

CaringVoices

An Occasional Newsletter of Caring Unlimited



Caring Eyes Focus on the Courtroom

From working closely with both survivors of domestic violence and the local law enforcement community, Caring Unlimited often hears of frustration with the criminal justice system's response to, and handling of, domestic violence cases. Both victims of domestic violence and the police officers who respond to their cases commonly express disappointment with the amount of time it takes for a case to reach its conclusion, and the outcomes of cases once a conclusion is reached. As a response to these frustrations, Caring Unlimited has launched a Court Monitoring program.

The Court Monitors are a group of volunteers, organized and trained by Caring Unlimited's Community Response Coordinator, Sherry Edwards, who consistently observe the Biddeford District and Alfred Superior court processes. They look for fairness and consistency in how cases are handled, and the degree to which victim and public safety are prioritized and offenders are held accountable for their behavior. Court Monitors track charges and case outcomes, as well as observations about the attitudes of court officials involving cases of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the Court Monitoring program will serve as a catalyst for creating positive change within the justice system. Caring Unlimited began recording data on July 1, and will present a six-month report of the compiled data after January of 2010.

Transitional Housing Program Receives Federal Grant

Caring Unlimited was notified recently that we have been awarded a renewal grant from the US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. This federal award of \$250,000 over three years will help to fund continued supportive services for families living in Caring Unlimited's fifteen transitional housing units.

The prevalence of domestic violence and lack of safe, affordable housing in York County, presents a monumental obstacle to those seeking to permanently end an abusive relationship. When safe, affordable housing is nowhere to be found battered women often have no choice but to return with their children to abusive relationships in order to avoid homelessness.

CU's Transitional Housing Program increases safety for victims of domestic abuse in York County by providing access to safe, affordable housing for up to twenty-four months for families who are

homeless as result of the abuse they have experienced. During their time in the program, survivors are able to access a full complement of supportive services as they work to reorganize their lives, build a network of supportive relationships and establish a more secure economic base for their families.

When they enter the program, residents establish a goal plan for the continued safety and future economic security of their families. The plan includes action steps and a timeline for finding permanent housing and accessing job training or education that will enable them to earn a living wage to ensure that they will be able to adequately support their families after leaving the program.

Caring Unlimited is very grateful to have been awarded this grant that enables us to continue this critical program that allows families to make a fresh start and create safe and economically secure lives that each of us deserve.

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Serving York County Since 1977

IT IS THE MISSION of Caring Unlimited to work with the community to end domestic violence in York County.

This includes providing support and safe haven to women, their children and men whose lives are affected by domestic abuse in a manner that honors their essential worth, nurtures their inherent strengths and respects their right of self-determination.

Caring Unlimited provides services to any person victimized in an intimate relationship.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

24-Hour Hotline
Emergency Shelter
Transitional Housing & Services
Legal Assistance / Court Advocacy
Support & Education Groups
School-Based Abuse Prevention
Community Education, Training & Consultation
Volunteer Program

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York County's Domestic Violence Program

POB 590, Sanford, Maine 04073
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Fax: (207) 490-2186
e-mail: mail@caring-unlimited.org
www.caring-unlimited.org

24-HOUR HOTLINE
1-800-239-7298

The Holidays are Coming!

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by and we are already thinking about the holidays here at Caring Unlimited!

Each year, with your support, we are able to assist families during the holidays that have used Caring Unlimited services during the year. Last year, your commitment to helping us with this project truly made a difference in the lives of 184 families including 423 children. We were able to brighten the lives of these children by making their wishes come true. The generous supply of dolls, games, dress-up clothes, tea party sets, matchbox cars, trucks and sleds were sorted and matched up with kid's wishes along with the coats, boots, ski pants, pajamas and clothing that came in for the children in need of these items. We also received sports equipment, gift cards for gas, food, basic needs and special gifts for moms and teens. The families are always surprised and very appreciative of the outpouring of caring from the community.

As you can imagine, the holidays are often a difficult time for the women and children we serve, many of whom have left their belongings behind in order to find immediate safety. This year, we will be kicking off the holiday season with the Women's Party that will be held in early December at the North Parish Church in Sanford.

Following the Women's Party will be the Children's Holiday Party. For many years the Children's Party has been sponsored and hosted by a dedicated group of church members at St. David's Episcopal Church in Kennebunk. Families in our transitional housing program, as well as those from central and southern York County who receive services in Sanford and Kittery, look forward to this party every year. The church members put on a buffet lunch, provide gifts for the children and their moms, organize a scavenger hunt for the kids and coordinate a craft table. Then, of course, there is always the special moment during the party when the big man himself arrives to hand out presents!

The Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport has also been involved in many ways over the past two years with our Holiday Giving Program. During the second weekend of Prelude in Kennebunkport the folks at the Nonantum host a craft fair at the resort. Space in their lobby is sold to artisans so that they can exhibit and sell their beautiful hand made products at the fair. The money from the sale of space is contributed to our holiday program. Last year, it was used to purchase warm winter clothing and boots for families. They also invite the families from northern York County who are currently living in the emergency shelter, or using our services in Limerick and Biddeford, to have breakfast with Santa.

All of these celebrations are a real treat for both the moms and the kids. The kindness and generosity of everyone involved is so deeply appreciated by all the families that we serve.

If you would like to participate in our Holiday Giving Program there are many opportunities to do so. Every year, we generate a wish list from the women and children. This wish list is sent out to the individuals, churches, organizations, local businesses and anyone who wants to help. A family can be adopted by individuals, organizations or a business. A giving tree can be set up in the lobby of the business where you work decorated with wishes written on bells or stars. If you would like to receive a wish list or would like to adopt a family, please contact Audrey at 490-3227 x115 or Bonnie at 490-3227 x106.

All of us at Caring Unlimited extend our warmest thanks for your support of our work to end domestic violence in York County, as well as our best wishes for a peaceful and joyous holiday season for you and all those you care about!



Kids Go Back to School In Style

Thanks to the generosity of our York County community, Caring Unlimited was able to help send the children of families who use our services back to school in style!

Backpacks and school supplies were donated by the members of three Kennebunk churches: St. David's, Trinity Chapel and Holy Cross Lutheran Church. For the eleventh year, Pam and Bob Cloutier of Kennebunk took on the collection of all the donated backpacks and supplies. In total, 141 backpacks were filled with pencils, pens, crayons, markers, notebooks and binders. Because of the amount of items received, Caring Unlimited staff was easily able to give children a backpack in their favorite color, and fill it with supplies that matched their needs for school this year.

The Wells Democratic Committee, in collaboration with Wal-Mart, donated money to Caring Unlimited to purchase new underwear, socks and clothes for all the kids going back to school this fall, and to complete their new outfits, Olympia Sports donated several pairs of sneakers, while the Christ Congregational Church donated money to purchase even more.

All of these generous donations allow kids to go back to school excited and prepared. We at Caring Unlimited are proud to be able to assist families as their children begin a new school year, and we are so grateful for the incredibly generous community support that makes it all possible.



Caring Unlimited staff display a few of 141 donated backpacks filled with new school supplies. From left to right: Monique Libby, Bonnie Gagnon, Janie Waterhouse, Audrey Beach, Missy Palmer and Emily Flowers

Freedom Wheels Rolls On—In Need of Donated Vehicles

Freedom Wheels is Caring Unlimited's Car Repair and Donation Program which was born out of the combined generosity of an extremely dedicated volunteer, the Clergy Association of the Kennebunks and Mike and Wayne from Kennebunk Auto, all of whom understood that families reorganizing their lives after leaving an abusive relationship cannot become economically independent without safe and reliable transportation. Over 30 months, 232 families directly benefited from Freedom Wheels support including 175 families whose cars were repaired and 57 others who received vehicles donated by generous community members after receiving needed minor repairs.

Understandably, the economic downturn through which we are all living, has caused vehicle donations to the Freedom Wheels program to drop off to almost nothing in recent months, however domestic abuse and the needs of those fleeing it have certainly not dropped off during this time.

Many of the families who receive services from Caring Unlimited come to us with either no transportation or dependent on a vehicle that is unsafe but lacking the financial resources at the time to remedy the situation. As anyone living in a rural state like Maine can imagine, a dependable vehicle is vital to a person's ability to establish

safety and economic stability after leaving an abusive relationship. Without reliable transportation it is virtually impossible to consistently get to and from work, school and other appointments necessary to meet the families' needs—and the pursuit of educational or vocational goals necessary to establish economic stability is definitely out.

Caring Unlimited gratefully accepts tax-deductible donations of vehicles in good condition that are able to pass state inspection after relatively minor repairs. If you are interested in donating a vehicle to this important and life-changing program, please contact Bonnie at Caring Unlimited at 490-3227 x106.



"Understandably, the economic downturn through which we are all living, has caused vehicle donations to the Freedom Wheels Program to drop off to almost nothing in recent months..."

HELP BRING AN END TO DOMESTIC ABUSE!

What a WONDERFUL way to start the New Year!

Caring Unlimited's 9th Annual ATLANTIC PLUNGE

January 1, 2010 at 11:00 am

(Registration begins at 10:30)

Gooch's Beach, Kennebunk



This invigorating event has become a sustaining source for York County families seeking safety from abuse in their own homes. **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED THIS YEAR MORE THAN EVER BEFORE!**

Please join us in helping to make an important difference in the lives of over 3,000 of our York County friends and neighbors served each year by Caring Unlimited by **TAKING THE PLUNGE** or **MAKING A PLEDGE** or **BECOMING AN EVENT SPONSOR.**

Your support will help York County families affected by domestic abuse create the safety in their own homes that each of us deserve!

PRIZES!

EACH \$100 IN PLEDGES RAISED EARNS A CHANCE TO WIN AN APPLE IPHONE OR IPOD NANO!!!

PLEDGES MUST BE TURNED IN BY 10:30AM 1/1/10 TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR DRAWING.

A Fresh Start...

In 1977, a small group of women in Southern Maine united to help their friends and neighbors. They founded Caring Unlimited to offer safe haven for battered women and their children in motel rooms, borrowed camps, and even their own homes. Today, Caring Unlimited provides comprehensive services to approximately 3,000 abused women, children and men each year as they journey from a life of intimidation and fear to one of self-respect and freedom.

"With Caring Unlimited's help, I was able to keep my kids safe and enroll in college. Today, I am back on my feet and the head of my own household with a bachelor's degree and a wonderful job that allows me to "give back". I have regained the self-confidence that my husband took from me and more."

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.CARING-UNLIMITED.ORG
FMI CONTACT MISSY AT 490-3227 X100



Caring Unlimited
York County's Domestic Violence Program

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HOTLINE • EMERGENCY SHELTER • LEGAL ASSISTANCE • SUPPORT GROUPS • TRANSITIONAL HOUSING • COMMUNITY ED



Caring Unlimited 2010 Atlantic Plunge Pledge Sheet

Friday, January 1, 2010, 11:00 am Gooch's Beach, Kennebunk

IMPORTANT: Registration begins at 10:30am. Pledge forms and money must be turned in during Plunge Registration in order to be eligible for prize drawing.

Each \$100 in pledges raised earns you a chance to win an Apple iPhone or iPod Nano

*Please make checks payable to Caring Unlimited
POB 590, Sanford, ME 04073*

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

YOUR NAME: _____ **YOUR PHONE** _____

YOUR MAILING ADDRESS: _____

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PLEDGES SUBMITTED: \$ _____

**IF YOU RAISED PLEDGES ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER PLUNGE PARTICIPANT,
PLEASE INDICATE TO WHOM THEY SHOULD BE COUNTED BELOW (Check One):**

COUNT MY PLEDGES TOWARD ANOTHER PLUNGER'S TOTAL (Name): _____

COUNT MY PLEDGES TOWARD MY WORKPLACE'S TOTAL (Business Name): _____

OTHER (Name): _____

No	NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE	AMOUNT
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Thank You!

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month



“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

-Edith Wharton

Even though the month of October has already begun, we think it’s important to recognize the fact that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Throughout the state of Maine and around the country, domestic violence projects are hosting special events to mark the importance of this month.

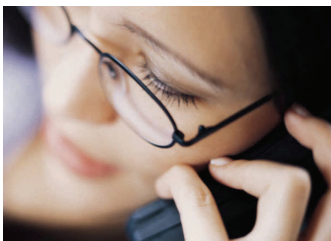
Caring Unlimited held our 21st annual Candlelight Vigil on October 7 in Central Park in Sanford. The vigil serves as time for our community to come together and remember the victims of domestic violence whose lives have been taken from them, while at the same time celebrating the survivors who have moved forward from abuse to create safe and peaceful lives for themselves and their families. York County District Attorney, Mark Lawrence addressed the crowd during the vigil, and we are appreciative of his kind words and his support of our work.

The vigil included a Speak-Out, as community members and survivors of domestic violence were invited to come forward and share their stories. The Speak-Out is a powerful way to break the silence that surrounds domestic violence. All in attendance were then welcomed back to Caring Unlimited’s Resource Center for a reception.

There are many ways to commemorate domestic violence awareness month including having conversations about domestic violence with family and friends, talking with kids about healthy relationships, wearing a purple ribbon to raise awareness about domestic violence in your community, or putting information about Caring Unlimited out in your church or office.

For more ideas, or to get involved in raising awareness about domestic violence year round, call 1-800-239-7298.

New Volunteer Training Begins



Volunteer Hotline Advocates, along with Kidworkers and Court Monitors, make the work of Caring Unlimited possible!

Since 1977 volunteers have been essential to Caring Unlimited’s efforts to effectively meet the needs of the thousands of people who have asked for our help. This October, a new group of dedicated and caring individuals will train to work with Caring Unlimited as Hotline Advocates, Kidworkers, or Court Watch Monitors.

On October 13 all new volunteers will gather at Caring Unlimited’s Resource Center in Sanford to begin training which covers the dynamics of domestic violence and Caring Unlimited’s philosophy.

After that, each group will complete the training specific to the position for which they have volunteered.

Volunteers enable us to provide so many important services to the families we serve. Hotline Advocates make it possible for us to maintain our 24-hour confidential hotline. Kidworkers allow us to provide free childcare to

mothers attending our weekly support and education groups in Sanford, Biddeford, Limerick and Kittery, and Court Monitors assist us in creating change within the criminal justice system.

We are so appreciative of our amazing volunteers and are always grateful to have new folks join the effort!

Interested In Volunteering?

Call Monique!

490-3227 x111

Women's Writing Group To Begin

Helen Rousseau, a recent graduate of the Amherst Writers and Artists (AWA) Workshop in Amherst, Massachusetts, has recently offered to bring her talents as a writer, and a writing group leader, to Caring Unlimited.

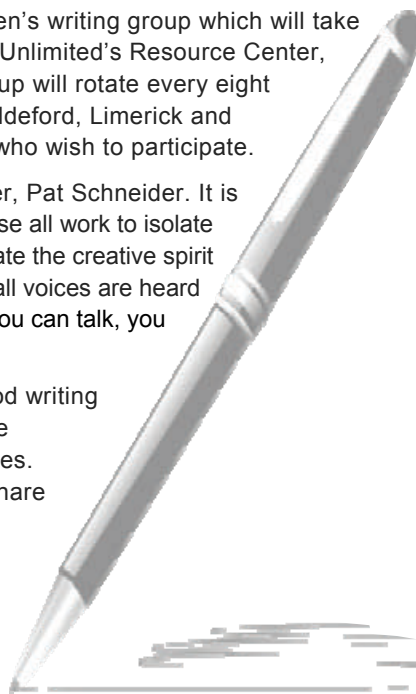
We are thrilled to announce a new eight week women's writing group which will take place on Tuesday evenings from 6—8pm at Caring Unlimited's Resource Center, 965 Main Street in Sanford. The location of the group will rotate every eight weeks among CU Resource Centers in Sanford, Biddeford, Limerick and Kittery in order to make the group accessible to all who wish to participate.

The AWA method was developed in 1981 by founder, Pat Schneider. It is based on a belief that poverty, discrimination and abuse all work to isolate and silence people and seeks to empower and celebrate the creative spirit in each person and change the world to one in which all voices are heard and everyone's story is valued. According to Pat, "If you can talk, you can write. Talking is writing on the air."

Although this is not a support group, an AWA method writing group is designed to be a safe space and supportive environment for all participants to express themselves. Writers are encouraged, although not required, to share their work during the sessions, while other group members listen and respond with positive feedback rather than criticism.

Helen is truly a talented writer, and will be a wonderful leader for this group. In 2008 she self-published her first book entitled *Early Childhood Education: A Memoir Through Verse*. Currently, Helen is working on a manuscript of poetry about domestic abuse entitled, *A Courageous Dance*. We feel honored to have Helen sharing her gifts with us, and are excited about being able to offer this wonderful new opportunity through Caring Unlimited.

More information about the Amherst Writers and Artists Method can be found at www.amherstwriters.com. If you are interested in learning more about upcoming writing groups at Caring Unlimited please call us at 490-3227.



My One-Woman Play

By Helen Rousseau

My years were filled with waiting in the wings, listening for the director's cue, a stand-in whose time seemed to never come 'til today.

This one-woman play is all my own. The must has arrived in the finding of my voice, my power to create what is uniquely mine.

Come and watch!

Better still—join me on this stage—play the part you have created for yourself and we shall honor the gifts we have been given.

You Can Win This Beautiful Handmade Quilt!

This beautiful, full-sized quilt was handmade and generously donated to Caring Unlimited by the Evergreen Quilters of York County.

For a free chance to win this lovely work of art, simply send an email to: mail@caring-unlimited.org with "Quilt Raffle" in the Subject Line.

One raffle entry will be accepted per email address until 12/31/09.

The winner will be notified at the email address used to enter the raffle.



Like Our New Look?

Check Out Our New Website!

www.caring-unlimited.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.CARING-UNLIMITED.ORG

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Gooch's Beach, Kennebunk

You Can Do It!!!

SEE INSIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PLEDGE SHEET
TO SIGN ON AS AN EVENT SPONSOR,
CONTACT MISSY @ 490-3227 X100