

Womenspace seeks volunteers for holiday season

Because of higher stress at this time of year, women are more likely to be abused and need help

By Felicity Ayles
Oregon Daily Emerald

The holiday season is traditionally a time of joy, giving and general merriment. But unfortunately, it is also the time of year that brings the most tension, according to Womenspace domestic violence services.

The organization has begun its training for additional crisis line volunteers during the holiday season.

Womenspace is a 20-year-old organization devoted to empowering people through educational services and crisis lines to help put an end to domestic violence, said Bandana Shrestha, volunteer program coordinator.

Domestic violence can be sex-

ual, physical and verbal, but there is not one type of violence more prevalent during the holiday season, she said. Emotional violence is often the most underestimated.

The organization has three main services. Emergency services include a shelter and a 24-hour crisis line staffed entirely by volunteers. The community services program includes an advocacy center with in-depth support groups that provide community education. Finally, the organization offers transitional services, which include finding alternate housing for victims.

"Volunteers are a very important part of our program," Shrestha said.

Crisis line volunteers for this holiday season do not need to have any experience and are specially trained to handle a large number of calls, Shrestha said.

"The training is geared to-

"A lot of people are stressed around the holiday season. But stress does not cause violence, it is just a contributing factor."

Rebecca Peatow
ASUO Women's Center

wards giving people the skills they need to end domestic violence," she said.

Although most of the callers are women, Shrestha said anyone can call with issues about domestic violence. Children whose parents are having problems can call, and the organization will refer them to the proper services.

Womenspace has had an ongoing relationship with the Univer-

sity through fund raising and student volunteers, she said. Rebecca Peatow, office manager for the ASUO Women's Center, said there is unfortunately no way of monitoring the number of University students who use the organization's services or volunteer for the programs.

Peatow said the largest partnership between the University and Womenspace at the moment is the creation of a campus task force focused on dating violence, or abuse within a relationship.

The task force includes Peatow, members of the law school, staff in the Office of Student Life and Womenspace volunteers.

"We are trying to create a collaborative response to dating violence," Peatow said. 9

The organization and the women's center also gets together for activities in October, which

is domestic violence awareness month, she said.

The holiday season may be busy for the organization, but Peatow said the holidays are the most quiet time of year for the women's center because most of the students are gone.

"Fall and spring are our busiest times, at the beginning and end of the year," she said.

Shrestha said holiday stress can be an important factor in contributing to all forms of domestic violence.

"A lot of people are stressed around the holiday season," she said. "But stress does not cause violence, it is just a contributing factor."

Womenspace is planning another training session for Jan. 9 and 10. This session will train volunteers for all aspects of the organization. Call 485-7262 for information.

Public safety

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County Youth Services, said the failure of the measures will not affect the completion of the facility, but only 36 of the projected 100 beds will be built.

The building is scheduled for occupancy sometime in the fall of 1999, Ryer said.

Funding without the measures will not allow for a residential program for girls or the implementation of a transition center, he said.

On the 1995 ballot, Lane County Youth Services asked voters only for construction money for the structure, knowing it would

take three or four years to build, Ryer said.

"Until we had the building design, there was no way to know how much it would cost to run," he said.

When youth services asked for additional funding on this fall's ballot, Measure 20-05 was very comprehensive, he said.

The measure included funds for secure detention, drug and alcohol abuse treatment facilities, two courtrooms for juvenile justice, office space for the probation staff and training rooms for competency classes, Ryer said.

But because the measures didn't pass, all

of those programs might not be available.

The Lane County youth services is even considering renting out some of the unused space to the Oregon Youth Authority, Ryer said.

"It is a major setback in accomplishing our master plan," he said.

Interim Eugene Police Chief Jim Hill said the council is going to do some polling to try and understand the vote, especially because Measure 20-06 failed by only seven votes.

"We are going to try and understand what the vote represented," he said. "The

council supports the idea of doing a post-election poll to get some answers."

The juvenile justice center will not be running at full capacity, which would be necessary to maintain youth intervention programs, Hill said.

The community clearly stated it wants youth violence-prevention programs, and there are currently deficits in the county's ability to respond to youth issues, he said.

The council is disappointed and concerned about public safety and must move forward as a group to solve these problems, Hill said.

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