

DAWN Program Report

Community Advocacy and Crisis Line Programs

In May 2010, DAWN hired a Volunteer Coordinator who worked to change the structure of volunteer coordination from that of one staff supervising all of the volunteers to an agency-wide mentoring system. This was also a step towards implementing volunteers throughout all components of the agency and increasing agency buy-in on the broad use of volunteers. Briefly, the structure of this system was that each volunteer had a paid staff mentor who oversaw the new volunteer's training and support needs.

Over a 6-month period, the Volunteer Coordinator phased out remote crisis line staffing, bringing all volunteer staffing of the line to the agency's administrative office or shelter.

As of June 2011, 50 volunteers have been placed in nearly every facet of the agency, once they complete the 50 hour DV Advocacy Training. This has included placing volunteers in these areas:

- Shelter-advocacy, child care, support group facilitation
- Mental Health- Intern Counselors
- youth advocacy
- legal advocacy (including court accompaniment)
- advocacy training
- support group facilitation
- orientation and intake facilitator
- community services office advocacy
- Fundraising and Development
- Abuse in Later Life Program- advocacy

In addition, DAWN now offers four different trainings. DV101, 201 and 201-V (DAWN specific volunteer training) are each offered in the fall, winter and spring, and the Support Group Facilitation Training is offered once each year.

Our Community Advocacy Program has served a total of 1,255 clients year to date with 2,350 hours of direct advocacy services. We have been at work creating and implementing our new client database software, to help capture the many details of the day to work we do, and assist with streamlining the many reporting requirements of our contracts.

Housing Program

DAWN's house is in full operation after a long construction process of an addition wing and remodel of the shelter facility. We are able to shelter up to 12 households now. In addition, with 4 apartment units and our hotel voucher program, 228 clients have been served in our housing program for 7,151 bednights to date.

DAWN Client Stories

Amy

Amy initially called DAWN looking for someone to accompany her to court. Staff was able to coordinate a volunteer advocate to be able to attend the many court sessions she was due to attend throughout her court proceedings. Amy expressed much relief in having the support of DAWN through the various hearings and meetings. Amy was also concerned about her safety when leaving the courthouse after her hearings and DAWN was able to help her plan some ways to make sure she would be safer when leaving the courthouse. Amy called DAWN a few weeks after the court meetings to say how helpful and supportive it was to have someone with her and how grateful she was to DAWN. Due to that experience, Amy decided to attend DAWN's orientation to services group meeting and has since begun participate in weekly support groups as she continues to work on healing from the trauma and keeping herself safe post divorce.

Lynn

Lynn called DAWN after her husband threatened to kill her. She was afraid to call the police, and she had nowhere to go. Her 2 children have grown and moved out of state, and her husband has kept her isolated from other family and friends. He also prevented Lynn from working, and she had no income. She does not qualify for public benefits, and is 3 years short of qualifying for Social Security. She didn't know what her legal rights were concerning assets accumulated over her 30 years of marriage. Lynn's first priority was making a plan to stay safe while she was learning her legal rights, and preparing to leave. Over the next couple weeks, she met with an attorney, attended DAWN's support group for women over 50 years old, and learned about shelter and housing options from a DAWN advocate. She identified many tactics her husband had used to control her, and to keep her feeling powerless over her life. With the help of a DAWN advocate, and her own hard work and drive, she now has safe housing and a protection order. She has re-connected with friends and family, and has made new friends. Lynn has several promising job interviews, and is feeling safer and more confident.

Alison

Alison arrived at DAWN's House with her two girls (aged 7 and 3) after fleeing for months across three states. Despite her best efforts, the abuser had been able to find her multiple times through family members and due to the fact that she hadn't been able to find a confidential shelter. Upon arrival to shelter, she very quickly prioritized getting the children stabilized with school and more permanent housing.

Alison's 7 year old was born with a medical condition that, while not life threatening, is life altering and caused embarrassment and distraction in school and social settings. The child was behind in school and struggling with making friends due to this treatable condition. The abuser had made it impossible to receive treatment - first by refusing to allow family money to be used for this purpose and then by causing the family to have to move so often it was not possible to establish a patient-doctor relationship long enough to receive treatment.

By the time Alison and her daughters exited DAWN's House, they had found transitional housing and the 7 year old had successfully been seen by the doctors and specialists needed to set up a course of treatment and schedule surgery to permanently solve her medical condition. In addition, she was able and eager to participate at her fullest at school and play with her new friends especially during children's group where her favorite activity was to paint with her hands and even feet.