

THE MISSION of Every Woman's Place & Webster House Youth Services is to improve and enhance the lives of women, Youth and families in crisis in our community by providing and advocating for services which lead to their safety, their emotional and economic self-sufficiency, their productivity, and their ability to participate fully in our

### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

"I just don't understand why she would stay in the relationship if it's as bad as she says it was." Silently, I sigh. 'Dana' is a good friend of many years. We showed horses, rode trails and camped together. We had babies born at the same time. How could I possibly help her to understand something this complex? I took a deep breath, and started the conversation I have had so many times, with so many others.

I asked her if she would leave her children in the care of a babysitter that she knew would hurt them. "Of course not!" she replied. I asked her if she would be willing to accept personal harm in order for her children to have food, medicine, clothing and shelter. "Yes!" she exclaimed. I asked her if a death threat against her and her children would prevent her from moving to a new home. "Most likely, yes" she

answered. I asked her if she thought that under the right circumstances, people could change. She did. I asked her if someone she had ever loved had done something that hurt her. She had. I then asked if they had asked forgiveness, and if she had given it. Two more yes answers.

These are the realities of many women and children who come to us for help. They are courageous in the face of uncertainty and known danger. The number one reason women stay in abusive relationships is to safeguard their children. With joint custody almost always a given, many mothers know that the only way to protect their children is to stay. Most women continue to work in jobs that do not pay wages that can support a family, and few have benefits. Women seeking to leave an abusive relationship are at greatest danger

around the time that they are trying to leave. They want to believe a batterer that assures 'it will never happen again', and promises a loving relationship.

That is why this shelter and the aftercare services provided are so critical. Women leaving these relationships need a safe place to stay, counseling services for themselves and their children, and referrals to other resources in the community that will ensure that they have what they need to thrive. You, and others like you, have made these services available to those who need them for over thirty years, and you are our greatest asset in the fight against domestic abuse. We are humbled by your care and gifts and look forward to your continued support.

- Susan P. Johnson

### MORTGAGE BURNING CELEBRATION

On June 21, 2007 Every Woman's Place/ Webster House Youth Services invited the entire community to celebrate the final payment of the mortgage for the Almond Center for Women and Children. The event began at 5:30 and ran until 7:00 pm. Festive snacks like cotton candy and TCBY yogurt were served. The ceremonial burning of the mortgage took place at 6:00 pm with a brief history of the agency presented by Dr. Mary McDonald, the Executive Director of EWP/WHYS at the

time of the purchase of the facility. The vision for the agency was presented by Dr. Susan Johnson, CEO of EWP/Webster House today. Every Woman's Place started meeting the needs of abused women using rented houses and in 1980 the agency merged with Webster House realizing the connection between runaway youth and domestic violence. In 1994 the agency bought its own place at 1221 W. Laketon in Muskegon. The agency's services

expanded inside that house and today EWP/Webster House offers a continuum of services as an independent nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors and operated by a staff of eighty-five. We are very pleased that community members came out to help us celebrate this momentous occasion. We look forward to serving the community for many more years.

# AWAWARENESS

Jason Bertoia, Life Skills Specialist for WH, handing out frisbees to kids along the parade path.



## WEBSTER HOUSE PUTS ON THEIR WALKING SHOES

It's great to be in a parade, walking down the middle of a city street, smiling and waving at total strangers and having those strangers wave back. Best of all, participation was a great way to promote Webster House Youth Services and its Street Outreach program. Decked out in tangerine T-shirts that said "Ask me what I do!," youth staff passed out frisbees and candy to the thousands who lined the streets of Muskegon. As the Webster House team marched down Shoreline Drive to Fourth Street and on to Hackley Park, many youth waved excitedly and yelled out "Hey, Webster House!"

## SHOPPING AND INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE GETS TWO THUMBS UP

By the end of the afternoon, vehicles were piled high with shopping bags, smiles plastered their faces and laughter filled the air. "The kids just had such huge smiles on their faces through the whole process. It was fun just to watch them," said Brigitte, Homeless Youth Advocate. But this wasn't an everyday teen shopping spree; it was what some participants called a "dream come true."

Twelve clients who specifically had a goal of seeking employment were selected to participate from the Transitional Living Program, Transition to Independent Living, Youth In Transition and Street

Outreach youth programs. Staff members accompanied the clients to stores in and around The Lakes Mall as they purchased new clothes that would be appropriate for job interviews. They were each given \$125.00 to spend.

"I'm so excited," exclaimed one participant. "I got this cute skirt and matching shirt and jacket. I was able to get two pairs of shoes because they were buy one get one free, and I still had money left. So then I went back to the first store and bought a pair of pants that would go with my shirt and jacket. It was so awesome and perfect timing. I have a job interview next week,

so I really needed the clothes."

All of this was done in preparation for mock job interviews conducted by Kohl's Department Store. Seventeen clients participated in the interview group, which was set up by Heather Wiegand, Director of Youth Services.

"The clients did an excellent job of keeping track of their funds. They all came within a few cents of their budget and most had a few dollars left over. All of them took the interview process very seriously and gained a lot of information from the experience," commented Dan Scanlan, who is the case manager for TLP.

## MUSKEGON COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TASKFORCE PRESENTS "A CALL TO MEN"

Mr. Tony Porter, original visionary and co-founder of A CALL TO MEN, will be speaking at Muskegon Community College on September 21, 2007 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Mr. Porter is an educator and activist who has worked in the social justice arena for over 20 years. He will be covering topics such as: men's roles in ending violence against woman, how

social norms define manhood in our culture, and sexism and its role in violence against women.

A CALL TO MEN is a leading national men's organization addressing men's violence against women, and the eradication of sexism, while maintaining strong coalitions with women's organizations already doing this important work. They help to organize

communities in order to raise awareness and get men involved in ending violence against women.

The Muskegon County Domestic Violence Taskforce is pleased to bring this speaker to our area. There is a registration fee to attend. If you are interested in more information, please contact Rachel Glavich at (231) 759-7909 ext. 241.

International studies show that one in three women will experience abuse by a significant other in their lifetime, while 40% of all murdered women are killed by their husbands or lovers. These statistics are staggering, but Every Woman's Place and Webster House Youth Services are here to strengthen families. Our programs range from domestic violence prevention to youth programs geared toward helping youth make positive decisions about their lives. Our goal is to keep families healthy and safe in the greater Muskegon County area.



## CHILDREN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT GROUP

Domestic violence affects children too. Youth who live with domestic violence typically know it is happening; 29% of those who had experienced domestic abuse in the previous year stated that their children had been aware of what was going on during the last incidence of violence.

On June 11th, Every Woman's Place/ Webster House Youth Services began a new support group geared towards 4-18 year olds. The Children's Domestic Violence Group serves to support children in family violence situations as well as educate children in the areas of safety and common trauma reactions. It is conducted by Amanda Fort, the Children's Trauma Specialist.

One of the groups recent activities involved a 911 Simulator. The simulator is a portable unit that provides a realistic opportunity for the children to practice contacting 911. Children also have the opportunity to meet with a police officer who offers suggestions as to how to report any sort of crime. By practicing the routine before a crime happens: children should feel more comfortable in contacting help if a domestic violence situation, or another emergency arises.

Other topics covered include: Friendship, Anti-Bullying, Feelings, and Safety Options. The next group will begin in September. For more information, please call Amanda Fort at (231) 759-7909 ext. 272.

## TALENTED STUDENTS SHARE LOVE OF ART

An area in Every Woman's Place's shelter now features a dramatic and colorful wall mural recently painted by a group of art students from Muskegon Technical Academy and their instructor, Beth Olson.

The artwork is a reproduction of Vincent van Gogh's Starry Night. Charlotte Taylor, Kaleigh Wagner, Johanna Bisard and Leontine White were first introduced to the agency in May when they generously donated a collaborative painting on canvas that featured the powerful women who inspired them - three mothers and one grandmother. The painting was produced as an entry in the Muskegon Museum of Art's student

showcase and then donated to Every Woman's Place. That painting will hang in the shelter's dayroom.

We would like to extend a huge "thank you" to these very talented young ladies .



## VOLUNTEER - IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

It has long been said that it is better to give than to receive, but when it comes to volunteering you can have the best of both. A recent study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development states that volunteering can lead to improved physical and mental health as well as provide social benefits.

For example:

- One study found that those who gave social support to others had lower rates of mortality than those who did not.
- A second study found that, in general, volunteers report greater life satisfaction and better physical health than do non-volunteers, and their life satisfaction and physical health improves at a greater rate as a result of volunteering.
- Data from interviews conducted in 1956 and 1986 of a group of women in an upstate New York community found that those women who had volunteered on an intermittent basis from the time that they married until the age of 55 scored higher on functional ability in 1986 than those who had not.
- Adults over the age of 70 who volunteered at least 100 hours during 1993 had less of a decline in self-reported health and functioning levels and lower levels of depression and mortality in 2000 than those who did not volunteer.

If you would like to experience these health benefits for yourself, call Jean Catalino, Director of Volunteer Services, at (231) 759-7909 ext. 267. She would be happy to assist you in volunteering for us!



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# GROUPS

## WOMEN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EDUCATION  
GROUPS FOR WOMEN  
Monday 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
For referral, contact Jennifer

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
THERAPY GROUP  
Call for referral.

**231-759-7909**

All groups and counseling are completely confidential and free of charge.

## CHILDREN

CHILDREN WITNESSES TO  
VIOLENCE SUPPORT GROUPS  
Call for referral.

## FAMILIES

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES  
Contact Willie Wilson for information.

### DROP-IN CENTER FOR YOUTH STREET OUTREACH

Smith-Ryerson Park  
Muskegon Recreation Center  
550 Wood Street  
Mondays and Thursdays 5:00 p.m. - 8:00  
p.m.

BUILDING PERSONAL POWER FOR  
YOUTH (ANGER MANAGEMENT)  
Wednesdays 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. for 6 wks  
Contact Willie for more information.