



# Women's Action Update

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MAWVC

## Erasing Domestic Crime: leading a new community effort to bring change

In October the Memphis Area Women's Council and our partners from the Memphis Shelby County Domestic Violence Council hosted an event to rally community response to a tragic spike - and an ongoing plague - of domestic crime.

At MAWC's invitation, Mayor AC Wharton and Dist. Atty. Gen. Bill Gibbons headlined the event which included a press conference. They declared a "public safety emergency" in Memphis and Shelby County in response to the tally then of 32 domestic violence victims.

As of Nov. 8, that number had swelled to 35 who have been killed by family members or persons living in households. Thirteen were children --- one only one month old. The eldest was 85.

Hundreds more are traumatized or physically injured every day by ongoing violence and chaos in their homes.

Our new awareness campaign is "Raising Families. Erasing Violence. A community response to domestic crime."

With a \$10,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, we created new resource materials and a new website loaded with carefully edited essential information to help connect victims and volunteers to local domestic violence services. Five different cards provide advice on how specific groups can help, whether you are a member of the faith-based, legal or medical communities, an employer or the general public.

Go to [www.erasedomesticcrime.com](http://www.erasedomesticcrime.com). Print copies of the information card that will help you help our community. View online TV coverage of our Oct. 2 press conference.

**NEXT:** The Women's Council will lead a new conversation --- the Erase Domestic Crime Collaborative --- to draw new resources, leadership and energy to pursue additional shelters, advocates, prevention efforts and policy change.

**YOUR PART:** Join the new collaborative. Use the website. Tell your friends. Add the address to your email tag and help our whole community know about and use this resource to help make people safer.

## Big news as we go to press

*Your Council has learned that we have been granted a \$20,000 United Way Venture Fund to support our collaborative leadership!*

The Erasing Violence effort in part was a response to a request by local judges and staffs for a concise reference of local domestic violence resources.

## Girls: leading the fight against sexual harassment in schools

Sexual harassment is a dangerous, illegal part of girls' lives in local schools and we can find no attention being paid by school officials.

Supported by funding from The Urban Child Institute, the Women's Council and the Center for Research on Women have surveyed more than 600 girls and boys to gauge the scope and impact of that harassment at local public, private and parochial middle and high schools.

For three years, the Women's Council, CROW and the University of Memphis Women's Studies program offered girls ages 13-17 a place to talk about shared problems, learn how to articulate issues, draw on research and organize or collaborate with others to take action and make change. Their key issues have been teen pregnancy and sex education; body image, self esteem and media manipulation, and sexual harassment and violence.

In the fourth year, this leadership training initiative called **Girls for Change** will recruit a corps of teen girls to craft peer intervention programs, prevention programs and presentations that the teens will make to demand safety and enforcement of sexual harassment law by school boards principals and other policy makers.

We will include discussion and education about sexual predators statutory rape, a crime which is rarely prosecuted in our city; yet, girls as young as 10 and 12 are delivering babies fathered by much older males.

Girls for Change 2009 is supported by a \$10,000 gift from the Bornblum Foundation and a \$10,000 grant from the City of Memphis.

Most essential now: invite great girls to apply! Spread the word and the application (available online)! For more info--[dclubb@memphis.edu](mailto:dclubb@memphis.edu)

## Breaking down employment barriers

The Women's Council focus on barriers that block low wage women from getting and keeping good jobs has continued in 2008 with work groups aimed at specific policy areas.

The Workforce Action Collaborative we organized in 2005 won Community Foundation funding and pulled excellent

partners to the table - MIFA, Uptown Alliance, Seedco, Center for Research on Women, Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Actions, Memphis HOPE, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, YWCA, Neighborhood Christian Centers, Partners for the Homeless.

In our ongoing work groups, Collaborative members are crafting and carrying out strategies to address child care subsidy policies, public transportation routes and schedules, access to mental and medical health services and operation of the local Workforce Investment Network.

## Intensive training opportunity bolsters family crime response

With funding from federal Violence Against Women programs, four Women's Council leaders will travel to Monterey, Calif., for a four-day intensive conference on social change. Women's Council board president Sonja White, managing partner of the domestic violence unit at Memphis Area Legal Services, secured the funding and will lead the group. Also participating are Women's Council executive director Deborah Clubb and members Connie Ross, director of the Family Safety Center, and Julie Coffey, director of the Shelby County Office of Early Childhood and Youth. They will work as a team to enhance a coordinated community response to domestic violence.

*Many thanks to our donors, and in particular our multi-year **Changemakers' Circle**: Dr. Nancy Hardt, Happy Jones, Wight Boggs, Kathy Buckman Gibson, Ellen Kylce, Ginger Ralston, Gayle Rose.*

*Many thanks also to CROW for housing the Council for 5 years.*

