



CONTACT THE
FAMILY GUIDANCE
CENTER AT
828-322-1400

#17 HWY 70 SE
HICKORY, NC 28602
FGCSERVICES.COM



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.

Enough is Enough

Domestic violence has claimed two more lives in Catawba County. The most recent were Angela Tramble, age 46, and Shanice Williams, age 26, were killed by their intimate partners over the past two weeks. In both cases, the abusers shot themselves after they killed their victims. One died and the other remains hospitalized. **Since December 2015 to today, there have been a total of 8 domestic violence homicides.** Family Guidance Center has been providing domestic violence services for over 30 years and to our knowledge, we've never known of 8 domestic violence homicides in our county in a span of 15 months. Enough is enough. We strongly urge the community to come together and adopt a zero tolerance for domestic violence.



Human Trafficking Generates \$32 Billion Dollars a Year

Human trafficking is the 2nd fastest growing criminal industry in the US. The fastest is the drug industry. *Human trafficking is defined as the use of force, deception or coercion to compel someone into the sex slavery or labor slavery.* Trafficking includes the transport, transfer or procurement of an individual and the ability of the trafficker to earn goods, money or anything of value for the labor or sex of the people being trafficked.

Human trafficking is said to be the modern day of slavery, with illegal smuggling and trading of people for forced labor or sexual exploitation. According to some estimates, approximately 80% of trafficking involves sexual exploitation, 19% involves labor exploitation. An example of how young girls or women get trapped is: Melissa, age 16, was lured by a young man she met at a teen hang-out. He said he was a photographer and promised to get her into modeling. She left home to go with him to New York to meet a modeling agent. Once in New York, she was dependent upon him, she had no money and he controlled her through emotional, sexual and physical abuse. Soon he had her on "the streets" making money for him and he forced her to take drugs. She was too ashamed and afraid to return home. Unfortunately, beatings, drug abuse, and prostitution are all part of human trafficking. ***The next time you see that young teen on the street, remember she may not be there by her own choice.***

Mark Your Calendar Now

The **Hickory Parks and Recreation Department** is hosting a **Black & Blue Fashion Show** on Saturday, April 22, at the Ridgeview Recreation Center at 2:00 p.m. The event is in support and recognition of "Stopping Domestic Violence". The models are local men who are community supporters; they will be strutting their stuff in their favorite black and blue outfits.

- * Event is free; snacks and soft drinks available
- * **Entertainment by Santonio and White White**
- * Donations of canned food and new clothes for children will be accepted
- * **Date/Time is Saturday, April 22 at 2:00 PM**

DON'T MISS THIS FUN-FILLED EVENT!

REAL MEN DON'T HIT REAL MEN DON'T HIT

Think Human Trafficking If You See These Signs

- * **Human trafficking generates \$32 billion dollars a year.**
- * **Slavery was abolished 150 years ago...yet there are more people in slavery today... than at any other time in our history.**
- * **2.8 million children away each year. Within 48 hours, 1/3 will be lured into prostitution and pornography.**
- * **Child pornography is the fastest growing crime in the US. It has seen a 2500% increase in 10 years.**
- * **The average age of entry into sex slavery is 12 years old.**

**CALL FIRST STEP IF YOU
NEED HELP...828-322-1400**



NC Takes A Stand

We salute the State's efforts in making human trafficking a priority. **They have launched "Project No Rest,"** a statewide project to increase awareness and prevention around human trafficking and how it affects our children and young people in N.C. They have partnered with the UC School of Social Work to shine a light on human trafficking and to reduce the number of youth trafficked. The "Project No Rest" ads are currently airing on T.V. stations in our state. To learn more, Google "Project No Rest".

Human Trafficking is one of the most difficult crimes to spot because the victims look like ordinary people.



There are;

however, some signs that may alert you to identifying a victim.

- * tattoos – words like Daddy, Cash
- * has a pimp/manager or someone who is always by their side
- * has long work hours but has very little money
- * is fearful anxious, depressed submissive, or nervous
- * unusually afraid or anxious around law enforcement or when law enforcement is brought up
- * avoids eye contact
- * appears malnourished or skinny
- * shows signs of physical restraint, torture like bruises, cuts, etc.
- * claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where she/he is living
- * their story does not add up or make sense

Thank you to the Catawba County UW, N.C. Council for Women, and the Governor's Crime Commission for all your support.

**"LIKE" us on Facebook to keep up
with FGC news, facts and
information.**

Free Tax Prep for Survivors

Resources available to help survivors get money matters in order by April 18th.

After leaving a partner, abusive or not, you may find yourself facing financial hurdles like preparing and filing taxes. It can be a struggle to figure out what steps to take next, especially when you are dealing with a range of issues following the end of the relationship. However, help is available at tax time. Here are some completely free services that can help you file your taxes:



If your income is below \$54,000 a year, you have a disability or your ability to speak English is limited, you might qualify for the IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. In this program, volunteers can help you prepare and file your tax return for free. **In Catawba County, call Goodwill, 828-466-2346**

- * Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) offers free help designed for people age 60 and older and specializes in issues related to retirement. You can enter your zip code to find a VITA or TCE location near you.
- * The AARP Foundation offers free tax assistance to anyone here in Hickory. **Call 828-358-4634 M-F 9am to 1pm for an appointment.**
- * Watch out for companies that offer to prepare and file your taxes in exchange for a portion of your tax refund. And read the fine print if you are considering a refund anticipation loan – these loans often have high interest rates and/or fees.
- * An organization that helps you file your taxes can also help determine if you or your partner gets to claim your children as deductions on your taxes. For 2016, the deduction is \$4,050 per child. A deduction reduces your total taxable income, which decreases the amount of taxes you owe the government.
- * You may also qualify for the earned income tax credit, which can increase your tax refund. The IRS estimates that 20 percent of people who qualify for this credit don't claim it. For 2016, people with incomes from \$14,880 or less with no children to \$47,955 or less with three or more children may qualify for the credit.

**If you need help or information about our services, call 828-322-1400
Crisis line 828-228-1787**

You Made a Difference

We are so fortunate to have churches in our community who faithfully support our agency. Thank you to:

- * Discovery Church
- * First Presbyterian Church, Hickory
- * First United Methodist Church, Conover
- * Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hickory
- * New Hope Moravian Church/Women's Fellowship, Newton
- * Royal Chapel Church of God Christian Women Connection, Hickory
- * Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church UMW, Newton
- * Old St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Newton
- * St. Aloysius Catholic Church

Special Thanks To...

Hickory Tavern Chapter DAR for hosting a Shower for our Shelter. We received many needed and useful items!

It is caring community people like **Joe Beamon** who make the world a better place. Thank you!

A Big Thanks to **Century Furniture!** We appreciate your donation of beautiful furniture to our Purple Ribbon Thrift Store.

The Purple Ribbon

Don't forget to visit The Purple Ribbon for some great buys in clothing, furniture, gifts, Prom dresses, accessories, etc.

Come visit us! You will find LOTS of treasures at the Purple Ribbon Thrift Store!