

To Break Patterns Of Violence

by Debra Connaway

Abused women. Abused children. Fearful, despondent — To whom can they turn for solace and support in times of crisis? The Clatsop County Women's Crisis Service is here to help.

We receive calls twenty-four hours a day from women who have been beaten and/or threatened with death by their spouses — women who fear for the safety of their children: will innocent little ones bear the brunt of violence next?

Ours is not a business of putting a bandaid on the immediate injury but one of treating a cancer-like malady that threatens the well-being of every family in the community.

We are the only twenty-four hour crisis line available in Clatsop County. Suicide, drug overdose, rape, sexual assault, restraining orders are just a few of the wide-ranging nature of calls we receive daily. Men and women call who just desperately need someone to listen to their troubles. Our volunteers on the crisis line are all trained to be sensitive good listeners, to be aware of the potential of more serious troubles lying beneath the surface conversation.

Our volunteers are the heart of our organization. They are dedicated, committed to eradicating domestic violence and sexual abuse. The emphasis is placed on violence/abuse being an unacceptable, inappropriate method of dealing with stress and anger. We provide a listening ear, we make agency referrals and advocate for women and men with social service agencies and the courts.

We also have a network of safe homes for women in a dangerously abusive situation. We

Leslie Shufel



provide emergency transportation twenty-four hours a day.

We have an active community education and outreach program that is targeting prevention and awareness of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

We are now nearing completion of a curriculum for ninth and eleventh graders on personal safety and sexual abuse. We will be working closely with administrators and educators for implementation of the project in the fall.

Together with our board of directors and volunteers we are embarking on a needed fundraising drive.

Clatsop County chose to deny us money this fiscal year. In the past we requested three thousand dollars and received only fifteen hundred dollars. Now we will receive no support. We receive no federal or state funding, contrary to popular belief. We are solely dependent on public contributions, donations and private grants. We are a non-profit organization and our expenses are minimal in comparison to the wide range of services we provide the community.

The services we provide for families in a crisis situation, the education we offer on understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual abuse are vital to this community. The need is growing at a rapid pace but if we are to continue our services we need a financial commitment by the people in this area who are concerned about these issues. We urge you to write a check to us or a letter to your county commissioners in support of the Women's Crisis Service so that we may continue to serve you and our community.

Debra Connaway is a staff member of the Clatsop County Women's Crisis Service.



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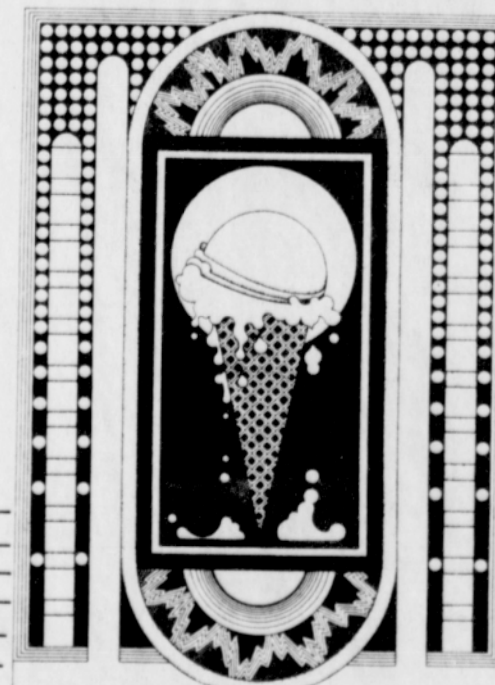


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