



CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Vol.19 No.3

Fall 2008 Newsletter

Executive Director Charisse Mitchell Starts Work June 2

Charisse Mitchell was welcomed to Center for Women in Transition by staff, volunteers and the West Michigan community with enthusiastic community-wide open houses and extensive media coverage. Mitchell returns to Michigan after an extensive career in Washington DC, most recently with the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) where she served for eight years. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Master of Public Administration degrees from George Washington University.

Mitchell was raised in Battle Creek. She remarks that, "coming home to Michigan and being a part of the future of CWIT is a wonderful opportunity. My family and I are enjoying the hospitality of the community and proximity to family." See her first Director's Letter, page 2.



Charisse Mitchell and son Julian at the Ice Cream Social.

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

DEDICATION OF BRICK INSTALLATION

Thursday, October 16, 6 pm. The public is invited to share in a formal ceremony at Center for Women in Transition's Holland program center to honor and memorialize those individuals for whom a brick has been purchased. This annual event brings families, groups and donors together to celebrate the work and lives of men and women in our community. Guests are invited to stay for the art exhibit that follows and for refreshments.

CELEBRATING THE SISTERHOOD OF STRENGTH

Thursday, October 16, 6:45 pm – 8 pm. An art exhibit showcasing women artists in the area will be held at Center for Women in Transition's Holland program center to celebrate the courageous spirit of women as they heal, grow, and express themselves. Many survivors of domestic violence will be submitting their work, both visual and written, and a panel of survivors will be sharing some of their own stories.

SILENT WITNESS PROJECT

Wednesday, October 8, 12 noon – 1 pm. GVSU Women's Center will host the unveiling and remembrance event. Feel free to contact GVSU Women's Center at 616-331-2748 or womenctr@gvsu.edu for more information or to participate in the event. Twelve silhouettes, each with the name and story of a West Michigan individual killed by an act of domestic violence, will be on display throughout the month.

TOGETHER WE CAN APPRECIATION DINNER

Tuesday, October 21, at Fenn Valley Winery and Vineyards. This is an opportunity to honor members of law enforcement and agency professionals from both Allegan and Ottawa Counties and one community volunteer for their outstanding dedication to eliminating domestic and sexual violence and advocacy for survivors. To register or to submit award nomination forms go to www.aplaceforwomen.org. Nominations are due by September 9.

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

When I came to Center for Women in Transition in June, I never expected to be received with such open arms. Growing

up in Michigan, I had always known how generous and welcoming people can be. But having been away for so long, I may have forgotten how quickly colleagues and neighbors in this community embrace new arrivals and call them friends.

It is this same spirit of warmth, compassion, and support that the staff, donors, supporters, and partners of Center for Women in Transition bring to the agency. Women who contact the Center are seeking assistance often during the most traumatic and lonely times of their lives. We reach out to these women and their families with strong yet gentle arms to help lift them out of their current circumstances and find the strength to stand on their own. This spirit of openness and generosity is what allows all of us from different sectors in the community to come together to not only discuss strategies to address the incidence of domestic and sexual violence, but also develop new collaborative strategies in prevention and education in the



Bill Swano of Grand Haven Kiwanis welcomes Charisse Mitchell. Kiwanis helped provide summer outings for CWIT client families to venues in West Michigan including a pizza party, a Blast game, a day at the YMCA and the Circus.

have seen a great deal of growth and change in the agency, the common thread of warmth and compassion and collaboration with donors, partners, and friends are permanently woven into the fabric of the Center. Whether we are providing emergency shelter for women and their children, offering transitional housing for women making that next step towards safety and independence, providing emergency services, therapy, and peer support for victims, or delivering messages of positive self-esteem and empowerment to our youth through the DELTA prevention project and Girls on the Run program, we do so as a reflection of the generous spirit of our community. Thank you so much for the opportunity to open my arms to women in need the same way you all have opened your arms to welcome me home. I look forward to working with all of you to continue the Center's work toward creating and sustaining an environment that enhances the voice, opportunities and strength of women in Allegan and Ottawa counties.

Sincerely,
Charisse Mitchell
Executive Director

hopes that the youth we see today don't become victims or perpetrators of such violence tomorrow.

The agency has been a proud member of the community in Ottawa and Allegan counties for over 30 years. Although we

October is Domestic Violence Month

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A COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

Friday, October 31. Center for Women in Transition will be hosting a day-long training for law enforcement, faith leaders, service providers and other community members on the dynamics of domestic violence, how to respond, and what we can do as a community to prevent violence.

CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

Thirty-five thousand shirts illustrated by victims of violence tell the story of the transformation from victim to survivor. Some of these shirts will be displayed at many events throughout the month and in the lobby at *Center for Women in Transition's Holland program center, 411 Butternut Drive.*

Watch our website, www.aplaceforwomen.org, for more information about dates and registration for events. See pages 4 and 5 for more details about Domestic Violence Awareness.

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN LATER LIFE AND ABUSE AGAINST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Kathleen Lord

Almost three years ago CWIT was awarded funds from the Office on Violence Against Women for transitional housing and supportive services to older adults and persons with disabilities. As a result of this project, the Advisory Committee Against Vulnerable Adult Abuse (ACAVAA) was formed to identify and remove barriers to domestic violence services for vulnerable adults. On August 5, the Advisory Committee welcomed twenty-five participants to a workshop at the program center in Holland. Ann Turner, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), presented "*A Look at Domestic Abuse in Later Life and Abuse Against Persons with Disabilities*" for Adult Protective Service workers, social workers, domestic and sexual assault program advocates and others who might meet abused elders or people with disabilities in their work. Ms. Turner has been a grassroots organizer for the domestic violence movement in Northwestern Wisconsin since 1981, opening a domestic abuse shelter in 1986. Since 2002, she has been a Rural Technical Assistance Specialist with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. For the last five years she has worked with that agency's Abuse in Later Life project, NCALL (<http://www.ncall.us>).

Participants in the workshop gained a better understanding of domestic abuse against this population and its effect on victims. They learned to recognize the difference between caregiver stress and domestic abuse, and effective intervention strategies promoting victim safety. For more information on these topics, contact Kathleen Lord, Coordinator of Services for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities 616-494-1739 or KathleenL@aplaceforwomen.org.

M A N Y T H A N K S

Teerman's in downtown Holland is a new location to donate cell phones and component parts. **Grand Haven Bank** in downtown Grand Haven also collects cell phones and they are given to clients or recycled for a cash refund to support programs.

Allegan County Community Foundation TAG grant provided funds for Girls on the Run/Girls on Track.

Holland Area Auto Value/Bumper to Bumper automobile program gave two CWIT clients refurbished cars. These cars were donated by area residents and the fine Auto Value dealers prepared them to be given to clients in the area. Call 616-494-1756 for information on how to donate your car to help women who need transportation.

Holland Junior Welfare League awarded CWIT \$1,382 to buy a swing set for the playground. They also supported children's activities with a grant of \$1,200.



Donaylle of Donaylle Nicole Hair Studio cuts hair during sidewalk sales in August in Grand Haven. The "Cut-a-Thon" raised \$2,000 for CWIT client services.

Women's Ministries of Third Reformed Church gave a generous donation to the Center. Funds were raised from baking cakes on special occasions for Hope students.

Gentex Corporation has established a fund at the Holland Zeeland Community Foundation and CWIT will be one of the first recipients of their employees' generosity.

Redemption Riders for continued support of our clients.

Anchorage Yacht Club for a great family fund raiser for CWIT with food, clowns and face painting.

All the donors who contributed to the **Holland Area Postal Food Drive** to benefit CWIT clients.

All the donors who gave items and financial support to the May Basket Project and the Back to School Supplies Project.

You affirm our support for hundreds of adults and children during a transitional and difficult time in their lives.



(Above) Long time supporters of CWIT, Panera Bread presented CWIT a check for \$5,000 at the Volunteer Ice Cream Social. Panera Bread accepts monetary donations for the Center at the Holland and Grand Haven locations. They also donate bread and sweets for clients on a weekly basis. Pictured left to right: Polly Diehl, from CWIT; from the Grand Haven location of Panera Bread – Sara Houseman, Marketing Associate; Jessi Auriel, Marketing Associate; and Bethany Edel, General Manager. Brian Campbell, Regional Marketing Coordinator presents the check to Charisse Mitchell, CWIT Executive Director.



Sunshine the clown entertains at the Ice Cream Social.

CONGRATULATIONS

Lisa Luckey for being selected "Woman of the Year" by the Counterpart organization in Grand Haven.

Suzann Nummerdor has been an employee of CWIT for 25 years and continues to serve with compassion and enthusiasm.

Annette Rus, Wardrobe for Work volunteer, received the Ambassador of the Year award from the Holland Chamber of Commerce.

CELEBRATING THE SISTERHOOD OF STRENGTH

EXPRESSING OURSELVES THROUGH ART

Anna DeHaan

The community is invited to share this special evening with survivors of domestic violence who tell their stories through art, writing, sharing and story telling. Many of the women hosting this event are survivors who are healing from domestic abuse. They express themselves through doll-making, felting, poetry writing, mask making and traditional art mediums. Some of the pieces have been put in a "Chest of Memories" that represents the collective experiences of survivors of domestic violence.

For two years we have hosted the community, and this year we hope to expand and invite more people to come and see what is going on in the lives of women in our own community. Please come and join us on Thursday, October 16, at our Holland program center, 411 Butternut Drive, for refreshments and the art exhibit as well as a series of presentations. The doors will open at 6:15 pm for refreshments and viewing the art, with the program scheduled to begin at 6:45 pm. Please call Anna at 616-494-1725 with any questions or if you are interested in contributing artwork for the show.



A Community Working Together

Friday, October 31, 2008

9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Center for Women in Transition

411 Butternut Drive, Holland MI 49424

Each of us has the responsibility to fulfill our role as part of the solution to preventing, intervening in, and responding to domestic violence. Become better equipped to prevent and respond to domestic violence in our local communities. Attend "A Community Working Together" a domestic violence training for law enforcement, faith community members, educators, service providers, rental property managers, and all interested community members. Contact Anna at 616-494-1725 or visit www.aplaceforwomen.org to register.

Registration begins at 8:30 am and the program starts at 9:00 am. Lunch is included. The cost of the training is \$30.

Participants will:

- Learn primary prevention strategies to prevent domestic violence at the individual and community levels before it happens.
- Learn red flags, safety tips, and facts about domestic violence.
- Learn how to intervene to support survivors and receive a binder of resources.
- Listen to survivors share their stories.



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



PURPLE & WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Adrienne Bailey

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Center for Women in Transition, along with community partners, is hosting a series of events to help raise awareness. One way you can partner with us in bringing awareness to the prevalence of domestic violence is to participate in the White and Purple Ribbon Campaign. Initiated in 1991 by a small group of Canadian men, the White Ribbon Campaign has become the largest worldwide effort of men working to end men's violence against women. Men who participate in the campaign wear a white ribbon signifying a personal pledge never to commit, condone nor remain silent about violence against women. Please consider taking part in this movement by learning more about what men can do.

The purple ribbon campaign is another way that both men and women can show their support and raise awareness. What began close to two decades ago in scattered communities as a visible gesture of support for survivors and victims of domestic violence, has become one of the most widely-recognized symbols of the battered women's movement - the purple ribbon. Across the country, families and friends of victims have adopted the purple ribbon to remember and honor their loved ones who have lost their lives at the hands of a person they once loved and trusted. Shelters and local battered women's programs use the purple ribbon to raise awareness about the crime of domestic violence in their communities. In addition to the demonstration of support for victims and advocates, the display of purple ribbons throughout a community conveys a powerful message that there's no place for domestic violence in the homes, neighborhoods, workplaces or schools of its citizens. *(Information provided by The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence)*

To learn more about the White and Purple Ribbon Campaign or if you, your work place, school or church would like to participate, please contact Adrienne at Center for Women in Transition at 616-494-1753 or e-mail at AdrienneB@aplaceforwomen.org.



"Together We Can" Appreciation Dinner

Lesley Coghill

The Allegan and Ottawa County communities have felt the devastating impact of domestic and sexual violence. In the midst of tragedy, there have been people in our communities who have stepped forward to prevent such violence from occurring, investigate, and support those who have been victimized.

The Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (LAADSV) and Allegan County



Coordinating Council on Domestic Violence (ACCCDV) encourage members of the community to nominate award recipients for the 7th Annual "Together We Can" Appreciation Dinner. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at Fenn Valley Winery and Vineyards located at 6130 122nd Avenue, Fennville, MI 49408.

This annual event recognizes a law enforcement officer and agency professional from both Ottawa and Allegan counties, honoring their consistent dedication and sensitive handling of domestic and sexual violence cases. The Mari Martin Award is presented to an outstanding community member honoring one's commitment and volunteerism toward ending domestic and sexual violence.

Online registration is available at www.aplaceforwomen.org. Appreciation dinner registration is \$25 until October 7, 2008. Late registration for \$30 is available until October 14, 2008. Doors open at 6:00 pm. Dinner is at 6:30 pm and the awards program begins at 7:15 pm. Contact Lesley Coghill at Center for Women in Transition for more information about the event and award nominations at 616-494-1741 or LesleyC@aplaceforwomen.org.



Patrick Moran, Executive Director of United Way, shows Charisse Mitchell and Jan Meinel the poster that will encourage giving. CWT encourages the community to "Give United" in support of all United Way programs in Allegan and Ottawa Counties.





Presented by:



Ashley Rea, Girls on the Run Coordinator

Girls on the Run of Ottawa and Allegan

Counties is now the 4th largest Girls on the Run program in the nation; there are currently over 160 councils operating across North America! We are gearing up to bring another fun season of Girls on Track and Fall Girls on the Run! Girls from all over Ottawa and Allegan Counties will begin the season on September 22 and end with the Wondergirl 5K on November 22. We are excited to have a new Girls on the Run school joining us from the Allegan County area—Westward Elementary in Allegan. Girls on the Run and Girls on Track are dedicated to educating and preparing girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. It is the goal to provide this opportunity to all girls regardless of their ability to pay. If you are interested in sponsoring a girl, please visit our website www.gotroac.org or call Ashley Rea at 616-494-1719.

Thank you again to Shoreline Container for challenging other local businesses to support Girls on the Run and thank you to Oppenhuizen Orthodontics for becoming a new sponsor.



These are just a few of the remarks
we hear from participants after they
experience the program:

I learned...

That no matter who you are
and what you look like,
you will always be you.

That every one likes me
and supports me.

to always have a positive attitude
and appreciate everything you have
and every person you have

That it's totally possible
to impress yourself everyday!

I have learned to make good choices in life.
I have also learned that it is important
to respect your body.

To never give up!!!

INVESTING IN WOMEN AND FAMILIES

August of 2008 begins the thirty-second year of Center for Women in Transition. The legacy of service that continues every day for every woman and family depends on the generosity of our community. CWIT is challenged every day to continue that legacy.

Are you interested in making a gift in the future but receiving tax benefits now?

Would you like to create life income, tax savings and give a gift to charity?

Would you like to learn more about the IRA Rollover so that you may give now and reduce taxes?

Have you named CWIT in your will or estate plan? If you have, please let us know so that we may thank you.

Do you have a passion for a particular program at CWIT and have an interest in advancing that program? Together we may be able to make that passion continue to grow.

The Center accepts gifts of cash, stock, real estate, insurance, retirement assets and estates.

We are happy to discuss your interests confidentially and work with you to help you attain your objectives. We welcome opportunities to collaborate with the Grand Haven Area, the Holland/Zeeland Area, and the Allegan County Community Foundations as well as financial planners and attorneys. CWIT has professionals to discuss opportunities and you are not obligated to make a gift. CWIT also has funds at area Community Foundations. Call Mary Louise Avery CFRE at 616-494-1756, email MarylouiseA@aplaceforwomen.org, or call Charisse Mitchell 616-494-1750, email CharisseM@aplaceforwomen.org.



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Holland, MI 49424

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Girls Dream Fair in November

Center for Women in Transition and the local branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) will hold the Ninth Annual Girls Dream Fair on November 6 at Central Wesleyan Church in Holland. Two hundred and eighty 8th grade girls representing 15 area middle schools have been invited to this day-long event. Area women will share their career journeys, give the girls tips on career exploration, and talk with them about preparing for traditional and non-traditional careers. Nurses, administrators, truck drivers, electricians, human service professionals and educators will be telling their stories.

Approximately 45 professional women representing various careers have been invited as well as two keynote speakers. If you are interested in giving a presentation about your career, volunteering at the event, or being a part of the planning committee please contact Vickie at 616-494-1726 or VickieD@aplaceforwomen.org.



CELEBRATING THE SISTERHOOD OF STRENGTH

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Help Us Save Some Green

A number of individuals and organizations

support CWIT with donations and funding. We'd like to be certain that resources are used wisely. In an effort to cut costs, while increasing communication with our supporters, we will be offering an e-newsletter. Help us. Please send your email address to PollyD@aplaceforwomen.org.

*That no matter who you are
and what you look like,
you will always be you.*

**Girls on the
Run words
of wisdom**

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