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Spotlight

On Domestic Violence

First Step Newsletter
A Program of
The Family Guidance Center

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM.



Christopher Marelli

OUR AWARENESS DINNER AND VIGIL

"Children are the hidden and silent sufferers of domestic violence," said Chris Marelli, keynote speaker for First Step's annual Domestic Violence Awareness Dinner and Vigil, held on October 27th. His childhood memories are anything but fond. He recalled living in fear, waking up in the middle of the night hearing his father abusing his mother, and of being isolated. He said he couldn't invite friends over because he never knew what might set his father off. His father had no shame, he'd assault his wife in front of others and then blame her for it. He used many different forms of abuse; verbal, mental, sexual, financial and physical, said Mr. Marelli. Eventually his mother was able to get herself and the children away from him, yet he says the effects of domestic violence are long-term. To this day, Marelli says he deals with anxiety as a result of it.

The evening concluded with Hickory Police Captain Reed Baer, reading the names of the 54 people killed as a result of domestic violence. A candle lighting and a moment of silence to remember the victims concluded the event.

TIME'S RUNNING OUT!

On December 8th, the drawing for this beautiful 69" X 80" quilt will be held. The quilt was made by a member of the Catawba Valley Quilters Guild. You still have time to

purchase a raffle ticket here at Family

Guidance Center or at The Purple Ribbon. Cost is \$1.00 per ticket or 6 for \$5.00. It will make a great Christmas gift!



Perspecticide in Abusive Relationships

Many victims describe life with an abuser as being imprisoned. Recently we came across this description: living with an abusive and controlling partner can feel like living in a cult, like cult members. Victim's own viewpoints, desires, and opinions may fade as they are overwhelmed by the abusers. Over time, they begin to feel that they don't have a right to their own perspectives. **This is called perspecticide; the abuse-related incapacity to know what you know** (Stark, 2007). It is often part of a strategy of coercive control that can include manipulation, stalking, gaslighting, and physical abuse. Here are some of the ways they do it.

- * **ABUSER ERASES PARTNER'S THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND PERSPECTIVES**

Mark pushed his viewpoints on Christie and would become furious anytime Christie asserted her own opposing views. Mark also lied a lot and she felt obligated to go along with his falsehoods. After a while, Christie lost track of what was true and what were Mark's lies.

- * **ABUSER DECIDES HOW PARTNERS SPEND THEIR TIME**

Jake demanded that Susan be by his side when he worked on his vintage car. She had to hand him tools, clean them or get things for him. Whenever she wanted to do something else, he would rage, call her selfish, self-centered, uncaring; told her how lucky she was that he even wanted her with him. Gradually, she accepted this as an obligation and soon could hardly remember her own hobbies and interests. Once a victim is isolated, it's easy to lose one's sense of self.

- * **ABUSERS DEFINE THEIR PARTNER**

Jenny's husband told her repeatedly that she was a gloomy, depressed person who made everybody feel down. He told her she was crazy to ask for changes in their marriage because she would never be happy anyway. Eventually, she believed him and stopped asking him to change.

Abusers make their partners feel badly about themselves, destroy their self-esteem, and take away their self-worth. Abusers serve as a filter for the outside world, keeping them isolated, and under their coercive control.

If you see yourself in these examples, let us help you rediscover your awesome self!
Call (828) 322- 1400. (Excerpts from www.DomesticShelters.org)

Sights Seen During Awareness Month

We had the “Empty Place at a Table” display at two area eateries, Which Wich and Tutti Frutti. Thank you both. The display symbolizes the loss of a victim’s life and the empty place left in the lives of her/his family and friends.



Cookies for Cops

Our annual thank you to law enforcement for helping victims of domestic violence.



You Made A Difference

Thank You To:

Friendship United Methodist Women— Thank you for baking cookies for our cops and making them feel special. They were GREAT!

Family Guidance Center Staff—thank you for the cookies too!

Lowe’s Home Improvement Store—Thank you for filling a huge need at our Shelter for Battered Women. By your gift, you let them know that they mattered!

Employees of Lowes Home improvement—your gift to our Shelter was so appreciated. It touched the hearts of our families and let them know you cared.

Greg at Lowes

