

One Day in May - Executive Director Letter to the Editor

June 13, 2006

To the editor:

"Mary" has been married for seven years and lives in our community. Last October she came to the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center after her husband threatened to kill her. She was pregnant and also had her 7-year-old son with her. After the initial interview with Mary, staff brought together the Greater Newburyport High Risk Case Response Team to figure out how to ensure Mary and her son's safety. Within hours, her husband was arrested for domestic assault and battery and sent to jail for two years. Safely out of his reach, Mary and her son have continued to work on healing from the violence they lived with and prepare for the arrival of the newest member of their family, a baby girl.

On May 23, the staff at the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center hosted a baby shower for Mary to help celebrate the baby's arrival and to help defray her pending costs. Immediately following the shower, Mary attended our support group and shared with the other members her hope for a brighter future for herself and her children.

I would also like to tell you the story of "Megan" who left her abusive husband, "Matt," two years ago after many years of abuse. Megan knew that her husband had seriously injured two of his family members when he was younger and on several occasions he had threatened to kill her. During the last fight Matt strangled her in front of their children. She knew she had to get out while she still could.

Megan called the police. Matt was arrested and prosecuted for the crimes against Megan. Megan worked with an advocate from the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center to relocate and keep her address confidential. One of our staff attorneys also worked with Megan to obtain a divorce, which became final last year. Matt is scheduled to be released from jail next year and already Megan is preparing herself and the children.

On May 23, she went back to court with her attorney to seek additional protection for herself and her children once Matt is released from jail. Her request was granted.

May 23, 2006 was an important day for Mary and Megan. It was also an important day for:

- * 14 people who called the crisis hotline;
- * five women who attended support group;
- * three children who attended childcare so their mothers could get the help they needed;
- * two women who were represented by our staff attorney at probate court;
- * one woman who came in for crisis intervention;
- * one woman who stayed at our emergency shelter; and the
- * three children who came to us for counseling to deal with the trauma in their young lives.

May 23 was a day like every other day at the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. We provide critical services to victims of family violence from our community and need your help to continue to do so. If you would like to become involved, call 978-465-0999 or visit our Web site at www.jeannegeigercrisiscenter.org.

Suzanne C. Dubus
Executive Director
Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, Inc.