



Financial Resources for Women & Children, Inc

FRWC Profile: Sojourner House

The Sojourner House staff perceives their residents as customers, rather than as clients. That perspective helps them to focus on positive outcomes rather than completed processes.

In This Issue:

FRWC focuses on transitional housing and its importance in providing the on-going safety and support services that families need for long-term stability.

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The Sojourner House, our partner program in Roxbury, MA, is a "best practice" transitional housing program. FRWC board member Georgia Mattison interviewed the Executive Director Anastasia Lopopolo to find why the program is so successful.

Anastasia began her position in 1994 after finishing a master's degree in public administration at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School. Her financial background is essential to oversee Sojourner House's model of intense services supported by multiple church, foundation, state and city funders. Many religious organizations and local universities provide ongoing volunteer support.

Anastasia brought a business perspective that views the residents as customers instead of as clients. While some programs focus on process, Sojourner House staff focuses on moving the residents toward successful outcomes. Staff assumes that its job is to access and make available

a wide range of resources to help customers achieve financial stability.

FRWC is a good match with Sojourner House as its mentoring piece fits into the range of financial services offered to parents: financial education, employment assistance, education and job training. All adults in the shelter learn how to check their credit status. FRWC mentors have also assisted families with debt management once they have left the shelter.

But there is no such thing as leaving Sojourner House. Especially for the first year, there is intensive follow up to see how the family is faring. Every year there is a picnic for all Sojourner House alumni. This is an opportunity for the staff to catch up with former families.

Children of Sojourner House receive a cluster of intense services including education, tutoring, recreation programs, health care and childcare. Families stay as long as they need to in

order to make the transition to permanent housing.

Sojourner House works with its own extensive public and private housing network to place families in the best situation for them. Families move on from Sojourner House when all the components of a successful transition are in place. In the case of Denisse Hernandez (see last FRWC newsletter) the loan from the Roxbury Highland Bank enabled her to pay off a past housing debt, become eligible for housing, and by paying back the loan establish a good credit rating. A mentor from FRWC continues to work with Denisse and her family.

The staff at Sojourner House provides the products and services to empower its residents to establish a safe and stable existence. FRWC is privileged to assist them with this goal.

Special thanks to Dana DeMoulin who has agreed to be the FRWC '04 Newsletter Editor.

FRWC is looking for additional shelters or support programs who want to partner with us in a pilot lending program.

**Interested?
Let's Talk!**

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**Our mission is to develop resources and services that improve the financial stability and long-term safety of women and children who have experienced family violence.**

**“Domestic violence survivors need a continuum of safe and affordable housing options and the economic means and supportive services to maintain housing stability.”**

Fender, J., Holmes, L. & Levy, S. (n.d.) *Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence. A Blueprint for Action* (in conjunction with The Economic Stability Working Group of the Transition Subcommittee of the (MA) Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence). Retrieved February 27, 2004 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.janedoe.org/know/voices\\_of\\_survival.pdf](http://www.janedoe.org/know/voices_of_survival.pdf).

*The following pieces were reprinted and adapted from 'News Flash' (<http://www.fvpf.org/newsflash>), an online newsletter of Family Violence Prevention Fund: Talking the Talk, Walking the Walk? and CALL to PROTECT.*

## **Talking the Talk**

President Bush recently announced the Family Justice Center Initiative at an event in Washington, DC marking Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Initiative will fund the creation of twelve Family Justice Centers in communities around the country, and administered through the U.S. Department of Justice. The Family Justice Centers will provide medical care, faith-based counseling, law enforcement, social services, employment assistance, and housing assistance together in one location.

The Family Justice Centers will be modeled after the San Diego Family Justice Center, which was launched in October 2002. The Center was the vision of San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn, who attended the White House event in October and was honored by President Bush. "San Diego figured it out," said the President in his speech. ". . . there's a more compassionate way to help people who have been abused."

## **Walking the Walk?**

Women's rights advocates released the second Women's Global Issues Scorecard in Washington, DC, this month. The Scorecard grades the Bush Administration's rhetoric and reality on international women's issues.

- The Administration received an "A" for its rhetoric on the "U.S. Resolution on Women and Political Participation," but a "D" for its actions.
- The Administration received a "B" for its recent rhetoric on the rights of women in Iran and Afghanistan, but an "F" for its actions.

The first Scorecard was released in August 2003. For more information, visit [www.wglobalscorecard.org](http://www.wglobalscorecard.org).

## CALL to PROTECT

The Wireless Foundation donated an unprecedented \$1.7 million to leading domestic violence service and prevention organizations in October, for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The donation builds on a long-term commitment by the Wireless Foundation and the wireless industry to help stop domestic violence. The Foundation's highly successful CALL to PROTECT program—founded in 1996 by the Foundation, Motorola, and NCADV—has provided tens of thousands of free wireless telephones with airtime donated by wireless carriers to domestic violence agencies that serve families in crisis.

Consumers wishing to donate phones in support of the CALL to PROTECT program may visit [www.donateaphone.com](http://www.donateaphone.com) for a listing of local drop-off locations and for the mailing address.

## FRWC Loses a Friend

When Zane Henderson died on Thanksgiving Day, 2003, FRWC, Inc. lost a supporter and a friend. Zane was the former college roommate and lifelong friend of FRWC Chairwoman, Earline Kendall, so she was involved in our mission from the beginning. When FRWC filed the papers to obtain 501c(3) status, Zane made a donation to cover the filing fee, and she made regular contributions until a few months before her death. We celebrate her life, and mourn the loss of her exuberant spirit.

## Battered Women's Movement Loses a Pioneer

Susan Schechter, one of the most accomplished and respected leaders in the domestic violence prevention movement, died on February 3 of endometrial cancer in Iowa City, where she resided.

"Our movement and the world lost a great leader, and many of us lost a dear friend," said Family Violence Prevention Fund President Esta Soler. "Susan's contribution was as enormous as it was unique. She was strong, committed and compassionate. She did the most difficult work in this field, looking at the intersection of domestic and child abuse, and she always managed to make progress. Her extraordinary vision and sheer brilliance helped eliminate every obstacle that stood in her way. She was an inspiration to people all across this nation. We will miss her terribly."

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c/o Old South Church  
645 Boylston St.  
Boston, MA 02116

PHONE- 508 627-5685

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## **Book Review: Nickel and Dimed**

Looking for a light read for those evenings in front of the fire? Read something else, because Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America (by Barbara Ehrenreich, published by Henry Holt and Co.) will warm your blood in another way. Ehrenreich, a middle-class PhD, addresses the question: can you really live on minimum wage?

Ehrenreich moved to three different parts of the country, accepted minimum-wage jobs from restaurants, a cleaning service and Wal-Mart,

and found unsurprisingly that it was nearly impossible to keep afloat, let alone get ahead on minimum wage. Safe, affordable housing is difficult to find, the physical requirements are grueling, and any unexpected pitfall is enough to rip the threadbare rug out from underneath the minimum-wage worker.

The most disturbing conclusion is the one the reader comes to while reading between the lines. Ehrenreich gave herself a \$1000 to start (enough to pay a

damage deposit on an apartment and provide a safety net against emergencies), she rented a car from Rent-a-Wreck in every location, and she traveled alone. What would you do, then, without a damage deposit, without a car, and with children who need things, get sick, and must be cared for?

You'll never forget to tip a hotel maid again.

*Review by Dana Demoulin, MSW*

**An independent source of income is the single most significant indicator that a woman will be able to permanently leave an abuser.**

*Fender, Holmes, and Levy*

### **FRWC**

Old South Church  
645 Boylston St.  
Boston, MA 02116

