



Summer 2013

Dear Inspire Readers,

It's hard to believe that the women's support and education program has been in existence for more than twenty-five years. The combined efforts of Beth Beams, Ana Giusti, Maralee Martin, Meghan Menchhofer, and Pat Cornell represents seventy-four years of devotion to the process of personal growth and change in women participants. These veteran facilitators have helped hundreds of women realize the gifts and energies contained within themselves, gifts they can use to enhance their lives and create safe, nonviolent homes. We believe that developing this **power within** nourishes one's spirit and grows one's personal and social awareness. Because society doesn't always understand the dynamics of domestic violence, women often find support in our groups that is not available to them any place else. The groups help them feel that they are not alone, that others understand. It is in this supportive environment where they begin to recognize that by finding the **power within**, they can transform their lives.

Support group facilitators know there are many beliefs a woman needs to re-evaluate and challenge in our culture. When a woman can set aside imposed and assumed limits she can create personal nonviolence for herself and her family. Making the long, difficult and arduous journey to find and develop one's **power within** is a celebration of self and life. A voice now able to be heard—found through rigorous self, social, and cultural exploration—finds its strength in nonviolence.

The Center's support and education groups are designed to encourage **power within** and positive change on an micro level, but also increase awareness of the plight of women and children across the globe. While this newsletter is focused specifically on our voluntary support programming, this connection to our greater global family is a foundational part of every program we offer, (Mother's Group, Court Mandated Programming, Support and Rural Outreach Groups, Advocacy). We are committed to the belief that when you increase awareness of the common elements of oppression, marginalization, and exploitation facing women in our community and world it gives every targeted person a more fully informed ability to think critically and effectively about the choices they need to make to heal their lives.

Inspiring Change. One person...One family...One world

Women's Support Program Highlights

CFN's Coordinating Panel

Laura Boyer

Linda Fox

Kim Miller

Brindha Hariharan

Sherwin Kepes

Barbara Linden

Jennifer Mabe

Colin MacQueen

Joy Justice

Deb O'Kelley

Trish Fox

Women served through support groups in 2012: 162

Women and Youth Served in 2012: 362



The Center's Women's Support Groups were awarded the Prosecutor's Office Award on May 13, 2013 for their excellent service as providers of Domestic Violence services.



Fort Wayne Highlights

- Childcare is provided for ALL of our support groups in Spanish and English. Each childcare worker is certified by the state, and uses curriculum and activities that deal with the effects of trauma and a variety of practical life issues.
- Ana Giusti has worked tirelessly to help obtain U-Visas for more than 11 women in 2012. She was recognized as the provider who obtained the most for victims in the state of Indiana this past year. The purpose of the U-Visa is to give victims of certain crimes (domestic violence is one of the qualifying crimes) temporary legal status and work eligibility in the United States for up to 4 years. The process to apply for and obtain a U-Visa is complicated and intricate, and lawyers often charge thousands of dollars. But with the help of Indiana Legal Services, Christian Neighborhood Clinic, Jerry Mead, and Ana, Center clients do not have to pay exorbitant fees.
- Ric Robles, the Hispanic Liaison Officer with the Fort Wayne Police Department, has been coming to the Center for 1½ hours per week to help women make police reports or obtain law enforcement advice in a safe environment. He has helped countless women get the resources they need.
- A grief support group is held each week at the Center in Spanish for women that have suffered losses but that can't make it back their home countries due to immigration restrictions. Lilly Carroll, a bilingual therapist through Hospice Care provides this free support group.

Bluffton Highlights

- Women in this support group are very focused on giving back to the community by raising visibility and awareness. Women participated in the Bluffton Street Parade and helped coordinate all planning logistics for the Wells County Domestic Violence Task Force conference which had over 104 attendees.
- Bluffton survivors are able to quickly have telephone contact after a domestic violence incident with victim advocate, Pat Cornell, thanks to a grant from United Way of Wells County.

Latina Support By Ana Giusti



This past year “Mujeres Unidas” (United Women) support groups worked to prepare an amazing “Day of the Dead” altar at the Museum of Art. One of the participants brought up the idea of dedicating this altar to the victims of bullying. The women dedicated the altar to *Amanda Todd*, a young lady that committed suicide after being bullied at school.

In December, we had a wonderful Christmas Dinner celebration for all the participants and their children. Several of the Center’s friends donated the food for this celebration. All the groups came together and shared stories of their Christmas experiences in their home countries. Some of the participants shared that having a nice Christmas dinner while growing up wasn’t even an option because of the extreme poverty in their native countries. Some shared painful memories of their fathers getting drunk on Christmas Eve, and coming home to physically and verbally abuse their mothers.

I personally will always remember the excitement of the women and children when they walked in and saw the red clothed tables and heard the Christmas music. Our biggest THANKS go out to all our amazing friends that donated, took the time to come to the celebration, and served food to the women. You helped make it a HAPPY memory for so many!

Immigrant Women By Meghan Menchhofer

Just imagine for a minute that you met and fell in love with a US citizen in your home country, got married, and moved to the US with your children. But instead of “happily ever after”, imagine that upon your arrival you are isolated in a residence with someone who mentally, physically, sexually, and psychologically abuses you. Imagine the fear, confusion and vulnerability. Would you know how the systems in the US work? Would you know if you had any rights as compared to your native born husband? If you did/could leave, how would you find a job and food to support your family? Would you know how to get a car or get to work or a license for that matter? Where would you find support and friends to help you? Who could you trust?

Understanding the realities for immigrants and refugees is a very involved and complex process, requiring extensive work—often involving a trusted interpreter. Survivors must be viewed holistically and we must understand that immigrant and refugee women often operate out of cultural norms that we may not fully comprehend, i.e. women may risk complete abandonment by their families if they leave an abusive relationship or expose a “private family matter.”

With the growing population of refugees in Fort Wayne, the Center has started to provide advocacy and support services to refugees and immigrants beyond our Latina services. Those speaking Burmese and other ethnic languages (Mon, Karen, Chin, Thai) come to America as refugees, fleeing various types of persecution. Some have endured family violence and marital rape for years not knowing they had a right to report it or where to seek help. Some Asian immigrants were brought here by Americans with the promise of marriage, but instead are forced into domestic servitude, forbidden to have friends, drive, work, or even look at people in the store without suffering the consequences. Is this a form of human trafficking? How many other women living in our community are experiencing this? How many are silenced by their fear?

These women are in desperate need of advocacy and support as they navigate the systems of reporting crimes committed against them and filing protective orders. They need help with safety planning, accessing community services, assistance with finding employment and food resources, etc. Immigrant women need to hear they’re doing the right thing for themselves and their children and that a better life is, indeed, possible.



Mission: To provide education, support, and advocacy to end domestic and other forms of violence while modeling equality and power sharing

Services of the Center

- Batterer's Intervention Program
- Women's Violence Intervention Program
- Support Groups (for survivors of domestic violence)
- Mother's Intervention Program
- Mujeres Unidas (Latina support group)
- Violence Intervention for Youth
- Thinking Errors Intervention for Youth
- FACES (a school-based leadership program)
- GSA (lgbtqa young people under 20)
- Trainings

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Center for Nonviolence