest speaker, Amy Polacko, shared her story. We are so grateful to her, and celebrate her courage in retelling her ordeal and applaud her advocacy efforts against domestic violence. Thank you so much to everyone for supporting this very special event!

The issues of domestic and sexual violence are in the headlines daily. The demand for our services continues to rise, yet funding for our work remains stagnant or in jeopardy of cuts. The fact that we self-generate 50% of our operating costs underscores the critical importance of every one of our fundraising efforts. Thank you to everyone who generously supports us throughout the year. It is this benevolence that enables us to be there 24/7 for everyone turning to us for help.

I look forward to seeing you at our dinner "An Evening Together" on Friday, June 19th at the Amber Room. This year we will honor Raffaele Gallo with our Founders Award for all he has done to support the Center and so many others within our community, and celebrate Glori Norwitt for her 8 years of service as Chair of the Women's Center Board of Directors. RmediA will be creating another emotional video presentation, focusing on a #survivor to the river story of one of our clients A Journey to Hope. It promises to be a spectacular event!

In gratitude and peace,

Remember to Use AmazonSmile

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases when you sign up and choose the Women's Center as your charitable organization.



Support the Women's Center by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com

Make a Donation

Every dollar counts!
Your generosity is crucial as we work to end the violence!

[DONATE NOW](#)

Welcome Our New Staff!



*Rebecca Cyr
Prevention Educator*

Rebecca joins us as a recent graduate from Eastern Connecticut State University, receiving her bachelor's degree in social work. While attending Eastern, Rebecca worked tirelessly in their Unity Wing, which includes the Pride Center.

Highlights of February's Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month Activities

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month during the month of February provided an opportunity for prevention education and encouraged parents and teens to take inventory of their relationships. One in three teens will experience physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a dating partner.

The purpose of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is to raise awareness of dating violence, engage youth in activities that promote healthy relationships, and remind them that the Women's Center is here to support them.



Center staff showed their support on **#Orange4Love** Day by wearing orange on February 12th.



Our **#ChalkAboutLove** Day coincided with Valentine's Day on February 14th, the perfect day to spread awareness about teen dating abuse and healthy relationships. Center staff and students used chalk to write messages about love and teen dating violence.

One highlight of her work was creating an original program, speaking on healthy relationships through an intersectional lens as a way of preventive education with over 300 attendees. Rebecca also has eight years of public speaking experience and has facilitated trainings on a variety of topics, her favorite being on gender stereotypes. Rebecca is very enthusiastic about starting work with the Women's Center and supporting our mission.



*Michele Cousens
Prevention Educator*

Michele comes to the Women's Center after ten years of managing a small mental health practice. She previously had a long career in the music business, both as an executive assistant in performing rights and as a radio personality on local Fairfield County stations. Michele was a board member and served as a support group facilitator for the Rowan Center (formerly The Sexual Assault Crisis Center) in Stamford, CT.

She is a level one Reiki and level two EFT/Tapping practitioner, and she teaches a sexuality education program ("Our Whole Lives") for K-6 children in her congregation. Michele is a life-long Connecticut resident, and she is currently working toward her MSW at the University of Bridgeport.



"Service Above Self" Award Recipient Felicia Paduano Honored at 12th Annual Breakfast!

We are so grateful to all who attended our 12th Annual "Hearts of Hope" breakfast where we honored Felicia Paduano, long time Direct Service Volunteer, as this year's recipient of our "Service Above Self" Award. The Women's Center established this award to recognize individuals who demonstrate dedication and commitment to our mission and the services we provide throughout our 13-town service area. As the name of the award connotes, it is someone who puts service above themselves.



This year's "Service Above Self" Award recipient, Felicia Paduano, pictured with her family.

Felicia Paduano has been a volunteer for the Women's



Carly Jacques
Child Counselor

Meet Carly, the Women's Center's new Child Counselor. Carly previously held the position of Manager of Residential Services for the Center. During that time, she worked closely with families who were impacted by trauma to help rebuild their lives. In addition, she assisted the Counseling and Prevention Education teams by providing individual counseling and co-facilitating the Women's Center's youth support groups. Carly earned her Bachelor of Arts in Women and Gender Studies and Criminology, and holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from Southern Connecticut State University. She strives to create a warm and welcoming environment for the clients she serves to promote a safe space for healing.

Carly uses a person-centered and trauma-informed approach when working with clients. Her experience includes working with adults and adolescents impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, legal issues, mental health, addiction, and other traumas through her efforts at the Women's Center and beyond. Carly also has experience interning for the Federal Defenders, working in a residential forensic unit for those struggling with psychiatric disorders, and working as a Behavioral Health Clinician at a local community health clinic. She is a Licensed Master of Social Work as well as a certified Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Counselor, and is currently earning her clinical licensure. Carly is thrilled to be working with children of all ages to promote client and community health and well-being.

Center since 2015, and over the past five years, has proven to be an invaluable asset to our organization. Felicia is a hotline volunteer and facilitates several of the Center's support groups. She coordinates and has expanded our workshop series and increased the number of legal and financial workshops offered for clients needing advice on issues such as immigration, divorce, child custody, banking and credit affairs.

Felicia is a member of our Speakers' Bureau. She has coordinated new wellness programs and education programs being offered at the Center, including yoga and mindfulness. She provides on-site administrative support at our headquarters and recently has started to provide counseling for walk-ins. Felicia is also a member of both our SafeWalk and Annual Dinner committees. And, she has also served as Chair of the "Hearts of Hope" breakfast since 2017. There really isn't anything Felicia doesn't do for the Women's Center! Above all else, she is the kindest, most compassionate person Center staff, volunteers and clients have come to know and love.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

S A A M

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

EVENTS

april **29** **DENIM DAY**

Join us in wearing jeans to dispel harmful myths about sexual violence and survivors! Denim Day was originally triggered by a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped her rapist remove them, thereby implying consent. Please email womenscenter@wcogd.org for "Ask Me About Denim Day" stickers to further spark the conversation. Email us pictures or post on your own social media and tag us!

INITIATIVES

all month **LIBRARY DISPLAYS**

Stop by your local public library to check out our displays, which include books on sexual assault, consent, and boundaries that you can read and check out.

all month **TEAL RIBBONS**

Be on the lookout for teal ribbons throughout the 13 towns we serve during the month of April.



Women's Center Participating in Big Y

Become a Member!

Join our Community!

Membership reflects community support and shows funders that our Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Resource Services programs are important to the community and provide a lifeline to individuals within Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties.

As a member of the Women's Center, you can take great pride in your affiliation with this respected organization and your support for the FREE services we provide to individuals and families in crisis or transition.

Show your support! Please help us to continue to make a difference in people's lives.

[Become a Member](#)

Thanksgiving & Holiday Giving Program

The Women's Center would like to give a special thanks to the 100 donors who helped make our Thanksgiving and Holiday Giving Program such a huge success. With the support of the community, and the community's incredible contributions, the Women's Center was able to provide food, gifts and resources to **658** clients. A total of **317** clients received Thanksgiving baskets and **341** clients' holiday gifts were sponsored by generous donors.

We are so grateful for the overwhelming support!

Thanksgiving Baskets

Total Clients: 317

112 adults with 205 children/dependents.

Baskets were covered by 14 donors (individual donors and 3 major groups)

Giving Tag Program

The Center has begun generating donations through the Big Y Giving Tag Program.



The Big Y Giving Tag Program is a reusable bag program that facilitates community support with the goal to make a difference in the communities where shoppers live and work.

Every time a shopper buys the \$2.50 reusable Community Bag at any Big Y store throughout the year, they can direct a \$1 donation to the Women's Center by using the attached Giving Tag within 7 days of their purchase.

Visit your local Big Y and pick one up today!

Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

[Services](#)

[Get Involved](#)

[More About Us](#)



Holiday Program

Total Clients: 341

151 adults with 190 children/
dependents.

The Holiday program was covered by
86 donors (individuals and a variety of
groups)



