



A 2009 Message from COPE's Executive Director

Domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women between the ages of 15-44 in the United States---more than car accidents, muggings and stranger rapes combined according to the FBI. Of the women murdered each year in the United States, 30% are killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend, says the Department of Justice.

Given these sobering facts, what would keep a woman in abusive relationship? These are some of the reasons we hear:

- "I love him. I need him. I am worthless without him."
- "He says he will change."
- "It's not really that bad."
- "It's really my fault. If I was a better wife he wouldn't do this to me."
- "I don't think anyone will believe me."
- "I can't make it financially without him."
- "I don't have anyone who can help me anymore."
- "The last time I called the police for help, he beat me again after they left."
- "He threatened to get a lawyer and take the kids away from me and never let me see them again."

- "He says he will kill me and the kids if I try to leave."
- "I don't want anyone to know about our problems."
- "He is my husband. We married 'til death do us part."
- "He says if I leave he will kill himself."

Victims of domestic violence face difficult decisions when they are considering leaving an abusive partner. Where will they live? How will they support themselves and their children? Is this the right decision? How can they keep this problem a secret from others? Will anyone believe them? Will leaving make their partner even more angry and trigger a more violent, explosive episode?

Leaving a violent relationship is a process, not an event. It takes a lot of thought, a lot of soul searching, a lot of planning, and a lot of help. Victims of domestic violence have been told by their abusers that they are worthless, ugly, stupid. It's dou-

bly hard to prepare for independence with these messages having been engrained in the core of their very being.

If you know someone in an abusive relationship, I am sure that you worry for them and you want to help them. Let them know that you care about them and you are concerned for them. Let them talk. Listen. Let them know that they are not to blame. Don't push them. Encourage them to get help by calling a domestic violence agency such as COPE. As hard as it might seem, this difficult decision is theirs and theirs alone.

Thank you for your support,
Kay Gomolak
Executive Director

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In 2008, COPE provided direct services to:

- 571 adult victims of domestic violence
 - 120 children exposed to violence.
 - 338 offenders
- for a total of 1,029 unduplicated clients.

COPE Receives Rural Outreach Grant

For several years, we have recognized the need to provide an outreach service to our rural communities. In Otero County, 40% of the population resides in rural locales. Living in rural areas isolates a domestic violence victim from knowledge of or access to support. Unfortunately, we didn't have the funding and resources. We have now been blessed with a

grant to help us recruit and train volunteers to provide a means of victim access for Otero County's rural population. The areas for which these services are needed include Tularosa, Cloudcroft, Bent, High Rolls/Mountain Park, La Luz, Mayhill, Mesquero, Orogrande, Chaparral, Pinon, Sacramento, Sunspot,

Timberon, and Weed.

If you are or know someone who might be interested in being a rural victim advocate, please contact Perry Lawson at 442-6306 or email lawsonp@netmdc.com.

Did You Know?

- **53%** of adult domestic violence victims were abused as children.

- **61%** of adult domestic violence offenders were abused as children.

- Only **44%** of domestic violence victims report the incident to law enforcement.

- **1** in every **7** incidents of domestic violence reported by law enforcement involved a child witness.

- **21%** of those children also

experienced physical abuse and **5%** experienced sexual abuse.

New Mexico Interpersonal Violence Statistics

Domestic Violence (violence perpetrated by a household member):

24% of total NM population

Women—**32%** or **1 in 3**

Men—**15%** or **1 in 7**

Intimate Partner Violence (current or former boyfriend/girlfriend, current or former

spouse—non-cohabitating):

18% of total NM population

Women—**25%** or **1 in 4**

Men—**10%** or **1 in 10**

Stalking:

16% overall

Women—**20%** or **1 in 4**

Men—**7%** or **1 in 14**



Domestic Violence—The Real Story

A client was referred to COPE services by local police. The client had been living with her partner and his parents. Not only was her partner physically abusive, his parents also engaged in physical violence towards her if she did not do what they demanded. They kept her isolated from family and friends and she was not allowed to seek employment or have money of her own.

Her partner battered her shortly after giving birth to their child “because she was fat.” The client notified the police and he was arrested for “Battery on a Household Member.” However, his parents pressured her into recanting her story and asking the judge to release him.

Within the same week, her partner physically attacked her again. He threw her to the ground, knelt on top of her, beat her and attempted to strangle her. She sustained two black eyes and multiple bruising on her upper body and neck area.

Our client was able to extricate herself from under him and attempted to leave the room to get her newborn infant. He blocked the door. She pushed past him where he then lost his balance and fell to his knees. This allowed her time to get the baby and leave. All her personal belongings were left behind but her child was safe.

She reported this incident to the police and was referred to COPE for legal advocacy to

assist her in petitioning Family Violence Court for a protection order. COPE supplied her with an attorney and she was granted an Order of Protection.

The offender continued to harass her with phone calls and stalking. He filed a counter petition against her claiming she caused irreparable damage to his back when she had pushed past him to get her baby to safety. The hearing officer dismissed his petition with prejudice. He now resides in a detention center awaiting trial for the battery incidents against our client.

New COPE Ruidoso Location

COPE’s Ruidoso office has moved to Suite 11 at White Mountain Plaza, 1204 Mechem Drive. The previous office, although centrally located was not conducive for clients seeking help. The very limited parking was extremely challenging but more concerning was the high visibility location, making it impossible for clients seeking assistance to do so in a low profile manner.

The new office is located off the main road with parking not

only in front of the building but behind it too. It has 2400 square feet of renovated office space providing private and secure offices for clients to meet with advocates and counselors. There is a large conference room for group sessions and meetings.

Services at the Ruidoso office include counseling and advocacy for domestic violence survivors and their children, a certified 52-week domestic violence intervention program for offenders, and counseling

for youth who have experienced trauma.

“We are excited to be able to provide our clients with a safe and nurturing environment which is essential for the healing process to begin,” says Donna Bonds, Advocate.



Domestic Violence Education and Training

COPE promotes domestic violence awareness by offering free educational programs that give people the tools they need to effectively identify and address domestic violence. We want to bring domestic violence out from the secrecy of closed doors. We urge you to consider sponsoring an awareness program at your organization. Knowledge is a powerful tool in the reduction of domestic violence.

What will your group get from COPE's program? General facts on the dynamics of domestic violence. Understand-

ing of the breadth and depth of negative affects of domestic violence on adults and children. Resource "tools" for responding to those affected by domestic violence. Information about domestic violence services available at COPE.

People who have attended say.....

"The community needs to hear not only the warning signs of domestic violence (because they probably already know them), but how to act on them."

"This presentation was really good... It helps people even if they're not in an abusive relationship; they might be in one later or witness one, and they will know what to do if something happens."

For more information contact: **Perry Lawson** at #442-6306, or #434-3622, or by email

lawsonp@netmdc.com



Community Educator Perry Lawson conducts a puppet show on bullying for preschool children.

COPE Goes Green!

These are tough economic times and we at COPE have committed to providing services as efficiently as possible. Our new shelter, which was first occupied in January 2007, was designed to be energy efficient, with thick concrete walls, energy efficient windows and appliances, and 154 solar panels on the roof. *The solar panels provide so much electricity that some months we actually sell electricity to the power company instead of buying electricity!*

This year we have focused on

improving the energy efficiency of our Alamogordo office. We began this summer by replacing our outdated exterior lights with new energy efficient bulbs and dusk-to-dawn fixtures.

In September, PNM awarded COPE a grant for \$2,500 to replace the ductwork in our office. We also replaced our toilets with low water use toilets, and we significantly increased the insulation above our drop ceiling. This phase of the work was done between

Christmas and New Year's Day. *Already, we have cut our electric usage almost in half!*

Our reduced energy use will be good for the environment and will allow us to focus our limited financial resources directly on the needs of the clients we serve.



Volunteers from Holloman AFB helping us maintain the solar panels

Side of Aged Grass-fed Beef Raffle

Watch for our March raffle of a side of aged grass-fed beef sponsored by Laughing Sheep Farm.



Center of Protective Environment (COPE)

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The purpose of the Center of Protective Environment, Inc. (COPE) is to provide services that act to reduce the risk of family and relationship abuse in Otero and Lincoln Counties, New Mexico. Our mission is to provide a variety of services to individuals and families experiencing domestic violence, including but not limited to: shelter and housing advocacy to reduce homelessness, crisis intervention, advocacy and counseling services. COPE is dedicated to the treatment and prevention of family and relationship violence whenever possible. COPE advocates for community involvement to help deal with the problem of family and relationship violence within the community.

Things our clients need.....



Our agency is in great need of food and personal care items for our clients. In addition, many of our clients are forced to leave their homes and start over. They need basic supplies to set up their new homes. Your donation of any of the following items would be most appreciated:

Suggested food items needed:

(Please bring refrigerated items directly to COPE)

- Cereal
- Ground beef
- Milk
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Lettuce
- Bacon
- Canned meat, i.e., tuna,

- chicken
- Coffee
- Dry creamer
- Sugar
- Tea bags
- Personal care items and paper goods needed:**
- Alarm clocks
- School supplies
- Diapers
- Over the counter medicines: aspirin, ibuprofen, and acetaminophen
- Over the counter children's medications
- Paper plates
- Small and large trash bags
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Linens, including bedding and towels
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Toothpaste/toothbrushes
- Hair conditioner
- Disinfectant spray, low suds laundry detergent, cleaning supplies
- Kitchen items such as dishes, glasses, silverware, pots & pans, small appliances
- Tools for simple home repair

Please contact us for more information on how you can help domestic violence survivors and their children in our community.