Celebrating a Benefactor, a Leader, and a Friend: A TRIBUTE TO LONG-TIME BOARD MEMBER MARLENE SMITH

I consider myself to be a lucky person, maybe the luckiest. There are many signs of my good luck but one stands out and highlights how fortunate I have been. For twenty-two years I have worked alongside Marlene Smith as we both were Directors of the Susan B. Anthony Project. We were members of a Board of Directors that took the enormous leap to raise the money to create enough space to meet with clients and to house the many administrative and programming people. First, as President of the Board, and then, as a Chairperson of the Rebuilding Lives Campaign, Marlene led us all to reach for an impossible appearing goal that would both fund this space and also provide us with programming funds so that we could bring our fund development efforts into the 21st Century. She and I chaired the campaign committee. Marlene was involved in most of the major gifts to the campaign. With her clear headed vision and perseverance, she provided the energy and love that propelled us to raise $2,600,000. Her love of the Project and its mission are all around us in our solid home; she served also on the Building Committee that oversaw the details of the renovation. When I look around this building I see her touch, her influence, everywhere. I don’t know for sure, but I suspect that Marlene would be prouder of her contributions to our work to provide for a sustainable future. She has consistently made us aware of the importance of building and maintaining endowment and reserve funds. Marlene’s love for the Project has shone brightly and consistently for all of these twenty-two years. I and all the people who love Susan B. Anthony can know how lucky we are to be present and to witness Marlene’s resolve, strength, and love in doing this work. I am a lucky person indeed.

Bob Berson, Secretary, SBAP Board of Directors

New Challenges in a Pandemic

Susan B. Anthony Project is here and continues to offer services to domestic and sexual violence victims and survivors during this continuing pandemic. This goal has been our key focus.

The 24-7 hotline remains available. Shelter services and criminal and civil court requests are all seeing increases in activity since some physical distancing is easing across Connecticut and in our communities. Our regional Child Abuse Investigative Team (CAIT) is also reviewing cases of suspected child abuse with more frequency.

While the courts were consolidated during the several months and Torrington courthouse cases were taking place in Waterbury, the Torrington area GA-18 courthouse is re-opened. All new arraignments were heard during consolidation and continuances during that time were delayed. Currently, continuances are being scheduled.

As an essential employer, our ability to serve clients from the community in our main Counseling and Advocacy Center had moved to remote counseling to comply with 50% occupancy of our counseling site. In June, the administrative and counseling staff returned to this center. We are continuing to work on preparing for client return by ordering protective masks for adults and children and sanitizing cleaners to assure, that in addition to best practice for physical distancing, each communal area of the building and counseling rooms may be sanitized between meetings. The practical challenge has been in locating these supplies which seem to become more available as time passes.

Susan B. Anthony Project has received certification as a component of the Re-Open Connecticut program of the Department of Economic and Community Development. This certification guides our focus for limiting exposure to victims, staff, and others, who will enter the building.

An unintended, positive result of navigating the challenges of providing services to victims during a pandemic is the opportunity to consider the ways in which we will move forward with a combination of in person and remote service delivery options for victims.
Our Mission

Susan B. Anthony Project promotes safety, healing and growth for all survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and advocates for the autonomy of women and the end of interpersonal violence.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Throughout the month of October, we will be creating awareness through online activities, informational videos, and virtual events. Please visit our website and Facebook page for announcements and information.

Tuesday, October 1st at 8:30 am – SBAP and Mayor Elinor Carbone hung a commemorative wreath at Torrington City Hall in honor of victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Wednesday, October 28th at 6:00 pm – SBAP will hold a virtual candlelight vigil online to celebrate survivors of domestic violence and honor community members who collaborate and support our work. Visit our website for details.

Susan B. Anthony Project (from July 2019 to June 2020):

- provided crisis services to 1,662 victims of domestic violence
- gave safe shelter to 45 women and 47 children
- presented prevention education programs to 4,464 school aged children and 847 adult community members
- advocated for an average of 144 victims of domestic violence in Torrington Superior Court

Nationally:

- More than 1 in 4 women and more than 1 in 10 men in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. (The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2015 Summary Report)
- On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines nationwide answer over 20,000 crisis calls, averaging more than 13 calls every minute. (National Network to End Domestic Violence 2019, Domestic violence counts national summary)

Website: www.sbaproject.org  Facebook: www.facebook.com/sbaproject

New Challenges in a Pandemic (continued from page 1)

Often, victims may not have transportation to an appointment on site and may, in the future, choose a virtual appointment. Similarly, during the consolidation of the courts, an online temporary restraining order submission guided by an advocate remotely, was available to victims. The CT Legislature, in a special session in September is considering the continuation of this court process to offer victims a variety of options to address these civil needs to assure victims enhanced safety in their homes.

Our organization also held its first-ever virtual event, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, in May. Without a doubt, among the most significant challenge we have been navigating is the financial impact of the loss of in person special events which aid in supporting our services to victims and survivors. Again, we experienced the ways in which we might build upon our strengths and rise to the challenge at hand.

All of these challenges and endeavors have seen the support of our community—individuals, foundations, businesses and community foundations have been leading continuing support to victims and survivors.

“Safety, Healing, Growth”. The challenges of this pandemic help us to recognize that this is an apt motto as we move forward to serve victims in continuing and innovative ways.
A few years into my tenure as Executive Director of Susan B. Anthony Project, Marlene Smith joined the Board of Directors. Marlene immediately took an active role, enthusiastically participating in Board meetings and fundraising events. What I didn’t know in those early days was that Marlene would serve as Board President for six years, that she would lead SBAP through our Rebuilding Lives Capital Campaign, and that under Marlene and her husband Chris’ leadership we would exceed our campaign goal and move into the Counseling and Advocacy Center that SBAP now occupies. What I also didn’t know was that our connection at SBAP would lead to Marlene and Chris becoming life-long friends of my family and me.

Marlene may not think of herself as a natural leader. But she is! Marlene leads by doing. When it’s time to sell wreaths, Marlene (and Chris) roll up their sleeves, sell, and deliver wreaths. When Marlene is with friends, she never misses the opportunity to share the news of Susan B. Anthony Project and the good work SBAP does to help keep survivors safe and supported through their healing. One of Marlene’s strengths as a leader is that she is the best listener. When she led Board meetings, Marlene took time to make sure everyone’s voice was heard, and she made sure everyone knew their opinions mattered. Similarly, Marlene always made time to express her concern and respect for the SBAP staff and all our clients.

I know it is time for Marlene to transition off the SBAP Board of Directors and let others lead, but she and Chris will never be too far away. When the world allows for gatherings and events, Marlene and Chris will be there, championing the organization that they love and have nurtured. And, I’ll be looking for a place next to them.

Barbara Spiegel, Former SBAP Executive Director

On a not-too-long-ago rainy, gloomy day, Marlene stepped into my office to tell me that she had decided to step down from the Board at Susan B. Anthony Project. I don’t remember which one of us began to cry first, how many tissues we each used, or for how long the recalling of memories continued. What I will always remember from that day (and all the days I have known Marlene during her important work that has truly left a long term impact upon this organization), is how gracious Marlene is, how free flowing her enumeration of strengths of others, how lifted one feels by her sincerity and the ways in which she holds the other in shared space. I am so happy that Marlene will remain a part of our “family” and joins Chris on SBAP’s Advisory Council.

Jeanne Fusco, SBAP Executive Director

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On April 29th, SBAP staff joined millions of people across the world in wearing jeans for Denim Day, to raise awareness about all forms of sexual assault. While staff was working remotely at the time due the pandemic, the photos were a good way to connect over a common cause.

STOP Human Trafficking! January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. SBAP staff gathered outside the Counseling and Advocacy Center on Water Street for #WearBlueDay.
Thank you to everyone who supported Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®, The Virtual Experience! After an uncertain start to this year’s event, we are grateful to report that we produced an engaging virtual event that encouraged participation and awareness far and wide. Thanks to you, we welcomed the support of many friends, old and new, from all over the country and surpassed our fundraising goal!

Thank you to all who participated, and to those who graciously donated your treasure, time, and talents to make the Walk a success!

- 36 registered walkers who walked, posed, and posted throughout the month of May
- 220 donors who generously provided walkers with moral and monetary support
- 12 corporate sponsors who honored their commitment to support the Walk, even in uncertain times
- $34,038.72 raised!!!

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Rosemary Ripley & Peter Grubstein

THANK YOU TO OUR VIRTUAL WALKERS!
Scott Anderson
Todd Anderson – Rhinos
Robert Bernstein
Reymond Budny – I’ll Walk
Ian Campbell – I’ll Walk
Jude Celebi – Momma’s Boys
Garrit Cerruto
Jon Concilio – I’ll Walk
Clifford Cooper – Rhinos
Matt DeRienzo
Jason Devaux – Boys in Girls’ Shoes
Luca Devaux – Boys in Girls’ Shoes
Edward DeVos – Momma’s Boys
Deborah Donne – Litchfield Hill Walkers
Louis Donne – Rhinos
Mark Famiglietti – Leg Hair Don’t Care
Chris Freimuth – Heels for Hope
Michael Fusco – Team Fusco
Jeanne Fusco – Team Fusco
Peter Grubstein
Graham Ince – Momma’s Boys
John Kleeman – Rhinos
Michael Kovalchik – Rhinos
Luke Martin – Momma’s Boys
Darren Murphy – I’ll Walk
DJ Murphy – I’ll Walk
Matt Oneglia
Yachai Reilly – Team Yachai
Adam Seifert – Leg Hair Don’t Care
Nico Sorce – Momma’s Boys
Jeremy Stickney – I’ll Walk
Paul Sweeney – Rhinos
Nancy Tracy – Litchfield Hill Walkers
Samuel Wen
Sam Weider – Momma’s Boys
Michael Wynne
Community Education and Prevention Programs

How to keep kids engaged, having fun, and safe is the question for every Summer Camp season. This year, camp presented a host of additional challenges, between increased health concerns and kids who had been cooped up for months during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the generous support from Outreach Sponsor Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Susan B. Anthony Project’s Community Education team spent 16 sessions at Torrington’s Camp Rising Star for “super kids.” Camp Rising Star does a wonderful job teaching, encouraging and engaging campers throughout the season. With the enthusiasm from counselors and kids alike, SBAP facilitated a host of educational programs to promote healthy relationships and self-esteem, from activities designed to explore personal space bubbles to water balloon tosses with an educational twist, keeping over 80 campers engaged throughout the Summer.

The campers had fun learning, and SBAP’s Community Education team was grateful for the opportunity to work with everyone at Camp Rising Star. Many thanks to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital for supporting these important outreach and prevention opportunities, which help educate youth and ultimately work towards an end to interpersonal violence in our community.

Calling all HEROs

We are encouraging local businesses to help empower and rebuild victims of domestic and sexual violence by joining forces with their customers and employees to raise funds for critical services. This monthly program will help raise awareness, ensure program delivery, and increase community participation as we all work together to save lives.

Contact Ashley Cerruto at acerruto@sbaproject.org or 860-489-3798 for details.

Together, we can do great things!

For the past 17 years, Webster Bank has shown its extraordinary commitment to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence as a Susan B. Anthony Project supporter. In 2017, they became our first Agency Sponsor, partnering with us year-round in our efforts to support clients in every way possible — emergency shelter, counseling, court advocacy, community education, and more. Through its dedication to victims for almost two decades, and its investment in addressing immediate client needs as well as long-term, forward-thinking solutions to bring an end to interpersonal violence, Webster Bank has made a tremendous impact.

We are so grateful to everyone at Webster Bank for this special collaboration, and for the kindness and commitment to victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

Give Local 2020, a 36-hour online giving challenge hosted by the Connecticut Community Foundation, was held on April 21-22, 2020, and successfully raised over $1.83 million to support the vital work being done in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. Every dollar raised during the 36-hour giving campaign was amplified by matching funds and prizes secured by the Connecticut Community Foundation, totaling $22,002 to support victims of domestic and sexual violence who come to Susan B. Anthony Project for help. Thank you CCF and our loyal donors for your generosity!
HAPPENING NOW:

HOLIDAY WREATH SALE
We will be holding our holiday wreath fundraiser this year with all of our safety in mind. Please visit our website for details!

- Small Wreath (23") – $20
- Medium Wreath (28") – $35
- Large Wreath (36") – $50
- Taper Centerpiece – $25
- Pillar Centerpiece – $30
- Grave Blanket (40" x 28") – $50

Phone Orders: 860-489-3798
Fax Orders: 860-482-6268
Online Orders: http://sbaproject.org/get-involved/holiday-wreath-sales/

To become a Wreath Friend and volunteer to sell wreathes on our behalf, contact Denise at dtorson@sbaproject.org or 860-489-3798.

ORDERS DUE: November 2, 2020
PICK UP HOURS:
Saturday, November 21: 9 AM – 12 NOON
Monday, November 23 – Wednesday, November 25: 9 AM – 4 PM

Thank you to Lily & Vine Floral Design!

For all of our safety, if you are interested in adopting an individual or family this year, we are requesting donations that are monetary and/or gift cards (in $25 increments). Preferred gift card ideas: local grocery, restaurant & gas, Kohl's, Target, Walmart, Amazon, Visa and Mastercard. Donations can be mailed to us at 179 Water Street, Torrington, CT 06790 ATTN: Adopt a Family or dropped from 9 AM – 4 PM in our sanitized outer lobby that is secure.

We ask that all gifts be received by Friday, November 20th so that families have adequate time to shop.

For answers to your questions, please contact Siobhain at scraemer@sbaproject.org or call her at 860-489-3798. Thank you!

This Spring, Susan B. Anthony Project hosted Conversations with the Executive Director, a series of live video streaming sessions with SBAP Executive Director Jeanne Fusco. The Conversations proved an excellent way to communicate up-to-date information about how SBAP has continued to serve clients during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the particular challenges faced by clients and staff. Stay tuned for future conversations!

You can help Susan. B. Anthony Project every time you shop on Amazon! Visit smile.amazon.com, and designate Susan B. Anthony Project as your charitable organization, and we will receive 0.5% of your purchase.

Making a Difference!

Sephora generously donated over 60 personal beauty boxes for distribution to SBAP residential and community clients. Ashley Cerruto, Business Development Associate, is shown with one of the Sephora Play! Boxes, which featured makeup and skincare items. Thank you, Sephora!

Community Educator Matthias Ekstrand and Business Development Associate Ashley Cerruto represented SBAP at the Community Health and Wellness Center’s community event in Torrington to recognize National Health Center Week.

The finished product of an SBAP group art therapy project is ready for display, featuring inspirational messages and colorful images made by survivors.
I grew up in a family of educators, of people who believed in work that upholds and encourages human dignity, opportunity, and equality. My father—a community organizer, a social worker, and, eventually, an educator—told me and my sister stories about the work he had done and was doing, on the streets, in communities, with the people around us. It was work, it seemed to me, of immense hope. Ultimately, it was the work I chose as well.

At the Susan B. Anthony Project, we work every day with clients who come to us because of hope: hope that their lives can and will change in positive ways; hope that their lives can be different than what they currently are.

I am grateful, and challenged, and humbled by this work that we do every day, which is the work of compassionate human connection: collaborating with our clients, and working with them to mindfully, meaningfully connect with the parts of themselves that they have, of course, had all along—their strength, their courage, their voice, and their hope.

In the summer of 1990, in Cape Cod, MA, a coalition of women’s groups created a program that would “educate, break the silence and bear witness to one issue — violence against women”. The Clothesline Project, now an international program, is a collection of t-shirts created by survivors of domestic and sexual violence that uses their own words, artwork, and stories to let other survivors know that they are not alone.

This year, SBAP will be holding a virtual Clothesline Project, and we need your help. **We invite you to participate by designing your own t-shirt with messages of safety, healing, and growth.** Then take a picture of your shirt and send it to mekstrand@sbaproject.org. We will add the t-shirts to a virtual clothesline throughout the month of October. You can find more examples of t-shirts on our website at www.sbaproject.org under **Events** and on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sbaproject.