

Women's center celebrates 'Men Who Make a Difference'

By Michaela Kennedy

"Someone once said it takes a village. It's true. It takes everybody contributing," islander Connie Slick said about coming to the aid of fellow community members. Slick is guiding efforts to support community needs as chairwoman of this year's annual fete, "Men Who Make a Difference," which raises money for the Women's Resource Center of Newport and Bristol Counties.

Lori DiPersio, executive director for the women's center, said that the event celebrates men of distinction who make a difference in Rhode Island communities and in the lives of women and children. The main fundraiser for the organization moves to a different venue every year and is hosted by the communities the center serves. This year, the black-tie event will be held at the Hotel Viking of Newport on Friday, April 25.

Jamestown volunteers like Slick and Tina McIntyre, who is president of the center's board of direc-

tors, agree that fundraising is more crucial than ever in these days of disappearing government funds. "The government isn't always going to be bailing everybody out," Slick said. "We need to have that compassion to help our neighbors who may be hurting."

DiPersio talked about the effects of budget cuts on programs offered through the resource center. Jamestown recently lost its designation as a rural area, so the town is not eligible to benefit from the rural outreach grant. "Because Jamestown and a few other communities we service are no longer considered rural, our funding got cut in half," she said. The uncertainty of funds places even more pressure on this year's signature event to be a success.

Almost 10 years ago the women's center, in collaboration with the Rhode Island Sexual Abuse and Trauma Resource Center, partnered with Jamestown to bring community-based support for victims and children of domestic

violence and sexual assault, DiPersio said. Since then, the community partnership team involved members of the school committee, police department, and Visiting Nurses Association, to name a few. Since the outreach effort started, calls for help from Jamestown residents have increased significantly.

The rural outreach that has buoyed awareness of domestic abuse within the community through counseling and education is one of the federally-funded programs hit by budget cuts. McIntyre and DiPersio both agree, nevertheless, that Jamestown has always had a good volunteer program. "We are trying to expand our volunteer effort, especially at the board level," DiPersio says, mentioning that Stephen Farrelly, another island resident, also serves on the board.

Slick became involved with the volunteer group after she noticed an article in the Press asking for donations for the women's center.

She started thinking about how blessed she felt that she never experienced the hardships that many in this and other local communities endure. "I thought, aren't I lucky that this has never touched my life," she said. Slick lost her husband three years ago, just before fulfilling their dream of moving their family here from East Greenwich. She followed through with their dream, and now lives on the island with her daughter. Despite her personal tragedy, Slick expresses thanks for the caring people she has met here. "I found such incredible support here in Jamestown. A lot of generous people on this island seem very receptive to donating what they can." Among the donations received in support of the fundraiser is a "beautiful still life painting" from local artist Lizzy Congdon, and a gift certificate from Cathy Jamieson to her salon.

Slick shared an experience she had at work just the other day. She works part-time as a dental hygien-

ist, and a female client opened up about some domestic problems she had at home. Slick told the woman about the volunteer work she does at the center, but was surprised to hear that the client did not know such help existed. Slick said she pointed out that help comes on many levels - educational, financial and more. "Even just having that conversation makes a difference," she said, adding that government funding cuts should not be taken as defeat. "There are a lot of good people out there who help."

The Women's Resource Center of Newport and Bristol Counties, one of the six member agencies of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, provides an array of services for women and men who are victims of domestic abuse.

More information can be found about the Women's Resource Center online at www.wrcnbc.org.

FIRE AND EMS

9:30 a.m., April 8, Truck 1 was dispatched to Ferry Wharf for a service call.

10:04 a.m., April 9, Car 1 and Engine 3 responded to a smoke in area call on East Shore Road.

7:30 p.m., April 10, All units responded to a training drill at the fire station on Narragansett Avenue.

1:17 a.m., April 14, Cars 1 and 3, and Engines 2 and 3 answered a false alarm on Bayview Drive.

EMS runs

8:42 p.m., April 6, EMS 1 was dispatched to Reservoir Circle for a medical emergency and drove a

patient to Newport Hospital.

11:02 a.m., April 7, EMS 1 responded to a medical emergency call on Pemberton Avenue and drove a person to Newport Hospital.

11:04 a.m., April 9, EMS 1 was sent to East Shore Road for a smoke alarm standby.

11:35 p.m., April 10, EMS 1 responded to a trauma call at the Route 138 toll plaza and transported a patient to Newport Hospital.

3:10 a.m., April 12, EMS 1, went to Howland Avenue for a medical emergency and drove a person to Newport Hospital.

Learn more about pediatric cancer swim event

Join Swim Across America this summer and make a splash for pediatric cancer survivorship programs at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The 13th annual Boston Harbor 22-mile relay swim is on Friday, July 11, and the 10th annual Nantasket Beach one-and-half-mile swims are on Saturday, July 12. Registration is now open for teams and individuals.

Every stroke makes a difference in the fight against cancer. For more information, e-mail Kitty Tetreault at kitty@swimacrossamerica.org or visit www.swimacrossamerica.org.

Medicare consumer advisory board looking for members

The Medicare Rights Center, a national consumer service organization, is expanding its national Medicare Consumer Action Board to strengthen the voice of consumers in local, state and national health care debates.

Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) members are people with Medicare who are committed to the principle that all Americans should have access to affordable, high-quality health care.

"CAB members play an invaluable role in shaping our policy position," said Robert M. Hayes, president of the Medicare Rights Center. "They serve

as the eyes, ears and spokespersons of people with Medicare across the nation."

CAB members serve as a voice for people with Medicare, and communicate policy positions to local communities, the media, policy makers and elected officials. The members advise the Medicare Rights Center on emerging health care concerns in their communities through regular teleconferences.

To apply or to learn more about becoming a volunteer Community Action Board member, contact CAB Coordinator Al Mendlovitz at 800-480-2060, ext. 6238, or at amendlovitz@medicarerights.org.

Run to help women with post-partum depression

On Saturday, May 10, "Stepping Out of the Darkness," a 5K run and 2-mile walk to benefit the Day Hospital at Women and Infants Hospital will be run in Pawtucket. The walk steps off at 9 a.m., followed by the run at 9:30 a.m.

The hospital has the first outpatient program in the country that treats women for anxiety and depression during pregnancy and the postpartum period. The program allows women battling de-

pression to be treated without being separated from their new babies.

The run will be in Slater Memorial Park.

More information about participating in the event or volunteering that day is available on the Women & Infants' Web site at www.womenand-infants.org, or by calling the Women & Infants' Department of Philanthropy at 274-1122, ext. 2021.

Save the Date!
Earth Day Shoreline Clean-up
Saturday, April 26th • 8 a.m.
Meet at the Rec. Center
Help Prepare OUR ISLAND for Summer!
Jamestown Conservation Commission

Hill & Harbour
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 42 Ladd Street (1st Floor)
 Located at waterfront end of Division St.
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398-1035
 Mon-Fri. 7:30-5:00pm
 Thurs 'til 8:00pm
 Sat 8-2pm



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