

Spruce Run News

Celebrating 30 years of Working for Peace at Home

Spring 2004

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1-800-863-9909

Talking about Relationships, Respect Gender and Candy: Spruce Run's Middle School Program

"More lollipops!" This is the most suggestion we hear most frequently on student evaluations of middle school presentations. This refers to the method that Spruce Run's school based advocates use to get our hot-line number into students' hands (hint: it's physically attached to the free candy). "More time!" is the next most frequent comment.

Spruce Run School Based educators have been visiting middle schools in Penobscot County for several years now, presenting information about healthy relationships, communications skills and gender stereotyping.

Some of this school year's highlights included:

- Eighth grade students at Leonard Middle School in Old Town and Central Middle School in Corinth participated in a series of Spruce Run presentations on Communication Skills, Healthy Relationships and Gender Stereotypes.
- Seventh Grade students at Orono Middle School discussed components of a Healthy Relationship in small groups in their Guidance classes. One student commented: "*This class made me think about my friendships as well as "going out" relationships.*"
- An eight week Enrichment Group at Wagner School in Winterport, where seven 7th and 8th grade girls talked explored relationships through discussions and art projects.

- A health fair sponsored by students at Leonard Middle School in Old Town where students created a banner of tracings of their hands and pledged not to use their hands to hurt another.
- Sixth grade physical education classes learned about celebrating the differences between people through games and physical activities.
- More than 800 middle school students in Penobscot County have been reached by this program so far this year.

For more information about Spruce Run's middle school program or to talk about getting Spruce Run advocates to visit your school, please call 945-5102 and ask for Amanda.

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead



Want to join a group of thoughtful, committed citizens working to change the world?

For more than 30 years, Spruce Run volunteers have been quietly assisting people in our community who are affected by domestic violence.

Hotline volunteers provide callers with validation, confidentiality, information and help identifying options for safety. Hotline volunteers can work from their homes.

Spruce Run will be offering Hotline Volunteer training beginning May 24th in the evening. Please call Maureen at 945-5102 for more information.

You the Man at Hermon High School and Orono High School

You the Man is a one-man play addressing unhealthy relationships, dating violence and sexual assault. It's unusual in that it specifically takes a male perspective of empathy, supporting that there are no innocent bystanders in a crime that affects every sector of society.

Brought to Penobscot County schools by Spruce Run with assistance from the Maine Women's Fund, *You the Man* was recently performed at Hermon High School and Orono High School. In each school the performance was attended by the whole school body and was followed by a panel discussion of the issues raised by the play with Spruce Run and Rape Response Services advocates as well as representatives of the schools and local law enforcement.

Students commented:

"I was enthralled and slightly shocked at the reality of it all. Emotionally I felt for each of the characters as I watched."

"It was definitely something we needed to hear even if it was a little uncomfortable."

"It made me realize when someone is in an abusive relationship, you should try to help."

Shelley Gavett, a teacher at Hermon High School who was the site coordinator for the performance there, reflects:

"Although the topic of You the Man can be uncomfortable for many, I am glad Hermon High School took the risk to bring the play to our students, faculty, and staff. If the play made a positive impact on just one person, it was worth the time and effort. I know from the evaluations and from talking to students that lives were changed for the better as some took the message very personally realizing that a change in their behavior was necessary. It was extremely healing for others."

New Developments in Domestic Violence Research

Jay Peters, a member of The University of Maine's Research Collaborative on Violence Against Women and a faculty member of the UM School of Social Work recently completed work developing a way to measure domestic violence myths. The new measure assesses those beliefs which blame the victim, exonerate the perpetrator, and minimize the abuse. "I was surprised," said Dr. Peters, "that though we know that these myths reduce support for battered women individually and for programs which support them generally, there was no reliable and valid way to measure them." This new measure will help researchers understand more about the role of domestic violence myths in the commission of violence against women and will

help community practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to counteract the myths. For more information or a copy of the scale you may contact Jay at jpeters@maine.edu.

The Research Collaborative on Violence Against Women is an interdisciplinary group of University of Maine faculty and women's advocates in the community. Combining their expertise in research and advocacy, the Collaborative aims to generate high quality research on violence against women that informs scholarship and teaching as well as contributes to work for peace and justice in our communities.

This is an exciting upcoming training opportunity for anyone involved in a faith community who wants to enhance their understanding of abuse issues:

Abuse and Religion in Cross-Disciplinary Perspective

Co-taught by Marvin Ellison and an interdisciplinary team of professionals who work in the areas of substance abuse, child abuse and domestic abuse, this course examines how congregations and religious leaders can work collaboratively with others to respond to the needs of those affected by abuse of various kinds. A cross-disciplinary curriculum has been extensively revised for use by anyone within faith communities to address the role of religion in dealing with trauma and recovery.

June 21 – 25 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

For more information or to register contact:
Bangor Theological Seminary

www.bts.edu

800/287-6781

Meet a Spruce Run Volunteer

Nancy Fishwick is an Associate Professor of Nursing at the University of Maine and has been a hotline volunteer for Spruce Run for several years. She returned to Spruce Run after taking a break following her stint as a member of our Steering Committee.

What made you want to be a hotline volunteer?

I had worked on the issue of domestic abuse before in various parts of the country, including a long while on a hotline in Cleveland. I enjoy providing direct services and I especially enjoy the feeling of being a small part of a larger solution.

How was your experience of hotline training?

Hotline training was very intense and a big commitment of time but it was also very thorough and worthwhile.

How has hotline work affected the rest of your life?

I get home right at five o'clock!
Actually, the skills I've learned from hotline work are useful in all the areas of my life. I use active listening with my students in classroom situations, for example. It's also a great reminder that I don't need to fix the problem because we work with an empowerment model. That comes in handy in lots of situations!

Is there anything else you'd like to let people know about being a hotline volunteer?

Yes, Spruce Run staff is remarkable in their consistent support and availability. I never hesitate to call my backup if I need any help with a call. You know, hotline work can feel solitary but it's great to know that you're always connected to someone who'll help if you need it.

Endowment Campaign News

Spruce Run's Endowment Campaign has already raised an impressive total of \$ 280,000, including generous gifts from community members and several grants from foundations. We have not yet met our goal of \$500,000, however, so friends of Spruce Run may be contacting you personally with more information about this campaign to ensure that victims of abuse in our community will always have access to services.

Have you ever wanted to:

Discover new strengths?

Explore your goals?

Challenge yourself to try new things in a supportive environment?

Spruce Run introduces a new group for women affected by domestic abuse:

Bridges to Empowerment

This group will use explore relationships and personal empowerment. Learn and share about the dynamics of relationships while using a “hands on” approach including: art, games, and trust activities, which will take place both indoors and outside..

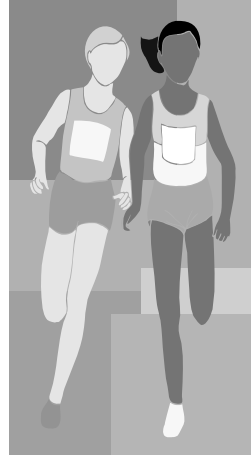
This ten week group will begin in late August. For more information please call Sherry at 945-5102.

Save the Date!
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Wednesday, October 6, 2004

The Maine Employers Against Domestic Violence, together with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, will be presenting a conference in Bangor on the topic of Domestic Violence in the Workplace designed for managers, supervisors, human resource professionals, EAP professionals, and employment attorneys. Robin Runge, Director of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Domestic Violence will be the keynote speaker.

Walk (or Run) To End Domestic Abuse



Spruce Run’s annual 5K Race to End Domestic Abuse will be held on **Saturday, October 2, 2004**

but it’s time to start thinking about it now!

We are hoping that many of you will be moved to form a team to participate in this fundraising and awareness raising event.

What is a team?

A team is a group of work associates, friends, family members or students who join together to show support for victims of abuse and for the goal of ending domestic and dating violence...and have fun!

How many people can participate?

A team must have two people but can include as many as you want.

Can kids be on a team?

Yes! Families are welcome. Teams consisting of children or teens who are part of another group (i.e. A sports team or a Brownie pack) are encouraged to participate together.

Do we have to raise a certain amount in pledges?

It would be nice, but...no. Teams can simply register and participate, but we encourage teams (and individuals) to have an even greater impact by raising pledges from other members of the community who want to support Spruce Run’s work.

How do I get more information?

Call 945-5102 and ask for Sue H or Dorathy for information or request registration and pledge forms.

New Transitional Housing Units

Spruce Run recently opened seven new units of transitional housing for families affected by domestic violence.

When families who are not safe in their homes come to Spruce Run's shelter, they can anticipate staying there up to 30 days. With the current dire shortage of decent affordable housing in our community, of course, many families are forced into longer shelter stays. But while some of these families' immediate needs and concerns can be addressed in this very short time frame, many cannot.



That's where Spruce Run's transitional housing program comes in. Families can stay in their units for up to two years while they participate in the program. They receive assistance in identifying their goals and creating a plan for reaching those goals. One pervasive feature of abuse is isolation from a supportive community; transitional housing residents are able to work at recreating their lives within such a community. Transitional housing staff help connect residents to community resources for education and job training, mental health and substance abuse services, counseling and services for children.

We are delighted to be able to extend this service to seven more families.

Transitional Housing Wish List

Many families moving into Spruce Run's Transitional Housing units are setting up households from scratch. Often these families have had to abandon their possessions as well as their homes. We are currently in desperate need of donations of serviceable furniture and household goods, including:

- Couches
- Chairs
- Kitchen tables & chairs
- Beds, bed linens, towels
- Dressers
- Lamps
- Rugs
- Kitchen goods including
 - microwaves, toasters, pots and pans, dishes, dish towels, cleaning supplies
- Baby furniture including
 - Cribs, changing tables, collapsible playpens, mobiles, rocking chairs

With the opening of new units, Spruce Run will have community space for transitional housing residents, women and children, for the first time. We are also looking for assistance with making this a comfortable and useful space. Please call us if you have any of the following to donate:

- Comfortable couches and chairs
- Microwave
- Coffeemaker
- Tall stools
- Playground equipment
- Picnic table
- Shelving
- Filing cabinet
- TV and VCR
- Dry erase board or blackboard



Spruce Run is happy to welcome two new staff members.

Brook Minner joins us as **School Based Advocacy Coordinator**. She is currently working within the school system and is a volunteer hotline worker for The Next Step in Ellsworth.

Karen Prescott will be our new **Administrative Coordinator** beginning early in May. She has worked previously for WomanCare in Dover-Foxcroft and Family Crisis Services, based in Portland. Her family is moving back to Maine from Minnesota.



*Spruce Run thanks
all our volunteers for
their dedication and
enthusiasm.*

April is National Volunteer
Appreciation Month

Spruce Run Staff

Janice Archer
Shelter Services Coordinator

Sue Bradford
Program Planning and Integration Coordinator

Lyn Carter
Legal Services Coordinator

Dorathy Chocensky
Resource Development Coordinator

Amanda Cost
School Based Program Coordinator

Sheila Daigle
Office Coordinator

Maureen Flagg
Transitional Services Coordinator

Sue Hamlett
Community Education Coordinator

Rebecca Hobbs
Administrative Coordinator

Sherry Lane
Transitional Housing Coordinator

Brook Minner
School Based Advocacy Coordinator

Karen Prescott
Administrative Coordinator

Tina Roberts
Special Projects Coordinator

Francine Stark
Community Response Coordinator

Johnnie Walker
Children's Services Coordinator

Erica Watson
Hotline Coordinator