



2006
30TH ANNIVERSARY



celebrating
thirty years
of change

New Beginnings and the domestic violence movement: milestones... then and now

As we celebrate our 30th year, New Beginnings has become a leading force in the movement to end domestic violence. With a strong Board, 140 volunteers, a regular staff of 37 plus 18 relief workers, the agency is providing an array of services and empowering countless survivors and agents for change. In 1976, the situation was much different.

Only recently had the City of Seattle Office of Women's Rights identified the community's need for a safe haven for battered women and their children. Until then domestic violence had been seen as "marital troubles" best kept quiet, rather than an epidemic of abuse that weakened an entire community. The situation was difficult to measure because few reports existed: domestic violence was "the hidden crime society never called a crime."¹

A battered woman in Seattle had few options in 1975. But the Women's Movement of the 1970s was demanding attention. The most critical local need was emergency shelter. The seed for New Beginnings was planted. The plan: develop a small short-term confidential shelter, providing support, resource referrals, and counseling.



Photos are of models, not program participants.

In 1976 the first shelter opened in a two bedroom apartment, part of the early wave of domestic violence shelters in the country.

As of 2006, New Beginnings services and facilities have grown to include a 21 bed emergency shelter, 17 apartments of transitional housing and a community-based advocacy program that serves hundreds of women individually and in support groups. The 24 hour crisis line receives more than 9,000 calls a year.

The newest addition is the Social Change Program. By training professionals, providing prevention education, and organizing survivors and other volunteers, the Social Change Program works actively to "change attitudes and social intuitions which foster and perpetuate violence."

New Beginnings has always striven to be responsive to community needs. We continue to be guided by the voices of survivors — they are the experts. Our focused vision to end domestic violence combined with innovative, proactive steps towards that goal create a real promise of achieving it.

¹YWCA of Seattle-King County newsletter, 1976

United States Battered Women's Movement Timeline

Early settlers in America base their laws on old English common law that explicitly permits wife-beating for correctional purposes.

1848: The Seneca Falls Convention "to discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women" is held.

1866: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is formed, predating the founding of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in 1875. Both predate any organization aimed at preventing cruelty to women.

1882: Maryland is the first state to make wife-beating a crime.

1919: American women win the right to vote.

1920's and '30's: Psychoanalysis argues that women are masochistic and derive sexual gratification from the violence they experience.

1950's and '60's: The civil rights, anti-war and black liberation movements lay the groundwork for renewed public interest in women's rights.

1960's: A national Harris poll finds that 10% of those interviewed approve of slapping one's spouse on "appropriate occasions". Wife battering is viewed as a family squabble, a problem of individual pathology.

1968: Beating, as cruel and inhumane treatment, becomes grounds for divorce in New York, but the plaintiff must establish that a "sufficient" number of beatings have taken place.

1970's: Women across the country organize to end domestic violence. Grass roots organizing results in the establishment of support groups and the first emergency shelters for battered women.

1975: National Organization for Women (NOW) declares marital violence a major issue and establishes a National Task Force on Battered Women/Household Violence.

1977: The Superintendent of the Cook County Department of Corrections reports that 40% of the women in that system convicted of murder or manslaughter had killed their abusive male partners.

1978: The United States Commission on Civil Rights sponsors a Consultation on Battered Women, legitimizing the needs of battered women as a matter of national concern.

1980's: Within a ten year time span, over 700 shelters for battered women across the United States begin operation.

1982: The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence features the first national Women of Color Conference, with race, class and homophobia as central themes.

1989: There are 1,200 battered women's programs in the United States, sheltering 300,000 women and children each year.

our history

New Beginnings' Timeline

1975-1976: Studies by the City of Seattle Office of Women's Rights and the Council of Planning Affiliates confirm the critical need for safe refuge for battered women.

1976: A small emergency shelter opens as a project of the Coalition on Women and Religion under the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The shelter operates on a shoestring of private donations and special fundraisers.

1979: New Beginnings is granted 501(c)(3) status. The emergency shelter rents a larger facility.

1980: Structured children's services are initiated.

1981: The agency assumes responsibility for three community support groups, and buys a large house with an \$80,000 donation from the Boeing Employees Good Neighbor Fund serving as the down payment.

1982: New Beginnings becomes a United Way member agency. Volunteers and staff organize work parties to prepare the new shelter.

1983: The emergency shelter moves into the new facility. Board-sponsored fund-raising projects are initiated.

1986: The emergency shelter installs a TTY and formalizes an agreement with Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services.

1990: A community-based chemical dependency/ domestic violence support group is formed. The agency collaborates with a local group to present theater workshops in schools to address dating violence.

1991: The City of Seattle provides funding for a Community Advocacy Program, to deliver services for battered women and their children in a community-based, non-residential setting.

1993: The Board adopts a strong diversity policy and sets up a diversity committee.



Timelines continue on back...



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United Way Partner Agency

New Beginnings' mission is to provide shelter, advocacy and support to battered women and their children, and to change attitudes and social institutions that foster and perpetuate violence.

United States Battered Women's Movement Timeline, cont'd

1990's: In most states, police officers may arrest on "probable cause" in cases of assault within the home. Some states go further by imposing a mandatory arrest of an offender.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service begins to recognize domestic violence as grounds for asylum in the U. S.

1992: The U.S. Surgeon General ranks abuse by husbands to be the leading cause of injuries to women aged 15 to 44.

1994: Congress passes the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which allows women to seek civil remedies for gender-based violence.

2006: A Harris Interactive Poll finds that 63% believe domestic violence to be a "very serious" or "extremely serious" problem in the U.S. today.

SOURCES

Based on timelines developed by: National Coalition against Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org), SafeNetwork: California's Domestic Violence Resource (www.caadv.org/docs/timeline.pdf), Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (www.mincava.umn.edu). Used with permission.

New Beginnings' Timeline, cont'd

1995: The agency serves over 300 women and children in the emergency shelter, and almost 500 in the community program. Close to 7,000 crisis calls are received. Community education reaches over 10,000 people.

1996-1997: The agency purchases and remodels a 17 unit apartment building for a Transitional Housing Program with funding from HUD McKinney, the City of Seattle, Washington State Housing Trust and the Federal Home Loan Bank.

2000: A capital campaign chaired by Arnie Prentice of Kibble & Prentice retires the mortgage for the Emergency Shelter, freeing up additional money for programs.

2004: Direct service programs are operating at maximum capacity, with hundreds sheltered and thousands turned away, and transitional housing serving one of twenty who apply. Hundreds of women attend community support groups.

2005-2006: A Social Change Program is initiated with seed money from the Foster Foundation.

**TO SPEAK TO AN ADVOCATE,
24 HOURS (VOICE OR TTY)**

206.522.9472

TO VOLUNTEER

206.926.3016

ON THE WEB

www.newbegin.org

other important numbers

Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.562.6025

Alcohol Drug 24 Hour Help Line
1.800.562.1240

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.7233