Empty Bowl Celebrates 13 years!

by Heather Orr, Special Events & Grants Coordinator

Thirteen years ago, a small group of potters joined together to create an event benefiting the Women’s Crisis & Family Outreach Center. With passion and enthusiasm for our mission, they helped us create the Empty Bowl fundraiser. In hopes of engaging the community, and by featuring hand-thrown, simple, and beautiful bowls, these potters assisted the WCFOC in highlighting the devastating effects when families are impacted by domestic violence.

The first Empty Bowl was hosted by the Castle Rock Recreation Center, and offered a simple meal. Approximately 300 bowls were donated for an expected 125 people. Fast forward for more than a decade, and Empty Bowl has turned into a favorite community gathering, boasting an average of 800 to 1000 people annually, and filling the Douglas County Events Center with laughter, music, and shopping for the perfect gift to take home. Hand-crafted bowls are still the event’s highlight – now with over 50 local potters, area schools, and other centers producing 2,500 to 3,000 bowls each year. Local restaurants continue to generously donate delicious soups, breads and desserts for guests to sample. Excitement abounds while each attendee searches for just the right bowl – the symbol of why they came and why they should support the WCFOC.

Save the Date: Saturday, April 20 noon to 4pm
From the President ...

The WCFOC’s Board of Directors is looking forward to a great 2013.

Through 2012 strategic planning sessions specific to donor engagement, board member recruitment, and agency marketing, several important goals have been identified. These goals will set the stage for the upcoming year – increasing the sustainability of our agency now and in the future.

First, the agency has developed new strategies for donor engagement. With that implementation, the Board has a clear understanding of the real value of our donors, is spending time getting to know more of them personally, and is making increased efforts to thank them for their support. In addition to meeting with those individuals and families that support the WCFOC, the Board is supporting staff in making sure that our current data management systems work efficiently and effectively. As was experienced in late 2012, the WCFOC is excited by the opportunity for continued success in donor growth in 2013.

Second, in 2012, the WCFOC’s Board of Directors experienced three members coming to the end of their terms. To overcome this drastic and untimely reduction in board members, we have developed a more thorough board succession plan. We have also improved the processes by which strong leadership can be recruited for 2013 and beyond. As you will see within this newsletter, the WCFOC has two new board members and looks to add at least two more before the end of the year.

Lastly, the WCFOC is reviewing our strategic messaging – looking at better ways in which to tell our story, communicate the mission of our agency, and celebrate the successes of our clients. Ultimately, this overarching message will impact how the agency markets itself in a variety of arenas (social media, newsletters, e-blasts, and donor letters).

Now as 2013 unfolds, the WCFOC’s Board of Directors is energized about our past accomplishments, our upcoming plans, and our future as an organization dedicated to serving others and making the world in which we live a better place. We are working hard to move this agency forward in positive and meaningful ways.

Thank you,
Krista Tushar, Board President
Women’s Crisis & Family Outreach Center

MISSION
The Women’s Crisis & Family Outreach Center is dedicated to reducing domestic violence and family conflict through advocacy, empowerment, violence prevention and intervention, services and education.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES
24-Hour Crisis Line/ Emergency Shelter
Staffed by trained professionals, our Crisis Line provides immediate intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of victims of domestic violence each year. Our 28-bed facility then provides a safe haven for hundreds of adults and children who are in imminent danger. During their stay, all daily essentials are provided; on-site therapy, legal advocacy, transportation, safety planning and goal setting assistance, and round-the-clock emotional support are also available.

Therapy
Mental health professionals provide individual therapy, group counseling, and psycho-educational support to hundreds of domestic violence victims and at-risk youths each year. Special programs exist for children who have experienced violence in their lives. Our Master’s level therapists provide cutting-edge interventions at our shelter and on a non-residential basis – helping victims heal.

Legal Advocacy
Advocates provide legal assistance to hundreds of victims of domestic violence each year, helping them with what can often be confusing and complex legal processes. This assistance includes filing for restraining orders, obtaining legal referrals, court accompaniment, and general support navigating the criminal and civil justice systems – helping victims stay safe.

Community Outreach and Volunteer Program
Specialized trainings, educational presentations, a school-based violence prevention initiative, web-based information, annual fundraisers, and outreach booths are some of the methods by which the WCFOC helps to raise awareness of this very important social issue – domestic violence. Volunteer opportunities are also available for community members and businesses interested in making a personal impact on the region.
Volunteering: It’s Good for You!

by Gretchen Matsuda, Volunteer Coordinator

Many people volunteer because they want to give back to their community, make the world a better place or help those who are less fortunate. These are all wonderful, altruistic reasons to share time and talents. In essence, volunteering has a meaningful, positive impact on your community; but did you know that it can have many benefits for you too?

Studies have shown that there are social, mental and physical health benefits for those who give at least 40 hours of volunteer time annually. The Americans’ Changing Life Survey found that volunteers reported higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self esteem, and physical health than those who did not volunteer.

People age 60 or over may reap the greatest rewards, including lower mortality rates. Studies also found that individuals who start volunteering earlier in life experience better health and less disability later in life. Researchers even found that patients with chronic or serious illnesses receive benefits beyond what they get with just medical care.

For those entering college or thinking about a career change, volunteering also looks great on a resume or application. Giving time to an organization can be an opportunity to learn new skills, develop another side of your personality, have an identity outside of home and work, share your knowledge with others, and increase your self-confidence.

Any way you look at it, volunteering is a win/win – making the world a better place while improving your health, longevity, marketability, and overall happiness. For more information on volunteering with the WCFOC go to http://twcfoc.org/volunteer.html or contact Gretchen at 303-688-1094.

Welcome New Board Members

Heather Harcourt currently sits on the Juvenile Services Planning Commission for the 18th Judicial District and is on the Board of Directors for HeadsUpColorado youth mentoring. As an active social worker, Heather has extensive experience dealing with families in crisis. She believes that to be a truly just society, we are obligated to provide a safe haven for our most vulnerable members. Heather brings strategic planning, organizational skills, and clinical training to the WCFOC.

Becki Rupp is coming to our Board of Directors already a dedicated and long-standing volunteer. Seeing the positive impact that our services have on families going through a difficult time gave her the desire to make an even more meaningful contribution to the organization. Becki is currently employed at Anthem Blue Cross, and brings a background in communications and marketing. She hopes to use these skills in helping to raise the awareness and perception of the WCFOC in the community and, in particular, with influential stakeholders.

From Our Clients:

“I am getting the support to progress, help to understand my situation, and resources to help me grow whole again.”

“The WCFOC has really helped me to believe in myself and in my potential.”

“I would not be where I am today without the knowledge, patience, compassion, and understanding of the WCFOC.”
I wish I could come up with a catchy title for this article, but I have to ask myself why a catchy name for something so ugly? As a therapist working with sex offenders and domestic violence offenders for over 20 years, I was asked seven years ago to teach a professional workshop on Intimate Partner Rape (IPR).

I soon realized I knew very little about the subject. Domestic violence (DV) offenders always say they wouldn't commit a sex crime. While working with a group of DV offenders a therapist is almost accosted by clients when bringing up the subject of sexual assault, “We're not those people (sex offenders).” On the other hand in a group of sex offenders (SOs) the subject of DV is not met with such resistance and anger, but many sex offenders deny engaging in DV.

Because I work with both groups of people (separated by the legal system by crime and perceived severity), I knew there were cross-over behaviors- one group of offenders engaged in the other group’s behaviors. But how much and how often does this happen? Most research on IPR comes from the victim assistance community and research done on college freshman. The statistics reported by the victims’ community are alarming, so alarming many people don’t want to believe them.

It is already known that IPR is the most common form of rape which leads to a completed sexual act. It affects 10% to 14% of all women and 30% to 40% of battered women (Bergen, 1996; Finkelhor & Vlo, 1985; Russell, 1990). IPR remains one of the most under-reported acts of violence because victims (and perpetrators) usually don't identify non-physically abusive coercive sexual interactions within a relationship as rape. (Basile, 2002; Kilpatrick, Best, Shunders & Verdnen, 1988). Few studies have been conducted on the perpetrators of IPR.

My friend and co-researcher, Dominique Simons, and I completed the first study of convicted DV and SO offenders living in communities of Colorado. In 2009, we surveyed 250 offenders, offenders who are someone’s co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family. They are living in their community mostly under the supervision of probation; a few are on parole. All of them were in treatment as part of their court orders.

We learned that only 62% of the DV offenders could accurately identify a consenting sexual scenario after an average of 9 months of treatment. 42% said that non-physical coercion was consenting! The SOs did better after a longer treatment experience; after an average of 38 months of treatment, 71% could accurately identify a consenting sexual scenario and 23% said coercion was consenting. 89% of the DV offenders disclosed that they had engaged in IPR; 77% of SOs disclosed they had raped their partners. 73% of DV offenders engage in sex with partners who are asleep or unconscious, without obtaining consent, and 69% of the sex offenders do the same.

With statistics so large could we have made a mistake? NO! Intimate Partner Rape (IPR) is the most under-reported sex crime affecting the majority of domestic violence victims. It is overwhelming and we must take a stand.

We fail to attend to this issue because of our own system denial. The system typically separates DV offenders as different from SOs in respect to sexually violent behaviors and we can no longer do that. Because we are learning more about cross-over behavior between these two groups of men, the SO and DV treatment communities are actively making changes to include asking about intimate partners as possible sexual assault victims.

We have a long way to go to reduce the number of future sexual assaults perpetrated on intimate partners. By increasing our awareness and developing pro-active policies we can reduce the number of IPRs for the future. It will take all of us working together to help society better understand sexual violence and not be blind to it within the context of a relationship. Victim services can improve with the understanding that most DV victims are also victims of sexual violence. This affects victim/survivor treatment and in the future could likely impact how we prosecute DV cases.
Domestic Violence + Addictions = A Harder Journey

by Jenny Dunn, Assistant Shelter Director

According to the NIDA, (National Institute on Drug Abuse), “addiction is when a drug user can’t stop taking a drug even if he wants to. The urge is too strong to control, even if you know the drug is causing harm.”

We all know when a person becomes a drug user; addiction is not their ultimate goal. The addict believes they have control over their drug usage.

We also are aware that people abuse drugs for many reasons. They may want to feel good, stop feeling bad, or fit in.

Finally, we acknowledge that when someone has a problem with alcohol or drugs, there is no easy solution to recovery. Drug users start to need the drug just to feel normal; i.e., become addicted, and this need can quickly take over a person’s life.

But, why is this important information for the WCFOC? Simply put, and according to a report from the Connecticut Clearinghouse, regular alcohol abuse is one of the leading factors for intimate partner violence. And, while substance abuse does not cause domestic violence, there are several studies that show a correlation between the two issues.

Separate from the perpetrator, we also see many victims struggling with addictions – using drugs and alcohol to mask and numb their own pain. According to “Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Health Professions”, a 2004 article by Lyn Shipway, women who have been abused are fifteen times more likely to abuse alcohol and nine times more likely to abuse drugs than women who have not been abused.

In the year 2012, WCFOC’s statistics demonstrated that approximately one-third of our adult clients at shelter reported a history of alcohol and/or drug abuse prior to coming to our shelter. With this growing trend, our agency must provide adequate support at shelter around addiction issues. Creating safety plans, providing education, and offering a supportive environment are just a few of the ways our shelter staff assist individuals and families as they search for healthier outlets for their stress and alternative ways to face the day. Through classes such as Domestic Violence 101, Safe & Sober, and Coping Better, new information is offered, new skills are learned, and new behaviors are encouraged. Domestic violence does not usually occur in a vacuum; a holistic approach is the only answer.

If someone you know is using drugs or abusing alcohol, confidential resources are out there 24/7. Please consider calling the Treatment Referral Helpline (1-800-662-HELP) or the Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network’s Emergency Crisis Line 303-730-3303 or our own Crisis Line at 303-688-8484.

THE OUTRAGE coming to Douglas County High Schools

The WCFOC and Chaparral High School have partnered in presenting THE OUTRAGE to Douglas County High Schools. THE OUTRAGE is an educational, theatrical performance that addresses the topics of teen dating violence and sexual assault. In this play, teens grab the attention of their peers with thought-provoking statistics, questions and challenges. To get more information about bringing The Outrage to your school or group, please contact Lynn at 303-688-1094 or ladams@twcfoc.org.
A Closer Look at Art, Meditation & Self Reflection

by Becky Hershey, Therapist

In addition to traditional interventions for victims of domestic violence, the clinical team at the WCFOC has been diversifying the types of services offered to those we assist. Through a variety of trainings and literature, the team has learned that creating a space for clients – one in which they have a more experiential outlet to process the violence experienced – can be beneficial and therapeutic in a variety of ways.

Our new Relaxation Group lets clients reconnect with and become more present in their own bodies. During these sessions, clients are encouraged to practice deep breathing, gentle yoga, mindfulness, guided imagery, and meditation. This group helps clients learn how to regulate themselves during times of stress, anxiety, depression, and panic. The skills developed bring awareness to the mind-body connection and allow victims to be more in tune with and process their traumas in a healthy way.

Similarly, we use an artistic and innovative process that allows clients to engage their right brain. Focusing on emotions and creativity, victims express their trauma without the use of language or words. In our Art Therapy group, clients are invited to use paints, clay, paper and other materials to illustrate concepts such as personal identity, boundaries, safety, and love.

Also worthy of mention is our new body image group based on a curriculum called The Body Project. Meeting for eight weeks, clients are invited to consider how the domestic violence they have experienced has impacted the way they feel about and treat their physical bodies. The goal of this treatment modality is to invite victims to tear down old messages and beliefs they have about themselves and rebuild a new, healthy relationship with their bodies that is rooted in acceptance, love, and health.

These interventions and others like them offer our clients the opportunity to process their pain in ways that do not require them to verbalize their traumatic experiences and memories. It creates an outlet for movement, progress, and healing in a visceral and organic way – one that might not be possible through talk therapy alone.

For more information on WCFOC’s clinical programs, please visit www.twcfoc.org or call 303-688-1094.
Empty Bowl celebrates 13 wonderful years!

**New Day and Time:**
Saturday, April 20, noon to 4 p.m. Drop in anytime and stay as long as you want…

**New Festival Atmosphere:**
Get to know the potters at their own table; cruise the entire venue as you pick your free bowl; purchase extra bowls at any time during the event…

**New for Kids:**
Bring the youngsters! There will be creative crafts and activities. Balloon animals, face painting, edible art, decorating “just the right sized” bowls -- they won’t want to leave…

**New Choices:**
more soups, more breads, more desserts, more fun…

**New Chances to Win:**
Look for upcoming details on what travel, electronics, weekend fun, and art packages will be offered at this event…

**Save the Date:**
Saturday, April 20 noon to 4pm