



Montgomery County Family Justice Center

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**Resa Levy
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Bruce Sherman**

From the Desk of Councilmember Phil Andrews

Victims and survivors of domestic violence need government at its best to help keep them safe. In recent years, Montgomery County has markedly improved the quality and convenience of services available to victims and survivors of domestic violence, significantly strengthened efforts to break the cycle of domestic violence, and helped secure passage of state laws that better protect victims and improve the ability to prosecute their abusers.

In 2000, the County opened the Betty Ann Krahnke Center, a 54-bed capacity shelter that has protected many hundreds of women and children from domestic violence. Also in 2000, the County placed the responsibility for coordinating efforts against domestic violence under the Sheriff. The Sheriff's Office has done superb work, including going to extraordinary lengths to ensure that protective orders are promptly served. In 2001, the County significantly upgraded the qualifications of staff and level of service provided at the Center in response to concerns of residents.

In 2006, the County established the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) to provide a structure for

County and state agency leaders and the public to discuss, advocate for, and implement reforms to better help victims, to make progress in breaking the cycle of domestic violence, and to advocate for laws that better protect victims and that improve the ability to arrest those who per-



The Montgomery County Family Justice Center is centrally located in the heart of Rockville, Maryland.

petrate domestic violence.

In 2008, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), encouraged by the DVCC, began using lethality assessments to better assess the danger facing victims, and to help keep them safe from their abusers.

In May 2009, the Family Justice Center (FJC) opened. Already, the Center has helped thousands of DV victims at its conveniently located, family-friendly, one-stop center in Rockville. The subsequent establishment and remarkable

work of the Family Justice Center Foundation has greatly aided the Center. Recently, at this year's FJC Gala, the House of Ruth announced that it would provide five therapists for the Center.

In 2010, the DVCC sponsored the first annual "Choose Respect Montgomery" conference, part of a concerted, award-winning effort to help young people avoid abusive dating relationships, and to help break the cycle of domestic violence. During the past several years, several members of the DVCC have spent considerable time going to schools to speak with youth about how to recognize the differences between healthy and abusive relationships -- and how to get out of the latter.

Since the DVCC was first established, the DVCC also has worked effectively with other advocates to help win passage in Annapolis of improved legal protections for domestic violence victims. As a result of these successful initiatives and reforms, victims of domestic violence in our County are far better served and much safer than in past years. That is real, life-saving progress.

Pilot Project Takes Off

After an evaluation of its effectiveness and real benefits to victims and the courts, Chief Judge of Maryland, Robert M. Bell, signed an order institutionalizing the hearing of ex-parte domestic violence protective orders via video link between the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and the Courts. There have been 354 video hearings since the program began as a pilot project in December 2010.

Led by the current Sheriff Darren M. Popkin, planning for the pilot program began as an effort to use technology

to provide petitioners a safe and secure environment in which to obtain their orders. It was also deemed the most efficient method to provide services to petitioners. Prior to the implementation of this



Video conferencing at FJC provides a safe link to Judges.

project, victims had to go back and forth between the FJC and the Rockville courts. Establishment of the video

link enabled victims to receive assistance on obtaining a petition for protection at the FJC, appear before the judge from the safety of the FJC, and meet with a deputy Sheriff for service of the order, all at the same location. It made the FJC a true one-stop shop.

The benefit to the courts lay in having cases directed to the correct court from the beginning, reducing the number of transfers between the Circuit and District courts. The project has both improved access to justice and provided greater convenience and safety for FJC clients.

Friday is Always Pizza Day

Sheriff Darren Popkin greets Paisano's Pizza Manager James Johnson.



The Montgomery County Family Justice Center has received

community support in many ways in the 3 ½ years we have been in existence. We have had artists donate original works, community groups hold book drives for the children, organizations supply fresh baked bread to nourish the clients. However, one of the most unusual was the unexpected donation from Paisano's Pizza of Rockville on

Friday, October 19. James Johnson, manager of the eatery came to the FJC with 20 fresh hot pizzas to donate to the clients for lunch. He was met by Sheriff Darren Popkin who accepted the generous donation on behalf of the clients and their children. Keeping up the tradition that Friday is always Pizza Day for kids.



House of Ruth Maryland Strengthens Partnership at FJC

House of Ruth, Maryland (HRM), one of the oldest domestic violence programs in the state, will increase its counseling presence starting January 2013. Working closely with the counselors from the Abused Persons Program in the Department of Health and Human Services, HRM counselors will provide a bi-lingual English-Spanish therapist as well as a specialist in child witnesses of domestic violence for play therapy.

Program Director Asjoure Brown LCPC, has been with HRM for 6 years. She loves to work with teens but also works with adults and

children. Lead therapist Elissa Levine LCSW-C has been with HRM for about 10 years. She is an expert in working with victims of



HRM Counselors Onellys Villegas, Liz Gordon and Jessica Martin.

trauma. Onellys Villegas LCPC is a bi-lingual counselor and works with Spanish speaking adults. She is regarded as the House of Ruth calming force. Liz Gordon, LGPC, is the children's coun-

selor. Her office is a total joy for the children - so many things to play with and she is an expert in Sand Tray Therapy. Lastly, Jessica Martin LCSW-C who has already established her caseload at the FJC, works with both English and Spanish speaking victims, adults and children. Jessica is an integral member of the FJC clinical team and she also is a wonderful therapist.

All the members of the House of Ruth Clinical Services Team are eager to begin working at the FJC and participate in the great work we are already doing.

FJC Update: Since the Grand Opening 4200 domestic violence clients representing 100 different countries of origin have received services at the FJC.

Choose Respect Montgomery Plans 4th Annual Teen Dating Conference

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council in collaboration with numerous community partners, Verizon Wireless and the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College will sponsor the 4th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference. The conference is coordinated in an effort to

raise the community's awareness about teen dating abuse and ultimately prevent it.

The conference, open to teens in grades 6-12, their parents and youth service providers, will be held on Sunday, March 3, 2013 from 1:00 to 4:30 at Globe Hall located on the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College.

Ivy Rose, a local girl band sensation will perform as the opening act and Toby Kanpp, DJ from Hot 99.5 will emcee the event. Registration will open early in January. For complete event details and updates go to <http://bit.ly/o8j01> or follow Choose Respect Montgomery on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Family Justice Center Foundation News

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From the Desk of the MCFJC Foundation Executive Director, Resa Levy



Resa Levy
MCFJC Foundation
Executive Director

Thank you for another great year, for your help in supporting our mission to raise awareness and funds for the MCFJC and for helping us to underscore our own efforts to help a most vulnerable population – the women, children and families suffering from domestic violence.

With your help – our sponsors, donors and supporters, as well as that of all of our community partners – the incredible folks who do the day-to-day work at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center, under the guidance of the Sheriff's Office, have been able to continue their tremendous work in making the MCFJC become one of the most vital resources for families in crisis in our community.

It is because of you that we are able to honor our motto of 'Keeping Them Safe, Giving Them Hope....And a New Start.' So thank you.

Your support of our recent 3rd Annual Benefit was outstanding. Event Chair and Foundation Board Member, Catherine Leggett, as well as her Event Committee, created an evening of great fun and excitement, while at the same time clearly conveying the incredibly positive role that the MCFJC has played in helping the 4,000 families from more than 100 countries who have come to the Center since its opening in 2009.

Great News! Please mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13, 2013 for the 4th Annual MCFJC Foundation Benefit. Once again, Catherine will host a fantastic evening at the HYATT Bethesda.

I wish you all a joyous, happy and *safe* holiday season. You have done great work this past year, and as we all look forward to a good year ahead, I want to thank you again for a fantastic 2012.

Regards to all,
Resa

PANERA BREAD

Warming the hearts of MCFJC Clients

Every Wednesday morning for the past two years, Panera Bread has warmed the hearts and stomachs of the women, children and families who come to the MCFJC for client services. Through their Operation Dough-Nation Program, and aided with the special delivery support of MCFJC Foundation Board Member, Lewis Selis, fresh breads, bagels and pastries that otherwise would have needed to be dis-

posed, instead come to Family Justice Center.

Oftentimes clients and their children come to the Family Justice Center with limited funds. To receive all the services the FJC has to offer, they may need to be at the Center for extended periods of time. Having freshly baked goods is both a luxury and a necessity. As one client stated, *"During this really tough time, the smell of the freshly baked food is so warm and welcoming, and my kids just love the pastries!"*

Continued to page 8

From the Desk of MCFJC Foundation President, Tom DeGonia II



Thomas DeGonia
MCFJC
Foundation
President

As we go forward into 2013 and look to face new challenges, we take a moment to reflect upon our past experiences and accomplishments, as those are two of the guideposts by which we plan our work for the upcoming year. Most recently, we reflect upon the enormous success of our 3rd Annual Benefit, chaired by fellow Board Member, Catherine Leggett, and supported by the unending efforts of a dedicated Event Committee. Thank you to them all!

We thank Maryland Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown and Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler each, for bringing greetings and for understanding the great importance of our work, and for their continued efforts around the issue of domestic violence.

Special thanks to our Mistress of

Ceremonies, Greta Kreuz, Award Winning Reporter & Anchor of ABC7/WJLA TV. Greta did a wonderful job of "Bringing it all together." The Benefit was a very special evening and the 250 guests who attended had the opportunity to have a wonderful time as well as to hear about the life-saving work that the MCFJC accomplishes every day.

At our Benefit, we had the opportunity to highlight the outstanding domestic violence work of our four honorees: Senator Barbara Mikulski, Dorothy Lenig, Esq., House of Ruth Maryland, Laura Chase, Esq., Deputy State's Attorney for Montgomery County and Kaiser Permanente, with our Corporate Award.

A few other highlights from this past year: Video conferencing equipment at the FJC, made possible by funding from Verizon, has now been institutionalized throughout the State; also with Verizon funding we purchased Forensic Interview equipment for the FJC for use when interviewing clients and their chil-

dren in the safety of the FJC; we provided some funding for a part time bilingual therapist; printed thousands of brochures and palm cards in both English and Spanish; continued to partner with Women Who Care Ministries and Panera Bread; launched our "It's Everybody's Business" campaign in an effort to further engage local area businesses; we were present at numerous community events; we funded taxi cab rides for clients who come to the FJC and have to go to the shelter or home; we created our "Children's Library Fund and Toy Appeal" and we are working on our new Educational Initiative, which will be a joint effort between the MCFJC Foundation and local educational institutions.

We did all this – and more - because of your support. On behalf of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation – thank you!

With every good wish in the year ahead,

Tom

Meet the Team



Melanie Ortel
Verizon Wireless
MCFJC
Board Member

Each issue a member of the FJC Foundation team will share their insights in this column.

When we consider the traction MCFJC has gained by bringing together much needed victims services with its dynamic and talented team of professionals and volunteers to help over 4,000 victims with their journeys to become survivors, it's difficult to believe that it was just three short years ago that the Center opened its doors. While our team is relatively small, its reach has been wide, attracting the support of communities, citizens, survivors, businesses of all sizes, government agencies and officials to bring our plan to provide inclusive services to those who

need them, when they need them the most. We're so pleased to know that our work is making positive impacts on the lives of so many.

It's for these reasons that I am so proud to work alongside everyone at MCFJC and the Foundation in our efforts to help break the cycle of domestic violence --- first, by helping those in crisis reach safety and also by providing a complete portfolio of services with our partners to help victims and their children live domestic violence free lives.

For those of you reading this, I hope that if you're not affiliated with the Center in some way, that you will make it a serious consideration in this coming year. There are so many ways you can help. Donate items to the Center. A simple stuffed animal can bring comfort to a child temporarily displaced from his or her home. Donate in-kind services.

Donate your time. Support our annual gala. It's a wonderfully entertaining night out featuring great live and silent auctions, and it's filled with fabulous fellowship among friends new and old! I guarantee that when you leave, it'll be difficult to determine whether you enjoyed the evening more because you contributed to the greater good, or because you had a good time. My guess is it'll be both!

Thanks for this opportunity --- and thanks to my fellow board members, the Center staff and volunteers, and to our community of loyal supporters who make it possible for us to continue our good work in the year ahead!

Sincerely,

Melanie Ortel, Verizon Wireless
MCFJC Board Member

The Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation 3rd Annual Benefit



Corporate Legacy Awardees Machel Bezhadi and Dr. Susan Leggett-Johnson of Kaiser Permanente with Resa Levy, Tom DeGonia and Catherine Leggett



Deputy State's Attorney Laura Chase receives the Forerunner Award, pictured with Resa Levy, Tom DeGonia and Catherine Leggett



Dorothy Lennig, Esq., Director Legal Clinic, House of Ruth Maryland receives the Marilyn J. Praisner Award from Resa Levy, Tom DeGonia and Catherine Leggett



Event Chair Catherine Leggett and County Executive Isiah Leggett



Maryland Attorney General Douglas Gansler



Captain Kathi Rhodes and Sheriff Darren M. Popkin



Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and Mistress of Ceremonies ABC News Reporter Greta Kruetz



Kathy Kelly and Judith Clark



Assistant State's Attorneys for Montgomery County, Sherri Koch, Mary Herdman, Margaret Schweitzer & Donna Fenton



Rose Salton, Alicia Doherty, Karla Olsen & Laura Morella of BLH Technologies, Inc.



Fire Chief Richard Bowers and new recruit



Judge Marielsa Bernard

Our Special Thanks to the New and Continuing MEJC Foundation Sponsors and Supporters

**Thank you to our wonderful supporters!
It is through your gifts that we are able to provide the social, legal,
psychological and protective services necessary to rebuild the lives of the
women, children and families who have survived domestic and
relationship abuse.**

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LIFELINE CAMPAIGN

Your gift helps provide a lifeline....

Without the MCFJC's "one-stop shop" lifeline of services, domestic violence victims would have to visit as many as 20 separate agencies.

Your gift to the MCFJC Foundation truly is a lifeline to hope and safety!

Please send your gift today to:

The MCFJC Foundation

PO Box 10692 Rockville, MD 20849

or go on-line to make your secure donation at www.mcfjcfoundation.org. Thank you!
Yes! I'm happy to help give a "Lifeline." Please find my gift enclosed.

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Mark Your Calendars! 4th Annual Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation Benefit Sunday, October 13, 2013

Panera cont. from page 4- Panera's End of Day portion of their Dough-Nation program, donates all unsold bakery products to 501 (c) 3 qualifying non-profit charitable organizations. According to information from Panera, "Panera tries to help as many people as possible who live in the areas surrounding our bakery-cafes." While they say

that it would be impossible to accurately guess the number of folks who have benefited from this program, it is estimated that \$100 million was donated by all Panera Bread cafes in 2010.

Panera's social responsibility and community partnership provides collection boxes placed near registers where customers can donate cash to a specific non-profits. Their Charity Night Program is designed to offer school

groups the opportunity to raise funds by offering 10% of the sales between 6 and 9 PM on a designated Monday night.

Panera Bread offers what they have available in various cafes throughout Maryland for organizations like the MCFJC Foundation. To learn more about how your non-profit can enroll in this wonderful program, contact Kelly Stegman at ksteman@lemekllc.com.