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Volunteers sought to help through transition Women's Center offers eight-week training

By Shelley Ball
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An eight-week training program designed to teach much-needed volunteers the needs of domestic violence victims will begin Feb. 7 at the United Methodist Church in Oak Grove.

The program is a part of the Domestic Violence Program founded by the Women's Center on Beaver-creek Road. Volunteers will be trained to help out at the

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Evergreen House, a local shelter designed to give domestic violence victims a safe place to stay until they can sort out their problems.

"When they (victims) come to us, (our job is) basically to support them, help them through the transition and get control of their lives," Jan Lucas, volunteer coordinator of the Evergreen House said.

Trained volunteers will also gain a better understanding of the issues and problems associated with domestic violence, a term Lucas said doesn't always mean a husband and wife situation such as battered women. Lucas explained domestic violence can also include unmarried people, two people of the same sex, as well as child abuse and incest.

Handling dangerous situations is a common element of the Evergreen House. "There's a variety of needs to fill with volunteers," Lucas said. These needs can be broken down into three main areas: the crisis line, working with the victims themselves or helping to transport the vic-

tims to the shelter itself.

Lucas said volunteers who offer to transport victims to the House sign up for hours they are free to help out, and should a crisis call be received during those hours, they will be notified at home of the emergency.

Victims who choose to stay at the House will be able to talk about their problems through informal counseling sessions, another area where volunteers can help out at the shelter. Counselors Anne Pardington and Carol Strazer from the Women's Center also visit the shelter to provide individual counseling, Lucas said.

The Evergreen House also provides victims with resources from the county and state to help them with their particular situation, as well as aiding in legal issues, such as court restraining orders.

For those volunteers who are able to spend time helping out at the shelter itself, Lucas explained they will be asked to make a commitment by spending four four-hour shifts each month at the Evergreen House. One of the four-hour shifts must be on a weekend.

What kinds of situations can volunteers expect to face at the shelter? Lucas said there are always a great variety of cases, but one common example would be a woman coming from an abusive situation, in which the volunteer would be "helping the woman sort out her feelings."

Although the Evergreen House has only been in operation since the summer of 1983 (the crisis line has been in use since 1981), it has become the major part of the Women's Center Domestic Violence Program, which Lucas said has been "quite successful." Between the months of Sept.-Nov. 1983, the Evergreen House sheltered 56 women and 63 children. During this time period there were also 97 transports (equal to approximately 1,000 miles) and 336 informational/referral calls recorded.

The shelter is directed by Judith Armatta and consists of a paid staff of seven members, one full-time and the others part-time, and about 30 volunteers. The staff works constantly to improve its teaching methods, as Lucas said, "Our training manual

has gone from a half-inch thick to two to three inches."

Lucas said the shelter could use more participants. "Some shifts we're covering with one person, which is hec-

tic; every shift should have at least two people or more," she said.

The upcoming training session for volunteers will be held every Tuesday from 7-10

p.m. Anyone with questions concerning the volunteer training program or the Evergreen House itself may contact the shelter at 654-1440, and a brochure will be sent out explaining the organization.



OUCH!—Jay Brown, teacher and student at Clackamas Community College, chops through a stack of blazing bricks during a

martial arts presentation in the Community Center, Wednesday, Jan. 25.

Photo by Duane Hiersche