



Domestic Violence Services

OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

2009-2010 Annual Report



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The mission of Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties is to advocate for and empower domestic violence victims by providing free, safe, confidential shelter and support services.

2009-2010 Board of Directors

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Our Vision:

DVS is a trusted leader and partner in creating a community free from all forms of violence and oppression.

Staff

Kelly Abken	☼ Executive Director
Erinn Gailey	☼ Program Director
Samantha Sharer	☼ Shelter Manager
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Joan Marcotte	☼ On-Call Advocate
Jeanine Tuttle	☼ On-Call Advocate
Cheryl Whitehurst	☼ On-Call Advocate



Crisis Program



Shelter Services: The shelter is a 7-bedroom home in a confidential location. The shelter has a warm and welcoming environment; with a living room, children's play area, large kitchen & dining room, outdoor kennels and swing-sets. The shelter has on-site staff 18-hours per day, everyday.

2009 Statistics:

- ◆ 172 families stayed in the shelter
- ◆ 376 total clients (202 children)
- ◆ 6,005 total bednights
- ◆ Daily average of 17 clients
- ◆ 4,719 service contact hours
- ◆ 8,075 service contacts

2010 Statistics:

- ◆ 185 families stayed in the shelter
- ◆ 338 total clients (155 children)
- ◆ 6,305 total bednights
- ◆ Daily average of 18 clients
- ◆ 6,660 service contact hours
- ◆ 15,730 service contacts

Service contacts include individual advocacy, case management, safety planning, referrals and/or contacting other agencies on behalf of the client, advocating with other agencies on clients' behalf, providing emergency transportation, housing assistance and developing housing stability plans, medical advocacy, crisis intervention, certified assistance with address confidentiality program, assistance with Crime Victims Compensation, emergency 911 cell phones, community voice-mail program, mother mentoring and parenting resources, children's group and activities, providing clothing, hygiene products, diapers, food, etc., and a myriad of other assistance to provide safety, stability, and quietude for families in crisis.

Children's Program offers age-appropriate intervention services that strive to assist children to express feelings about their exposure to domestic violence. The children's advocate conducts support groups, as well as unstructured activities to entertain, educate and soothe children. The advocate also provides referrals, guidance and information to mothers about recognizing the impact of the abuser's behavior on her parenting and how to support the natural resiliency in her children and help them cope with and heal from witnessing domestic violence. In 2010 there were 466 service contacts for a total of 789 service hours.



Crisis Program

Crisis Hotline: The crisis line is staffed 24-hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days a year by trained and experienced advocates. The hotline provides crisis intervention, safety planning, information, shelter intakes and referral services.

2009 Statistics:

- ◆ 8,384 calls to crisis line
- 77% were crisis calls (including referrals & support)
- 22% were information and referral only

2010 Statistics:

- ◆ 9,535 calls to crisis line
- 82% were crisis calls (including referrals & support)
- 15% were information and referral only

Crisis intervention services are provided to an individual in crisis to stabilize their emotions, clarify issues, and provide support and assistance to help explore options for resolution of the client's immediate crisis and needs.

Advocacy Services provided by trained DVS advocates are always at the forefront of best-practice models; DVS staff had a total of 1,537 ½ hours of advanced advocacy training in 2010. DVS advocates provide advocacy that is survivor-centered with a primary focus on safety planning, empowerment, and education of the client through reinforcement of the client's autonomy and self-determination.

2009: 5,981 hours of advocacy & crisis intervention

2010: 8,693 hours of advocacy & crisis intervention

Therapy Referrals are provided to local counselors trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and utilize empowerment based counseling practices. DVS paid for 69 counseling sessions in 2009 and 86 sessions in 2010.

Support Groups are provided in both English and Spanish language and occur weekly at the shelter and at the main office. Participants share experiences, offer mutual support, and receive information and education. The purpose of DVS support groups are to validate the experiences of victims, explore options, build on strengths, and respect clients' rights to make their own decisions. Childcare is provided for clients during support group sessions.

2009: 2,081 visits to support groups

2010: 2,194 visits to support groups



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Legal Advocacy & Support Services

Legal Advocacy is provided to clients in both the criminal and civil justice systems. This includes educating and assisting victims as they navigate the justice systems; accompanying clients to legal proceedings; advocating on clients' behalf within the legal system; referrals and information regarding immigration issues; working closely with family law court facilitators; and referrals for legal assistance.

DVP Clinic (Domestic Violence Protection Order): DVS offers daily DVP clinics in Benton County from 11am-1pm and in Franklin County on Monday and Friday from 11am-1pm. Like all DVS services, the clinics are free and open to victims seeking assistance.

2009 Statistics:

- ◆ 1,623 clients (includes duplicates)
- ◆ n/a (new cases)
- ◆ 12,156 client contacts
- ◆ Assistance with 353 Protection Orders

2010 Statistics:

- ◆ 966 new clients
- ◆ 977 new cases
- ◆ 16,485 client contacts
- ◆ Assistance with 314 Protection Orders

Emergency Client Funds were used specifically to assist clients in meeting their emergent needs. The funds were spent on items and services ranging from bus tickets for a mom and her three children back to her hometown in the Midwest; repairing a transmission; paying for 46 client sessions with the court facilitator; paying for birth certificates or ID; to buying new coats for a victim and her five children in the shelter that had fled their home without any.

Co-located advocates: DVS employs advocates that work out of the Kennewick Police Department, Richland Police Department and the Community Services Office (DSHS). By co-locating and working closely with other service agencies, DVS is able to reach clients that may not have received services otherwise.

Rural Outreach: Legal advocates routinely travel to the outlying rural areas of Benton & Franklin Counties to distribute brochures, informational packets, hang pull-tab flyers and meet with community members and survivors. Providing access and removing barriers for victims of domestic violence are critical components of our client-centered advocacy services.



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Support & Community Services

NEW!!! Transitional Housing: DVS started a transitional housing program for domestic violence victims leaving the shelter and seeking supportive services and housing with the goal of transitioning to permanent housing in two years. DVS was awarded a 4-plex from the City of Kennewick and partnered with the Community Action Committee for tenant-based rental assistance. Elijah Family Homes will house clients in two of the units, with DVS clients in the other two.

Rental Assistance: DVS provided first month rental assistance or eviction prevention to 46 women and their 74 children in 2009 for a total of 3,661 bednights. In 2010, 42 women and their 77 children received rental assistance for a total of 3,654 bednights. Since 2003, DVS has distributed over \$146,000 in rental assistance.

Jail Outreach: DVS partnered with the Tri-Cities Chaplaincy in the Benton County jail to provide services and information to incarcerated women. Incarcerated women are a traditionally underserved population. DVS staff worked to create accessibility to the crisis-line and legal advocates, hold weekly support groups in the jail, carry-out quarterly informational sessions for inmates regarding DVS services, and provide training to all jail staff.

This effort has garnered the attention of the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women and other programs for being on the forefront of best practice and creating accessibility for underserved victims of domestic violence.

Volunteer Program: Volunteers are an essential part of our program. Our volunteers work in the shelter, answer the 24-hour crisis line, work with children, provide legal advocacy, and assist at our administrative offices. Our volunteers provide hundreds of hours of service every year! We hold our volunteer advocacy training twice a year.

Starting-Over Program: DVS distributes items donated from the community to our clients as they transition from shelter to safe housing. Over 150 families received items ranging from couches, to beds, to silverware, to shampoo and soap. Martha's Cupboard has been an excellent community partner that provides baskets containing cleaning supplies and other household products for our families.

Diaper Program: In 2010, advocates distributed nearly 16,000 diapers to clients at the shelter and those working with outreach staff. Diaper drives and community donations have been a critical component in enabling DVS to continue this much needed diaper program.

Food Boxes: Clients in need are given food boxes and other essential items to assist them as they work to stabilize their lives. DVS staff distribute food boxes and other miscellaneous items daily.



Community Programs

Cell Phone Drive: In April, DVS conducts a community wide cell-phone drive. The donated cell phones are either distributed to clients for emergency 911 cell phones or sent to a buy-back program that provides funding for direct client services. Thank you to all our community partners that are drop-off sites: all local law enforcement agencies, all local libraries, Yokes, Tri-Cities Battery, US Cellular, Hanford Vit Plant, New Beginnings Thrift Shop, and CBC.



Diaper Drive: DVS Legal Advocate, Kate Carter, hosts a diaper drive every year at WalMart. Without this drive, and the other community partners that host their own diapers drives, DVS would not be able to meet the needs of all our clients. Thank you Kate and Alysia!

Education Program: DVS staff provide trainings on domestic violence to students, parents, community groups, agencies, churches, and service providers. The curriculum is tailored to meet the specific need of the audience. Topics include:

- ◆ Understanding Domestic Violence & Effective Interventions
- ◆ Impact of Abusive Behavior on Children
- ◆ Teen Dating Violence (for teens, for parents, or for teachers/counselors)
- ◆ Healthy Teen Dating Relationships
- ◆ Violence in the Workplace
- ◆ Interventions for Medical Professionals
- ◆ Domestic Violence in the Faith Community
- ◆ Intensive Domestic Violence Training for Social Services Professionals

In 2010, DVS provided direct training to 1,323 individuals for a total of 3,640 training hours. In addition, DVS participated in 15 community events exposing DVS services and materials to another 15,600 community members.



Community Programs

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program: In October, DVS hosted a workshop for education professionals at Education School District 123 that was attended by counselors, school resource officers and other service providers. The workshop focused on:

- ◆ Understanding teen dating violence
- ◆ Domestic violence in the home
- ◆ Appropriate interventions for teens and families
- ◆ How schools can create policies to address teen dating violence on their campus
- ◆ How to incorporate teen dating violence education into existing curriculum
- ◆ Resources available to teens and education professions both locally and on-line

All participants in the workshop received a binder and flash-drive with handouts, activities, videos and sample curriculum.



In addition, DVS hosted a community symposium at Columbia Basin College aimed towards teens, parents and community members concerned about teen dating violence. The community symposium focused on reaching-out to teens and their support systems directly to talk about how to how to recognize the red flags for dating violence and how to help someone in need. There were break-out sessions for teen and adults separately that addressed the specific concerns of each group.

DVS Website & E-Newsletter: The DVS e-newsletter is mailed quarterly to over 2,500 individuals and agencies. The newsletter provides information on upcoming events, program services, statistical data, and links to helpful on-line resources. The website has generated nationwide interest in DVS and has become a useful tool for victims and the general public to access information and resources.



Candlelight Vigil

Each year, in October, DVS commemorates Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a community vigil. In a striking display, rows of glowing luminarias represent the number of clients sheltered the previous year. In addition, family and friends memorialize the life-size silhouettes of their loved ones by writing messages, posting pictures, bringing flowers and attaching other memorabilia.



The following 30 victims were murdered as a result of domestic violence between 1998-2010

Lucia Barela, killed 06/28/98
Christa Carcia, killed 07/26/98
Amy Reeves, killed 04/28/99
Neffali Castillo, killed 03/13/00
Tara Jensen, killed 09/16/00
Linda Grover, killed 01/07/01
Janine Crandal, killed 02/13/01
Mayra Avila-Lopez, killed 07/28/01
Salvador Farias, killed 09/07/01
San Juanita Montelongo, killed 03/03/02

Shona Malcom-Kelly, killed 08/09/02
David Brown, killed 03/07/03
Marisela Sital-Ross, killed 08/06/03
Nathan Sital, killed 08/06/03
Donald Hayden, killed 08/05/03
Debra Carr, killed 07/09/04
Glen Carr, killed 07/09/04
Julie Prather, killed 06/01/05
Alysha Prather, killed 06/01/05
Alex Prather, killed 06/01/05

Sandra Godinez-Sanchez, killed 08/23/04
Darlene Hyatt, killed 03/10/05
Barb Davis, killed 01/19/06
Yana Samolyuk, killed 07/09/06
Patricia Leighton, killed 07/26/06
Julie Britt, killed 08/22/06
Cleveland Everhart, killed 10/08/06
Tairra Jo Garcia, killed 6/22/08
Shenay Greenough (8-months pregnant), killed 5/10/10
Griselda Ocampo Meza, killed 5/24/10



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2010 Golf Tournament

Teams:

American Rock Products
Arboretum Mortgage
Babcock Services, Inc.
Benton County Sheriff
Cicotte Law Office
Copiers NW
Don Zoda
George Grant
Hanford Fire Dept.
Hentschell & Associates
Key Bank
Lockheed Martin
Lorin Kelly
Lourdes
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Motoring Services
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Sterling Savings Home Loan Division
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Tri-Cities Sunrise Rotary Club
URS
US Bank
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Hole Sponsors:

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Moon Security
Moss Adams LLP
Motoring Services
Power Focus Engineering, PS
Progressive Machine, Inc.
Remote Systems Engineering, Inc.
Sterling Savings Home Loan Division
Tetra Tech
Total Site Services, LLC
Tri-Cities Sunrise Rotary Club
US Bank

Tournament Sponsor

Randolph Construction

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Meier Architecture-Engineering

Hole in One Sponsor

McCurley

Golf Cart Sponsor

Mission Support Alliance, LLC

Corporate Sponsors

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Volunteer Sponsor

Serco, Inc.

Victim & Child Sponsors

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Areva
Apollo Sheet Metal

Additional Sponsors

Signs by Sue
SunWest Sportswear
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AJ Salon
Alysia Johnson
Anelare Winery
Anthony's
Applebees/Richland
Athena Schieffer
ATP Massage
Becky Hogan
Bill Youngstien
Bonefish
Brad Roberts
Broadmoor/Hansen Park Fitness
C & K Nails
Casa Vino
Children's Attic
Chuck Lee
Chuck-E-Cheese
Country Gentleman
Craig Cavanaugh
Cyndi Hildman
Darrel Jobin
Denny's
Domino's Pizza
Don Zoda
Donald Hawkins
Dura-Shine Clean
Famous Dave's
Golf Universe
Greenies
HALO Branded Solutions
Hole-in-the-wall
Illusions Salon
Jackson's
Jiffy Car Wash
Jarrad Haff
John Beyer
Jokers Comedy Club
Kahler Glen
Karin Costa

Khris Judy
Kyle Feeder
Lemaster Daniels
Lori Cook
Lourdes Health Network
Maidstone Massage
Marcia Wyatt
McCurley's
Merry Maids Columbia Basin
Moon Security
Nan Stoops
New Beginnings
New York Richies
Ovenly Arts
Pacific Kicks
Paradise Puffers
Pasco GolfLand
Pat Johnson
Peter Turping
Randolph Construction
Richland Jackson's
Rick Brunk
Riverside Therapeutic Massage
Rocco Luongo
S Schmidt
Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery
Sami Sharer
Scott Suemori
Seattle Mariners
Seattle Seahawks
Sundown Marine
Templeman's Market
Tom Mitchell
Tony Roma's
Townsquare Media
Travel Leaders
Tri-City Court Club
Uptown Deli
Wild Horse Resort & Casino
Wondrack

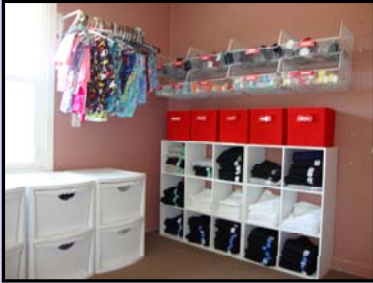
A special thank you to **Lori Cook** for her extraordinary work,
and **Canyon Lakes** for their assistance.



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2009-2010 Shelter Improvements

Kennels: DVS partnered with the local Elks to receive a National Elks grant to make the shelter pet friendly. Local Elks provided the in-kind labor to excavate, build and fence kennels in the backyard. DVS is one of the first programs in the nation to make the emergency shelter pet-friendly.



Sharefest: Continues to support DVS Shelter Services by providing labor, time and funding to make shelter improvements. This year, Sharefest volunteers erected a new play area, fixed the existing structure and cleaned up the back-yard. Thank you Sharefest!

Kadlec Managers: For painting the living room, kitchen and dining room. What a difference!

Bethel Church & Lori Kimball: For raising funds to support shelter services and provide funding for emergency shelter repairs.

Bathrooms: Russ Treat and Richland Rotary have been generously supporting and fixing the shelter for years! This year, Russ Treat singlehandedly, with Richland Rotary funding, completely remodeled the client bathrooms in the shelter. What an amazing difference. Thank you Russ and Rotary!

Clothing Room: An anonymous \$10,000 donation has allowed DVS to completely re-do the clothing room and purchase new clothing, undergarments, and sleepwear for all clients entering the shelter.

New Pipes: Columbia Center Rotary generously donated \$5,000 for an emergency repair to a pipe rupture. Never has a staff been so grateful!!

Thank you to **Bethel Church's Joy in the Evening Women's Group** for raising the funds to replace ALL the bunk-beds in the shelter!

As well as donating \$1,070 in emergency client funds which have been used to assist clients with getting birth-certificates, ID, gas vouchers, bus tickets, and prescriptions.



Funding & Programs

Elks provided funding and labor to build kennels in the backyard. DVS is one of the first shelters in the nation to make our shelter pet friendly – and we were recognized by the National Humane Society for our efforts.

Verizon Hopeline provided 20 new cell phones with 3,000 minutes to distribute to clients.

Verizon awarded two grants to DVS:

- To provide legal advocacy services and to purchase a laptop and printer to better assist victims in the DVP clinics by completing and printing documents on-site.
- To provide case management and on-going supportive services to victims transitioning out of the shelter into safe housing.

Three Rivers Community Foundation awarded two grants:

- To provide direct and age-appropriate services to children residing in shelter; and provide support and information for their mothers.
- For the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program to host three community events to educate professionals, parents, and teens about dating violence, provide case management and on-going supportive services to victims transitioning out of the shelter into safe housing.

Columbia Center Rotary funded two projects for shelter improvements. The first was to create a fun, functional, and entertaining children's play area in the shelter and the second, to repair the emergency plumbing issues. Both fantastic and much appreciated projects!

Richland Rotary provided funding and donated labor to rehab and remodel both client bathrooms in the shelter. Thank you Russ Treat for your hard work!

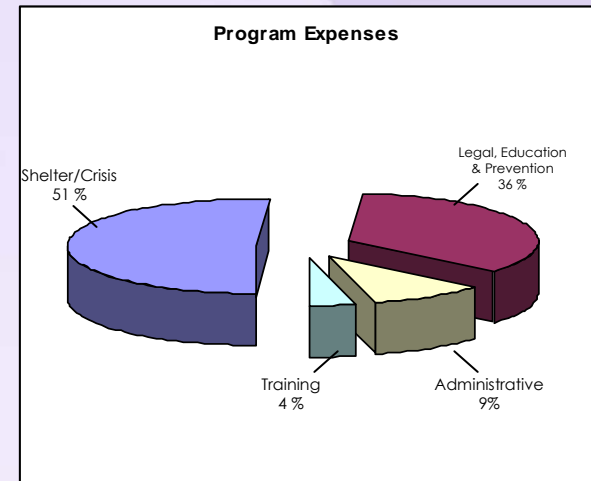
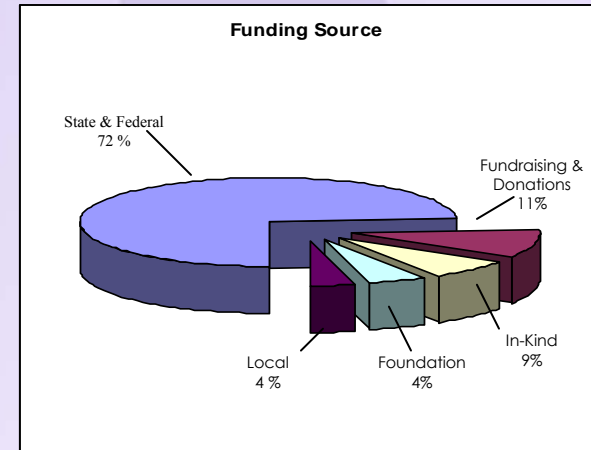
VOCA: Stimulus funding to retain a shelter advocate, fund counseling services and emergency client funds.

VAWA: Stimulus funds to hire a third legal advocate.

City of Kennewick (through State of Washington, Department of Commerce, Community Development Block Grant Funds) awarded DVS a completely remodeled and rehabbed 4-plex for transitional housing. DVS and Elijah Family Homes will each house families in 2 units.

Benton-Franklin Community Action Committee partnered with DVS for tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) to provide housing assistance for the families residing in the transitional housing units.

Benton & Franklin Community Health Networks provided funding for support group curriculum development and provision of on-site counseling services for shelter residents.



2009-2010 Donors & Supporters

Businesses / Groups:

Action Counseling
Alternative Gift Fair
Apollo, Inc.
Atomic City Rollergirls
Aunt Franny's Toys
Bechtel Women's Group
Benton County Sheriff's Office
Benton-Franklin Council for gov't
Consejo
Culligan
DA Davidson & Co
Daughters of the American Revolution

Energy Solutions
Etter Construction
Fever Game Raffle earnings
Fluor Employees
Fluor Foundation
Kadlec Regional Medical
Center
Macy's GIFT
Mane FX
Mission Support Alliance
Mom's Club
Moon Security

Moss Adams
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Treatment Finishing Plant
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Red Lion Hotels
Remote Systems
Engineering
Richland Police Benefit
Association
Rotary Club of Columbia
Center #22471
Seasons

Sew Me Pretty
Soroptimist International
SRS
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Toyota Center
Tri-City Area Professional Employees
Tri-City Association of Realtors
United Way
URS Energy & Construction INC
WA. St. Association of County Clerks
Washington Group International
Wondrack

A special thanks to the following for making financial and in-kind donations of \$1,000 or more:

All Saint's Episcopal Church Outreach
Bechtel Women's Group
Bethel Church
Costco
Donald & Barbara Wood
Dr. Naughne' Boyd
Edward Ochoa
Ikon Marketing
John & Diana LaFemina
Leonard & Janet Bond
Mission Support Alliance
Plutonium Finishing Plant Employees
Randolph Construction
Richland Lutheran Church
Rick Jansens
Rod & Candice Bluechel
Russ Treat
Susan Vann
Sylvia & Victor Hubbard
Torena O'Rorke
Westside United Protestant Church

Thank you to the Christmas Family Sponsors:

Bethel Church ★ Bechtel Women's Group ★ Lura J. Powell ★ Crossroads Bible Church ★ Bath & Body Works
★ Tri-Cities Optimist Group ★ Delta Kappa Gamma ★ Fluor Hanford ★ Bechtel ★ Soroptimists ★
★ Broadway Truck Stop ★ Center for Spiritual Living ★ Con Agra/Lamb Weston
★ Infinia Corporation ★ Jesus & Alma ★ Kennewick Police Dept. ★ Kiley Dean ★ Laura Jendro ★
★ Look-CHPRC ★ Lori Kimbel ★ Randolph Construction Services ★ Ray & Judi Dodge ★
Riverton Retirement & Assisted Living ★ Savannah Dean ★ Trent & Nicole Becker
★ Tri-Cities Regional Surgery Center ★ Tyson & Jenny Downs ★ URS Corporation ★ Washington Collectors ★

Churches:

All Saint's Episcopal Church Outreach
Bethel Church
Community Unitarian Universalist Church
Crossroads Bible Church
Kennewick First United Methodist Women
Lord of Life Church
Lutheran Church of the Master
Miriam Circle of Richland

NWVP Church
Richland Lutheran Church
Richland Seventh Day Adventist Church
Shalom United Church of Christ
St. Vincent DePaul Society
The Living Room Church
West Highlands UMW
Westside United Protestant

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the listed individuals, foundations, businesses and corporations. If we have inadvertently not included your name, please contact us. Thank you.



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2009-2010 Donors & Supporters

Individual Donors:

Alysia Johnson	Evelyn Townsend	Lura Powell
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Eleanor & Charles Hedel	Lori Lieske	Torena O'Rorke
Elsa Smith	Lori & Lonnie Cook	Victoria & Neil Burt
Erinn Gailey	Louise Neal	Virginia Thorson

For support above and beyond:

Atomic Bowl	New Beginnings Thrift Store
Bethel Church	Project Linus
Columbia Center Rotary	Rae Weil
Craig Sutton	Ragz with Tagz
IBEW L.U. 112	Richland Rotary
Ikon Marketing	Russ Treat
International ATL	TCT Computers
Kids Safe Saturday	The Living Room Church
Lura Powell	Toyota
Macy's	Tri City Quilters
Martha's Cupboard	Tri-City Surgery Center
Mary Kay	Tri-City Taxi
Monte Ingersol	Victoria's Secret
MOPS - Bethel	Windermere Real Estate

A special thank-you to **Ikon Marketing** for designing and hosting our website, dvsbf.org. And to Craig Sutton and Rae Weil for their extraordinary work, patience and assistance.

Our partnership with **New Beginnings Thrift Shop** has been a tremendous success – all clothing donations are taken there. DVS gives our clients vouchers to go shopping, they can purchase clothing or items of their choice, and staff is not burdened with overwhelming amounts of clothing to sort and wash. Thanks to New Beginnings and our generous community donors for making this great program successful!

! In the past two years, generous community donors and service groups have given in-kind donations valued at \$87,729!! We simply could not provide the excellent services we do without the support of the community



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Survivor Stories

What would you have done if the shelter wasn't available to you?

I would have jumped.

(DVS shelter exit interview 9/22/10)

"At the shelter they told me it wasn't my fault, and they told me about the cycle of violence. And then in a group session, each woman there was telling the same story, the same situations, the same pain. I wasn't alone any longer. I felt so alone for so long when I was with my husband. It's ironic, now that I am alone for the first time in my life, I don't feel lonely at all. It feels good to be independent."

(former DVS shelter client)



What would you have done if the shelter wasn't available to you?

He would have killed me and the kids.

(DVS shelter exit interview 1/13/10)



"I didn't want to verbalize what was happening to me because that would make it real. The transformation you go through is so subtle and it's so progressive. You can't reason with somebody about this when they say, 'Well, you can just leave...'. The thing is, you're so cut off from the real world. I guess I had never honestly thought of myself as a victim. I thought of myself as not having the best marriage."

(Anonymous)



What an anti-violence expert learned from the BBC



After ten years of working against domestic violence, I was fairly sure I “got it.” Then something really crazy happened to me: doctors found a gigantic tumor in my six-month-old baby daughter’s head. It was a rare, aggressive cancer. She went through brain surgery, intense chemotherapy and radiation. We spent six months in the hospital and even traveled across the country to get what she needed.

We referred to the whole ordeal as the “BBC” (Baby with Brain Cancer), believing that something as ridiculous as childhood cancer deserved a ridiculous nickname.

When I came back to work, I began to see the experiences of abused people in a new light and saw many parallels to my experience:

When your intimate partner is abusing you:

And/Or

When your child is diagnosed with cancer:

- It is unexpected, devastating and totally inconsistent with your dreams and desires
- You have to make some tough decisions when all of your options are pretty crappy
- You need your family, friends and community more than ever
- It's hard to concentrate on anything else when lives are on the line
- In shelters and hospitals: sharing space with strangers and dealing with institutional rules is a drag
- Money makes a huge difference

I did notice one key difference: Our family got oodles of sympathy and tangible support, and virtually no one questioned our choices. But what I have seen in my work is that many survivors of abuse get the opposite reaction. The experiences are similar; the stakes are equally high, but the response tends to be a lot less supportive. Why is that?

P.S. My daughter is currently showing no evidence of disease. But just like survivors of abuse, the fear of *what might happen* still lingers.

By Mette Earlywine, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (reprinted with permission)



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