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A Lifeline for Victims

One-stop domestic violence center opens

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Survivors of domestic violence no longer have to trek from place to place to access the resources they need to escape their abusers and establish new lives, a process that can be vexing as it is time consuming.

The Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Services is celebrating its opening this week at 10305 E. Burnside St., serving as a "one-stop" place for people trying to break free from an abusive partner.

The whole idea behind the center is that individuals fleeing an abusive domestic situation can come to the center's single location and get most, if not all, of their needs addressed, rather than having to go to multiple places scattered across the city.

People who utilize it can access legal help, get a shelter referral, file a police report, apply for a domestic violence grant, get food assistance, find a clothing closet, and just have a comfortable environment to take a breather.



Martha Strawn Morris directs services for the Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Services, a new one-stop resource for people trying to break free from an abusive partner.

The comprehensiveness of the center is made possible by collaboration between the City of Portland and Multnomah County, in addition to the Oregon Department of Human Services, LifeworksNW, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, and other organizations that will be setting up shop inside. And the services are much needed.

According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, there were over 34,000 calls for help with domestic violence, which include crisis calls, peer support calls, and calls for information and referral. A 1999 study by Multnomah County found that nearly 14 percent of women in the county had been physically abused.

The needs of each survivor of domestic violence vary greatly; and Multnomah County's Domestic Violence Resource Guide is 48 pages.

Martha Strawn Morris, the director of the center, explained that people utilizing the center are directed toward one of six workers dubbed "navigators," who inform them of what resources are available to them.

"A navigator can take very personal concerns and very personal needs and translate that into what services are available," she said.

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Recovering from Traumatic Events

Like Sept. 11, surviving families learn to cope

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After working for more than 20 years helping families recover from traumatic incidents, Donna Schuurman has learned to avoid using the phrase "getting over it."

Schuurman -- who works as the executive center of the Dougy Center, a nationally-recognized organi-



Everett Lawrence Briley and his two sons in a family photo.

zation that helps grieving families - likens the process of healing to someone who has been unexpectedly hit by a big wave while on a beach. They might be tossed around, and be hit with another wave, but sooner or later they learn to keep afloat.

This Sept. 11 will mark the ninth anniversary of a traumatic event that the nation is still recovering from. In Portland, and elsewhere, there are people recovering from

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