



# CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Vol.19 No.4

Holiday 2008 Newsletter

## New Look for CWIT

“Everything old is new again” is from an old pop song. This is true also for the look of CWIT on website, displays, newsletter and other collaborative materials. Thanks to the generosity of the Steelcase Foundation, Fairly Painless Advertising, Verizon Wireless and a Crime Victim Assistance grant from the Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission, the new “old” photos in black and white that were on past annual reports will be returning to the CWIT website and print materials.

“We have always identified with this personal and artistic representation of our clients,” states Jane Armstrong, CWIT board member. “Fairly Painless who originated the concept is working with us again to help articulate the stories and messages of our clients.”

“We would never have the resources to accomplish these improved communication tools without the financial support of these grants and gifts,” says Charisse Mitchell. In addition to funds to improve communication, the Nokomis and Steelcase Foundations granted funds to improve technology, marketing, registration, evaluation and Spanish translation of existing and future communications. Billboards on local highways funded by Verizon Wireless and the Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission are the examples of the old/new look.



## CWIT BRINGS BEST SELLING AUTHOR JOAN ANDERSON TO WEST MICHIGAN

The “scholar of self and soul,” author of children’s books, and three memoirs, *A Year by the Sea*, *Unfinished Marriage* and the recently released *A Walk on*

*the Beach* will entertain audiences for “Reach for the Stars” in Holland on April 23 and “Making a Difference” in Grand Haven on April 24, 2009. Audiences across the country are familiar with Anderson from her many talk show interviews and retreats she sponsors for women.

“We are so fortunate to have her come to West Michigan where she has dedicated readers and fans,” states Jane Patterson, co-chair of the Holland event. “Joan has a passion for helping people reach their potential and find their gifts. We have talked to area women who have attended her retreats and book signings and they are excited for the opportunity of having her here in our own backyard.”

“The life experiences she shares with her audiences as a former teacher in Africa, owner of an advertising agency and motivational speaker make for an interesting and uplifting presentation,” states Patterson. Joan Anderson lives in Harwich Port, Massachusetts.

See [www.Joanandersononline.com](http://www.Joanandersononline.com). Tickets will be available in January for both events. Books may be purchased at Tree House Books in Holland and The Bookman in Grand Haven.



Photo credit: Sarah Fantom, 2006

## SAVE THE DATES

REACH FOR THE STARS · HOLLAND APRIL 23, 2009

MAKING A DIFFERENCE · GRAND HAVEN APRIL 24, 2009



# HOLIDAY SEASON 2008

Families will gather to celebrate their history and renew affections this season. They will take photos and recall memories that year after year affirm the trust, faith, and love of individuals for each other. Families will share church services, meals and hopes for the future of the next generation.

Women and children who are clients of CWIT may be living in the shelter or supportive housing this holiday for the first time. They celebrate their independence and freedom from fear, injury and tears. Through the generosity of donors they will have presents to open and can begin a new history of creating good memories.

Crisis services have increased in the past year and experience indicates that calls to the 24-hour crisis line will increase during the holidays.

Volunteers and staff will be available to support survivors of domestic and



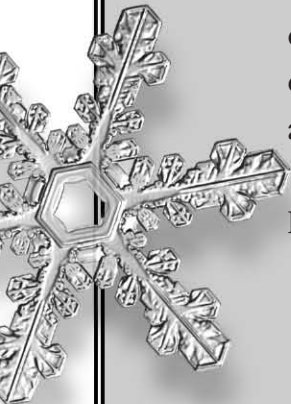
sexual violence 24/7.

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program is also a 24/7 program for victims of rape and

<b>Annual Data</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Hotline Calls</b>	<b>3168</b>	<b>3513</b>
<b>Walk-in Clients for Crisis Services</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>857</b>

other sexual assault. It is comforting to know that our community is vigilant in caring for women and their children experiencing both the joys of independence and the pain of abuse.

An envelope is enclosed to make a holiday gift to support our programs. For online donations visit our website at [www.aplaceforwomen.org](http://www.aplaceforwomen.org).



# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Community education and training, ribbon campaigns, public announcements, media presentations, vigils, celebrations. These were just some of the activities that Center for Women in Transition engaged in throughout October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Across the country and around the world individuals, organizations, and communities recognized the importance of this month in their own way, in their own voice. Domestic violence knows no timeframe and sticks to no calendar. Understanding this, Center for Women in Transition works year round to help those who have been abused and to move our entire community toward strategies for prevention.

As Domestic Violence Awareness Month comes to an end, I want to focus our attention not on those of us who serve but on those whom we are here to serve. There are women and children throughout our community who lead what would seem to us to be ordinary lives. What we don't know is that they have come through extraordinary challenges with exceptional strength, grace and dignity. They have emerged from lives of abuse, neglect, loneliness and fear to find their own strength, beauty, independence, and have found joys in the smallest and largest things in life. The courage and wisdom that these survivors have found and shared with others have made not only themselves stronger, but have enriched our community. So today, as we look ahead to the challenges and opportunities Center for Women in Transition has to serve those in Ottawa and

Allegan counties, I want to say thank you to every person who has ever turned her periods of abuse to abundance, her life of fear to fruitfulness, and her days of pain to peace. Thank you to every person who has ever trusted us enough to ask for help. For those of you who are hurting but don't know where to turn, there is help.

Whether we know your names or not, please remember that we know your stories and they inspire us all. All of you are the reason we have been here for 31 years and we will continue to work hard to be here for you as long as you need us.



**Charisse holding masks from the Art Therapy program**

*Sincerely,*  
*Charisse Mitchell*  
**Executive Director**



## EXPERIENCED LEADERSHIP FOR CWIT

Steve Harvey, CPA is taking the helm of the Center as Board President for the next two years after having served on

the board for several years. He is employed with BDO Seidman, LLP and resides in Spring Lake with his wife Tami. Both have been very active in leadership positions in the community. Harvey currently serves on the board of the Tri-Cities Historical Museum and the Grand Haven Planning Commission. He has served the North Ottawa County Council on Aging, United Way, St. Mary's School Foundation and Ferris State University Alumni Board. He follows Maria Hoekstra who will continue to serve on the board as Past President. Betsy Simpson is Vice President, Ed Walsh continues as Treasurer, Jeff McMartin is Secretary. "We will depend on the experience of these community leaders to draw the blueprint for the agency's future," states Charisse Mitchell.

## SHOP FOR GOOD LIVE UNITED

Running Circles, a retail store in downtown Grand Haven, is giving 10% of purchases to benefit United Way agencies of the buyer's choice November 17-22. Consider a purchase of professionally fitted running shoes, seasonal apparel or a holiday gift.



# M A N Y T H A N K S

To **Counterpart**, a group of professional women in the Grand Haven area, for their annual fall clothing drive for the Wardrobe for Work program.

To all the families, companies, individuals and supporters of the Adopt-a-Family program. Approximately one hundred client families will have new gifts under their tree. Thanks to **Mindy Miller** for coordinating this large community-wide project.

To all our newsletter readers who have requested to be on the email newsletter list. This will save the cost of printing and mailing. You may still join this "green" group. Send your email address to [Pollyd@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:Pollyd@aplaceforwomen.org). Polly reports that approximately 150 families have already responded to this request. Thank you!

**National City Bank of Grand Haven** held a food drive for the CWIT shelter. Pictured left to right, **Mindy Rosel**, **Bryan Wait**, Branch Manager and **Amy Kozanecki**.



**Le Style de Vie** event sponsors, **Bob of Globe Design and Vision**, **Kim of Studio K** and **Butch of Butch's**. **Le Style de Vie 2008** was a perfect end of summer event. Over 200 guests enjoyed wine tasting, music, fashion and fall weather under the tent behind Butch's. This annual charity event, sponsored by **Studio K**, **Globe Design & Vision** and **Butch's**, raised over \$11,000 for **CWIT**. Supporting them were other major sponsors: **Bayside Capital**, **Anderson Technologies**, **Global Concepts**, **Enterprise Inc.**, **Jane and Dave Armstrong**, **Greenleaf Trust** and **Taylor Rental**. Supporting Sponsors were **Work Sighted** and **Gamache & Associates**. Thank you also to all auction donors: **City Flats Hotel**, **SMOoch**, **Salon Cheveux** and **Girlfriend's Fit Club**. Save the date to attend next year. It's the place to be the Saturday after Labor Day of 2009.



# FROM THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Sherry Martens and I am thrilled to have been selected as the Volunteer Coordinator. My family and I have lived in the City of Holland for 15 years. I was formerly employed with Tulip Time as their Sponsorship/Development Coordinator and the favorite part of the job was the direct interaction with local community

members and corporations. I was amazed at the generosity of Holland and our surrounding communities when showing support of a mission they believed in. I am the mother of three, and my husband and I own a small retail shop called Running Circles in Grand Haven. We are all active in various sports, music groups, theater and church. As a family we enjoy living in Michigan and being outdoors, taking advantage of all the activities that each season has to offer.

In the short period of time I have been with Center for Women in Transition I have had the opportunity to meet some incredibly dedicated people who constantly give freely of their time and energy. I look forward to expanding and exploring new ways to recruit and retain volunteers for the Center. We have countless opportunities for individuals and groups wanting to volunteer. As Volunteer Coordinator, I am looking to create partnerships that will allow for a perfect match between the Center's needs and our benefactors' time and talent.



## WINTER 2009 VOLUNTEER/INTERN/STAFF TRAINING DATES

Now accepting applications to become a CWIT volunteer.

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Monday January 26	6pm-10pm
Wednesday January 28	6pm-9pm
Friday January 30	6pm-9:30pm
Saturday January 31	9am-3pm
Tuesday February 3	6pm-9:30pm
Thursday February 5	6pm-8pm

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If interested contact Sherry Martens at 616-494-1747  
or [SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org).  
Sherry will arrange details when you apply.

CWIT has approximately 175 active volunteers ranging from a complete spectrum of time and talents. I would love to address each and every one of our volunteers to thank them again for their constant support and commitment. Our volunteers are a huge part of CWIT's success. They allow our mission to thrive.

*Thank you to all of our Volunteers!*

**Volunteer** - A volunteer is someone who works for free for a community or for the benefit of natural environment primarily because they choose to do so. The word comes from Latin, and can be translated as "will" (as in doing something out of one's own free will).

*If this sounds like you or someone you know, join us, we need your help!*

**Sherry Martens**  
616-494-1747  
[SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org](mailto:SherryM@aplaceforwomen.org)

# ANNUAL GIRLS DREAM FAIR A SUCCESS

Center for Women in Transition held the Ninth Annual Girls Dream Fair on November 6 at Central Wesleyan Church in Holland. Over 150 8th grade girls representing ten area middle schools were in attendance. The keynote speakers for the event were Maranda from WOTV4, Dr. Adwoa Osei, of Holland Pediatric Associates PLC, and Sarah Lineberry, a biochemist, pianist and singer/songwriter. Center for Women in Transition's Executive Director, Charisse Mitchell, was the emcee for the event.

The event hosted women presenters from various professional career paths. The 8th grade girls were offered the opportunity to explore their interests and talents by speaking with successful women from diverse fields within the workforce.

The local branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) co-sponsored the event again this year. They provided financial support and a team of volunteers who spent hours organizing and helping to host the event. They also baked cookies for all of the girls to enjoy during lunch. Many area businesses donated items for door prizes and goodie bags. This year's event could not have taken place without the assistance of one very dedicated volunteer, Nellie Richthammer. Center for Women in Transition would like to thank Nellie and everyone else who provided donations or volunteered their time in order to make the 2008 Girls Dream Fair a success.

## 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  
*Executive Director*  
Elizabeth Brandt  
*Newsletter Design*

Jane Armstrong  
Mabel Casey  
Jane Dickie

### Board

Steve Harvey, CPA  
*President*

Dale Dykema, MD

Betsy Simpson  
*Vice President*

Rev. Jaco Hamman, PhD

Ed Walsh  
*Treasurer*

Robyn Hofmeyer

Jeff McMartin  
*Secretary*

Jane Patterson

Maria Hoekstra, DDS  
*Past President*

Katie Reincke

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.



**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**

The seventh annual "Together We Can" Appreciation Dinner and awards ceremony was held on October 21 at Fenn Valley Winery and Vineyards. The event is held to honor area law enforcement officers, agency professionals, and community activists for their outstanding contributions to ending domestic and sexual violence according to Lesley Coghill of Center for Women in Transition. Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (LAADSV) and Allegan County Coordinating Council on Domestic Violence (ACCCDV) solicit nominations from the community for awards.

There were two recipients of the "2008 Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer Award." The 25 year veteran of the Otsego Police Department, Detective Bruce Beckman, was heralded for his leadership and service in training initiatives and domestic violence protocols as well as Personal Protection Orders within the police department. Detective Jeff Steigenga, Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, was also awarded the prestigious honor for his work with a multi-disciplinary team with the Children's Advocacy Center in Ottawa County. He follows through on every case with reliability and attention to detail to confront child sexual abuse.

The "Outstanding Agency Professional Award" was given to Officer Gwen DeGraaf of the Grand Valley State University Public Service and to Sally Ashley, Sylvia's Place Shelter Advocate of 10 years. DeGraaf is the coordinator of

## Awards Presented for Activism and Dedication

safety programs for female students at GVSU and she was applauded for her professionalism and empathy coupled with compassion for the students and victims of assault. Ashley has devoted ten years of service to clients of Sylvia's Place shelter in Allegan. She provides compassionate services to families in crisis.

The prestigious "Mari Martin Award" was presented to David Schock PhD. In 2004 when Shrock was a professor at Hope College he engaged the students in his journalism class in a special project aimed at documenting the cold case rape and murder of Janet Chandler. Due to this activity and heightened awareness the Holland City Police Department and Michigan State Police re-opened the investigation of the case and six people were tried for the rape and murder. In his acceptance speech Schock applauded the efforts of law enforcement, agency professionals and advocates for victims and survivors.

Sponsors for the event were LAADSV, ACCCDV, Center for Women in Transition, Sylvia's Place, Ottawa County Health Department, GVSU Women's Center and Children's Advocacy Center. Shelley Irwin, producer and anchor for WGVU Morning Show

was mistress of ceremonies for the evening.



**Award winners, left to right, Detective Bruce Bookman, Sally Ashley, Detective Jeff Steigenga, Officer Gwen DeGraaf and David Schock, PhD**

# CELEBRATING THE SISTERHOOD OF STRENGTH

On October 16, Center for Women in Transition held a beautiful event to celebrate the voices and stories of women who are survivors of domestic violence. The event featured artwork and poetry by a number of women, as well as a group from Hope College called Sacred Dance who performed and expressed the hope and strength of women through dance. Another highlight of the event was a panel of survivors who were willing to share their stories. Their honesty and openness was an encouraging and enlightening experience for all as we heard about their pain and abuse, and also about their healing. Thanks to all who contributed artwork and to those who came to show their support of the survivors in our community. Let us all continue to stand together and make West Michigan a safe and empowering community!



**Executive Director Charisse Mitchell holds a garden stone designed and painted by a shelter client on display at the "Celebrating the Sisterhood" Event. These stones will become part of the landscape at the shelter.**



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CENTER FOR  
WOMEN IN  
TRANSITION

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PERMIT #169



*Ruby Thome wrapping Christmas gifts for clients in 1999.  
She is still one of our most dedicated volunteers!*



**More about our new look • Front Cover**



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• Page 2**



**Volunteers needed • Page 4**