

Womenspace opens new center

■ **SERVICE:** The new office will provide legal advice for victims of domestic abuse

By Jennifer Schmitt
Community Editor

Every 15 seconds another woman in the United States is battered by her husband, boyfriend or live-in partner, but now there is a new place in Eugene where victims of domestic abuse can turn to for advice, referrals and even child care.

Womenspace, in collaboration with Sexual Assault Support Services, is expanding its services with the grand opening of a drop-in advocacy center.

"It is exciting because now we can reach a lot more women in Lane County than we could with the shelter," said Terri Gutierrez, advocacy center coordinator.

Womenspace, which has been in Lane County for the past 20 years, currently runs an emergency shelter for women escaping abusive situations.

The new center is a place for women to turn to after they have left the abusive situation and are trying to figure out their next steps.

Educating women on domestic violence is an important step to addressing the problem, Gutierrez said.

"We want to dispel the myth that domestic violence is only physical abuse," she said. "Many women stay in bad situations because they have never been hit, but emotional and economic abuse are just as bad."

At the new office, women can get assistance filling out restraining and stalking orders, and an attorney is in the office two times a week to give advice and answer questions. Sometimes the attorney will take on a woman's case, Gutierrez said.

"Women can fill out the restraining orders at the courthouse, but they can also bring the papers here and fill them out," she said. "We will go to court with them if they want, too."

Women who go to the center also usually leave with some type of safety plan, Gutierrez said. Batters often will destroy the woman's birth certificate and driver's license so the woman has a hard time getting any type of identification later, she said.

"I have seen women come to the

shelter without even shoes on their feet," she said. "We want to get them thinking about things they need to think about if they want to leave the situation. Things like putting their ID in different places."

Another service provided by the new office is advocacy for lesbian battering victims. The advocate is in the office three days a week.

Kidspace, a play area in the office for children, is designed to help educate children on domestic violence.

"It is more than just a space for kids to play," Gutierrez said. "They may think they are just watching a video, but the video also educates children on what domestic violence is, and what is not OK."

The new office is partially funded by a grant from the Center for Disease Control, Gutierrez said.

A grand opening will be celebrated today from 5 to 7 p.m. at the new office, which is located at 111 E. 16th Ave.

The new drop-in office is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is also open on some evenings. For more information, call 484-6103.

Workshop: Self-assertion key to escaping assault

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clude prevention, avoidance, interruption, escape, and after-care.

"How many times have we heard about an assault and thought, 'how could she have gone with that guy?'" Telsey said. "We don't know what the situation was and every woman has the right to make her decisions for her situation without being blamed."

Avoidance is trusting intuitive feelings and maximizing safety.

"If you are going somewhere and it doesn't feel safe, don't go," Telsey said.

Interruption is stopping an assailant from approaching and starting a conversation.

Serial killer Ted Bundy was famous for getting women to go with him by pretending he was injured and asking for help.

"Requesting help is the number one ploy used to assault," Telsey said. "Assertiveness is the key to avoiding assault at this stage."

Escape is achieved by concentrating on what can be done instead of worrying about what the assailant might do. Taking control and actively choosing options is important, she said.

After-care is rewarding oneself for being assertive and careful and avoiding an assault. The goal of the class is to expand people's lives rather than restricting them, said Susan Trefts, self-defense instructor.

Insults: Green says he has no choice in seating closure

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leged occurrences at The Pit.

Ideas that the Race Task Force put to Moos included:

■ Players and cheerleaders wearing buttons promoting the groups' fight against racism

■ Players wearing significantly colored attire, such as sweat bands or shoelaces

■ Passing out buttons and brochures at entrances to Mac Court

■ Head coach Jerry Green speaking prior to the game

■ The announcer broadcasting a message during the game

Moos agreed with the idea of the distribution of material at the doors of Mac Court prior to the game, but said he didn't think having the players and cheerleaders wearing paraphernalia was a good choice.

"I think fliers can make an impact. I think Jerry Green speaking will have a positive impact. And I think the roping off of a student seating section will be effective."

Following the meeting, Moos and Banfield said Green will speak

to fans in attendance three minutes prior to the start of the game.

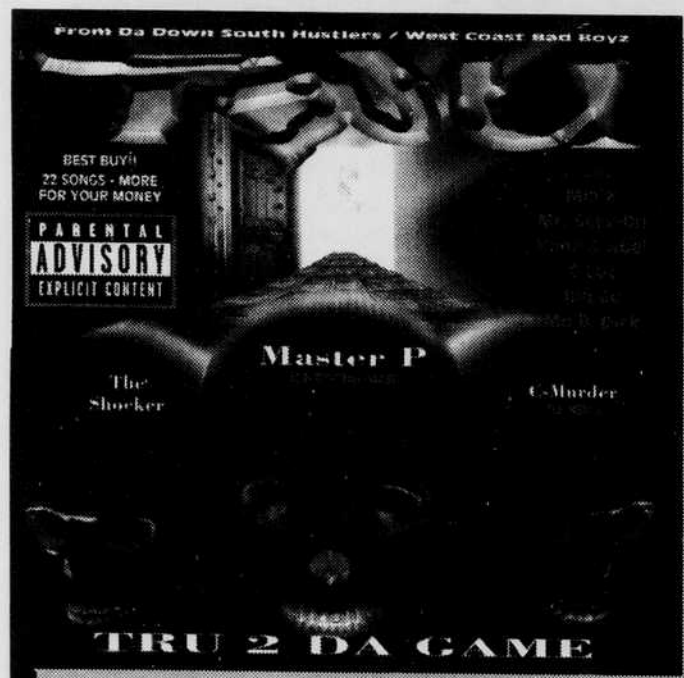
"With the game being on television, its going to be pretty glaring to the fact that we've got the place basically sold out, but yet we've got a section empty," Green said.

"I can't think of it from a 'right or wrong' standpoint because other people are already doing that. It certainly doesn't help our basketball team; and I don't think our team has done anything wrong, except maybe miss too many free throws or one too many shots."

While the loss of student seats is planned to be for only one game, the issue will not be left at that.

Wes Morrill, the director of the University's counseling center, said at the Race Task Force meeting Dan Williams, vice president for administration, is helping develop an associate dean of students position that would deal primarily with issues of race. Also, there will be a public forum held on Feb. 27, at 3 p.m. in the Ben Linder Forum for people to voice their opinions on the recent activities and issues.

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