

## History of the Battered Women's Movement Highlighting United Family Services Domestic Violence Services

1971

- First shelter for battered women opens in Chiswick, England.

1973

- Crisis Intervention Team of Mecklenburg County Police Department is trained to respond to domestic violence cases.
- First shelter for battered women opens in St. Paul Minnesota.

1974

- The Charlotte Women's Center hires its first staff person with Federal CETA funds. There were many calls from domestic violence victims seeking assistance.

1976

- Responding to the mandate of the County Commission, The Mecklenburg County Women's Commission interviews women to learn their most pressing concerns. The number one problem cited by residents is domestic violence.

1977

- In early April a survey is developed by The Women's Commission Battered Woman Committee and published in The Charlotte Observer. Over 100 replies are received.
- In late April a program "Women against Violence against Women" is sponsored by the Women's Commission and the YWCA in Mecklenburg County. Panel participants include local psychologists and a female attorney. Cooperating agencies include Contact Telephone Counseling Service, Florence Crittenden Service, Family and Children's Service (United Family Services), Mental Health, National Organization of Women, Charlotte Women's Center and the Charlotte Public Library. Held in a meeting room of the Charlottetown Mall, the program has enormous attendance...many of the participants are victims of abuse. Additionally WBTV produces a live segment, offering viewers the opportunity to call in. The response is so overwhelming they're unable to handle all the calls in the allotted time.
- The Women's Center forms a Battered Women's Action Committee and begins running a support group for battered women. Because the Center had some space in their two-story facility, they're able to provide shelter for a limited number of battered women and their families. They also have a "secret list" of women in the community who will shelter battered women in their homes.
- The first batterer's intervention program (Emerge) opens in Boston.

1978

- In March an agency task force is formed by the Women's Commission to activate a solution to the plight of battered women in our community. The agency task force includes representation from the Women's Commission, Family and Children's Service (United Family Services), United Community Service, Randolph Clinic, Mental Health Service, YWCA, Victim Assistance Program and Information and Referral Service. The group researches services for battered women and begins to keep statistics on numbers of calls to agencies and numbers of victims seen in hospital emergency rooms.
- **In May Family and Children's Service (United Family Services), begins staffing support groups for battered women, beginning with a day and night support group weekly.**
- In June the Agency Task Force report is written and distributed to the Social Planning Council of United Community Services, County Commission Members, the President of United Community Services, the Executive Director of United Community Services, and

the Allocations Board of UCS. The report contains recommendations for the community's response to domestic violence.

- In August the chairperson of the Agency Task Force speaks to the Social Planning Council and requests that they appoint a Family Violence Task Force to address domestic violence immediately. **The need is dramatized when Family and Children's Service (United Family Services) arranges for a battered woman and a batterer to speak from behind a screen to members of the council.**
- **Victim Assistance begins providing services to crime victims with one counselor located at the Law Enforcement Center as a combined effort of Family and Children's Service (United Family Services) and the Charlotte Police Department.**
- **Information and referral lists a number to call under the heading "Battered Women." The number is answered by Family and Children Service (United Family Services), which had a full time counselor working only with battered women due to the response to the support groups.**
- The first battered women's program in North Carolina opens in Lenoir.
- The National Coalition against Domestic Violence is founded.

1979

- **In April an interim shelter is established at the Salvation Army facility as a step toward a permanent shelter and to gather more information on the needs of women in a shelter. United Community Services provides funds and the Salvation Army provides space. Family and Children's Service (United Family Services) staffs the shelter with professional counselors.**
- **In May the Family Violence Task Force report is submitted and funds for a permanent shelter are requested from the Social Planning Council. United County Services agrees to fund staff costs for the shelter.**
- **In September United County Services submits a request to the County Commissioners for operating funds. United County Services funds one-third of the budget and the county funds the other two-thirds.**
- **In October a shelter staff director is hired.**
- **In December the permanent shelter opens.**
- Twenty three programs, eleven in shelters, are open in North Carolina.
- NC General Assembly passes 50B (providing protective order relief for victims of domestic violence).
- 250 domestic violence programs are operating in the United States.

1980

- **The Monday night support group is established at The Shelter.**
- NC Coalition against Domestic Violence is formed.
- The NC General Assembly appropriates funds for domestic violence programs.

1981

- **The Volunteer Speakers Bureau is established by The Shelter Resource Committee**
- Legal Services of the Southern Piedmont begins domestic violence services.

1983

- **The volunteer Charlotte Rape Crisis Center merges with Victim Assistance.**
- **The ADAM batterer's intervention program is established.**
- Fifty three programs, 20 with shelters, are operating in NC.

1984

- In May the first state-wide conference on domestic violence is held with Susan Schechter as the keynote speaker.
- NC Council for Women publishes first state-wide newsletter on domestic violence.

1985

- **United Family Services launches the Court Advocate Program with four volunteers who accompany clients to criminal court.**
- Charlotte Women's Political Caucus sponsors meeting on domestic violence. Internal task force is appointed to make concrete recommendations. In July a joint city-county task force is appointed by the Mayor and Chair of County Commission.

1986

- In July a report of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Domestic Violence Task Force is issued with recommendations for changes in law, structure and policy.
- **In August the Victim Assistance Misdemeanor unit is established through a federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant.**
- **United Family Services Domestic Violence Resource Committee convenes the Domestic Violence Advocacy Council, a monthly meeting of representatives of 16 agencies and departments to coordinate services to battered women.**
- **Legislation is passed allowing pro se restraining orders and Victim Assistance domestic violence services are expanded to include civil as well as criminal court advocacy.**
- Domestic Violence Citizens Committee is established and staffed by the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission, later to become the Domestic Violence Advisory Board.
- First NC Council for Women workshop on funding for domestic violence programs is held.

1987

- **With the passage of Victim Compensation legislation in 1987, Victim Assistance began assisting crime victims with the victim compensation applications.**
- Women's Commission Adult Domestic Violence Program begins.
- NC Coalition against Domestic Violence is funded by state.
- The National Council against Domestic Violence establishes their first toll-free domestic violence hotline and hosts first national conference.

1989

- **In July support groups for children are offered at the shelter.**
- **In September the Wednesday Night Educational Series begins at The Shelter including topics such as self esteem, budgeting, parenting, women's health, relaxation, journaling and creativity.**
- **Shelter staff begins offering support groups at a public housing project and at the United Way for women living with their abusive partners.**
- 1200 domestic violence programs are operating across the United States
- The legislature amends 50B legislation to allow Pro Se filing for protective orders.

1991

- **In August The Shelter playground is renovated under the leadership of the Resource Committee.**
- **In September, Bridges, a mentor program, is established for Shelter clients.**
- NC General Assembly increases the marriage license fee by \$20 with revenues going to domestic violence programs. Additionally, warrantless arrest legislation (an act to clarify the authority of law enforcement offices to arrest without a warrant for certain misdemeanors) passes.

1992

- In January premiere of "Any Day Now," a locally produced domestic violence video, is released and wins national awards.

- **In February the Speaker's Bureau is formed.**
- Domestic Violence Citizen's Committee becomes Domestic Violence Advisory Board.
- North Carolina Legislature passes the stalking bill.

1993

- **In August, with the financial assistance of Presbyterian Health Services, the Rent Subsidy Program begins serving clients.**
- North Carolina Legislature passes marital rape legislation making it illegal for a man living with his wife to rape her.

1994

- **In August Heart to Heart, a teen dating violence prevention troupe, is formed with its premiere performance March 2, 1995.**
- **In September UFS creates field placements for students working with Housing Authority residents.**
- **In December the first Jingle Bell Ball is held benefiting United Family Services domestic violence programs.**
- New Options for Violent Actions (NOVA) is created to replace ADAM batterer's intervention program.
- Women's Commission HERO (Help, Encouragement and Recognition of Observers of Domestic Violence) is formed to support children witnesses of violence.
- Local domestic violence court is established.
- District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit is established.
- The NC legislature determines that magistrates can issue restraining orders under certain conditions.
- NC General Assembly establishes that the subject of a protective order may not purchase a firearm.
- Federal Violence against Women Act is passed.

1995

- **First annual holiday store is held for United Family Services client families.**
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Domestic Violence Unit is established.
- NC Legislature establishes that convicted batterers must attend an abuser treatment program if one is available.
- 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing publishes its platform for action; domestic violence is one of the twelve items.

1996

- **In May the Housing Authority of the City of Charlotte contracts with United Family Services to serve residential clients and train staff.**
- Community Link develops "A Step Up."
- Filing fee is eliminated for protective orders and Full Faith and Credit legislation mandates that orders from other counties or out-of-state must be honored.

1997

- **In July the Program for Incarcerated Women begins as a collaboration of the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department and United Family Services. Funded by a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission, the Sheriff's department contracts with UFS to provide a full time domestic violence staff person. Her duties include conducting educational sessions for inmates, providing domestic violence counseling and providing training for Department staff.**
- Local Project 100 volunteer lawyer program begins, sponsored by the Mecklenburg County Bar Association.
- Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department forms a domestic violence unit.
- NC legislature amends stalking law increasing penalties for battering.

1998

- **Hearts and Hammers, co-sponsored by Independence Hill Baptist Church, J. Alton Stewart Construction and Mecklenburg County, add 2,000 square feet to the Shelter.**
- **First Men for Change educational and fundraising campaign is held.**
- Department of Social Services establishes a domestic violence protocol.
- Connections Visitation and Exchange Program is established by The Family Center.

1999

- 78 domestic violence programs are funded by the North Carolina General Assembly.
- Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence is funded.

2000

- **United Family Services begins offering domestic violence advocacy services evenings at the Magistrate's office.**
- **United Family Services holds its first Art with Heart art auction to benefit the domestic violence program.**

2001

- **The Women's Recovery Program begins when United Family Services hires a full time domestic violence counselor who is also a certified substance abuse counselor. This position is based at The Shelter and provides substance abuse assessments and specialized individual and group counseling to address the dual issues. Additionally the counselor provides groups at several external sites.**

2002

- **The Domestic Violence Healthcare Project, a partnership of United Family Services and Carolinas Medical Center (CMC) opens. The project trains CMC staff to develop protocols and provide screening for domestic violence. Additionally, on site domestic violence advocates provide safety assessment, safety planning, photo injury documentation and information/referrals.**
- The state of North Carolina creates an Address Confidentiality Program for victims of domestic violence.

2004

- The most comprehensive domestic violence legislation in the history of the North Carolina passes (HB 1354) including: new felony crime of non-fatal strangulation; judges required to consider custody in 50B cases and must consider factors listed; protection against employment discrimination for victims seeking a DVPO; warrantless arrest authority for violation of pretrial release conditions; state law conformity with federal law so that all felons are prohibited from possessing firearms; increased funding for domestic violence programs; increased funding for legal services to provide representation to victims of domestic violence; training for law enforcement, judges, and other court personnel; treatment required for offenders placed on probation; and tracking of domestic violence criminal cases.

2005

- **The United Family Services Domestic Violence Latina Program is initiated with bi-lingual staff providing services at all sites as well as outreach in the Latino community.**

2006

- Mecklenburg County commissions a domestic violence study and the final report notes a lack of domestic violence resources particularly in the areas of emergency shelter beds,

transitional housing, culturally competent services, early intervention and prevention services, batterer accountability, training and public awareness.

- **United Family Services and the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission form a partnership to collaborate on speaker's bureau, the silent witness exhibit and domestic violence training.**
- **United Family services initiates domestic violence services in the North Mecklenburg region by creating a full time domestic violence counselor position in its Huntersville office.**

*Last Updated October 10, 2006*