



# CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Vol.20 No. 1

Spring 2009 Newsletter

## APRIL WAS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

### Sexual Assault Statistics

- **1 out of every 6** American women have been the victims of an attempted or completed sexual assault in their lifetime
- Between 1/3 and 1/2 of all **battered women are sexually assaulted** by their partners at least once during their relationship
- **62%** of sexual assaults are **not reported to the police**
- Approximately **73%** of **sexual assault victims know their assailants**
- **College age women** are 4 times more likely to be sexually assaulted
- **Every 2 minutes**, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted
- **About 3%** of American **men** have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime
- 15% of sexual assault victims are **under age 12**

### Strategies for Becoming an Active Bystander

In order to create a safer community, everyone can make steps to *overcome the bystander effect*:

- Consider whether the situation demands some action
- Decide if you feel a responsibility to act
- Choose what form of assistance you can use to intervene
- Listen and be open to a victim seeking help
- Ask yourself, 'If I were in this situation, would I want someone to help me?'
- Even small interventions can make a big difference in a questionable situation
- Just distracting someone, saying something, checking in with a person can stop the momentum of something bad
- Speak up if someone is putting down women
- Use your cell phone (or any phone) to contact 9-1-1

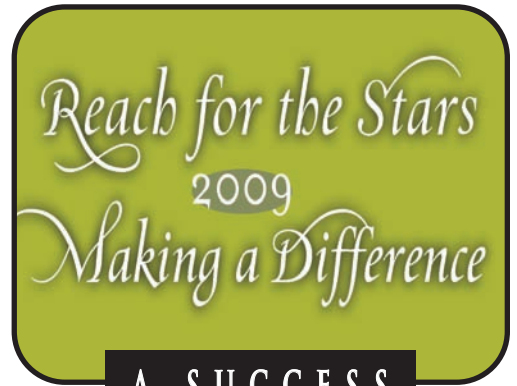
#### NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

1-800-656-HOPE • [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

#### CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

616-392-1970 or 616-355-9755 (Spanish)

**Sexual Assault**  
Awareness Month



The Grand Haven fourth annual *Making a Difference* and Holland seventeenth *Reach for the Stars*

provided guests with fine food and a chance to hear nationally known author and



Charisse Mitchell, Executive Director and featured speaker, author Joan Anderson

motivational speaker, Joan Anderson. She also engaged fifty-five women in a day long retreat at Camp Blodgett during her week on the Lakeshore.



Find more photos from our events on pages 4 & 5

# GIRLS ON THE RUN SPRING 2009

*Ashley Rea, Council Director - Program Coordinator*

The Spring 2009 season of Girls on the Run is now underway! We are pleased to announce that almost 1500 girls in grades 3-5 are participating this season, making it one of the largest groups yet. Three hundred certified volunteer coaches at 63 participating schools lead the girls through a curriculum that pairs self-esteem enhancing lessons with fun and uplifting work outs. Girls on the Run of Ottawa and Allegan Counties remains the 4th largest program in North America and we continue to grow every year.

The culmination of our Spring 2009 season will be the New Balance Girls on the Run Celebration 5Ks. The South Ottawa and Allegan County 5K will be held on May 15th at the Holland Municipal Stadium at 5:30pm. Participating school districts include Holland, West Ottawa, Zeeland, Saugatuck, Fennville, Hamilton, Hopkins, Allegan and Wayland. The North Ottawa 5K will be held on May 16th at Lakeshore Middle School in Grand Haven at 9:30am. This run will feature the school districts of Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Coopersville, Allendale, Jenison and Hudsonville. The events are completely non-competitive and all girls wear a #1 race bib. Girls are encouraged to run, hop, skip or dance their way to the finish line together.

Each of the events will feature almost 1000 runners and 1500 spectators. We will need many volunteers to help make these events safe and successful for all participants. If you would like to volunteer for the event, please contact Ashley at 616-494-1719 or visit our website at [www.gotroac.org](http://www.gotroac.org).



# WELCOME TO LEADERSHIP

New Board members Lisa Luckey of Grand Haven and Carol Stroop of Holland will bring experience and commitment to the Center for Women in Transition. Lisa has been the chairwomen of "Making a Difference" in Grand Haven for several years. She is president of Luckey Financial Services, Counterpart Woman of the Year 2008, Elder of First Presbyterian Church, past board member of Holland Hospice and

currently on the Executive Committee of Leadership Holland. She has also been active in Junior Welfare League and Holland Chamber Board of Directors. Lisa states, "I truly believe in the mission of CWIT and want to continue to see the agency grow and respond to the needs."



Lisa Luckey

Carol Stroop recently retired after 35 years of teaching. She is a graduate of Hope College with an MA from Western Michigan University and a Bilingual Endorsement from Ferris State University. She taught 5th grade for Kenowa Hills Public Schools and 2nd grade for West Ottawa Public Schools where she was

also a bilingual teacher. Carol and husband Jim have five grown children and four grand-children. They love to travel, fly, golf and cook. In 2006 she soloed in a Cessna 172 and her daily goal is "To make someone's day a bit better with a random act of kindness."

"We depend on leadership from the community to set our course, respond to our needs and navigate through these tough economic times. We are pleased to have Lisa and Carol join our dedicated Board of Directors," states Charisse Mitchell.



Carol Stroop

## CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

### Mission Statement

The Center for Women in Transition's mission is to create and sustain an environment that enhances the voice, opportunities and strength of women and girls in Allegan and Ottawa Counties.

E-mail [mail@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:mail@aplaceforwomen.org)  
 Web site [www.aplaceforwomen.org](http://www.aplaceforwomen.org)

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Charisse Mitchell<br><i>Executive Director</i> | Jane Armstrong        |
| Elizabeth Brandt<br><i>Newsletter Design</i>   | Mabel Casey           |
| <b>Board</b>                                   | Jane Dickie           |
| Steve Harvey, CPA<br><i>President</i>          | Rev. Jaco Hamman, PhD |
| Betsy Simpson<br><i>Vice President</i>         | Robyn Hofmeyer        |
| Ed Walsh<br><i>Treasurer</i>                   | Lisa Luckey           |
| Jeff McMartin<br><i>Secretary</i>              | Jane Patterson        |
| Maria Hoekstra, DDS<br><i>Past President</i>   | Katie Reincke         |
|  | Carol Stroop          |
|  | Rev. Gordon Wiersma   |

CWIT is a non-profit organization funded by governmental and private grants, private contributions, donations, fund-raising events and United Way allocations.



## Director's Letter

Spring is in the air and a new season of hope has begun. Staff, volunteers, interns, and supporters come to Center for Women in Transition every day to help people move from periods of fear and sadness to futures filled with new possibilities. With the promise of spring we all renew our commitment to serving those in need in Ottawa and Allegan Counties.

The warmth of spring couldn't have come at a better time. The nation's economic challenges have had a significant impact on local businesses and families and Center for Women in Transition is no exception. Like other service agencies, the Center has struggled to meet the growing needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Financial hardship and employment instability significantly strain family relationships. The health and safety of individuals under such heightened stress and fear is of great concern. Now more than ever the Center must be poised to reach out to and support those who may be physically, emotionally at risk of abuse and without the resources to ensure their own safety and security.

While we look forward to trees and flowers budding and blooming this spring we hope that Center for Women in Transition can experience a period of renewal as well. We look forward to new partners and supporters to help sustain the agency and ensure that we remain a place of hope and healing for those in the community who need us most, now more than ever.



Sincerely,

**Charisse Mitchell, Executive Director**

# Reach for the Stars 2009

## Making a Difference



Joan Anderson signed many books for our event guests



Charisse Mitchell with evening emcee, news anchor Julie Dragos from WZZM and Steve Harvey, Board President



Reach co-chair Jane Patterson and board member Jane Armstrong



Melanie Levin and Bob Scamehorn



Center staff celebrate Reach (l to r) Lesley Coghill, Jan Meinel, Carl Mayberry, and Tara Blandford

Photo Credits: Kara Kemperman of Candid Designs, Laura McCranner, Teresa Schraudt, Mary Louise Avery

Lisa Luckey, Making a Difference co-chair with Master of Ceremonies Dennis McKee and Steve Harvey





Guests bid on the silent auction items.



Volunteer Coordinator Sherry Martens and Charisse Mitchell



Joan DeLeeuy co-chair of Reach for the Stars and Beth Eckhardt, member of Reach committee and friend of Joan Anderson



"Journey Within a Journey" Retreat at Camp Blodgett, Julie Morton and Joan.



Craig Russell of The Printery led invocation at both events



Retreat participants Krista Kortman, Ginner Castillo, and Jane Armstrong

(l to r) Tom Bamborough, Mary Bamborough, Laura Palmiier, Gary Palmiier and Tina Pietrangelo enjoy the evening



Making a Difference co-chairs Lisa Luckey and Kelly Seaver





## From the Volunteer Department

Thank you to all of our **Reach for the Stars and Make a Difference Volunteers!**

April 23rd proved to be a busy day for our volunteers and the culminating event after thousands of hours of dedicated time and talents to secure sponsors, arrange event venues and make it a magical experience for all who attended. Author Joan Anderson appeared at noon at the Making a Difference luncheon at Covenant Life Church in Grand Haven and then later that same day presented at the Reach for the Stars gala dinner and charity auction in Saugatuck.

Without our dedicated volunteers, events like these would be impossible for CWIT to accomplish. All proceeds from both events will pay for agency services.

### MAY 2009 VOLUNTEER TRAINING DATES:

Monday, May 11	9:00am-12:00noon
Tuesday, May 12	9:00am-12:00noon
Wednesday, May 13	9:00am-12:00noon
Thursday, May 14	9:00am-12:00noon
Monday, May 18	9:00am-12:00noon
Tuesday, May 19	9:00am-12:00noon
Wednesday, May 20	1:00pm-3:00pm

### VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK

National Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 19-25, was celebrated throughout the Center with balloons and ribbons acknowledging all of the volunteers for their generous gifts of time and talent. The festivities culminated with the final event of our Annual Volunteer Appreciation, Tuesday, April 28th from 5:30-7:00pm, at the Holland Area Arts Council.

To volunteer call 616-494-1747 or email [SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org).

# Volunteer Royalty

Amber Marcy, crowned

Ms. Wheelchair

Michigan,

will attend the

National

Pageant for

Ms. Wheelchair

America in August.

During her reign,

Amber's platform,

"My chair does not

define me", will continue

to advocate for those

who are dependent on the use of a wheelchair for mobility.

Amber currently volunteers for CWIT as a front desk

receptionist, crisis line volunteer and sexual assault advocate.



Amber with Sherry Martens, Volunteer Coordinator

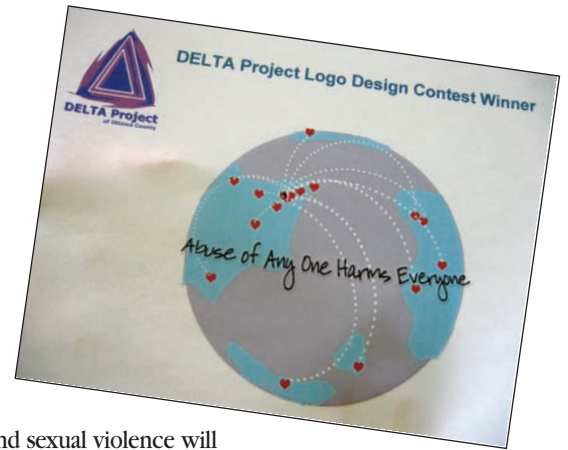


Continuing a tradition started many years ago, employees and contract workers at the Consumers Energy J.H. Campbell Electric Generating Complex in Port Sheldon donated 74 Easter baskets for Center families to enjoy.



DELTA PROJECT

# ABUSE OF ANY ONE HARMS EVERYONE



*Lesley Coghill, Delta Coordinator*

The existence of domestic and sexual violence impacts all of us. Our community has a stake in preventing domestic and sexual violence. We are all a part of the solution and have many opportunities to speak out and promote peace over violence.

The DELTA Community Prevention Committee developed this prevention slogan as a reflection of how prevention is the responsibility of the community as a whole. Domestic and sexual violence will not end due to the efforts of one individual, one task force, or one agency alone - but by the collective efforts of a community that promotes non-violence, peace, and healthy relationships. The committee has been meeting since September 2008 and its membership includes representation from law enforcement, community agencies, youth serving organizations, and schools in Holland and Zeeland.

During April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the community was able to participate and vote on a new logo for the Abuse of Any One Harms Everyone slogan. The new logo will appear on the DELTA page of the Center for Women in Transition website and on all prevention materials. The significance of this logo is to promote a symbol for the collective effort toward prevention in our community. To connect with the DELTA Project's prevention efforts or to request prevention training at your church, school, or organization, please contact Lesley Coghill at [LesleyC@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:LesleyC@aplaceforwomen.org) or 616-494-1741.



**A participant in the Self Empowerment workshop, held as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, demonstrates a self-defense technique with instructor Frank Coronado.**



**Our crisis line is available 24 hours a day to provide support and referrals regarding issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, safety planning and other community resources.**

**English 616-392-1970 and 1-800-848-5991**

**Spanish 616-355-9755 and 1-866-728-2131**

**Nuestra línea de crisis es disponible 24 horas del día para proporcionar ayuda y remisiones sobre los temas de la violencia domestica, abuso sexual, el planeamiento de seguridad y otros recursos de la comunidad.**

**C R I S I S L I N E**

## MAY BASKETS BRING MAY SMILES

Our heart felt appreciation goes out to all of the May Basket Donors for helping us collect a variety of household supplies and personal

items. Due to an overwhelming response we were able to successfully fill and distribute over 100 laundry baskets. This 10 year tradition reaches out to our clients and their families throughout Ottawa and Allegan Counties.



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Holland, MI 49424

CENTER FOR  
WOMEN IN  
TRANSITION

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HOLLAND, MI 49424  
PERMIT #169

Accessing reliable transportation is a significant barrier for many victims of domestic violence who are trying to move forward with their lives. "The Vehicle Assistance Program within Center for Women in Transition attempts to alleviate this barrier for survivors, providing them the opportunity to be able to seek or maintain employment and to gain a sense of safety," according to Holly Wilson, Client Advocate.

The Vehicle Assistance Program was established in 2007 through the generous donations of community members who recognized transportation as being a significant barrier for many survivors. Since then, CWIT has been able to provide fourteen clients with reliable transportation. Clients who have received cars through the program have since improved their ability to maintain employment, obtain higher education, make safe visitation transitions for their children, and relieve safety concerns.

## Vehicle ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Several factors negatively influence a victim's ability to access reliable transportation including being financially dependent on the abuser, the inability to maintain employment due to abuse, living in rural areas without access to public transportation, and not being allowed to obtain a driver's license. During these difficult economic times support is needed to continue our Vehicle Assistance

Program. Transportation assistance can make the greatest difference in the life of a survivor. Center clients also receive donations of vehicles from Auto Value Dealers in Michigan. We encourage people to donate cars to their program.

For more information about our Vehicle Assistance Program or the Auto Value program, please contact Mary Louise Avery, Development Director at 616-494-1756, [MarylouiseA@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:MarylouiseA@aplaceforwomen.org).