

HOPE Works!

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1

~ A publication of Steps to HOPE ~

WINTER 09

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE YOUNGEST VICTIMS ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED

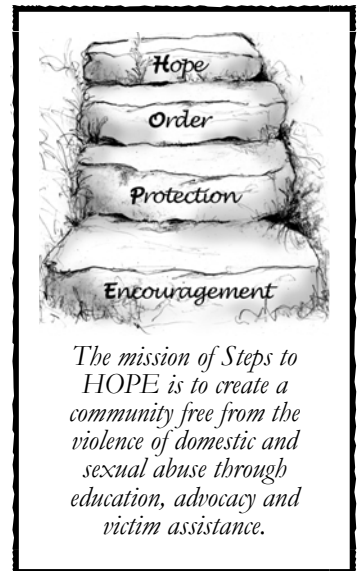
Growing up with Domestic Violence

There has been growing recognition of the prevalence of domestic violence in our society in the past two decades. Some individuals are at greater risk for victimization than others. Domestic violence has adverse effects on individuals, families, and society in general.

Domestic violence is a devastating social problem impacting every segment of the population. While the focus has generally been on the adult victims of abuse, increased attention is now being focused on the children who witness domestic

violence. Studies estimate that 10 to 20 percent of children are at risk for exposure to domestic violence, or approximately 3.3 to 10 million children who witness the abuse of a parent or adult caregiver each year. Research also indicates children exposed to domestic violence are at an increased risk of being abused or neglected. Studies indicate there are adult and child victims in 30 to 60 percent of families who experience domestic violence.

Children from homes where domestic violence occurs are physically or sexually abused and/or seriously neglected at a rate 15 times the national average. Approximately 45% to 70% of battered women in shelters have reported the presence of child abuse in their home. About two-thirds of abused children are being parented by battered women. Within this group, children are three times more likely to have been abused by their fathers.



Children who live with domestic violence face increased risks: the risk of exposure to traumatic events; the risk of neglect; the risk of being directly abused; and the risk of losing one or both of their parents. All of these may lead to negative outcomes for children and may affect their well-being, safety, and stability.

At Steps to HOPE, our goal is to help families lay the foundation for a healthier future free of domestic violence.



Ward Street P.O. Box 518
Columbus, NC 28722

There is hope. Call 894-2340 or 1-888-968-4283.

**STEPS TO HOPE
AVERAGE MONTHLY
STATISTICS**

For period Sept.—Nov., '08:

Steps to HOPE provided support to callers on 648 crisis line calls.

Safe shelter was provided to 4 women and 10 children.

Our staff provided assistance to 96 new female and 2 new male clients.

Counseling services were provided to 48 clients.

36 Adult and 32 children attended educational and support groups at our facility.

Any concerns about child abuse should be directed to your local school personnel, Department of Social Services, law enforcement, or Steps to HOPE.

“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.”

Theodore M. Hesburgh

HOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS OUR CHILDREN

“The lives of children are forever impacted by the violence that they experience and witness.”



Abuse begins in the womb. 30% of pregnant women are battered during pregnancy.

National Commission for Prevention of Infant Mortality reports that there is a 25% greater chance of low birth weight (less than 1.75 lbs.) if mom is battered during pregnancy.

3.3 to 4.3 million children witness DV in the home annually. Some estimates say 25 million.

Children who report DV are at high risk of harm.

The long term effects on children are that the cycle of abuse is perpetuated.

CHILD WITNESSES EXPERIENCE:

- Nightmares, sleep disorders & fantasies of retaliation
- Eating disturbances
- Withdrawal and depression
- Feelings of blame causing guilt, worry and anxiety
- Physical complaints (e.g., headaches)
- Low self-esteem
- Inability to focus
- Impaired social development
- Relationship difficulties

CHILD ABUSE:

- 50-75% of male batterers also abuse their children

Every hour 40+ kids are abducted by a parent (50% involve DV)

CHILDREN OF DV ARE:

- 4 times more likely to be juvenile delinquents
- 6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 74% more likely to commit crimes against another person
- 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault or rape
- 50% more likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs

80% of runaways are from DV.

80% of batterers are from DV.

A CHILD’S OWN SAFETY PLAN

Cut out or copy this form and fill it out by hand. Keep it with you to read in times of crisis.

My Safety Plan

When I get scared I can think about _____

When I get scared I can go to _____

When I am feeling down or afraid I can talk to _____

These are the safe exits from my house _____

In an emergency I can _____

My Important Numbers

My phone number _____

The police _____

A neighbor, friend or relative’s number _____

JANUARY IS "NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH"

Stalking is real. It can happen to anyone. It's dangerous. And it's a crime.

10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STALKING

1. Stalking is a crime. Stalking is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that places a reasonable person in fear for her or his safety. It is against the law in every state. Stalking across state lines or in federal territories is illegal under federal law.

2. Many people are stalked. 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetimes. 1.4 million people are stalked every year in the United States.

3. Stalking can be very dangerous. 76 percent of women killed by their intimate partners were stalked by these partners before they were killed. All stalkers should be considered unpredictable and very dangerous.

4. Stalking is harmful

and intrusive. Stalking victims often lose time from work or never return to work, and some even relocate to regain a sense of safety. Many suffer from anxiety, insomnia, and severe depression as a result of being stalked.

5. Anyone can be stalked—not just celebrities. The vast majority of stalking victims are ordinary people. Furthermore, most stalkers are not strangers, but are known by their victims.

6. Stalking can occur during a relationship, after a relationship, or in the absence of a relationship. Stalking often begins during a relationship. Stalkers may keep the victim under surveillance or threaten her or him. Others begin stalking after the victim has ended the relationship, and the stalker feels desperate to maintain or regain control. Still others become fixated on a victim without ever having

had any relationship with the person. All forms of stalking are unpredictable and should be considered dangerous.

7. Technology can be used to stalk. Although newly-developed technology enhances our lives, it can also empower criminals. Cell phones, computers, and surveillance equipment are just some of the technologies stalkers now use.

8. An effective response to stalking includes the entire community. Police, prosecutors, advocates, educators, reporters, neighbors...everyone can and should play a part in stopping stalking. Working together, we can make victims safer.

9. You can make a difference. Visit www.ncvc.org/src to learn more about stalking and how to fight it.

10. Help is available. If you or someone you know is being stalked, call 1-800-FYI-CALL for assistance.

Steps to HOPE Staff

Cheryl Womack, Executive Director
Ruth Richardson, Family Outreach Educator
Jay Stevens, Case Manager
Dollie-Brooke Reid, Rape Prevention Educator
Connie Orr, Office Manager
Debra Backus, Receptionist/PR Coordinator
Bobbie Shannon-Williams, Counselor
Darlene Brown, Shelter Staff
Brenda Green, Shelter Staff
Elizabeth Ely, Shelter Staff

Second Chance Thrift Store

Ernestine Lewis, Manager
Edith Lance, Store Assistant
Randy Conklin, Driver
Ken Kitchen, Driver Asst.
David Borden, Warehouse Asst.

Board of Directors 2008-2009

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Katrina Daniel, Vice Pres.
N. Elaine Belk, Secretary
William F. Jones, Treasurer
Michael Bowers
Dr. Thomas Dashiell, Jr.
Helen Gilbert
Don Hofmann
Lynn Kirkwood
Kate Manno
David Satterfield
Dr. Gordon Schneider
Nathaniel Shields
Larry Wassong

SHELTER "WISH LIST"

Would you like to help provide for the women and children at our shelter in this New Year?

Here is the Winter edition of our **Steps to HOPE Shelter Wish List**:

- Non-perishable foods
- Trash bags
- Prepaid gas and grocery cards
- Paper products
- After-school snacks
- Batteries—all sizes.

Please call STH at 894-2340 for Wish List updates. Heartfelt thanks for your many generous contributions throughout the year.

STH'S RAPE PREVENTION EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS

The Rape Prevention Education Program at Steps to HOPE conducted a community assessment survey in Polk County last summer regarding citizen's attitudes and knowledge of issues surrounding sexual violence and its prevention.

Did you know?

■ Out of the 191 respondents, 13.1% agreed or strongly agreed to the statement "A woman who is raped while she is drunk is at least somewhat responsible."

FACT: An individual is incapable of giving consent and can be prevented from resisting due to physical or mental incapacity which includes but is not limited to the influence of drugs or alcohol.

■ For the above statement, 3.1% of the respondents agreed that "If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape."

FACT: The North Carolina Statue defines rape as "vaginal intercourse by force, without consent, or with a victim whom the perpetrator knows is mentally disabled, incapacitated or physically helpless." Force includes both psychological coercion and

physical force. In NC, criminal sexual offenses include but are not limited to rape, statutory rape, sexual offense, peeping, sexual harassment, stalking, and indecent exposure. (North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2007).

■ Out of 191 respondents, 12% of the respondents agreed to the statement, "Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away."

FACT: Rape and acts of sexual violence are about power and control. Rape and acts of sexual violence have nothing to do with sex, uncontrollable sex drives, or being led on.

■ Out of the 191 respondents to this survey, over 30% answered that they had in fact either been a victim or had a family member who has been a victim of sexual assault.

FACT: 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18. (Finkelhor, David, et al. "Sexual Abuse in National Survey of Adult Men and Women: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Risk Factors." 1990)

■ 25.7% of respondents stated they do not know where to receive help for sexual assault.

■ 36.6% of respondents did not feel preventing

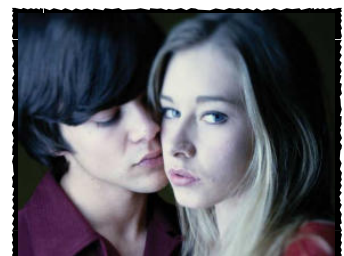
sexual violence is being adequately addressed in the Polk County Community.

(Additional survey results will appear in future newsletters.)

Steps to HOPE offers programs for the prevention and treatment of BOTH domestic violence and sexual assault. Steps to HOPE offers Rape Prevention Education programing as well as counseling, court advocacy, and legal services to those affected by sexual violence.

For more information about STH's RPE Program and volunteer opportunities, please contact Dollie-Brooke Reid, RPE Coordinator, at 894-2340.

**Steps to HOPE:
Working Toward
Preventing
Sexual Violence**



Star of Bethlehem—"Hope"

The Language of Flowers

Kate Greenway, 1846-1901

London: Routledge, 1884

Botanical name: *Ornithogalum umbellatum*; lily family

During the Victorian era, "florigraphy", or the assignment of meaning and language to flowers, became increasingly popular. It allowed the silent communication of feelings and meanings that the strict propriety of the times did not allow.

Sketches by Debra Backus

LOVE AND JOY COME TO YOU...



Steps to HOPE's Adolescent and Teen Girls' and Boys' Groups caroled at Laurelwoods Assisted Living and White Oak Nursing Home this holiday season, treating residents to cheerful Christmas song and tasty cookies!

Groups meet weekly at Steps to HOPE to develop strategies for dealing with conflict resolution; developing life skills and self-esteem; getting along with parents, siblings and teachers; and taking responsibility for their own actions. In addition to a

return visit to Laurelwoods, plans are underway for community service projects.

For information about STH's youth programs, call Ruth Richardson at 894-2340.

STH's Second Chance Thrift Store could not operate at a profit without its many volunteers.

During the '07/'08 fiscal year, 40% of STH's income was generated from Thrift Store sales, while 31% came from grants and 29% from donations, fundraisers or other sources..

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please call Connie Orr at 894-2340.

STH VOLUNTEERS HONORED AT BRUNCH

On December 11th, Steps to HOPE and Second Chance Thrift Store's volunteers were thanked for their many hours of tireless support at a bountiful and delicious brunch at Larkin's Carolina Grill.



There are currently 81 volunteers assisting at court, in programs, on the Board and at the Thrift Store, amounting to 9,891 volunteer hours during the '07/'08 fiscal year.

Certificates were awarded to all volunteers, with special acknowledgement given to: Dale Minkler for 452 hours; Bernardine Monroe for 432.5 hours; and Joyce Minkler for 417 hours of service dur-

ing the '07/'08 fiscal year.

Roses were given to those in attendance in memory of Alice Schlaack, co-founder of the Thrift Store and volunteer coordinator for 13 years. Alice was loved by all who knew her and will be missed.

Second Chance Thrift Store is an outreach for

Steps to HOPE, Polk County's domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and intervention center. Funds from the sale of the store's gently used items support programs that provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault as well as programs to prevent and break the generational cycle of violence.



Save a tree!

If you would rather receive an electronic version of this newsletter, send an email (from your preferred email account) to pr@stepstofohope.org. Please include your name and mailing address .



POLK COUNTY TOY RUN RAISES FUNDS FOR AREA AGENCIES

On a frosty late November day, 100 bikers roared from the Saluda Fire Department to the Columbus courthouse, where they delivered a plethora of children's toys and \$2,250 raised in support of needy children in the county.

As in past years, Polk County Toy Run Director Barry Gee presented three county agencies with the proceeds of this popular fund-raiser: Polk County Department of Social Services; Thermal Belt Outreach Ministries; and Steps to HOPE.



From L: Robin Elliott, Polk County Department of Social Services; Barry Gee, Polk County Toy Run Director; Eloise Thwing, Thermal Belt Outreach Ministries; Cheryl Womack, Steps to HOPE's Executive Director.

Steps to HOPE continues to be very appreciative of Polk County Toy Run's support of our programs, without which our clients would cer-

tainly struggle to provide for their families at Christmas, especially during this challenging economy.

STH 5TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT: FUN IN THE SUN WHILE SUPPORTING STH

On a warm, brilliant late Autumn day, Red Fox Country Club hosted Steps to HOPE's 5th annual Golf Tournament.

STH staff operated the "snack carts" throughout the morning, after which hard-working golfers enjoyed a delicious buffet luncheon followed by presentation of prizes and the much coveted trophy (pictured).

Of the twenty teams competing, Heath Jackson, Tommy Melton, Leonard Jackson and Robert Cochran were the first-



From L: Heath Jackson, Tommy Melton, Leonard Jackson, and STH's Executive Director Cheryl Womack at the November 5th tournament.

placed team again this year.

Many thanks to the teams, sponsors and organizers who participated in and helped with this

year's fund-raising event. Proceeds from the tournament will assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

*It's not too late...
for a calendar
or a cake!*

2009 Steps to HOPE Calendars—featuring local "suitable for framing" pictures from three area photographers—are now **ON SALE for only \$8.00, or 2/\$15.00!**

When purchasing your calendars, why not also pick up a delicious ...

My Grandma's of New England™ Coffee Cake
for \$15.00!



Proceeds from calendar and cake sales help support STH's numerous programs. Call 894-2340.



STEPS TO HOPE: SERVICES PROVIDED

- **24-Hour Hotline** – for crisis intervention and assistance.
- **Confidentiality** – all services are guaranteed confidential.
- **Shelter** – emergency safe shelter for victims of sexual violence or sexual assault.
- **Counseling** – individual counseling with a licensed counselor.
- **Referrals** – hospital (staff will transport and assist); court (free legal aid may be provided through Pisgah Legal Services).
- **Court Advocacy** – trained volunteers accompany and support clients through the judicial process.
- **Case Management vs. Crisis Intervention** – holistic support of clients.
- **HOPE for Youth and Adolescent and Teen Support Groups** – weekly character and skills building groups and enrichment activities for adolescent girls and boys.
- **Support Groups** – weekly women victims, male and female abuser group meetings, and bi-monthly parenting support and education group meetings, facilitated by trained professionals.
- **Community Education** – through schools, organizations and civic groups.
- **Public Awareness** – presentations and workshops.
- **Resource Library** – videos, pamphlets and brochures are available.
- **Advocacy Center** – forensic interviewing of children.
- **Rape Prevention Program** – focused on primary prevention.
- **Second Chance Thrift Store** – outreach to victims; gently used, quality merchandise.

Steps to HOPE, Inc.

Ward Street · P.O. Box 518
Columbus, NC 28722
828-894-2340 · 1-888-968-4283
E-mail: steps@stepstohope.org



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Columbus, NC 28722

HOPE Works!

*A Quarterly Newsletter of
Steps to HOPE, Inc.*

Steps to HOPE, Inc. is Polk County's Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Center. For all victims of Sexual assault or domestic violence in this community, there is:

Hope
Order
Protection
Encouragement

"The mission of Steps to HOPE is to create a community free from the violence of domestic and sexual abuse through education, advocacy and victim assistance."

**BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Columbus, NC
Permit No. 25**