

MORRIS COUNTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN  
Meeting Minutes  
May 21, 2015

Morris View Healthcare Center, Board Room  
540 West Hanover Ave., Morris Township

**Members present:** Sibi Sáenz-Williams, Ginny Lyttle, Pam Bennett-Santoro, Edith Frank, Carole Harper, Aida Visakay, Gayle Pearson, and Jennifer Carpinteri

**Absent:** Tina Liu Jen, Deirdre Wheatley-Liss, Patti Page, Elaine Muller

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chair Edith Frank

Gayle Pearson was introduced as the new member of the Advisory Committee on Women, filling the 11th seat available in the committee

**Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law**

Vice-Chair Aida Visakay advised that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting had been provided and filed with the public.

**Approval of Minutes**

On motion of Edith Frank, seconded by Ginny Lyttle, the committee approved the minutes of the March 19, 2015 meeting.

**Old Business**

**End of Year Report**

Ginny presented the year-end report with the revisions agreed upon during the committee's prior meeting. The committee reviewed missing information, and discussed ways in which to better state and present the need for data collection in regards to gender distinction and identification of issues by gender.

## **Domestic Violence**

Aida Visakay presented the Proclamation for Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Awareness from the Morris County Freeholders accepted by Aida and Patty Page on their January meeting. While discussing the appropriate place to display the proclamation, the group decided that the new Family Justice Center would be the ideal place to show the county's support on this important issue.

The committee also reviewed and further discussed the presentation provided by Patty Sly, Director of the Jersey Battered Women's Shelter; providing information to members who were absent during the last meeting. The group continued the conversation about ways that it can support JBWS.

Discussion focused on "Purple Thursday" in October and the Yellow Card Challenge presented during last meeting. Carol Harper and Gayle Pearson provided information on both initiatives.

Initiated by the New Jersey Coalition of Battered Women (NJCBW), Purple Thursday encourages New Jersey residents to wear purple to shine light on the issues of domestic violence by honoring its victims, supporting its survivors, and promoting DV awareness and prevention. As Purple Thursday was observed on October 23 last year, the assumption is that October 22 will be designated Purple Thursday in 2015. Gayle Pearson will follow up with JBWS to confirm date for this initiative and to determine the plan of events for that day.

The Yellow Card Challenge (YCC) is a program developed for athletes to promote awareness on dating violence and to provide education on the "red flags" to prevent domestic violence in dating relationships. Just as the yellow card is in soccer, YCC presents warning signs to notice while in a relationship to prevent abusive behaviors and violence. Gayle will request further information from JBWS on this as well.

The idea to bring YCC to schools as part of the curriculum was a topic of discussion, just as the different police departments provide the DARE program to schools. However, the idea was quickly shut down by the notion that "teaching to the test" is preventing programs to go into the school; any extra curriculum time during the school day is utilized to redefine the new core curriculum and instruct on PARCC testing.

Jennifer Carpinteri suggested that the group arrange to speak to the new superintendent for Morris County to explore way to filter in YCC to the school system. After the discussion, the group agreed and made a commitment to work with JBWS this year in promoting and supporting both initiatives. Patty Sly will be invited to another committee meeting to find out JBWS' needs, and ways in which the committee can support the agency.

Other ideas discussed were having additional presentation by service providers and law enforcement agencies in the topic of domestic violence. Aida Visakay expressed her interest in having a presentation by the Sheriff or the local police department to provide the group with the law officers' perspective on DV issues. Sibi Sáenz-Williams suggested an invitation to Freeholder Douglas Cabana, who as a municipal prosecutor has experience with domestic violence cases in Morris County.

Another idea was to create a symposium on domestic violence similar to the Committee's Redefining Cinderella symposium in 2012; however, the group decided to be cautious on repeating services already provided by JBWS and other agencies in the county. The committee decided to speak to Patty Sly first before exploring these ideas further.

## **Announcements**

Gayle announced that on October 17, 2015 the Presbyterian Church in Morristown in collaboration with the Interfaith Food Pantry will hold a 'Courageous Conversations' meeting to discuss appropriate ways in which to approach a person to inquire and/or discuss difficult subjects of abuse. The meeting seeks to initiate conversations to promote involvement and participation in the prevention of abuse.

Pam reminded members of the 10th Annual Phenomenal Woman Awards Ceremony on June 5 at the Hyatt in Morristown. Entry fee was raised to \$75.00 this year to support Cornerstone Family Programs.

Jennifer announced that the County Memorial Day Service is on May 22 at the courthouse. Twelve veterans will be honored during the event.

The next Freeholders' meeting is Wednesday, May 27 at 7:30pm. The public 'away' meeting will be in Morristown. The Freeholders will present a Mental Health Proclamation in recognition of Mental Health Awareness.

Next meeting is July 16, 2015 at 5:30 pm for light dinner; the meeting begins at 6 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm by Chair Edith Frank.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Sibi Sáenz-Williams, Alternate Secretary**