



CASA News

Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused
301.739.4990 • 24 Hour Hotline: 301.739.8975 (301.739.1012 TTY)

Oct, Nov and Dec 2013

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence does not discriminate. Therefore, anyone can be a victim. Although 85-95% of all domestic violence victims are women, men can be victims, too. Children can also be direct or indirect victims.

Common behaviors of abusers include denial of abuse, blaming the victim, other people or outside events for the violence, controlling, and intimidating to name a few. Abuse is a learned behavior. Perhaps the abuser grew up in a violent home. Abusers are not "out of control." They choose to use violence as a response to situations. Following a violent incident, abusers may even express remorse, shower their victim with gifts, be hard workers and good providers, be loving parents, and be charming, intelligent, and attractive.

If someone you know is involved in an abusive relationship, here are some things you can do to help:

- Bring up the subject: voice your concerns with your friend/family member and let them know you want to help.
- Acknowledge that your friend is in a very difficult and scary situation and let them know the abuse is not his/her fault.
- Respect your friend's right to make decisions.
- Go with your friend to seek help.
- Plan safe strategies with your friend. (Further safety planning included on insert)

Sudden Impact: A Survivor's Story



There was a gun shot, a deafening ring in my ears for days. I prayed and hoped that I had told my children enough times and that they knew how much I loved them. He came into the bedroom, with no instigation and no prior warning, and I heard him asking in a very calm voice, "Are you ready to die?" He said, "I'm going to shoot you, then the dog, and then myself. You will be the first to go."

I was on my knees. He shot the gun into the wall, right beside me. Then he walked away. I had never heard a gunshot so close before, so I was in shock at how deafening the sound was and how much the sound continued to ring in my ears. Even now, I sometimes still can hear that ringing sound. I called a family member and my husband got angry that I was on the phone. My family member asked if I had anywhere to go, and I said, "I don't know." My husband always took something out of the car (disabled) so I couldn't go anywhere by myself. My family member got my husband on the phone and somehow convinced him to give me the keys for the car so that I could get away for one night. My husband gave me the keys and I called a friend, who agreed I could come and stay there for a while. That night, I left, and did not go back to him. However, the next day, I did go back to the house to get my possessions and the gun. My husband was not supposed to be at the house, so I went in the house, got some of my things, and I was able to get the gun out of the house and into my car. When I thought of other things that were in the basement of the house, I opened the basement door and my husband was there.

Continued inside front cover

Sudden Impact: Continued from front page

I was shocked and surprised. He didn't know what I had in the car already. I immediately left the house, but he attempted to persuade me to come back inside the house however, I refused. I got into my car and I drove away for the last time. I never set foot inside the house ever again. He called and sent many, many text messages, but I did not answer any of them. Eventually, he stopped.

I contacted CASA the next day. I went to CASA for an intake, began seeing their Crisis Intake Specialist and also spoke to their legal staff. Then I went to district court and obtained a Temporary Protective Order. The attorney at CASA helped greatly by providing support and representation at the Final Protective Order hearing. The attorney also helped to draft the papers for my divorce and represented me in process of divorce from an abusive spouse. This included arranging for my friend to give testimony on my abusive situation to the equity examiner. The process of my divorce was very slow and ended up taking almost a year from when I left, but the CASA attorney was with me throughout the entire process.

I continued with my counseling at CASA with one of the therapists for about a year, which was very instrumental in helping me to resume normalcy in my everyday life. I also received information from CASA on the Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program that is authorized by the office of the Secretary of State. I applied for the address confidentiality program and received confirmation and a confidential address in a very timely manner. This has helped to keep me safe and to feel secure and I am grateful that this program exists in Maryland. When I contacted the Maryland Safe at Home program in order to register to vote, the program staff were very compassionate, professional and secure. I have the utmost respect for how they handle everything associated with keeping people safe within the state.

I appreciate the compassion and empathy that the state of Maryland has and their ability to fund all of the entities that support CASA and all the services that are provided and available to ensure that abused individuals are able to reinvent their lives within the community and to feel safe and secure. The staff at CASA is overwhelmingly understanding and patient. They have accepted me wherever I was at any given point in time during my process of healing and reinventing my life. I am still today using the coping skills that CASA staff taught me when the flashbacks enter my mind where I am once again back in that house hearing that gunshot ringing in my ears.

I know today that I am a stronger woman and that I am not going to die at the hands of my former husband. I thank everyone who has helped me on this journey of reinventing my life that is now my own. I know that I have not taken this journey on my own, and I greatly appreciate all of the support and love that I received from my family, my friend and the pets who love me unconditionally. I continue to strive to be a positive influence within the community through my volunteer service and refuse to allow the negativity that was once my marriage to impact how I view others or dictate my actions toward others.

Respectfully written,
A Work in Progress

"It was nice knowing there are other women in the same situation."- former CASA client

Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)

As part of an overall safety plan, the ACP provides a substitute address and free confidential first class mail-forwarding for victims who have recently moved or are about to move to a new location unknown to their abuser. This allows a victim to file legal documents, enroll their children in school, and apply for assistance from the Department of Social Services without disclosing their whereabouts. Victims can contact CASA's Legal Advocate, who is an application assistant, for more information on the program.



CASA, Inc. Programs and Services

Domestic Violence Program

Provides counseling, crisis intervention, and safety planning to individuals and families involved in domestic violence situations.

Rape Crisis Program

Provides counseling and crisis intervention to sexual assault victims of all ages and their family members.

Children's Program

Provides counseling to children and teens, ages 3 to 18, who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence or sexual assault. Services can be provided in the CASA office or within area schools.

Legal Services

Provides information, referrals and accompaniment. Provides representation by staff attorney at court proceedings related to domestic violence.

24 Hour Hotline

Provides confidential counseling and referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
1-301-739-8975

Employment & Training

Provides information and referrals on employment, education, and training opportunities in the community.

Abuser Intervention Program (AIP)

In a group setting, perpetrators of domestic abuse are provided with the knowledge and tools to change their abusive behaviors and hold themselves accountable for their actions. The program also reaches out to the partners of AIP participants by contacting them, in efforts to make them aware of services and obtain feedback on the participant's progress.

Domestic Violence Unit Project

Provides enhanced law enforcement, advocacy and intervention services to all victims of domestic violence, especially those identified as high risk through repeat police reports, protection orders and use of lethality assessment tools.

Shelter

Provides temporary safe housing for victims of domestic violence and their children. All CASA services are made available to shelter residents, as well as the skills and support needed for establishing independence.

Safety Planning

Leaving an abusive situation can be a scary time. Here are a few suggestions for keeping yourself safe:

- A cell phone may be your only link to help from family, friends, or police. Keep your cell phone charged and ready at all times. Keep your cell phone on your person, not in a purse or in the car. An old cell phone, without service, can be used as a backup to dial 911. If you are planning to leave, be prepared to purchase a new phone and leave your phone behind. Most phones have GPS tracking which might lead your abusive partner to you.
- Create an escape plan. Take time to think about the layout of your home and what would be the safest way to get out of each room. Then practice with your children, so that they are aware of the plan.
- Make copies of important documents and store them in a safe place. Try to put them all in a tote or plastic bag that you can grab if you need to leave quickly.
- If you are planning to leave, do not email or text your plans to others. Tell only those individuals that you trust and those who need to know.

If you have someone you would like to refer to CASA, Inc.
please call 301-739-4990.

CASA Unveils Million Dollar Endowment Campaign

At their September meeting, the Board of Directors unveiled plans to engage in a campaign to build a one million dollar endowment fund: **LOVE –A Lifeline to Overcome Violence Endowment**. As the Board began to discuss the possibility of engaging in a campaign, its goal was to build the endowment as a supplemental source of revenue that could counter the loss of funds from national, state, local government, community, and foundation grants. CASA's desire is that even with the potential of decreased grant support, it could use income from an endowment to continue or expand services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. A packet of information about CASA and ways by which individuals, corporations, and community groups can assist in building the fund has been developed. The packets will be distributed by Board Members to financial planners, bank trust departments, estate attorneys, and investment companies, asking them to share with their clients the opportunity to support CASA's endowment campaign. However, anyone interested in strengthening services to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and victims of sexual assault can make a contribution either to the endowment campaign or through Friends of CASA.

The Board welcomes anyone, regardless of the amount, to consider providing support for LOVE– A Lifeline to Overcome Violence Endowment through bequests, gifts of life insurance, retirement plans, trust funds, or other types of gifts. To make a gift, talk with your financial advisor, insurance agent, or attorney or contact CASA, 116 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown MD 21740 Phone: 301-739-4990 Fax: 301-790-0064 or online at www.casainc.org.

Even with this effort, CASA's Board will continue its fundraising events held throughout the year– Run Jane Run Golf Event, Tex-Mex Fiesta, Sip N' Dip, and the Friends of CASA letter campaign.

During this spring and summer, the Board has been faced with even more challenging roadblocks– a bedbug infestation and sprinkler system malfunction that necessitated renovation of the shelter rooms and some of the transitional apartments. The Board is so thankful to so many in the government and business communities who have made possible some extra funds and have made generous donations of materials and skilled labor to facilitate the work which is just now being completed. With the renovation, CASA basically will have brand new shelter rooms and amenities to house our guests.



A Lifeline to Overcome Violence Endowment

Holiday Open House Bee's Creations

It's that time again for the spectacular Christmas Holiday gifts at Bee's. We have a large selection of primitive snowmen, ornaments, decorative linen items and of course an array of decorated alpine trees. Come & feel the season and while you are at it, do some shopping while listening to holiday tunes & nibbling on some favorite treats. If you've been to Bee's during this time, you know what to expect: but if you are new to the scene, stop by. Special sales & a daily drawing. Plus free gift with purchase, while supplies last!

The dates to remember:

November 1-3

Friday and Saturday 9AM to 5PM

Sunday 12PM to 5 PM

FOOD DONATIONS TO BENEFIT CASA

For every non perishable food item brought in you will receive 1 ticket to be entered in the drawing for a special gift basket filled with Bee's favorites. Valued over \$100.

Clothesline Project

Art is a very powerful way to express emotions and convey feelings. CASA Therapists and other support staff have worked with clients on the Clothesline Project for several years. The Clothesline Project is a visual display on t-shirts. Clients can decorate their t-shirts with either messages or illustrations that reveal their own personal story of strength. Another important goal of the Clothesline Project is to increase the awareness of the severity of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The colors of the t-shirts used may represent the type of abuse endured. White represents women who have been murdered as a result of domestic violence or sexual assault. Yellow or beige represents women who have been battered. Red, pink or orange represents women who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Blue or green represents survivors of incest or childhood abuse. Lastly, purple or lavender represents women who were attacked due to their sexual orientation or the color of their skin.

(ClotheslineProject.org, 2013).



Preparing the shirts for the Clothesline Project

A word of thanks...

A very special **thank you** goes out to all who have donated to our agency through the United Way Campaign. Every year we have agencies who have excelled in their commitment to helping others. This year we would like to thank the employees at First Data for all of their help in donating time and funds to help out victims of violence. The employees of First Data will be spending the Day of Caring completing some of the renovations in our shelter.

We would also like to thank the employees from the GAP, GAP Kids and Banana Republic who have assisted in preparations for our clothesline project, making ribbons for Domestic Violence Awareness Month and assembling packets for the Abuser Intervention Program.



Domestic Violence Awareness ribbons and the Clothesline Project

Karen Cook from GAP and Andrea Blackmon from Banana Republic



Justin Munday and Seth Shinaberry from GAP.

Champions of the Community



CASA is recognizing Det. Mike Broas of the Washington County Sheriff's Office for his unwavering commitment and dedication to assisting victims of domestic violence and the staff of CASA. Det. Broas has a long history of public service that includes serving in the U.S. Army followed by government and civilian law enforcement. He began working for the Patrol Division of the Washington County Sheriff's Office in 2008 and transferred to the Domestic Violence Unit in 2010.

As part of the Domestic Violence Unit, Det. Broas is responsible for reviewing all domestic violence reports, conducting officer-advocate follow-up home visits with CASA, serving Orders of Protection, and filing charges for violations of Protective Orders as well as other domestic violence related crimes. He has also assisted in training cadets at the Hagerstown Community College Police Academy.

When asked why he thinks this position is important, Det. Broas said, "It provides an additional opportunity to interact with victims, address safety concerns, and reiterate information about their options and legal rights." As an example of his dedication to victim safety, Det. Broas assisted in implementing the Domestic Violence Offender GPS Tracking Pilot Program. Additionally, on behalf of the Washington County Sheriff's Office, Det. Broas provided testimony in Annapolis to expand the scope of Protective Order qualifications.

Wish List

With Christmas approaching quickly, CASA, Inc. will be needing the following items:

- Gift cards (gas, grocery, restaurants, Wal-Mart, Target, video game stores, malls)
 - Board games
 - iTunes or Amazon gift cards
 - Toys for boys
 - Teen gifts
 - Mothers gifts
 - New children's winter coats
 - Toys of varying ethnicities
 - New umbrellas
- Our shelter is in need of the following:
- Slippers, robes, socks, underwear, sweatpants, & sweatshirts
 - Alarm clocks

Do you have an unused cell phone you could donate?

CASA, Inc. accepts used cell phones and chargers. Cell phones provide safety for clients in cases of emergency and is a fundraiser for CASA, Inc.

For any cell phones that are not complete sets or don't work, we recycle them through Shelter Alliance.

You may drop off any cell phones during business hours.

Monday and Thursday 8:30-4:30

Tuesday 8:30-8:00

Wednesday 8:30-7:30

Friday 8:30-3:00

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Vicki A. Sadehvandi.....Executive Director
Krista Kershner.....Deputy Director
Crista Shoemaker.....Fiscal Manager

OFFICERS

Gloria Bastian.....President
Carl Galligan.....Vice President
Laura Allis.....Secretary
Melinda Marsden.....Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Harriet Bowman.....Shirley Nigh
Sherry Donovan.....JoAnne Papa
Jack Hall.....Dr. Michael Parsons
Capt. Paul Kifer.....Drenna Reineck
Margaret Kline.....Cathy Rowland
Sharon Leatherman.....Mary Schurz
Sheriff Doug Mullendore.....Rev. Anne Weatherholt



An Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer. CASA, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, disabilities, or age in the provision of services.

Let the Healing Begin.

