

WOMANSPACE NEWS

IT STARTS HERE

Coming this December – The 22nd Annual Communities of Light



In the U.S., an average of 20 people per minute are victims of domestic and sexual violence, and thousands of them are members of our community. This past year alone, Womanspace served over 9,500 victim-survivors in Mercer County.

That is why, on the evenings of December 3rd and 4th, 2023, thousands of flickering lights will line the streets, sending a powerful message of support and solidarity to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in our community.

The community-wide lightings on December 3rd, in homes and neighborhoods, and on December 4th, at businesses and municipal buildings, will be the culmination of a month of awareness raising to bring domestic violence and sexual assault out of the darkness and into the light. Throughout November, Communities of Light Luminary Kits – each including 6 votive candles and white paper bags – will be on sale for \$10 at local retailers and at www.womanspace.org. For a list of participating retailers,

please see page 2, or visit www.womanspace.org/events.

“For over 20 years, Communities of Light has been such a beautiful and powerful event. Every time I see the luminaries light up our neighborhoods, our main streets, and our municipalities, I am awestruck. What a thing to witness, our community coming together to support those among us who suffer the trauma of domestic and sexual violence,” said Nathalie Nelson, President &

CEO of Womanspace.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Womanspace at RLL@womanspace.org. There is a role for everyone to play, be it lighting up your home, coordinating with your neighbors, or illuminating your business. Sponsorship opportunities are also still available. Your support ensures that no victim of domestic violence or sexual assault will ever be turned away.

If you are being hurt, it is NOT your fault.

You deserve to be safe and healthy.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

For help and information anytime, contact:

Womanspace 24-Hour Hotline

1.609.394.9000

Text Message Hotline for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

1.609.619.1888

NJ Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline

1.800.572.SAFE (7233)

Visit www.womanspace.org for our secure chat line.

The Fund for Children Delivers Fun for Children



The Fund for Children is for Womanspace donors who want their contributions to be used exclusively to benefit the children whose lives have been impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault, and whose parents are clients of our services.

Employing the Fund for Children, we were able to build a playground at our emergency shelter, which the

children love. Parents are relieved to see a little normalcy in such traumatic circumstances.

Funds were also used for the needs of individual children. Here are just a few highlights:

- One of our clients with two children (ages 8 and 6), was able to enroll them in a YWCA program and get a discount for afterschool

care. This allowed the mom to find a job and be able to support herself and her children.

- A 16 year old was able to enroll in a 5 week program at the W.E.B Du Bois Scholars Summer Institute of Princeton University. Students took rigorous classes Monday through Thursdays, while Fridays were reserved for trips. As the students stayed on campus, on weekends they participated in free time, leadership workshops, and guest lectures.
- One of our 15 year olds was able to take bass lessons.
- A client at Barbara's House, our transitional housing, was able to enroll her three children in a 10 week summer camp.
- A client was given assistance to help celebrate her child's 12th birthday.

To learn more about the Fund for Children, please contact Erin Harts-horn at EBH@womanspace.org.

Giving Season is Almost Upon Us!

As you know, Womanspace offers safe haven to women, men, and their children in our Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Program. Many have left their abusive situations with virtually nothing.

For those looking to donate this season, the most valued items are gift cards. Gift cards empower individuals and families to purchase what they need most. These are the most useful:

ShopRite	Wegmans	Save A Lot
Walmart	Target	Aldi
Gas stations	Acme	Lidl
Visa	Trader Joes	Family Supermarket
Uber	McCaffrey's	Super Foods
Lyft	Food Bazaar	

Please visit www.womanspace.org for additional donation suggestions. Contact Womanspace at 609.394.0136 or RLL@womanspace.org to schedule a donation drop-off at 1530 Brunswick Avenue in Lawrenceville. Please include your full name and contact information so Womanspace can acknowledge your generous donation.

Communities of Light

During the month of November, Luminary Kits will be available for sale at the following locations:

Terhune Orchards
 Dandelion Wishes
 Keller Williams Premier Robbinsville
 Pennington Quality Market
 BHHS/Fox & Roach Realtors Princeton Junction
 McCaffrey's Princeton
 McCaffrey's West Windsor

Congratulations to the First Graduate of the Match Savings Program

Securing affordable and permanent housing is one of the biggest challenges for those who become homeless when they leave an abusive situation. Womanspace has long offered both emergency shelter for short term stays, as well as longer-term transitional housing for those who need more time to build a support system and find the right path to self-sufficiency.

In addition to many wrap-around services available to these survivors, last year Womanspace launched a Match Savings Program. For every dollar a resident saves towards the expenses of moving into a new home,

Womanspace matches that amount one-to-one (up to a maximum of \$2,000). Participants also attend financial education classes. Together with their financial educator, they set a personal budget, establish a goal, and create a savings plan. When they “graduate” from our housing, these funds can be used towards setting up their new household.

One of our residents recently completed this program and moved their family into an apartment. They spent everything they had to move in; the match savings enabled them to buy beds for their children. In their words, “this money was a life-saver.”

This program was funded by a generous donation from the NextGen Giving Circle Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation and First Bank.

“As a financial institution, First Bank understands the importance of financial education and recognizes the effect domestic abuse has on an individual or family’s financial wellness. It is an honor to sponsor the Match Savings Program and the opportunity to assist survivors on their way to financial empowerment,” said Sarah Pearson, First Bank Vice President and CRA Officer.



PRINCETON AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
NEXTGEN GIVING CIRCLE



Listening Sessions Held in Trenton to Explore Racial Underrepresentation

This summer, Womanspace embarked on a listening tour in Trenton, looking to discover the reasons that while Black adults experience intimate partner at a disproportionately high rate (over 40%), they only comprise 21% of Womanspace clients.

Facilitated by Varonda Kendrick, Womanspace’s Domestic Violence Victim Response Team (DVVRT) Coordinator, four Community Listening Sessions were held. These sessions were coordinated with various community leaders, and held in a public library, two churches, and a community center so they were easily accessible for Trenton residents.

Three types of participants attended: those who knew about Womanspace because they or someone they knew

used our services; those who did not know Womanspace existed or still existed; and those who believed the services were geared toward white women.

The topics were explored in a round table format, and included increasing awareness of services offered by Womanspace, the need to break through trust and cultural issues, and perceived causes of domestic violence among the Black community in Trenton. These data points will help inform our outreach efforts, with the goal to serve all who need help.

As importantly, the Community Listening Sessions resulted in direct action. A number of individuals indicated they would contact Womanspace to help cope with past trauma, and four volunteered for the Womanspace Crisis Response Teams of Mercer County, who meet with victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault at local police stations and hospitals.

Womanspace would like thank the Princeton Area Community Foundation Bunbury Fund for supporting this initiative.



PRINCETON AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
The BUNBURY FUND



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WOMANSPACE is the only agency in Trenton and Mercer County, New Jersey specifically focused on providing essential, life-saving services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking. The overarching philosophy guiding all of our programs at Womanspace is one of empowerment: for women, men, and their children to become self-sufficient; live safer lives; make informed decisions; to undergo personal growth. We assist victims-survivors, both at the moment of crisis and throughout their journey of emotional healing and the achievement of economic independence.

Outreach in Mercer County

As part of our Crisis Response and Prevention program, Womanspace makes outreach to the community a priority. Our objectives include collaborating with businesses and local organizations to engage diverse audiences and raise awareness about domestic and sexual violence.

Toy Burks is our Outreach and Crisis Response Team Support Specialist. A survivor of domestic abuse herself, she brings both perspective and passion to spreading the word about the services available to victim-survivors looking to build a better life. You will see Toy at our Womanspace information table in public libraries, gyms, hair salons,

and at community events. Public libraries, such as the Hamilton Township Library and the Lawrence Public Library, offer a safe and welcoming atmosphere for people to learn and explore. In addition, Womanspace participates in events such as Capital City Cruisers Against Domestic Violence, Robbinsville Rotary's Women Empowerment Fair, Thrift Us Up, and Foundation Academy's Back to School Night.

Womanspace is proud to be a prominent advocate for survivors. Every interaction, no matter how small, has the potential to make a difference in creating a community where survivors are seen, heard, and supported.



Jersey Transit at the Lawrence Library