

# West Cork Whisper

West Cork Women Against Violence Project Newsletter

36th Edition

January, February, March 2010

## West Cork Women against Violence celebrates 10 years of supporting Women

*At the Maritime Hotel Bantry, on 4th December last, over 60 people joined West Cork Women against Violence to mark ten years of supporting women experiencing abuse in West Cork.*

- 1,500 women have sought support from WCWAV over ten years
- These women had an estimated 2,200 children under 18 years

We wanted to celebrate the work of the project and the courage of the women who came to us for support.

West Cork Women against Violence worked with artist Marie Brett to create a 'Tree of Intentions'. Intentions were for women and girls in the world today or private anonymous intentions. These were hung on the Tree of Intentions; candles were lit and a minute's silence observed.



We want to thank the many people who sent us intentions to hang on the tree. The intentions will be buried under a young living tree which we will plant in 2010 as the final celebration of our anniversary year. The belief is that as the paper disintegrates and the tree grows the spirit of everyone's wishes is sent out into the world".

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## Break the Silence on Domestic Violence

West Cork Women Against  
Violence Project,  
Harbour View,  
Bantry, Co. Cork.

Freephone Helpline:  
Tuesday 10am - 4 pm  
Tel: 1800 203 136

Office: Tel: 027 53847  
Open: 10am-1pm,  
Monday - Friday

Website:  
[www.westcorkwomensproject.ie](http://www.westcorkwomensproject.ie)

Email: [admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie](mailto:admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie)

## West Cork Women against Violence celebrates 10 years of supporting Women

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The evening also incorporated the *Premier of a DVD* documenting the development and work of the West Cork Women against Violence Project over ten years, produced by Feicim Goleir productions. This will be used in promotional, awareness-raising and educational events.

The evening ended with songs from *Accapellabella*, West Cork's Community Choir.

We want to acknowledge the generous support of COSC, working as part of the National Development Plan, and the HSE National Lottery fund.



Councillor Mary Hegarty of Bantry and Tree of Intentions



## Your Health

Many women minimise the effects of domestic abuse on their health. You may try to hide your physical injuries or not get medical attention for them. You may be under severe mental and emotional pressure, but not recognise that the main cause of the stress is your partner's abusive behaviour.

You can take steps to improve your health and wellbeing.

### Your Mental Health

*"Abuse takes different forms doesn't it? It doesn't necessarily have to be physical, I mean, verbal abuse can be just as hurtful. It is very hurtful and can take longer to get over. When you're having something repeatedly said to you, like the name calling, then that's how you see yourself..."*

Domestic Abuse can cause more than bruises and physical injuries. Women who have left abusive relationships usually say that coping with the emotional abuse was the most difficult.

65% of women who experience abuse from a partner reported suffering from depression.

(Making the Links, 1995)

If you feel you are suffering from stress or depression, it is important to talk to someone about it. The first step may be going to your doctor or calling a helpline. Helplines are there for you to talk to someone about your worries. The person at the other end of the line will listen to you, and often she / he will have been able to put you in touch with services or support groups in your area.

(Extract from 'Feeling Safe' an Information Guide for Women Living in Domestic Abuse-Adapt Refuge Limerick, 2001).

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

## A Message of Solidarity

In the aftermath of the behaviour of a section of a community who, in full view of the victim, openly supported a man convicted of sexual assault, West Cork Women Against Violence Project wish to take this opportunity to express our solidarity with the woman who had the enormous courage to seek justice through the Court system.

And the system worked. The man was found guilty of sexual assault by a jury of his peers.

Where the system failed was in not ensuring that the victim was protected from the intimidating parade of so many people to express their support for her attacker within the very Court room where he was found guilty.

One can not begin to imagine how witnessing this must have impacted on the victim.

In her impact statement to the Court the victim expressed how she felt judged by her community, she said that she had been asked by people she knows if she is sorry for bringing the perpetrator to court. She said that she is not sorry for it, that she was only telling the truth.

On RTE Morning Ireland on Monday 18th Jan 2010, Ellen O Malley Dunlop CEO Dublin Rape Crisis Centre said that in Rape and Sexual Assault cases, the rate of success from reporting to conviction is only 7%. This rate of attrition does have an impact on whether a person reports the assault /rape to the Gardaí as does society's attitude towards the victim. It is to be hoped that this show of support for the convicted person does not deter other victims of sexual assault / rape from proceeding in their quest for justice.

### *Attrition:*

*Of crimes committed, a smaller proportion are reported; of those reported, a smaller proportion are prosecuted; of those prosecuted a smaller proportion end in conviction. This progressive reduction between crimes committed and those which end in prosecution is known as attrition. (Living Without Fear, Home Office 1999:31)*

## Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

SATU is a free 24 hour service, open 365 days. We are delighted to advise you of an improvement in our service. Previously, we only saw people up to and within a week of an incident occurring but now we can see people who disclose a sexual assault beyond that time. It is available to any person over 14 years of age who has been sexually assaulted.

- SATU is a dedicated unit where people who have experienced rape or sexual assault can be examined and treated in a holistic way.
- Forensic/medical examination if required.
- Emotional and practical support consistent with the wishes of the individual.
- Liaison with a crisis support person from the Sexual Violence Centre according to individual wishes.
- Post coital contraception and pregnancy testing service.
- Screening for sexually transmitted infections.

**Sexual Assault Treatment Unit  
South Infirmary-Victoria University  
Hospital  
Old Blackrock Road, Cork  
Tel: 021-4926297  
Email: [satu@sivuh.ie](mailto:satu@sivuh.ie)  
Website: <http://www.sivuh.ie>**

## A Message for Women

**Women do not ask for, cause, invite, or deserve to be assaulted.**

**Women and men sometimes exercise poor judgement about safety behaviour, but that does not make them**

**responsible for an assault. Attackers use violence to overpower, control, and abuse another person.**

**Women can't stop violence alone.**

**We need to support each other and work with men who care about us.**

**Together we can create a safer future for women, children and men.**

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

**WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST  
VIOLENCE PROJECT IS  
LOCATED AT HARBOUR VIEW,  
BANTRY, WHERE  
WOMEN CAN ACCESS SUPPORT  
AND INFORMATION ABOUT  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FROM  
ALL PARTS OF WEST CORK**

## Support Services for Women:

West Cork Women against Violence Project, Bantry  
.....Freephone 1800 203136

Women's Aid Freephone.....1800 341 900

Cuanlee Refuge, Cork..... 021 4277698

Legal Aid Board, Cork.....021 4551686

.....021 4275998

Mná Feasa (Domestic Violence Project)..... 021 4211757

OSS Cork..... Freephone 1800 497497

Domestic Violence Resource Centre for men and women

S.A.T.U.....021 4926100

Sexual Violence Centre..... Freephone 1800 496496

Domestic Violence Social Work.....021 4921728

Y.A.N.A. North Cork..... 022 53915

### **Kerry**

Kerry Women's Refuge and Support Services (ADAPT).....066 7129100

Open Door Network.....066 7185472

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre ..... 1800 633333

Legal Aid Board..... 066 7126900

Tralee Women's Resource Centre ..... 066 7120622

## Believe in me I believe in you

Come out of your shadow and into the sun,  
Find you a path that will lead you back home  
Take a minute of your day  
And push your troubles away  
And remember there is a person inside you

When you awake to a day that's dull and grey  
And you feel life's so hard you don't want to stay  
Remember that it is you that holds the key  
And you can make tomorrow a bright new day

When you'd rather be alone let it be known  
And don't feel guilty for words you cannot speak  
It never ever makes you weak  
Dark days are always turned into colourful rain-  
bows  
But you have to believe, believe in you

So my friend I come to say,  
Look up to that sky away above high  
And find you a star that gives you hope  
That there is light  
I believe in you that you will win the fight.

*( Words of a survivor)*

*Out of the shadow*

*Kerry Rape and Sexual Assault Centre 2002.*

## West Cork Citizens' Information Service

**The Square, Bantry. Ph: 027 52100**  
**South Square, Macroom. Ph: 026 42179**

*West Cork Citizens' Information Service can provide you with information, advocacy and advice on all your rights and entitlements. The service is free, confidential and independent. Open daily, please call for times.*

### **LEGAL AID BOARD**

3rd Tuesday of month 10.30am – 4.30pm  
**For an appointment with the Legal Aid Board please phone the Legal Aid Cork office on: 021 4551686.**

### **FREE LEGAL AID CLINIC (F.L.A.C.)**

1st Tuesday of month 6pm – 7pm  
**Appointments for F.L.A.C. are made by contacting the West Cork Citizens' Information Service via drop in or telephone 027 52100.**

### **MABS OUTREACH CLINIC:**

Each Friday 10 am – 11.30 am  
**Phone MABS at 023 55155 for an appointment.**

**These are Confidential Services**

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service.