

The Link. News of WHBW

To donate, please visit:
<http://www.whbw.org/donate/>



Founded in 1974 and serving Chittenden County, WHBW is the largest service provider for survivors of domestic violence in Vermont. We provide comprehensive services including: a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, children's services, community education, legal advocacy, economic justice services and transitional housing. We believe that all people have the right to live free of abuse – sexual, physical, emotional or financial.

Women Helping Battered Women

Jane Van Buren, WHBW's Executive Director Testifies in Washington, D.C.

WHBW's Executive Director spoke at the *The Violence Against Women Act: Building on Seventeen Years of Accomplishments* held by the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 13, 2011 in Room 226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

The witness list for the hearing before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary included:

- Dr. Phillip C. McGraw, Ph.D
Los Angeles, CA
- Michael Shaw, Co-Director,
Domestic Violence & Sexual
Assault Services Waypoint,
Cedar Rapids, IA
- Dr. Jane Van Buren
Executive Director, Women
Helping Battered Women,
Burlington, VT
- Julie Poner, Indianapolis, IN
- Eileen Larence, Dir., Home-
land Security and Justice,
U.S. Gov't Accountability
Office, Washington, DC

Excerpts from Jane's testimony: "...Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the importance of the Violence Against Women Act, in particular how my organization has used crucial VAWA funds to serve victims of domestic violence and their children successfully in Vermont.



*WHBW's Executive Director, Jane Van Buren
Dr. Phillip C. McGraw*

In 1994 when VAWA was passed, WHBW served approximately 3,200 individuals and received roughly \$50,000 in federal grant money. Today we directly serve approximately 4,500 individuals and receive \$485,000 in federal grant dollars. What VAWA has allowed us to do is provide women, men and children with programming that is increasingly comprehensive and sustainable. and which ultimately leads victims to independence and freedom from violence. This landmark legisla-

tion filled a void in federal law that had left too many victims of domestic and sexual violence without the help they needed to restore their lives.

Furthermore, national and state policy did not recognize the seriousness of domestic and sexual violence and the impact that systemic abuse and violence against women has on civil society. That all began to change when Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act. Propelled in part by VAWA, our Nation

Continued PG 3

Inside this issue:

Jane Van Buren, WHBW Executive Director Testifies in Washington, D.C.	1
Strategic Planning Underway at WHBW	1
An update from the Marketing and Rebranding Committee	2
Get Ready for the 4th Annual Zumbathon!!	2
In Their Own Words Series: A Survivor's	2
2011 Healthy Living Fundraiser Successful!	4
How to Support WHBW	4

Strategic Planning Underway at WHBW

This Fall, WHBW redesigned the organizational structure and have implemented a model that better promotes leadership and accountability. WHBW has streamlined the organization with four major program areas: Residential Services; Basic Program Services; Administration and Finance; and Development and Communication. With this

new structure, we will be able to provide increasingly efficient and comprehensive services to individuals are experiencing domestic and/or dating violence and stalking. We have dedicated more resources to revenue development with the goal of increasing our budget through private sources, including major gifts.

The process began with a meeting in May of 2011, when a group of community members met to discuss the perception of WHBW.

Since that time, a Marketing and Rebranding Committee, and a Strategic Planning Committee were formed. The WHBW Staff and Board then met during a day-long retreat at The Essex on November 2.

During the Retreat the Board

Continued PG 2



Changes at WHBW *Continued...*

and Staff worked to create goals and strategies for FY12 and beyond. The goal was to document attainable goals and move the organization towards excellence.



An Update from the Marketing and Rebranding Committee

By, Tara Perkins

The Marketing and Rebranding planning continues as WHBW explores ideas for a new name and an image that reflects accurately our mission and services.

WHBW staff members are scheduled to meet

with the Kelley Marketing Group at Champlain College on December 21. During this session, We will seek input and feedback to ideas that have been presented during Marketing and Rebranding Committee meetings and obtain advice from a

panel of community professionals. Next steps will be in to involve service users in a special focus group.

The process is interesting and WHBW is excited to roll-out a new identity in 2012! Stay tuned as we keep you posted on

progress. For any questions or suggestions, please contact Tara via email at

tarap@whbw.org.



Get Ready for the 4th Annual Zumbathon! *Saturday, March 24 at Memorial Auditorium*

Last year, close to 300 Zumba fans joined WHBW at Higher Ground in April for a fantastic session of Zumba, led by Bridget O'Connor and Shannon Stem, along with an army of area Zumba instructors, raising close to \$30,000 for WHBW!

This year, we plan to top that participation with closer to 500 people at Memorial Auditorium.

Save the date: Saturday, March 24 and help us to spread the word!

We plan to raise even more funds this year for WHBW's vital programs via the 4th Annual Zumbathon!

Join the party and have some fun, while supporting WHBW!



WHBW Zumbathon 2011 | Higher Ground

Photo: Crawford Morris

In Their Own Words Series: A Survivor's Story

My Own True Hunger

Much of my life was spent searching for validation. I married a man who was impossible to please. In my marriage, I got no respect. I turned to the church for a stable center in my turbulent life, becoming one of those ladies who do "good works." Chairing little committees, helping out in little ways, I got some of the acknowledgement I craved. But under it all lay the unspoken fact that I was in an abusive relationship. Everything I did was seen through that

warped lens, rather than being taken on its own merits.

Even with my few true friends, to whom I bared my soul, the "situation" in my home became a stumbling block. I wasn't just Ellen, I was 'poor Ellen', whose husband is so violent, so that all the things I accomplished were done "in spite" of my not-so-secret hell at home.

After many years, I finally reached the breaking point. One spring day, I packed my most precious possessions and left. The feeling I had, looking back at hell through my rear

view mirror for the very last time, is indescribable. I could literally feel my soul unfurling wings like a butterfly, stiff from too long in its cocoon.

Now, freed of the strait-jacket that confined me for so long, I feel my arms lift spontaneously in praise, my voice break out unafraid in song. The church is still my second home, but now I also have a home of my own, one to which I am glad to return, instead of dreading it. When I do the things I do, I am coming from a place of peace. I feel power flowing through me unfettered, wonderfully free. And

now, when I look in people's eyes, I know they take me for who I am: happy, confident, serene: just me.



"I am more than a survivor; I am a conqueror."



"...feel my soul unfurling wings like a butterfly, stiff from too long in its cocoon."

has made remarkable progress in recognizing that domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence are crimes, and in providing legal remedies, social support and coordinated community responses. Since enactment of VAWA, the rates of domestic violence including domestic violence homicide have declined, more victims have felt confident to come forward to report these crimes and to seek help, and states have passed more than 600 laws to combat these crimes. Despite this progress, however, our country still has a long way to go. Millions of women, men, children, and families continue to be traumatized by abuse. We know that one in four American women and one in seven men are victims of domestic violence. One in six women and one in 33 men are victims of sexual assault, and 1.4 million individuals are stalked each year.

VAWA PROGRAMS ARE NECESSARY

VAWA programs are necessary in order for us to continue in our efforts to address these critical and on-going needs. Women Helping Battered Women receives money from The STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Formula Grant program, which is one of the most comprehensive and effective means of reducing domestic and sexual violence. STOP grants provide resources to

law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, the courts, and victim advocacy groups such as WHBW to improve victim safety and to hold offenders accountable for their crimes against women. We also receive funds through The Transitional Housing Assistance Grants program which has en-



Jane Van Buren, WHBW's ED

abled us to develop an innovative housing program in Burlington in collaboration with the Burlington Housing Authority. The Transitional Housing Assistance Program is essential to our ability to provide safe havens and related services to victims fleeing domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. In the midst of a mortgage and housing crisis, transitional housing is especially important because long-term housing options are becoming increasingly scarce...The safety net VAWA has provided survivors over the years is now a lifeline for many. The economic pressures of a lost job, home, or car can add stress to an already abusive relationship.

The loss of these resources can make it harder for victims to escape a violent situation. And just as victims' needs are growing, state budget cuts are resulting in fewer available services, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, counseling, and child-care. A 2010 census by

the National Network to End Domestic Violence found that in just one day, more than 70,600 adults and children were served by local domestic violence programs. Yet due to a lack of resources, more than 9,500 requests for services went unmet, including 19 in Vermont.

Domestic violence has long been recognized as a leading contributing factor for homelessness and Women Helping Battered Women has seen an enormous growth in the number of homeless victims of domestic violence seeking emergency shelter. Last year alone we saw a 17% increase, from 158 adults seeking shelter to 186. This in-

crease follows a trend that has been occurring over several years. The past three years have seen a 39% increase in the number of adults seeking emergency shelter as a result of domestic violence.

As a result of the trauma that they have

endured, the need for homeless reduction strategies is even more pronounced for survivors of domestic violence, especially given the economic abuse and resulting poverty that places victims of domestic violence alongside other "hard to house" populations. Given that the WHBW shelter and other shelters throughout the state are almost always operating at capacity, many in this hard to house population rely on emergency assistance from the State of Vermont to fund stays in hotel rooms, often utilizing the entirety of the benefit for which they are eligible.

STABLE HOUSING MAKES IT MUCH EASIER FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Stable housing makes it much easier for survivors of domestic abuse to successfully access WHBW's empowerment-based, survivor-centered case work and the economic justice advocacy services that are the hallmark of our work. Survivors in transitional housing have access to economic literacy training, credit counseling and repair, debt management, advanced housing advocacy including homeownership counseling, and employment and training opportunities. Survivors have the opportunity to develop individualized plans to help them maintain their housing or move from homelessness into permanent housing. Transitional housing program funds make all of this possible and by reauthorizing VAWA and maintaining the funding for transitional housing services and coordinated community response services through STOP, Congress has the unique opportunity to help victims secure housing, life-long financial independence and, thus, reduce their reliance on public programs. "



Women Helping Battered Women

POBox 1535
Burlington, VT 05402



Phone: 802-658-3131
24-hour HOTLINE: 802-658-1996
Fax: 802-658-3832
www.whbw.org

Confidential help and support for victims
and survivors of domestic violence.

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO 510
BURLINGTON,VT



2011 Healthy Living Holiday Wreath Fundraiser Successful!

The Healthy Living Market 2011 Holiday Wreath Fundraiser took place from 11am to 3pm each Thursday and Saturday from end of November to December 17. Customers purchased wreaths to support WHBW and donated funds to our donation jar! We raised close to \$2,000 this year!
Thank you to our volunteers and to our community partner, Healthy Living Market!

Pictured at right: Anna, Erica and Anne



We are in need of volunteers for events and more!

- **Phone-a-thon: Early March , 2012**
- **4th Annual Zumbathon: Saturday, March 24, 2012**
- **5th Annual Run for Empowerment: Saturday, June 16, 2012**

We also have opportunities for volunteers in administration, direct service and in our service programs (legal, shelter, education, employment and more).

If you would like to volunteer, please visit:
www.whbw.org/about/volunteers/ or email: michelleh@whbw.org.

How to Get involved and Support Women Helping Battered Women

We need your support!

WHBW's services:

- **24-7 Hotline (802)658-1996**
- **Emergency Shelter**
- **Transitional Housing**
- **Economic Justice**
- **Employment Advocacy**
- **Legal Advocacy**
- **Children and Youth Services**
- **Support Group**
- **Education and Prevention**

To make a donation to WHBW, please mail a check (payable to WHBW) to PO Box 1535, Burlington, VT 05042 or visit www.whbw.org to make a secure credit card donation.

Thank you!

SPECIAL APPEAL

WHBW is seeking donations of journals and diaries for our service users. Anyone who is interested in donating, please contact Joanne at

joanneb@whbw.org or
tarap@whbw.org.

For a complete WHBW Wish List, please visit our website at www.whbw.org.

You may also make a secure donation online at www.whbw.org.