

Thank you for empowering survivors



Women's Center & Shelter
of Greater Pittsburgh

Y2K: A New Year, A New Beginning

10...9...8...7... As the remaining minutes of 1999 ticked away and the countdown to the new decade began, Susan Moore was wondering if she'd live to see the year 2000.

She can still remember the hot, whiskey-scented breath in her face and the strong grip around her throat as her husband Clay towered over her in the corner of their garage. When the liquor ran out at their New Year's Eve party, she had been ordered to go grab some beer from the pile of 12-packs Clay had stashed in there. Susan, barely over 5'1" on a good day, was eight months pregnant and moving as quickly as she could. But for Clay, it wasn't fast enough. Nothing was ever enough.

It hadn't always been like this. "Clay used to be sweet," Susan sighed. They met while working at the grocery store; she was a cashier and he was a butcher.

The couple dated for almost a year before they got married. "My parents were not happy at all. They never liked him and didn't agree with the marriage. But I figured they weren't the best role models anyway since they had been bitterly divorced for years. They only thing I'd ever seen them agree on was disliking Clay. My relationship with my parents became almost non-existent."

Susan had witnessed a lot of fighting, verbal and sometimes physical, while growing up, so when things with Clay began going down the same road, she felt like this was the norm. But when the beatings surpassed anything she'd ever seen her father do to her mother, she began to realize this wasn't normal. And when the beatings continued and were sometimes worse once she became pregnant, she realized she had to leave to save her life and her baby's. "It was a stay and die or leave and live situation. But I had nowhere to go. None. My mom wouldn't let me stay with her; her new husband wouldn't allow it. My dad wouldn't let me stay unless I 'fixed myself' first, whatever that meant. I didn't have any siblings, no cousins in the area, no resources, nobody."

Susan isn't quite sure how she heard of Women's Center & Shelter.

"You have to remember this was the late 90s. There was no social media, no Google—I didn't even have a computer and surely didn't have access to the internet," laughed Susan. "I didn't even really know what the internet was!" With her best guess, she believes she was connected to WC&S through the police.

When she first arrived at Shelter, she had an infant daughter, a bag of randomly packed items from her house, and nothing else. "I was scared, untrusting, and had no idea what to expect, but I knew I needed help. I needed to stay there because I had no place to go and I had to get away or he was going to kill me. I was at my rock bottom. WC&S helped me climb back up. The ladies helped with filing PFAs, the court process, support groups, individual counseling, and transitional housing."

Gaining her independence at WC&S led to a job and eventually her own house where she and her daughter could live safely. "This was all almost 20 years ago, but I remember it well. I have a happy life and a happy, loving marriage now, all because of what I learned at WC&S. None of it was possible without you all. There's so much fear and uncertainty, but what's on the other side is beautiful and brilliant and so different from living in fear. You have to take that leap." ●



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A message from Nicole...

In the blink of an eye, my first year as President/CEO of Women's Center & Shelter has flown by. I truly can't believe it.

It's dizzying to wrap my head around the quick passage of time. But as they say, time flies when you love your job leading an amazingly passionate team in the charge to help survivors and their children to keep safe and heal from intimate partner violence!



Though that may not be the exact phrase, it certainly is a tribute to the fast-pace we've set advocating for policy changes, meeting with community leaders, engaging and speaking with the media, and strategizing and planning with the Board. As I said last time, the work never ends, but our resilience, resistance, and strength only grow. And thus, we grow. I also mentioned before how excited I was about what's to come. Excited may not have been a strong enough word.

As a loyal supporter, you know it takes a village to do this work. And this work we do would not be anywhere near as impactful without you being part of our village. However, as far as our arms can reach, we knew we needed to go even further. Two months ago, my excitement skyrocketed. Over the moon. We were overjoyed to receive word that we had been granted the ability to add to our village!

Through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, we were approved for two large grants that has allowed us to hire four new full-time positions—an LGBTQ Outreach Advocate, Children's Counselor, Children's Behavioral Specialist, and a Victims Compensation Specialist! These new positions will enable us to help so many more survivors—many of whom are underserved in our community. The grants will also allow us to build capacity within our organization with our data analysis ability, data tracking system, and human resources.

We will have the capacity to go wider and deeper with these new service additions and expansions as well as build more relationships and lengthen our reach. No matter if someone is wondering if they're in an abusive relationship or they are literally running for their life, WC&S can meet them where they are, help them take the next steps, and help them reach their goals. Together, we can do this.

With my warmest gratitude,



Nicole Molinaro
President/CEO

Grilling Up Some Fun!

On Monday, August 19th, the WC&S Board of Directors hosted their annual back to school BBQ for more than 30 residents and their children in the outdoor playground area of the Children's Program.



With a menu including hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, salad, grilled pineapple and a decorate-your-own cookie bar, everyone enjoyed the delicious food and the beautiful (and hot) weather! Board members attentively worked the grill, prepared the salad and hamburger toppings, set up the buffet and served the food to all in attendance. After their hard work was finished, board members sat down to enjoy the meal with the residents and children. It was a truly great evening! We are so grateful to the WC&S Board of Directors for creating such a special night and for all that they do on behalf of those we serve. ●

“As a Board of Directors, we do our best to remain as close to the WC&S mission as possible. Sharing a meal with residents and their children is an inspiring reminder of why we chose to serve on this board and reenergizes us for the year ahead.”

— Mary Anne Papale, Chair, WC&S Board of Directors



**Corporate
Spotlight**

*Volunteers from Eckert Seamans'
Women's Initiative*

Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC

Eckert Seamans is a wonderful example of how a company can partner with a nonprofit organization such as WC&S in a robust and meaningful way.

Reinvigorating the partnership in 2018, Eckert Seamans was a proud supporter of that year's Celebrating Survivors event, even donating the use of their private box at PNC Park to the silent auction, leveraging additional funds to benefit WC&S' programs and services. This year, Eckert Seamans is the proud Host Sponsor of the 2019 DV Awareness Happy Hour event being held on October 30th at Alloy 26 in NOVA Place. They also creatively held a Jeans Day and donated the proceeds to WC&S! Outside of this incredible financial support, members of the Eckert Seamans team have served on WC&S' Development Committee, assisting the organization with raising vital funds and awareness. And, certainly last but not least, the Eckert Seamans team volunteers at WC&S, most recently providing a fun and delicious ice cream bar for our residents, children and staff to enjoy. What a treat! ●

“It's an honor and a pleasure for Eckert Seamans to be involved with WC&S and the amazing services they provide to IPV survivors and their children. We believe whole-heartedly in assisting the communities in which we live and work and we're proud of the many partnerships Eckert Seamans has created here in Pittsburgh and around the country.”

— Sara Davis Buss, Esq., Member,
Eckert Seamans and former
WC&S Board Chair

**NEW
Program**

LGBTQ Outreach

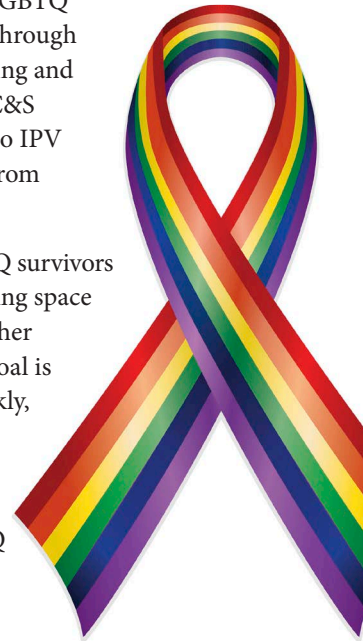
As mentioned in the CEO Letter, WC&S is thrilled to receive funding for four new full-time positions!

One of these positions is an LGBTQ Outreach Advocate, which has been long awaited and will undoubtedly help to meet the needs of a largely underserved community.

The program will be housed in WC&S' Empowerment Center. Also housed here are our other onsite and outreach support groups, individual counseling and advocacy, our Immediate Needs Coordination program, our team of staff providing advocacy and outreach to victims who are refugees, immigrants, and/or limited English speakers, and our team serving families who are at the intersection of child welfare and intimate partner violence. This new Advocate will be able to reach out—both onsite and in offsite locations—to members of the LGBTQ community who are experiencing or have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). This translates into healing for a more inclusive population of survivors! By expanding outreach efforts for Allegheny County's population of LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence through support groups and individual counseling and advocacy offered offsite and onsite, WC&S will provide free, confidential services to IPV survivors who may have felt excluded from victims' services and advocacy.

Offsite support groups will allow LGBTQ survivors to come together in an accessible, inviting space to relate to one another and work together through the challenges they face. The goal is for the Advocate to hold up to five weekly, 90-minute support groups, engaging 75 LGBTQ survivors per year as well as provide one-on-one advocacy and crisis intervention to at least 50 LGBTQ survivors of IPV each year. Clients will be able to meet with the LGBTQ Outreach Advocate for counseling over the phone, offsite at safe locations, and onsite at WC&S.

We'll be sure to give you an update on the progress of our LGBTQ Outreach Advocate Program as it takes shape and launches in the coming months. We are incredibly proud to serve IPV survivors from diverse communities and look forward to reaching everyone who needs our services. ●





Women's Center & Shelter
of Greater Pittsburgh

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Contributor Choice #110

Calendar alert!

Please be sure to save the date or register today!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN UPMC | MAGEE-WOMENS HOSPITAL

STAND UP FOR STANDING FIRM

2019 AWARDS LUNCHEON

Wednesday, October 16, 2019
Omni William Penn Hotel, Downtown Pittsburgh

10 STANDING FIRM 10TH ANNIVERSARY
The Business Case to End Partner Violence

REGISTER TODAY!
bit.ly/register2019SF luncheon

RSVP by October 2, 2019

2019 Domestic Violence Awareness Month Happy Hour

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Alloy 26 in NOVA Place (North Side)

100 South Commons

Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Host Sponsor:

ECKERT SEAMANS
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Don't forget to subscribe to our email list or check us out on social media for more details!



Our mission is to advance the safety and wellbeing of victims of intimate partner violence and prevent and respond to intimate partner violence through social change.