VICTIMS RESOURCE CENTER Volume 20 Issue 1 ● Fall—November 2020

speakout

An Advocate for Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
United Way of Wyoming Valley
United Way of Greater Hazleton
United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley
Wyoming County United Way

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LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT VICTIMS RESOURCE CENTER

Janet MacKay (left) outgoing Executive Director, and Suzanne Beck incoming Chief Executive Officer in the new VRC lobby in Wilkes-Barre.

VRC hires new CEO

VRC announces that Janet MacKay, Executive Director is retiring on December 18, 2020. She has been with the agency for 33 years. She started as the Program Coordinator in the newly opened Wyoming County office in 1987. After growing that county's services she went to the administration office in Luzerne County overseeing several projects. Janet was then hired as the Executive Director in 1996. She has served on many statewide victim services committees for the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency over the years. She has also served on the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's (PCAR) Board of Directors and as the President of that Board. She has been a member of the Keystone Crisis Intervention Team's (KCIT) Advisory Committee for many years and is a response team member.

Under Janet, VRC expanded to a third county, Carbon in 1999. During her tenure, VRC also collaborated with other professionals in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties to acquire competitive STOP grants to address sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking crimes. She co-chaired the Luzerne County Trauma Committee that grew out of these collaborations. Janet also worked with other professionals to establish the Children's Center under Family Service Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the child advocacy center that serves Wyoming and Susquehanna Counties.

Janet says, "I am happy to be retiring and relaxing after having had the privilege to have a job that was so rewarding. I have been blessed to have been part of a movement that witnesses survivor strength and healing and unbelievably dedicated caregivers! I am very lucky to be able to leave VRC in the hands of such a capable and talented team."

Victims Resource Center Board of Directors has hired a new Chief Executive Officer, Suzanne Beck, to replace longtime Executive Director Janet MacKay. "We are extremely fortunate to have someone with Suzanne's ability to continue the good work Victims Resource Center has done in the community over the past 46 years" said William Aquilino Board President.

Suzanne holds a master's degree in Public Administration from Kutztown University. She has been an adjunct faculty member at Penn State Wilkes-Barre in the Criminal Justice Department for the past 7 years. Suzanne is trained as an expert witness, providing testimony in cases of rape and sexual assault. She has served on numerous statewide victim services committees including the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape Board of Directors and the Pennsylvania Association of Sexual Assault Centers, where she served as the Eastern Regional Representative. Prior to coming to Victims Resource Center, Suzanne was the Executive Director of Crime Victims Council of the Lehigh Valley for 29 years.

"I am so fortunate to have this opportunity to work at Victims Resource Center with such a dedicated team of advocates who under Janet's leadership have made an enormous impact on victims services in Luzerne, Wyoming and Carbon Counties" said Suzanne. "I am extremely passionate about the field of victims services and have dedicated three decades to serving crime victims. I look forward to continuing to advocate strongly for victims' rights and toward equality and justice for all victims of crime throughout the community" added Suzanne.

Tuesday, December 1st is #Giving Tuesday. We're so grateful to once again be partnering with AllOne Charities who will match all donations made to VRC on their website dollar for dollar up to $1,000 on December 1st! Just click on the link below and select Victims Resource Center to have your donation doubled!

https://allonefoundations.org/all-one-give-day/

You can also send a check to our office, but please make it payable to AllOne Charities so VRC will be able to receive the matching funds. If you have any questions, please call 570-823-0766 or email infovrc@vrcnepa.org

The impact of COVID-19 on survivors of domestic abuse

It's pretty clear that wearing a mask, social distancing and staying home can all help curb the spread of the coronavirus. What may not be as clear is that spending a lot more time at home since March has presented increased obstacles for domestic violence victims to seek help and escape abusive situations.

Some victims and survivors are spending more time in close quarters with their abusers during an already stressful time. Being trapped alone with their abusers, there is the opportunity for higher tension, lower income due to job loss, increased substance abuse and especially true in rural areas, lack of transportation. Something as simple as using the phone to call a hotline can now be much more difficult if not nearly impossible. When we add the slowed court proceedings to all of this, many survivors have no choice but to remain or return to their unsafe homes.

We can't forget the children who are also more vulnerable to domestic violence due to increased time spent at home. Many children are now spending less time at school and more time in the home, putting them at a greater risk for exposure to violence taking place within their own families. Outside support systems such as teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, coaches and even grandparents may no longer be available.

Purple Thursday in Wyoming County……

Adult Probation

Wyoming County Children & Youth

Tunkhannock BPW

Monroe Noxen Clinic

Purple Thursday cont.

Dietrich Theatre

Interfaith

Tammi Burke and Chief Morristell

A Better Today

Sheriff's Office

Tunkhannock Borough Police

Prothonotary's Office

Treasurer's Office

Register & Recorder of Will's Office

In the Community…

In October, the Wyoming County Commissioners had the statue outside the courthouse lighted purple in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

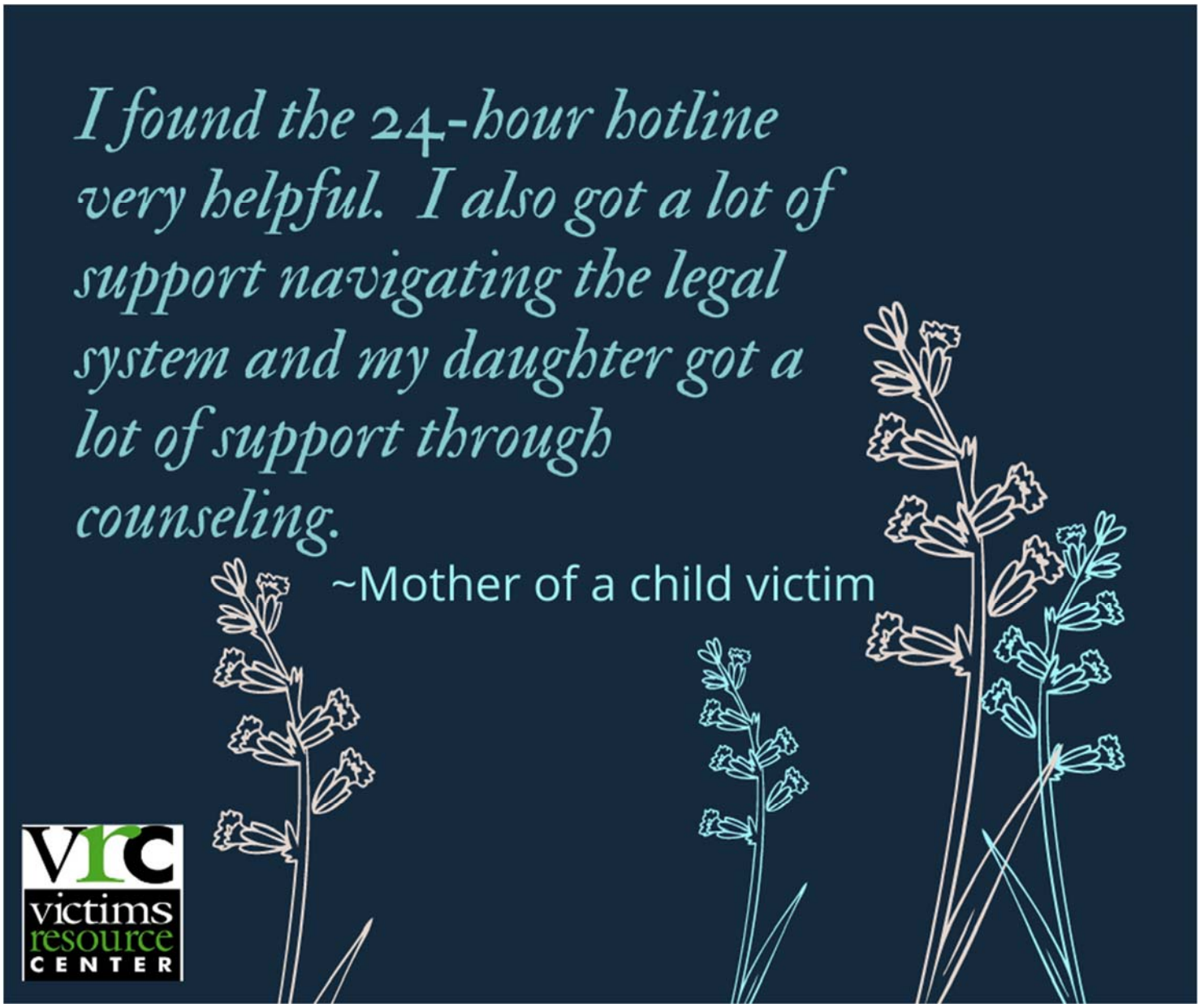
Tammi Burke, Manager of Community Services spoke to a combination in person and virtual meeting of the Tunkhannock Rotary Club. The Club gave a generous donation to VRC in 2020. Tammi updated them on VRC services in Wyoming County.

Tammi Burke, Manager of Community Services spoke to the Hanover Township Crimewatch group about crime victimization and local resources to help victims.

The Bistro joined in Purple Thursday today to raise awareness about Domestic Violence!

Linda, Bill, Lori and Commissioner Ernie King are all wearing purple today in support of Purple Thursday

Testimonial....



Wyoming County District Attorney's Office

The Wyoming County District Attorney Jeff Mitchell, Assistant District Attorney Deborah Albert-Heise, Liz, Shannon, Chief Ed Morristell, Detective David Ide, and Assistant District Attorney Timothy Carroll are all wearing purple for Purple Thursday!

Education Services…..

Are you looking for a dynamic guest speaker for your group? We can help!

In-person & virtual options available

VRC has trained presenters who can speak to your group on a variety of topics including:

Human Trafficking

Sexual Assault

Child Abuse

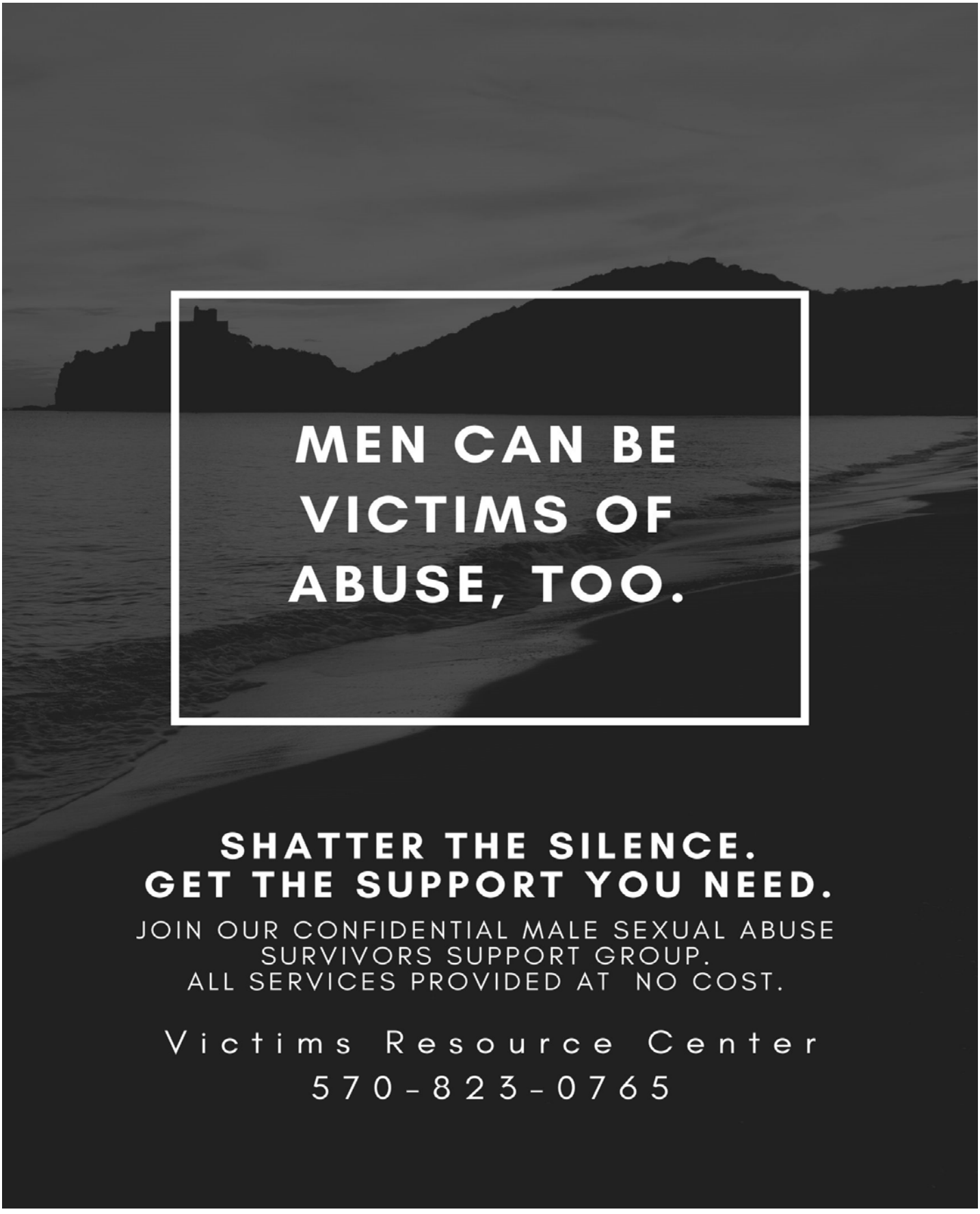
Sexual Harassment

Many more!

contact Tammi to arrange a speaker for your group at tburke@vrcnepa.org

VRC victims resource CENTER

Support Group Services……



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