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# THE CHARLOTTE POST

"The Voice Of The Black Community"

Volume 12, Number 51

THE CHARLOTTE POST - Thursday, May 21, 1987

Price: 50¢

## Abused Women Can End Violent Cycle

By Jalyne Strong  
Post Managing Editor

"What domestic violence is all about is a man trying to control his spouse and using violence to do it."

Julie Stafford, Division Director of the Shelter for Battered Women, offered this statement as an introduction to the ways the Shelter helps women and children who are the victims of domestic violence. It is a statement that succinctly clarifies the reason behind spouse abuse. It is also the first reality women who are being victimized must accept before they may begin to get help.

Currently, in Charlotte-Mecklenburg there are several agencies where domestic violence victims and, in one case, abusers can receive help. There is the Shelter for Battered Women, the Women's Commission, the Victim Assistance-Misdemeanor Unit, and the Adam program for men who abuse their spouses.

As the name implies, the Shelter for Battered Women, in its utmost capacity, serves as a haven for women who feel they must leave their homes because of domestic violence. It is a temporary haven. Women with or without children are allowed to stay a maximum of three weeks. But, while the Shelter offers a respite from the violence that has driven the women there, it is, additionally, a place where they learn they are not alone in their predicament, support is forthcoming, and there are ways to correct the problem.

### Women Need To Maintain Control

As was mentioned earlier, Stafford says domestic violence is usually a man's way of maintaining control over his family. "The biggest need a female victim has is to learn to maintain control over her own life," relates Stafford. "That's why, at the shelter, we don't make decisions for the women. What we do is relate to them what resources are available and what we know about domestic violence."

The Shelter is located in a very safe place with round-the-clock security. There are seven bedrooms in the shelter and one bedroom accommodates a woman



Photo By David Brenner

### Isn't This A Crime?

Hundreds of Women in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are victims of abuse. But it doesn't have to be. Several agencies are available to help women end the violence in their homes.

and her children. There is a day room for adults and a playroom for children, a communal kitchen and several baths. Two full-time counselors are on duty each day from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m. and a night manager with counseling experience takes over in the evenings. There is also a support group for school-age children.

"I believe our residents appreciate being around other women who've been battered and other people who really understand," reveals Stafford. "One of the consequences of domestic violence is that these women have been isolated."

Through counseling, women at the Shelter learn one of the most important lessons concerning domestic violence. Explains Stafford, "The woman is not responsible for the violence. The man is responsible for his own behavior. But if she wants it to stop, she has to take the responsibility to stop it. Women have been taught by society if someone is mean to them that by being nice that can make it better. That doesn't work. At the shelter we try to help her do something more effective."

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### Ways To Stop Abuse

In a handbook given to women at the Shelter, the ways to deal with domestic violence are discussed including information on involving the police and the courts. A new program called the Victim Assistance-Misdemeanor Unit, has proven to be especially helpful to victims of domestic violence.

Annette Morris, Project Coordinator of the Misdemeanor Unit, says although the Unit works with victims of all types of misdemeanor crimes, the majority of individuals who come through the unit are victims of spouse abuse. Based on that fact, Morris has deduced that domestic violence is a "very significant problem in Charlotte."

The Unit helps domestic violence victims in several ways from giving advice over the telephone to photographing visible injuries for evidence in court. But its most helpful aspect is the courtroom knowledge and support it provides for victims.

"We talk with victims and counsel them with regards to their situation. They are asked how they want to handle the situation and we inform them as to what their options are," says Morris.

"The majority of women we see have already sworn out a warrant for the abuser. But if they are trying to decide whether to swear out a warrant, we will give them advice on how to swear out the warrant. However, we do not pressure them to do so."

When the situation calls for it, the Unit provides information about court and courtroom procedures, helping the individual to prepare for the court experience. Also, professional counselors from the Unit serve as court advocates for victims, going with the victims into the courtroom to be supportive. Located on the second floor of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse, down the hall from Misdemeanor Court, the Unit is in a strategic and convenient place to offer assistance to domestic violence victims.

### Help For The Abusers

While the majority of agencies which deal with domestic violence offer assistance to the female victims there is one agency in Charlotte that aids the usual

perpetrator of the violence. The Adams program is an agency that counsels men who are spouse abusers.

Jim Johnson, who heads up the Adam program, claims the program has three main objectives: "First," he lists, "we teach the men what they have done is a crime and they have to take responsibility for their own behavior. Secondly, they are taught to identify clues to their behavior. And third, they are taught they can begin to change their attitude. No one has any right to have power over or control another human being."

Men in the Adam program go through a type of group therapy with two leaders. Most of the men in the Adam program have been convicted and sentenced and their participation in the program is a condition of their probation.

Johnson, who relates that "domestic violence is an immense and complicated community problem," cites the number of men treated at the Adam program as: 132 in 1984; 172 in 1985 and 200 in 1986.

However, it has been charted that when male abusers go through such a program as Adam, there follows less incidence of violence in the home.

### Liaison For Domestic Violence

Recently, the Women's Commission of Charlotte-Mecklenburg gained a new position to its staff as a result of a report of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Domestic Violence Task Force released in 1986. The Women's Commission serves as a resource center for women in this county promoting programs especially for the needs of women. It was responsible for helping establish the Shelter for Battered Women and this past January the position of a Domestic Violence Liaison was created.

Faye Skidmore, Director of the Women's Commission, says the Commission spearheaded the first community awareness survey on domestic violence. "The response was overwhelming," she recalls. "It was found that domestic violence is an issue and from that the Task Force was or-

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## Public Meeting On Low Income Neighborhood Grants Program

Representatives of neighborhood organizations in low income areas in the Metrolina region can learn how to apply for funds from a \$50,000 grants program at a public meeting on Tuesday, May 26. The meeting will be held at the Afro-American Cultural Center, 401 N. Myers Street, Charlotte, at 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Foundation For The Carolinas and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Neighborhood Grants Program offers mini-grants for neighborhood projects including beautification, crime prevention, youth programs and community leadership

development. During the past three years the Neighborhood Grants Program has awarded approximately \$150,000 to Charlotte area neighborhoods.

At the May meeting information about guidelines for mini-grants will be explained and a workshop on how to prepare a grant proposal will also be held. Representatives of neighborhood organizations which have received grants in the past will be recognized and will be available to talk with new applicants.

Further information about the meeting and the Neighborhood Grants Program can be obtained by calling Dr. William J. McCoy at 597-2307 at the Urban Institute at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Grants Program is to encourage and support low income neighborhoods in developing, and organizations to address neighborhood concerns.

The Foundation For The Carolinas is one of eight community foundations in the United States participating in the Neighborhood Grants Program organized by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan. The Mott Foundation provides \$35,000 for the local program which is matched by \$21,000 through the Foundation For The Carolinas.

The Mott Foundation is a private foundation with assets of more than \$600 million. The Mott Foundation awards approximately \$25 million in annual grants for programs fostering community self-improvement through education, citizen involvement, community leadership and development processes.

The Foundation For The Carolinas, a community foundation serving North and South Carolina, has assets of approximately \$35 million and makes annual grants of \$4 million for a wide variety of charitable purposes.



On Monday, May 18th at the McDonald's ground-breaking ceremony for the new McDonald's Best Western Hotel, Mr. John F. McDonald, owner of McDonald's Cafeteria, and his wife Eunice greeted the crowd that attended this historic event. Guest panelist Mayor Gantt, Councilman Charlie Dannelly and Ray Gooding observed along with other guest panel members.

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## Monument Dedicated To North Carolinians Who Served In Vietnam

The welcome that the North Carolina veterans have deserved and have long awaited for is finally going to be a reality. On the weekend of May 22 through May 24, the North Carolina Vietnam Veteran Memorial Committee has announced that they will dedicate

a bronze monument entitled "After the Fire Fight." Chairman John Saputo said, "This monument is going to be the focal point for the North Carolina Vietnam experience."

This monument will be dedicated to the 206,000 North Carolin-

ians who served in Vietnam, to the 1,561 KIA's from North Carolina, to the 26,000 WIA's and least we ever forget to the 61 MIA's and POW's, who have still, after 12 years, not been returned to us.

The North Carolina Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee

has planned a complete and full Vietnam Veterans weekend. The weekend will commence on Friday, May 22, with the laying of a wreath by the Lt. Governor at Raleigh National Cemetery, a POW/MIA candlelight flag raising ceremony will also be on Friday. On

Saturday, before the 2 p.m. dedication of the monument, military static displays, along with helicopter and fixed wing aircraft flyovers, will be provided by active duty and reserve elements from

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