

## PROVIDER PROFILE

### AT A GLANCE...

#### Mission

The mission of the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center is to provide a coordinated community response to battered women and their children and to improve the victims' quality of life.

#### Description

Founded in 1982 by three women concerned about the lack of services available to local battered women and their children, the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center (formerly the Women's Crisis Center) operated on a volunteer basis until 1984 when it secured \$12,000 in state funding through the Department of Social Services Public-Private Partnership Program. Today, the service area includes nine communities in northeastern Massachusetts: Amesbury, Salisbury, Newbury, Newburyport, Groveland, West Newbury, Merrimac, Rowley and Georgetown. The agency has 13 full-time staff and six part-time staff members who receive support from 75 active volunteers.

The Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center defines domestic violence as a public health issue that will only be prevented through a coordinated community response. Its mission: to provide a consistent, coordinated community response to violence to improve the victims' quality of life. Staff and volunteers partner with social service agencies, law enforcement, hospitals, local governments, schools and businesses to form a safe haven to help adults and children overcome fear and endangerment as they move toward safety and wellness. This partnership helps to increase victims' faith in the ability of the criminal justice system to keep them safe and to minimize their need to seek shelter in a distant location.

In 2004 the agency formed and implemented the Greater Newburyport High Risk Case Response Team—a means for unifying the fragmented work of groups that are individually strong, but collectively stronger. The Team brings diverse parties to the table to share timely information, strategize on individual high risk cases, prevent homicides, and promote public safety. Led by The Center, the Team includes victim advocates, the chief Probation Officer from the Newburyport District Court, the director of the certified batterer's intervention program at Caritas Holy Family Hospital and law enforcement officers from Amesbury, Newburyport, Newbury, and Salisbury.

#### Administrative Office

2 Harris Street  
 Newburyport, MA  
 Tel. 978.465.0999

#### Budget

\$1.1 million

#### Senior Staff

Suzanne C. Dubus, executive director  
 Kelly A. Dunne, director of programs  
 Lisa Williamson, director of education and training  
 Ray Denis, director of development

#### Major Funding Sources

MA Department of Social Services  
 MA Office of Victim Assistance  
 Massachusetts Bar Foundation  
 United Way of Merrimack Valley

## Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center Programs and Services

In order to end domestic violence, the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center has created and implemented innovative programs that meet the changing needs of its clients. The board and staff members understand that they cannot do this work alone so the agency has developed a number of programs that are collaborative and unique to enhance the community's response to domestic violence.

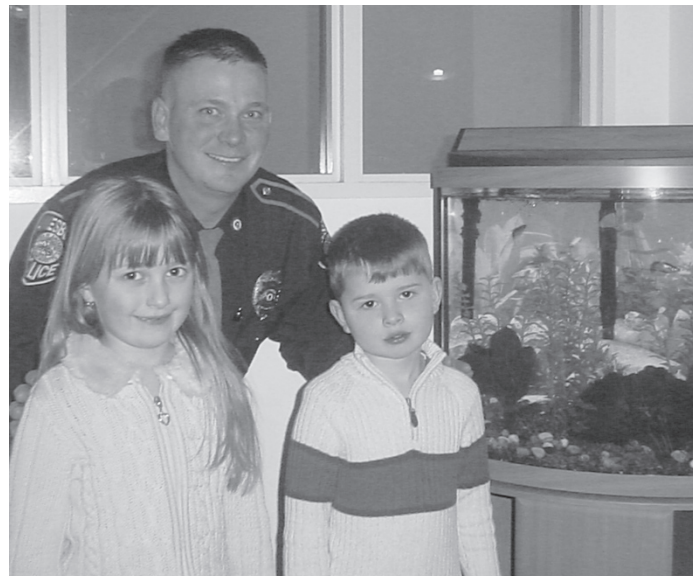
The Center offers an array of free client services: a 24-hour crisis intervention hotline, crisis intervention, short-term crisis counseling, emergency shelter and safe homes, legal advocacy, economic empowerment, children's trauma services and prevention programs for adolescents. During FY '05, the Crisis Center provided services to 1140 adults, 97 percent of whom are women and 88 children, all victims of family violence.

#### School-based Prevention and Education Programs—In

1993, The Center produced *Hitting Home*, a play that illustrated domestic violence and its relationship to teen dating violence and date rape. This began a successful nine-year outreach program using live performance as its primary vehicle. A second production, *Red Tide*, premiered in 1997 as a call to adolescent males to become part of the solution by taking a stand on preventing violence against women and girls. In addition, a middle school curriculum, *Jesse's Journal*, addresses those "blossoming" issues that relate to dating relationships i.e. body image, peer pressure, substance abuse and friendship.



Last fall The Center took its child clients on an all day outing to the Turkey Hill Farm.



Patrolman Jason Kookan of the Amesbury Police Department, who donated and set up a beautiful aquarium in our Amesbury office waiting room to help children relax while at the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center.

ing manual, currently used as the standard of training by the state's public safety office. The staff also created a presentation for employers to address internal policies and procedures to assist victims of domestic violence in the workplace.

#### Children Overcoming Violence Empowerment Project (C.O.V.E.)—Six years ago, The Center received a grant through the Massachusetts

Office for Victim Assistance to create a program to assist the youngest victims of violence through individual and group counseling. This program has grown significantly to accommodate approximately 500 children each year who have either witnessed domestic violence or themselves suffered physical abuse or sexual assault. The Center has expanded the program to include the trauma training of counseling staff in an effort to address more long-term issues for victims.

#### Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project—While most battered women's agencies offer assistance with restraining orders and safety planning, there are few legal resources available to those victims of domestic violence who have little money. The Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center is unique in offering legal representation at probate, criminal and district court. The agency has two staff attorneys, and it supervises a panel of area attorneys who represent clients on a pro-bono basis.

### Executive Director



### Suzanne C. Dubus

Suzanne C. Dubus has served as executive director of the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center (when it was still the Women's Crisis Center, Inc.) since 1997. A domestic violence survivor, Dubus rose above abuse in her own life to help at-risk individuals and families as well as to influence social change in her community.

One of Dubus' favorite ideas comes from the Talmud—that each blade of grass has its own angel hovering overhead whispering, "grow, grow." This is her inspiration, reflective of her work over the past 11 years.

Dubus believes in glimmers of hope, encourages the under-represented and oversees the creation of innovative and effective programs for victims of family violence. She believes that domestic violence robs its victims of the ability to transcend their present situations and to dream of the possibilities that lie before them and that the agency's work is to help victims speak their truth.

A skilled leader, Dubus has increased the agency's revenue to over \$1 million per year, up 49 percent since 1998. She is vigilant about staff development and believes creativity and innovation are key elements in developing programs that truly affect change. She has a reputation for developing and administering effective, innovative and community-based domestic violence programs.

Dubus, who holds a bachelor's of arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, is currently completing a business coaching program. She is also the author of *Red Tide*, a play that addresses problems of teen dating violence. During its successful five-year run, more than 100,000 high school and college students viewed the play. Before coming to the Crisis Center, Dubus worked as a paralegal for civil and bankruptcy litigation. She had also worked in restaurant management.

Active in professional and community affairs, she currently serves on the Nominating Committee of Jane Doe, Inc., on the board of the River Valley Charter School and as an incorporator of the Institution for Savings. Her past memberships include the board of Partnership for Peace (1995-2000), the Governor's Subcommittee: Children's Working Group (1995-1999) and several mayoral commissions.

Dubus is an accomplished public speaker and lives in Amesbury with her husband and daughter.

#### Board of Directors

##### Officers

Jane Tuohy, *president*  
 Martha Muldoon, *vice-president*  
 Barbara Andrews, *treasurer*

##### Members

Janice Anderson  
 Arlene Barnard  
 Helen C. Callahan  
 Joyce Cejka  
 Barbara Dowd  
 Susan Frangipane  
 Elise Henrichs  
 Sue Hriciga  
 Jenifer A. Hoffman  
 Karen Hudner  
 Edward M. Lynch, Jr.  
 Judi Lyons  
 David Mansfield  
 Debra Michals  
 Ganson (Jock) Purcell, Jr.  
 Franee Quinlan  
 Alice Stengel  
 Wendy L. West