

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER

Domestic Violence Prevention Center is the creation of many concerned citizens of Colorado Springs. In 1975, Wanda Reaves and other workers at the Virginia Neal Blue Center were alarmed at the frequency with which they were contacted by or on behalf of women in the community who had been threatened or assaulted by their husbands. Public officials and agencies had few provisions for insuring safety and assistance to an abused spouse, and even fewer private resources were available to the victim.

This concern was harnessed, and its energy used to enlist the aid of CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) officials, who funded a one-year research position. The researcher's task was to investigate and document the extent of the problem of domestic violence in Colorado Springs. Stationed at the Colorado Springs Police Department, the researcher soon discovered that part of the problem was the absence of documentation specific to the phenomenon of wife beating. Despite the pitfalls encountered, the report issued contained compelling testimony to the high incidence of spousal assault in our community and the appalling lack of resources for women and children trapped in violent relationships.

With this information, the local District Attorney, Robert Russel, became active in helping to organize a service to meet the needs of abused spouses. The El Pomar Foundation provided a start-up grant with which Battered Women's Services was begun in 1977. Since that time, this private, non-profit corporation has undergone a name change to Domestic Violence Prevention Center, and has grown from a referral service into a vital link in the community's protective and support services for its citizens.

A second grant from the El Pomar Foundation supported the development and continuation of Domestic Violence Prevention Center's efforts in the community. Currently the Center operates a 24-hour crisis hotline, provides emergency shelter to family violence victims and their children, offers crisis and support group counseling, makes community education presentations, works with children from violent homes and trains local volunteers to continue helping victims of violence.

Through cooperative efforts with law enforcement, judicial,

medical, religious and social service personnel, the consciousness of the community is being raised. Family violence is now recognized as a serious threat to our society, and there is a growing willingness to work together to protect those in danger while seeking to identify and treat the causes of violent family relationships.

AGENCY HISTORY:

Domestic Violence Prevention is the creation of many concerned citizens of Colorado Springs. In 1975 workers at the Virginia Neal Blue Center were alarmed at the frequency of calls from women in the community who had been threatened or assaulted by their husbands. Very few public or private resources were available.

CETA (Comprehensive Employment & Training Act) funded a one year position to investigate the problem. Stationed at Colorado Springs Police Department, the researcher discovered that there was a high incidence of spousal assault in our community.

In 1977, with help from the District Attorney and the El Pomar Foundation, Battered Women's Services began as a referral service. In 1979 the first shelter opened and the name was changed to Domestic Violence Prevention Center. With continued support from El Pomar we relocated to the present shelter in 1982. We now offer a broad base of direct services and community education.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

The Domestic Violence Prevention Center defines abuse as physical, psychological or emotional violence committed against a woman or a man by any individual with whom there is a significant cohabiting or intimate relationship.

On this premise, as a member of the Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition, we support and subscribe to the following philosophy statement:

"The Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition is composed of people dealing with concerns of battered women and their families. We represent both rural and urban areas throughout the state. Our programs support and involve battered women of all racial, social, ethnic, religious, age and economic groups, and those who may choose a gay or lesbian lifestyle. We oppose the use of violence as a means of control over others. We support equality in relationships and the concept of helping women assume power over their own lives. We strive toward becoming independent, community-based groups in which women are major policy and program decision makers."