Berks County Community Says: NO MORE!

On Saturday June 15, 2019, more than 200 advocates gathered on a beautiful summer day to make a peaceful, public statement against domestic violence and sexual assault. Wearing matching lavender T-shirts, this amazing and diverse group filled Penn Avenue in West Reading, as the Safe Berks Walk For NO MORE kicked off the 25th annual Art on the Avenue celebration. The Walk was led by Mary Kay Bernosky, Esq., Safe Berks CEO, and Sen. Judy Schwank, who both addressed the crowd.

These dedicated volunteers, sponsors and advocates raised nearly $38,000 to support Safe Berks! Check out page 3 to see our event sponsors.

All day, staff and volunteers provided information about Safe Berks services, displayed art created by residents, and gave out purple and teal carnations – representing the importance of having men, as well as women, support the Safe Berks mission.

Safe Berks also organized an entertainment stage featuring local musicians: Randall Hamlin, Impromtu, Dead Jimmy, John King Dance Band and Practical Saints. Special thanks to Koinos Community Church, Sinking Spring, for providing children's activities and creating a beautiful mural for Safe Berks.

Many survivors and former Safe Berks clients participated in the Walk For NO MORE. One former client shared these words about Safe Berks, which were included in the Reading Eagle's coverage: “They literally saved my life.”
Medical Advocacy Partnership Program (MAPP) Advocates

When victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or human trafficking arrive at local hospitals or utilize other medical services, Safe Berks staff are there to help. Three full-time staff members - Medical Advocacy Partnership Program (MAPP) Advocates – provide direct, compassionate services to victims, and help connect them to Safe Berks and other local resources. They also deliver training to hospital and medical staff on topics related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

The three Safe Berks MAPP Advocates and their locations are: Macy Lengle, Reading Hospital Tower Health; Letty Vazquez-Pena, Penn State Health St. Joseph; and Mayra Morales, Berks Community Health Center. In addition, Safe Berks advocates are available to respond in person to victims at local hospitals 24 hours a day via our hotline, 844-789-SAFE, or text SAFE BERKS to 20121.

This program is guided by the Healthcare Advisory Committee, a group of professionals who meet regularly to discuss systems collaboration and how to shift the culture in the healthcare field to recognize domestic violence and sexual assault as a healthcare issue. One of the goals of the Healthcare Advisory Committee is to identify a universal screening tool that will help identify victims, so immediate access to Safe Berks information, advocacy, safety planning, shelter, and additional services can be offered. The Committee is also working on creating a standard response to victims, so that the same services, guided by best practices, will be offered by medical facilities throughout Berks County.

“The MAPP Advocates are dedicated to providing expert care to victims of domestic and sexual violence,” said Beth Garrigan, who serves as Chief Operating Officer at Safe Berks and supervises the program. “They are also passionate about providing crucial training and technical assistance to medical staff. We are grateful to all the professionals who serve on the Healthcare Advisory Committee, for opening doors and creating the synergy that is helping to make this life-saving program a reality.”

For more information, contact Beth Garrigan at 610-370-7608 or BethG@SafeBerks.org.
The Cindy Boscov Safe Berks Scholarship Fund

Thanks to the love and generosity Cindy Boscov had for Safe Berks and our clients, her family created the Cindy Boscov Safe Berks Scholarship Fund to honor her memory and continue her work. This summer, for the first time, children staying at Safe Berks had the opportunity to attend the South Mountain YMCA Bynden Wood Camp, thanks to this scholarship. The children, who are healing from the trauma of domestic violence, experienced the joy and freedom of camping in a safe and structured environment.

For many years, Cindy Boscov was a devoted volunteer at Safe Berks. When Safe Berks moved into our building in 2012, she donated her own artwork to make our Safe House a beautiful home. She hung each piece of artwork herself, making sure it was just right. A teacher, wife, mother, and dedicated volunteer, Cindy contributed her time and talents to many organizations in Berks County, always working to bring people together and lift up the community.

Safe Berks is honored that the new Cindy Boscov Safe Berks Scholarship Fund continues her legacy by transforming lives through love, kindness and opportunity. Each year, donations to South Mountain YMCA will be matched by Cindy’s family to give as many children as possible a wonderful summer experience. Donations to this Fund can be made online at www.smymca.org.

Thank You Volunteers!

Thanks to all the volunteers who have visited Safe Berks and cooked a delicious dinner for our residents! We are always seeking groups of volunteers to cook dinners on weeknights. Volunteers can bring their own food, cook the food we have at Safe Berks, or a combination. Anyone interested in cooking can email Mindy McIntosh, Director of Development, at MindyM@SafeBerks.org or 610-468-9637.

Thanks to volunteers from Keller Williams Realty, Wyomissing. On May 9, they spent RED Day at Safe Berks, painting, landscaping, and finishing work on the new Safe Berks Playground. Special thanks to Safe Berks Board member Michele McCartney for organizing this incredible day. RED Day stands for Renew, Energize & Donate - and they did all three!

Volunteers who would like to provide direct service to our clients are encouraged to attend Safe Berks Victim Advocate Training, offered twice each year. For more information or to register, contact Lisa Tumbleson, Director of Education and Outreach, at LisaT@SafeBerks.org or 610-370-7811.

Ready. Set. PLAY!

After more than a year of fundraising, planning and building, the new Safe Berks Playground was officially opened on May 24, 2019! The Ribbon Cutting Event brought together many people who had worked on the Playground renovation, including Safe Berks staff, donors, volunteers and board members. From left, Tom McDevitt, volunteer; Mike Shaak, Inside Sales Manager at ECORE International, Lancaster, and volunteer; Meielliss Colon Ortiz, Director of Residential Services at Safe Berks; Sonia Rieger, a staff member at Reading Area Community College (RACC); Francine M. Scoboria, Communications Coordinator at Safe Berks; Angeluis Mezquita, a student at RACC; and Michele McCartney, a member of the Safe Berks Board of Directors, cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the new Safe Berks Playground.
Forty-seven local teens, from schools throughout Berks County, spent a week in July learning, laughing and making new friends at Camp Safe Berks. Coordinated by the Safe Berks Education & Outreach Department, Camp Safe Berks more than doubled the number of campers who attended in 2018. This free day camp, held at Albright College, provided activities aimed at developing positive alliances and leadership skills. Each day included a specific focus: Youth Justice; Racial Justice; Gender Justice; LGBQ+ Justice; and Launch Day, which provided campers with the opportunity to meet Sen. Judy Schwank and ask her questions.

In addition to education and empowerment, the teens had plenty of time for fun and relaxation, such as swimming, tie-dying, a Talent Show, playing pool, outdoor games, and a visit from an ice cream truck! New activities added this year included pop-up health clinics run by Berks Teens Matter and Planned Parenthood, a drum circle, papermaking, yoga, and creative problem solving using Legos provided by Snapology. Rev. Frank McCracken, a member of the executive board of the NAACP, Reading Branch, visited to speak about his hopes for the campers to create positive change, since youth are the future of our country. The teens also enjoyed a visit from Miss Aimee from Drag Queen Storytime, who shared a message of self-acceptance and tolerance for those who march to their own tune.

“Our goal this year was to encourage our campers to think deeply about how issues of social injustice impact not only themselves, but others around them,” said Lisa Tumbleson, Director of Education and Outreach. “We also wanted to balance that heavy material with new experiences and creative outlets for them.”

Thanks to all the volunteers and donors who helped make Camp Safe Berks a great success!

For information about Camp Safe Berks 2020, contact Lisa Tumbleson at LisaT@SafeBerks.org or 610-370-7811.
The vision of Safe Berks is:
Berks County is free from
domestic violence and
sexual assault.

- Crisis Services
- Residential Services
- Education & Outreach
- Counseling
- Systems Advocacy
- Legal Services

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Gifts to Safe Berks
The Give Now button, located on our website at www.safeberks.org/donate/donate-now/, is a convenient way to support Safe Berks. Receipts are generated immediately via email. The official registration and financial information of Safe Berks may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does imply endorsement.

Contact Us
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www.SafeBerks.org
P: 610.373.1206 | F: 610.372.4188
Email: Peace@SafeBerks.org

Toll Free Hotline:
844-789-SAFE (7233)
Or Text SAFE BERKS to 20121

SAVE THE DATE
Monday, December 16, 2019 • 6 to 8 pm
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Reading, PA

Celebration of Peace

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