

A publication of Womanspace, Inc., a non-profit organization
serving adults and children in crisis.

#ShineALight: Over 1200 Luminaries Lit for Communities of Light

On Monday, December 6th at dusk, Mercer County shined brightly for the 20th Annual Communities of Light. We lit 1200 luminary kits across Mercer County as a symbol of hope for men, women and children impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Because of you,

over \$40,000 was raised to fund our life-saving services.

Thank you to all who participated, the Mercer County Mayors, and our sponsors! This event serves as a powerful symbol of hope in our community and spreads the message that

Peace Begins at Home. Below are some pictures from our municipality lightings:

Lightings Across the County



Pennington Lighting with Mayor James Davy and Lucille Davy



Lawrenceville Lighting at Weeden Park featuring Paula Sollami-Covello, Lance Maloney, and friends.

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Thanks to our Communities of Light Sponsors...



Brian Zack, MD
Dandelion Wishes
Dr. Beth Brody DDS
Chief William Spain
Lauren & Rony Nazarian
Michelle & Rashaad Bajwa

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
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TRENTON, NJ
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Womanspace, Inc.
1530 Brunswick Avenue.
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
(609) 394-0136
Address Service Requested



Mercer County 24-Hour Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault Hotline (609)-394-9000

Text Message Hotline available 24/7 for the
deaf and hard of hearing at (609)-619-1888

NJ Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-572-SAFE

Counseling & Support Services
(609)-394-2532



Hamilton Lighting at Foley Park with Development Associate Kaitlynn Ely, Mayor Jeff Martin, and Police Officers.



Princeton Lighting with Mayor Mark Freda, Associate Executive Director Nathalie Nelson, and Board Members Fran Zeitler and Joan Bartl

In Social Media News...



35 reactions, 5 shares



Womanspace is proud to announce that over 100 families received Thanksgiving Baskets filled with nonperishables, canned goods, and desserts.

Thank you to our volunteers and donors pictured for your generosity! You made Thanksgiving 2021 special for so many clients.



4 retweets, 6 likes



#DVAM2021 #DVAM Make sure your voice is heard.



57 likes, 4 shares



@lilleschool kicked off Communities of Light last night! Members of Stanley House purchased and lit nearly 100 luminaries along Main Street in Lawrenceville. Thank you for your continued support of #COL2021!



Hightstown Lighting at Old Hights Brewing Company with Board President Michelle Bajwa, Councilwoman Cristina Fowler and friends.



East Windsor Lighting with Mayor Janice Mironov and Police Officers

VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021

By Kaitlynn Ely

With widespread bipartisan support in the House and Senate, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fix Bill passed on July 20 and was signed by President Biden the following day. The senate passed the measure unanimously.

Created in 1984, VOCA used collections from federal crimes, fines, and penalties to allocate to victims of abuse; however, over the past decade these funds have been depleting. Across the nation, grants were cut short by up to 70% for programs like Womanspace. The "Deposits Fix" – introduced to Congress by Senator Tammy Baldwin

(D-Wisconsin) – will now redirect monetary penalties from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements into the Crimes Victim Fund (CVF). This will increase funding for state victim compensation and assistance programs by 15%.

fix, victims of abuse and other serious crimes can continue to access an array of specialized services including victim advocacy, forensic nursing and trauma-informed counseling in their county of residence.

all the fines and penalties that are from federal cases go into the Crime Victims Fund to rebuild this fund, because it's badly needed. This is going to enable us to provide more help and support for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking, and other crimes, all across America."

When someone commits a crime, it's not enough to bring the predator to justice. We also need to support the victims.

– President Joe Biden

In 2019, the CVF provided grants for over 230,000 victims and gave money to state governments and territories to fund local service organizations like Womanspace. Thanks to this VOCA

"When someone commits a crime, it's not enough to bring the predator to justice. We also need to support the victims," President Joe Biden said, "This bill is going to allow us to make sure that

As a senator, President Biden represented women, children and other vulnerable people in congress, specifically leading the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994. At the signing of the bill, Biden urged Congress to take bipartisan action on reauthorizing and strengthening protections in VAWA.

Fall 2021 Grants

Church and Dwight Co. Inc. has generously granted Womanspace \$12,000 through its Employee Giving Fund. Church and Dwight employees make contributions which are matched dollar for dollar by the company. These funds are designated for general operating support, which allows us the flexibility to use the funds where they are needed most.

The Mary G. Roebling Foundation has contributed \$10,000 in support of our Children's Services Program. The goal of this program is to

reduce risk, promote safety, stability and well-being for children and families experiencing the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

The Walmart Supercenter in Hamilton has selected Womanspace to be the recipient of a \$2,500 grant. This store-based grant is meaningful to us not only for the support they provide, but because the decision is made by store employees; members of our community who can see firsthand the impact of our work.

Janssen Pharmaceutical and The Lawrence Township Community Foundation have both issued grants to Womanspace, (\$10,000 and \$3,000 respectively) in support of our Emergency Safe House and Transitional Housing Programs. Womanspace's housing services provide an emergency protection for families in crisis, as well as a provision of essential services that help them heal from the abuse and trauma resulting from domestic violence, that help to guide them on their journey toward economic independence and self-sufficiency.

Bristol Myers Squibb has gifted Womanspace \$10,000 in general operating support through its BMS Grants and Giving Program. BMS is a long-time supporter Womanspace and many other local organizations, making them a valued corporate community member here in Mercer County.

Womanspace is grateful for the generous support from each of these partners. We are inspired by their commitment to ending domestic violence and sexual assault, and humbled by their faith in us.



**Thank You,
Mercer County Education Association!**

Every month, MCEA donates local restaurant meals to our Safehouse and Transitional Housing Program. Thank you for making an impact!

My Cloud and My Light

By Anonymous

All I want is to open my eyes to see what is really in front of me
May I feel what my heart desires and yearns for
But I feel the pain of my trauma
Oh, I feel the cloud starting to come
I feel the cloud starting to expand

It is hard to see what the heart wants when the cloud shows up
It yells, it screams, it leaves me with a cry
It takes over. And I forget who I am
All the heart wants is to be heard
But I continue to go on getting wrapped in the cloud
You see this cloud it is quite heavy, fuzzy, and full of sadness
May I be strong to be with the cloud.

When the cloud finally leaves my head is spinning
At times, I may not even know what occurred
There is fear, judgement, questioning, and guessing
Full of sorrow my heart feels
May I be strong to be with myself after this cloud
To see and feel what is there and let it be
To see and feel what is there and be patient
To see and feel what is there and see the light, light?
Too see and feel and welcome the light, light?
Yes, light. I can barely see it.
My heart knows it's there.

After the cloud I feel a light
This light starts to shine, I can feel the warmth near my eyes, tears pouring
There is lots of light as I hug myself
The light feels like a crack in my heart, opening, opening, open
Like a friend who welcomes me to the love and presence of what it's
inside of me
The most intimate parts of myself are here
Is this what it's like to be within?

I try not to question, I just, exist and be
I try to feel the light as much as I can.

I thank you cloud, AND I thank you light.

Recent Donations



Thanksgiving and Halloween Goodie Bags from Christine's Hope for Kids



Diapers and Toiletries from Fort Dix



Backpacks from Christ Church in Bordentown



Thanksgiving Baskets from Gamma Phi Delta Sorority



Holiday Toy Donations!

Thank you to everyone who donated toys for the holidays.



Dusty Everson Karate School donated a whole truckload of toys!



Certified Steel & Nexus Properties donated boys and girls pajamas and toys.



Local musician Shane McKeon and Development & Public Relations Associate Kaitlynn Ely.



Robbinsville Hamilton Rotary with Kaitlynn Ely, Lauren Nazarian, and DVVRT Coordinator Joshua Duncan.



Hopewell Township Police Department with Director of Development Lauren Nazarian.

Womanspace, Inc. Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Michelle Y. Bajwa, *President*

Joanne Barlow, *Vice-President*

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Jyungin (Jenny) Lee Rose Nini

Ed Schmierer, Esq. Sonal V. Shah

Chief William Spain, Ret. Lorene Williams

Frances Zeitler

Welcome to Our New Board Members!

Rev. Jyungin “Jenny” Lee



The Reverend Jyungin “Jenny” Lee served as Moderator (2018-2021) for Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and also as a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the PC(USA). She is the founder and the director of Women Together, Inc., a non-profit organization in Cranbury, NJ, for spiritual formation, empowerment

and leadership development for women. Jenny played key role in launching an interfaith group of religious leaders in West Windsor, NJ and served as its facilitator for many years. In addition to a Master’s degree in Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, Jenny holds a BS in Mathematics and a MS in Statistics. Jenny has two grown sons who work in DC and New York City. She enjoys cooking and exploring the National Parks with her husband.

Sonal V. Shah



Sonal V. Shah is a former Senior VP at Deutsche Bank focused on global strategic planning turned early-childhood Montessori educator. In her corporate career, she provided complex business solutions through the design and implementation of financial data management and reporting systems for the bank’s infrastructure cost and

allocation management, while also successfully leading offshoring initiatives.

Fifteen years and three children later, she switched careers, going back to school to become a certified Montessori Teacher in the West Windsor area. She created and launched a school-wide early reading program which was then adopted by other partnering schools. Coming from a long family history of charitable giving, she firmly believes her purpose is to volunteer to provide support and create opportunity to those in need, starting with Womanspace. She enjoys playing tennis, meditation, reading, and outdoor activities with her family.

Not Pictured

Natasha Johnson

Lorene Williams

January: National Stalking Awareness Month

By Bree Gladd

Staking Awareness and Education Can Save Lives

It may be easy for some to believe that stalking is something that would never hit close to home, but statistics show that it’s not at all uncommon. As many as 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men could experience stalking at some point in their life – a major indicator that if we ourselves are not going to experience it, one of our loved ones, friends, coworkers or acquaintances easily could. Bystanders – friends, family, coworkers, and even strangers - can play a major role in spotting stalking and helping a survivor seek or plan for safety if they are able to see the signs, understand the gravity of the situation, and most importantly: believe the survivor.

Understanding Stalking – What Exactly Is It?

Stalking is often welded into experiences of domestic and sexual violence, though it is very much its own experience. Domestic and sexual violence are the result of a perpetrator’s desire to gain and keep power and control over their victim – stalking is a tactic used within these experiences to do just that. While domestic and sexual violence are both dangerous themselves, what we know about the danger and lethality of stalking makes it clear that naming it as its own phenomena is imperative for effective safety planning.

In New Jersey, the law defines stalking as a pattern of behavior where the perpetrator repeatedly, either directly or indirectly, contacts or maintains proximity to a victim, where that pattern of behavior would cause any other reasonable person to experience fear (N.J.S.A. 2C:12-10). “Repeatedly” is defined as only “**two or more** occasions”.

Stalking behaviors include, but are not at all limited to:

- Surveillance of the victim, including:

- Physically following

- Monitoring through technology – their phone, lab top, and/or social media, as well as audio/video recording devices and/or GPS/tracking devices

- Through third parties, i.e. asking friends, family members, acquaintances or co-workers details about the victim’s life, activity or whereabouts

- Maintaining contact with the victim, including

- Directly, through unwanted communication with the victim – calls, letters, e-mails, social media messages, texts, etc.

- Through third parties, i.e. sending messages through, or indirectly making their presence known through interactions with those close to the victim

- Showing up to the victim’s home, workplace, or to public places

- Spreading rumors about the victim

- Making threats, either directly or indirectly (suggested by specific behaviors or made clear through context)

- Sending unwanted gifts, especially those that carry significant and/or threatening meanings which only the victim would understand

The Lethality of Stalking

Stalking is undeniably dangerous and becomes increasingly so when the stalker is someone known to the victim, especially a current or former partner. Plenty of victims do not identify they are being stalked until *after* a relationship ends, and often the stalking could have been going on in some way prior to the end of the relationship –further highlighting the importance of identifying stalking as its own experience.

While stalkers in general tend to engage their victims at least once weekly, with some engaging daily, the likelihood of a stalker actually approaching their victim - versus primarily surveilling from a distance - increases when the stalker is a former or current partner. Even more sobering:

- One-third of women killed each year are murdered by a former partner

- Around 1 in 5 instances of stalking include a weapon being used in some way

- 80% of women stalked by a current or former partner ARE physically assaulted, and 31% are sexually assaulted.

The Importance of Context in Understanding Stalking

What makes stalking so insidious is that it can sometimes start off seemingly annoying, benign or innocent. At the start, stalkers often engage in behaviors that, to an outsider, might not seem as threatening as a victim knows they are. This often results in stalking going unnoticed until it becomes more serious, or not being taken seriously when the victim speaks up.

Context is KEY in being able to identify stalking, especially before it escalates. For example, a current or former partner polling friends, family or coworkers for information on a victim may not seem desperate or annoying – as opposed to potentially lethal. Sending a piece of jewelry, chocolate or a floral arrangement to someone’s house may seem sweet - or even harmlessly desperate if the victim has made it clear they have no interest in starting or maintaining a relationship with the perpetrator - but it can be unsettling, fear inducing or terrifying if the gift is sent to a new or current address that the victim has never shared with the perpetrator, or left on a car while the victim is in work or inside a store or restaurant. Sending gifts in this manner, and sending gifts even if the address of the victim is common knowledge to the perpetrator, can send a message like, “I’m watching you”, “I’m not going to leave you alone”, which is of course is unnerving. Even after only two of these events, a victim can be forced to change the way they live their life.

The way a victim responds to

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stalking may not always be what we'd categorize as fear or mental distress if we were to look at them from the outside – even the most well put together people can show signs of fear, intimidation or distress through behavior changes. Fear also appears in many ways – masked by annoyance, frustration, anger or denial -- so do not expect someone to be appear cowering and helpless in order for you to believe they are being stalked. The human brain can protect itself in many ways, including minimizing intimidating behaviors in order to feel "safe".

Fear, even when not verbalized, can be indicated through uncharacteristic behavior changes, like becoming cautious, apprehensive or outright fearful about:

- answering phone calls, reading texts or accepting social media requests
- being tagged on social media, especially when location is tagged as well
- taking typical routes to regularly visited places
- discussing certain things out loud, even in public (incase the stalker is nearby or recording them)
- answering the door to their home
- seeing a car stop in front of the house and/or drive by, whether that be a specific car and/or done on a specific day/and or time
- going certain places or seeing certain people in case the stalker would either suspect and easily find them there

Victims may also demonstrate a general increase in anxiety or hyper-vigilance, a shift in job performance or attendance at work, difficulty sleeping or eating, and/or depressive behaviors.

Safety Planning

Once it's become clear that someone is being stalked, creating a safety plan is the next step. As each situation is different, it is important that the victim be able to identify what the safest options are for them – it is not always safe for someone to call the police or obtain a restraining order, for example if the stalker is a police officer or involved heavily in crime, with a wide net of people who could respond on behalf of the stalker. Remember also that if you are identifying that a loved one is being stalked, they may not be ready to accept it or act right away. When the

victim is ready to develop a safety plan, consider the following guidelines as a blueprint to a more specific, victim-focused plan:

1. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.
2. Call 1-800-799-SAFE (the National Domestic Violence Hotline) for help with safety planning or a referral to an organization where you can process your experience with a counselor/advocate to better understand it and safety plan thoroughly.
3. Avoiding going places alone – if leaving a mall, store, restaurant, or friend's house alone – especially at night, have someone walk you to your car or remain on the phone with you
4. Remain aware of your surroundings – if you notice yourself being followed, take note of the vehicle type and license plate and immediately re-locate to a safe place, such as a police station or populated public area.
5. Avoid posting photos of yourself in public places that are easily identifiable and/or where the location is tagged
6. Consider the accounts that are requesting to follow you on social media.
7. You may obtain a restraining order at your local courthouse (either where you live or where the stalking is taking place) – if the court is closed, you may go to your local police station and file for a restraining order there, where you will be placed on the phone with an on-call judge
8. Have your home and car swept for tracking/recording devices – be sure to look in purses, wallets, jackets, etc. for devices.
9. Have your phone, laptop, tablet, etc. checked for tracking or mirroring apps/software

Additionally, if you are experiencing stalking, remember that others may not understand the threatening nature of certain behaviors or be willing to sit and hear about the context. If you feel something dangerous is beginning, or has been going on, start developing a safety plan in case you need to act. **You are the expert on your experience, and you do not need to wait for severe violence or the worst-case scenario in order to ask for help. Trust yourself, and know the bottom line: your safety is of the utmost importance.**

Additionally, if you are experiencing stalking, remember that others may not understand the threatening nature of certain behaviors or be willing to sit and hear about the context. If you feel something dangerous is beginning, or has been going on, start developing a safety plan in case you need to act. **You are the expert on your experience, and you do not need to wait for severe violence or the worst-case scenario in order to ask for help. Trust yourself, and know the bottom line: your safety is of the utmost importance.**

Every year our Annual Appeal makes it possible to serve over 12,000 men, women, and children

Help our clients heal:
Give to our Annual Appeal
and make your voice heard.

"You want to be the pebble in the pond that creates the ripple for change."

10,105 Men, Women and Children Served in the Last Year

1,510 Community Members Educated & Professionals Trained

9,021 Hotline Callers

151 Safe House Clients Served

"Thank you for being my angel and for never leaving my side."

"Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for giving me the space to be able to make good decisions instead of running from crisis to crisis and never accomplishing anything."

"I know you think it's just your job, but you really care and that makes all the difference, you saved my life. I had nowhere to go, he was going to kill me."



**"A New Vision of Womanspace:
Dismantling Racism and Realizing
a Just Organization."
An Anti-racism Project of Womanspace.**

In March of this year, Womanspace was awarded a grant from the Division on Woman (DOW) to create and implement a comprehensive Anti-racism Project. A timely award as our Strategic Plan goal included such a project and the pandemic had put plans on hold for a while. With the support of DOW we had the ability to revisit our plan this year. Our first step was to hire an expert to help lead us in achieving our goals. Sandra Ewell, founder of Common Ground Institute an expert in the field of Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) became our partner and guide in the process.

We launched our project in March 2021, inviting our community partners, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault agencies, and all Womanspace staff and Board to join us for a two-hour workshop featuring Professor Ibram X. Kendi, author of "How to be an Anti-racist" and Dr. Michelle Harper, author of "The Beauty in Breaking."

Since the launch event, all staff have participated in a workshop by Colsaria Henderson, Board President on the Partnership to End Domestic Violence in California and a recognized expert in the juxtaposition of anti-racism and the provision of services to victims and survivors of interpersonal violence.

Working with the leadership team, Sandy helped us to craft our first Anti-racism Position Statement which will be prominent in our official agency materials, such as our Annual Report and all agency Policy and Procedure Manuals. We will use social media and articles such as this one to share our position.

Adopting an Anti-racist Position is critical in making a public statement of our intent to prioritize a fair and just organizational perspective. The impact is far reaching and underscores our intent to meet the needs of clients, staff, Board, volunteers and our supporters. Personal issues, hiring, recruitment for Board and volunteers, screening of clients...everything is impacted by a position that understands and respects the uniqueness of each of us.



Womanspace has a new vision that aligns with our anti-racism project.

Womanspace, Inc. condemns racism and deplors the impact that historic, deeply rooted, and systemic inequalities have on survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, our workforce, the communities we serve, and our nation.

Our mission mandates us to be essential to survivors and to offer excellent survivor-centered care, that results in empowered survivors who experience their agency. We cannot be essential if we remain silent in the face of an issue that so profoundly impacts so many survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as our employees of color who serve and act on the behalf of survivors. We will provide a just employment experience as we address the pervasive inequities that are often insurmountable barriers to both survivors and employees of color alike. In the face of these historic and systemic issues it is not enough to not be the racist organization. We must be an anti-racist organization.

Womanspace commits to enact sustained organizational change and to pursue bold anti-racist policy action that is beyond rhetoric.

- We will enact anti-racist policies that lead to anti-racist ideas, attitudes and behaviors and practices to create a racism free environment.
- Survivors must and will have a critical role and a vital voice on committees focused on the organizational change process.
- We will commit to a management and program staff that is reflective of the client demographics.
- We will work to build the highest level of trust and confidence in our organization by engaging with communities of color to understand the service and access needs.
- Programs will reflect and reinforce our commitment to our ethnic and economically diverse community.
- Organizational education and training curriculum will be driven by our anti-racism principals.
- We will provide training and support to systems that interface with marginalized survivors, including justice, housing, and welfare, to eliminate systemic barriers to assistance and to do no further harm.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are being hurt by your partner, it is NOT your fault. You deserve to be safe and healthy. For help and information anytime, contact:

**Womanspace
24-Hour Hotline**
www.womanspace.org
1-609-394-9000

Text Message Hotline
for Deaf and
Hard of Hearing
609-619-1888

**National Domestic
Violence Hotline**
www.ndvh.org
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

**National Sexual
Assault Hotline**
www.rainn.org
**1-800-656-HOPE
(4673)**

**New Jersey 24-Hour Sexual
Assault Hotline**
1-800-572-SAFE (7233)

**National Teen Dating
Abuse Helpline**
www.endabuse.org
www.loveisrespect.org
www.thatsnotcool.com
1-866-331-9474
TTY 1-866-331-8453

Womanspace affirms its commitment to cultural competency. We recognize and value the ethnic, religious, and racial richness of our communities, and encourage mutual respect and understanding among all people. True excellence in our organization and communities results from identifying, serving, and enlisting the participation of all people who represent this rich diversity.

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Development Office, Womanspace News,
1530 Brunswick Avenue, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648**



www.womanspace.org

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