

Employment & Training Unit

New Choices... Strategies for Success

The *New Choices* program assists displaced homemakers in becoming self-sufficient. Within New Choices, the Women's Commission offers four different seminar series. *Adventures in Attitudes* emphasizes self-esteem, decision-making, listening, and personal empowerment. The core New Choices program consists of ten workshops covering self-esteem, goal setting, job search, career exploration, resume writing, financial management, and time management. *Customer Service* provides information on effective business communication, dealing with angry people, interviewing skills, and working with different personal styles. *Power Up!* is a self-esteem and communications outreach series that is customized to each group of displaced homemakers. In addition to these seminars, New Choices offers education, counseling, case management, community referrals, and placement assistance.

This program served 278 displaced homemakers in 2003 compared with 233 in 2002. New Choices... Strategies for Success is funded by the North Carolina Council for Women/Domestic Violence Commission.

Support Services

The Employment and Training Resource Center serves victims of domestic violence, batterers participating in NOVA, and women in crisis. The Internet website is an online database comprised of local openings and links to local employers. The site experienced 78% more hits in 2003 than in 2002. The number of walk-in clients has grown from 3,223 clients in 2002 to 3376 in 2003.

This unit of the Women's Commission develops, updates, publishes, and distributes the Blueprint Directory of local women's organizations. It also assists with projects of the Women's Commission Advisory Board (WCAB).

Community Outreach

The Women's Commission Advisory Board (WCAB) and the Domestic Violence Advisory Board (DVAB) serve the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission department. The WCAB works toward identifying women's issues in the workplace and in the home, while the DVAB's focus helps to identify how domestic violence impacts Charlotte-Mecklenburg. We continue to participate and serve on the Domestic Violence Advocacy Council (DVAC), which is comprised of public and private agencies and interested individuals, working issues of domestic violence.

The Mecklenburg County Women's Commission is involved in numerous community outreach projects throughout the year. Some of the projects that we are involved with are: Women's History Month (March), The President's Network Luncheon (May), Women's Equality Day (August), and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October). We host the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Assembly every other year as well.

The HERO Holiday Celebration held every December for the past nine years, for child observers of domestic violence continues its ongoing partnership with many local and area-wide companies.

Our community's perception is learning that the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission is a domestic violence service provider with a strong ambition to help the community, while the local media fondly recognizes the Women's Commission as the "Go To" agency for information and education on domestic violence issues.

The Women's Commission exposure in the media grew over 220% in 2003 compared to 2002. This includes local television, local radio and print media.

Mecklenburg County Women's Commission

(704) 336-3210

700 North Tryon Street



Charlotte, NC 28202

Mecklenburg County Women's Commission



Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Domestic Violence Umbrella

The Domestic Violence Umbrella offers services to domestic violence victims, child witnesses, batterers as well as the general public of Mecklenburg County and is housed within the Women's Commission. This organization helps improve the access and quality of services provided and creates a more user-friendly system. The collaboration among domestic violence service providers reduces duplication and fragmentation of services and the overlapping of domestic violence services in Mecklenburg County.

The Mecklenburg County Women's Commission also manages the Domestic Violence and Information Tracking System (DVITS). This system collects and assembles reliable, valid and consistent domestic violence information. The objective of DVITS is to create a secure system that allows several Mecklenburg County agencies to share data over their Intranet. Integrating the data provided by the agencies will allow collaboration and statistical reports to be produced on victims and batterers of domestic violence.

Adult Services

The Adult Domestic Violence & Women In Crisis Program has substantially increased its outreach to victims of domestic violence and others in crisis. The program served 3,766 clients in 2003 compared to 2,985 clients served in 2002 (a 26% increase).

We have a strong partnership with the Domestic Violence Advocacy Council (DVAC). In 2003 the DVAC initiated Memorial Marches for murdered victims of domestic violence. Partnerships continue to grow with the University of North Carolina-Charlotte and the League of Women Voters, in the court observation project. Our continued partnership with Department of Social Services provided domestic violence services to the WorkFirst Program serving 701 in 2003 compared to 466 clients served in 2002 (a 50% increase).

The domestic violence staff continues to provide information and education to departments and agencies in Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte.

Programa Confianza

Programa Confianza offers culturally sensitive community based services to battered Latinas by providing individual counseling and domestic violence educational services. This includes crisis counseling and intervention, client advocacy, and information and referrals to other agencies in the community.

With one social worker this program served 356 clients in 2003 with 639 Latin American client contacts. This is an increase of 18% clients served and a 12% increase in client contacts in the past year. We are currently seeking additional funding for this rapidly expanding program.

Programa Confianza partnerships include the Boy Scouts, Las Americas Business Council, Latin American Council, Lifespan, International House, Latin American Coalition, CMPD International Relations Unit, Mexican Consulate, Parks and Recreation, Mi Casa Su Casa, Latin American Women's Association, Radio Lider, and the Metrolina Aids Project.

Child Observers Program & Teen Dating Violence Services

The Domestic Violence Child Observers "HERO" Program and Teen Dating Violence Programs served 827 clients in 2003 with 1946 client contacts, up from 1,100 in 2002, representing a 77% increase.

The Victim Services Unit continued weekly Domestic Violence Group Services three nights per week (four groups per week). The Summer Day Groups continued with three groups in the summer of 2003. The Healthy Development Program, which was created in July of 2001 to serve two to four year old child observers of domestic violence through contractual play therapy services was still unable to reestablish funding lost in June 2002. We are continuing our search for funding to re-establish this service, which was eliminated July 1, 2002.

NOVA

New Options For Violent Actions (NOVA) has enhanced its reputation as having cutting-edge, nationally recognized programming and services within the domestic violence arena. NOVA has specialized groups catering to Spanish speaking, women's groups, and young adult groups.

In 2002, NOVA assessed 708 batterers admitting 663 of those. In 2003, NOVA served 1,137 clients (up 61%) with 304 graduations, 538 terminations, and 779 new clients admitted. The weekly average number of attendees in 2003 was 343 batterers.

As a program that is an alternative to jail, NOVA works closely with the courts, probation officers and social workers, providing in-service training and cross-training; even doing education awareness for inmates and those in work-release. We also work with UNCC doctoral counseling interns to assess the mental health needs of our clients. We recognize that our clients also victimize children, and so we work closely with the community on education and prevention, spearheading several efforts in this area. We have continued to work closely with the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender community to meet their needs as well.

Family Law Information Assistance

Women who need information and referral services regarding family law matters (separation, divorce, child custody, child support, equitable distribution, domestic violence, etc.) are eligible to attend our FREE legal clinic offered the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.

Family Law Information Assistance served 335 participants while serving 162 participants in 2002 representing a 107% increase.

Photos on front page: NACW Convention, Adventures in Attitude, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Domestic Violence Memorial March, International Visitors' Program.