A SAFETY NEST

Walking into the cafeteria at Carol’s Place—Women Against Abuse’s newest safe haven—your eyes will immediately land on a floor-to-ceiling mural. Colorful birds are poised around a nest on tree branches, stretching their wings wide. As you look about the room, children giggle as they chase each other to a seat at one of the dining tables, while their moms carry over plates of steaming lasagna and fresh green salad. The mural arcs above these families as they enjoy dinner together, a silent but evocative reminder of their journey out of domestic violence.

The mural was created with the help of Christine Hillman, an art therapy intern from Drexel University, staff members and residents of Carol’s Place. Along with Behavioral Health Supervisor Nathalie Hand, Christine shared several insights into how the mural developed, and the passion of our clients as they designed it:

Across many cultures, birds hold several meanings, representing both freedom and perspective. Their shapes, colors, and regions of origin can vary greatly from one species to another. Though the birds in the mural are all different, they share the same unique wing pattern, representing a shared bond like the diverse survivors who find refuge at Carol’s Place. Children from Carol’s Place’s afterschool program painted a large nest in the center of the mural to symbolize security, and were excited to add their fingerprints to the center of the flowers. The feather in the nest represents loved ones who have passed on that residents wished to remember.

The intention of the mural was to create a sense of community in a shared space. It was extremely meaningful for so many survivors to work together toward a common goal and have their voices come to life through art. Their marks will serve as a permanent reminder about the power that lies in a shared process.
Dear Women Against Abuse Friends and Advocates,

We have experienced so much hate and violence as a country this year. However, we have also seen advocacy like never before through marches, protests, and people speaking up on behalf of the vulnerable and hurting. Against this backdrop, it is clear that the responsibility lies with each one of us to create—or at times defend—the right for individuals of all backgrounds to be safe.

For Women Against Abuse, this requires a diversity of voices, ideas, and skills to bring forth safety, peace, and hope for survivors of domestic violence who come from all walks of life. Many are facing additional uncertainty about how to navigate the current landscape as they confront the fears and opportunities of beginning new lives, free from violence.

Now more than ever, Women Against Abuse is striving to open dialogue, explore unchartered approaches to service delivery, and forge deeper partnerships that will engage all members of our society. We are fortunate to work within a community that strives to create safety in all its forms, as a foundation for everyone to thrive.

Our 2017 Annual Report highlights several of our key milestones from the past year, with a particular emphasis on the work we’ve undertaken to reach underserved populations—like survivors of domestic violence who are immigrants and homeless runaway youth.

Amid a society whose future, at times, feels uncertain, our deeply rooted values of inclusivity, open communication, and peace provide confidence that survivors will continue to find the hope and support they need to soar. Thank you for standing firm with us in this crucial work.

Advocating Every Day,
The mission of Women Against Abuse is to provide quality, compassionate, and nonjudgmental services in a manner that fosters self-respect and independence in persons experiencing intimate partner violence, and to lead the struggle to end domestic violence through advocacy and community education.
CHANDA’S STORY

My ex-partner, Rodney*, was always the life of the party, and he could talk his way around anything. But people never saw what he was really like after a night of drugs and booze. I never knew whether I’d be dealing with crack cocaine, alcohol or pills when he walked in the door each night.

*Alias

Chanda shared this story at our 10th Anniversary iPledge® Campaign
Our friends and family didn’t know about the abuse, or his constant need to control me. Rodney said he’d get fired if I pressed charges for the bruises and injuries, and we needed the insurance that came with his job.

**Living with him, I felt like a prisoner.**

After years of dealing with the abuse that no one knew about, the truth of our relationship became public on the day of my son’s high school graduation. As usual, Rodney was high and drunk. But, despite that, it was a proud day for me as I watched my son walk across the stage to receive his diploma. Later, back at home, I was busy sending pictures to my family. Rodney always grew aggravated when I texted in front of him, but I wasn’t paying him any mind, because I had decided that this day was about my son and not him.

**Next thing I knew, he punched me in the face.**

With my head spinning, I called my other adult son to pick me up and help me file for a Protection From Abuse order. I was putting ice on my face when I heard our neighbors shouting. My son and Rodney were fighting in the street! I was scared, angry, and humiliated all at the same time.

Prior to this, only my next door neighbor had been wise to our situation. She and I had a system in place. She would call 9-1-1 if she heard me knock on the wall between our houses.

For years, I tried to make it work until I was just too tired—tired physically and emotionally, and tired of being afraid.

When I decided to break things off, I called the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline, but the shelter didn’t have any beds available—they were full. Even though I had a restraining order against Rodney, I decided not to stay in our home—

I couldn’t live with the harassment that his family was aiming at me. My home had truly become a prison. So I borrowed money and moved into an apartment with my children to escape the abuse.

**The apartment wasn’t much, but when I left that house, I felt like I was free.**

Today, I am free—free from Rodney, free from the fear that haunted me every day that I spent with him, free from the shame of hiding this secret.

My story touches on so many systems—from hospitals, to workplaces, to law enforcement and courts, to behavioral health, to addiction treatment providers. It was also heavily influenced by neighbors—people living next door to the abuse. If a coordinated community response like Shared Safety had been in place for me, I wouldn’t have fallen through the cracks.

Maybe if my childhood had been different—if I hadn’t been abused as a child and sexually assaulted as a teen; if I’d had a trusted person to confide in; or a safe place to go; Maybe if a teacher or a doctor or a neighbor or a supervisor had noticed something wasn’t quite right and said something or done something.

If there had been even one caring and supportive voice—maybe then, I wouldn’t have lived with the abuse for so long.

I am a survivor of domestic violence & I share that with you to help others avoid a similar fate. For anyone out there who is suffering in silence, let me be that voice for you. Listen to me when I tell you, it is not your fault. There are resources available to help you break free and build a life of peace.

**THERE IS HOPE.**
A LOOK AT OUR IMPACT IN 2017

Women Against Abuse served 13,327 people in Fiscal Year 2017 through a continuum of care that includes emergency safe haven, transitional housing, community-based case management paired with housing assistance, legal aid, trauma-informed behavioral health care, hotline counseling and community education, prevention, and advocacy.

CLIENT RACE & ETHNICITIES

63%
African American

20%
Caucasian

12%
Latina

2%
Asian

3%
Other/Unknown
1,272
women and children found refuge in our emergency safe havens and/or transitional housing program

1,769
individuals received free attorney representation & legal assistance

1,692
survivors were supported with court advocacy

107
women and children received community-based case management, paired with housing assistance through our Safe at Home program

4,051
individuals were trained in domestic violence dynamics and effective interventions

726
individuals received legal options counseling over the phone

878
victims at highest risk of injury were supported after a 911 call through our early intervention partnership with the Philadelphia Police Department

285
adults and their households seeking shelter received support for domestic violence through our partnership with the Office of Homeless Services

4,162
calls were answered by Women Against Abuse through the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline

13,545
calls were answered in partnership with the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Collaborative
A WIN FOR SHARED SAFETY:  
THE LIPMAN FAMILY PRIZE

We were thrilled to receive the 2017 Barry and Marie Lipman Family Prize from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School for pioneering Shared Safety: Philadelphia’s Response to Relational Violence.
In April 2017, Women Against Abuse became the first nonprofit organization from Philadelphia to receive this global prize, which—since 2012—has honored organizations that use innovative strategies to address social problems.

“This recognition underscores the profound impact of relational violence as a major public health and safety crisis that creates vast negative ripple effects throughout our society,” said Jeannine L. Lisitski, Executive Director and President of Women Against Abuse. “It is also a testament to the bravery of tens of thousands of survivors of domestic violence in our community.”

Shared Safety—a collective impact model that is harnessing the collaborative energies of approximately 70 stakeholders from health and human service providers and city systems—offers a citywide blueprint for effective identification, intervention, and prevention of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and reproductive coercion.

“As soon as we read their application, there was no doubt in our minds that Women Against Abuse had helped launch an inspiring, inclusive, and innovative approach to ending domestic violence,” said Umi Howard, Director of the Lipman Family Prize at the University of Pennsylvania.

Women Against Abuse received $250,000 to further the impact of this trailblazing work, as well as executive training from the University of Pennsylvania.

“THIS RECOGNITION UNDERSCORES THE PROFUND IMPACT OF RELATIONAL VIOLENCE AS A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CRISIS THAT CREATES VAST NEGATIVE RIPPLE EFFECTS THROUGHOUT OUR SOCIETY.”

— Jeannine L. Lisitski, Executive Director & President
People experiencing intimate partner violence who are immigrants face significant barriers to breaking free from abusive relationships. For many, the fear of deportation, being separated from their children who are born in the U.S., and threats from an abusive partner to harm family members in their home country cause them to stay in dangerous situations.
Since the Fall of 2016, our Legal Center has received an increasing number of inquiries from immigrant clients concerned about detention, deportation, and the effect that reporting domestic violence may have on their immigration status.

In response, our dedicated staff members are working to ensure our programs are accessible, inclusive, and effective for survivors who are immigrants. Our safe havens offer a range of culturally-relevant dining options, as well as Limited English Proficiency supports, such as translated documents, bilingual staff, and third party translators. Our hotline counselors are trained to screen for human sex trafficking—providing safety planning for families who may be facing immigration detention and deportation.

And, our Legal Center is leading regional efforts to protect immigrant victims of domestic violence, advocating both systematically and on individual cases for interpreters and language access in the courts, and even training private attorneys in matters pertaining to domestic violence and immigration.

When we were prohibited from serving immigrants in our federally-funded transitional housing program, we successfully advocated for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services’ Homeless Assistance Program to eliminate the requirement that survivors of domestic violence must hold U.S. citizenship in order to qualify for transitional housing. This advocacy resulted in state-wide change that benefited immigrant survivors across Pennsylvania!

We also work closely with local, culturally-specific service providers, including HIAS PA, SEAMAAC, and Nationalities Services Center; to ensure clients who are immigrants have access to a holistic arc of support. You can learn more about this collaborative work at womenagainstabuse.org.
Since 2006, Women Against Abuse’s Community Educators have been providing teen dating violence prevention programming to local middle and high school-aged youth and young adults across Philadelphia. Through the years, we have developed a teen dating violence prevention curriculum that is suited to a diverse, urban population. In order to reflect these refinements, Women Against Abuse’s Policy & Prevention Department has officially renamed our curriculum SAFER: Safety Awareness for Every Relationship.
Recently, we have expanded our focus beyond the classroom to partner with homeless youth shelters through a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. We are connecting with runaway youth—some of whom have aged out of foster care without a guardian—and are at high risk for abusive relationships.

Through this same funding, we have also hired an attorney to specifically serve teens and young adults seeking Protection From Abuse and Sexual Violence and Intimidation Orders.

We are thrilled that our evolving teen dating violence prevention work now encompasses these new elements as part of a broader approach towards preventing domestic violence.

“I WOULD RECOMMEND THIS CLASS TO A FRIEND BECAUSE AT A YOUNG AGE IT IS GOOD TO KNOW [THIS INFORMATION] BEFORE YOU GET INTO A RELATIONSHIP”

— 6th Grade Student, Age 11

“THIS CLASS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT TEACHES YOU KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND IT TEACHES YOU TO MAKE BETTER CHOICES”

— 6th Grade Student, Age 11
FINANCE REPORT

Women Against Abuse is committed to the highest quality fiscal management, ensuring that all contributions are used with integrity, transparency and in a manner that will have the greatest impact for our clients. We were pleased to receive an unmodified opinion from our independent auditors—Eisner Amper—and to, once again, be classified as a low-risk auditee.

REVENUE & SUPPORT

- **75.5% ($8,120,925)** Government Grants & Contracts
- **10.4% ($1,114,422)** In-Kind Contributions
- **9.2% ($985,875)** Contributions
- **4.7% ($511,042)** Foundation Awards
- **0.2% ($26,149)** Other

**TOTAL REVENUE**

$10,758,413

OPERATING EXPENSES

- **63.7% ($6,801,399)** Safe Havens
- **16.3% ($1,744,641)** Legal Services
- **5.4% ($579,743)** Policy & Prevention
- **5.2% ($550,371)** Management
- **4.8% ($506,829)** Sojourner House
- **2.5% ($266,985)** Safe at Home
- **2.1% ($222,713)** Fundraising

**TOTAL EXPENSES**

$10,672,681
ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REQUIRES OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY. BELOW ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN THIS TRANSFORMATIVE WORK:

**IPLEDGE® TOOLKIT**
Our iPledge Campaign Toolkit can be used by community members and organizations to take an active role in helping to end domestic violence. The toolkit includes:

- **key messages and talking points**
- **resources for people experiencing relationship violence**

Download the free iPledge Toolkit by scanning this QR code on any smartphone or on our website at iPledgeWAA.org

**TAKE ACTION**
Become an Advocate in Action by visiting our Take Action Center on womenagainstabuse.org! The Take Action Center offers ways for you to advocate for policies that protect survivors of domestic violence, including pre-written letters that you can personalize and send to your elected officials—all with a few quick clicks.

**MAKE A GIFT**
Join Women Against Abuse as we serve thousands of people each year. Convenient donation options include one-time or monthly giving, donating goods, and making a planned gift through your life insurance policy, estate or other assets. For more information about making a gift, visit womenagainstabuse.org.

**ATTEND DISH IT UP**
Dish It Up is Philadelphia’s only fundraising event and food tasting competition featuring all female chefs. More than 500 guests will enjoy delicious culinary delights at Dish It Up, while raising funds and awareness for our life-saving work. The 2018 event will take place at Cescaphe Event Group’s Vie, 600 N Broad Street, Philadelphia, on March 28, and tickets are available for purchase on our website!
“THE PERSON ASSIGNED TO MY CASE WAS VERY HELPFUL, CARING, KIND, AND INFORMATIVE. THANK YOU SO MUCH.”
OUR SUPPORTERS & GIVING SOCIETIES

Women Against Abuse is thankful to the many supporters who make our life-saving work possible. The following contributions of $500 or more were made between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

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INVESTORS: $50,000 +
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Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
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United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
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U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

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