



a Woman's Place ON THE ROAD TO FLOURISHING

Newsletter

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A Woman's Place Civil Legal Representation Program – A Vital Program for Bucks County's Domestic Violence Victims

AWP's Civil Legal Representation (CLR) program provides free legal services to victims of domestic violence. AWP Managing Attorney, Lauren Bucksner, understands that victims are frequently blocked from receiving access to the powerful and lifesaving tools that the justice system has to offer, while all too often, their abusers have no problems obtaining legal representation. Bucksner and AWP's paralegal, Diane Haines, provide legal representation and advice to victims on matters such as custody, child and spousal support, divorce, and equitable distribution. AWP's CLR program provides full access to justice to low income victims who want to live free of abusers.

I have the privilege of representing some of the strongest, caring, and dynamic people that I've ever met. I am inspired every day by their unrelenting pursuit of the most basic life necessities for themselves and their children.
– Lauren Bucksner

Amala* is a recent AWP client from Bensalem. Pledged by her family to a man through an arranged marriage, Amala spoke no English when she joined her new husband in America, where he was already an established businessman. Throughout the devastating marriage, Amala was violently beaten not only by her husband, but also by his family. Held in virtual servitude, her husband threatened to send her back to India without their two young children if she ever crossed him. When the abuse became too severe for her to bear, Amala fled with her children to AWP's shelter, and she filed for a Protection from Abuse Order.

Amala's husband devised a diabolical scheme in retaliation. He conspired with his lawyer to purport that Amala herself had hired the lawyer, and procured a fraudulent divorce agreement and fake Property Settlement Agreement in her name, which gave all marital assets to the husband. Amala's forged signature was on both documents, witnessed by a Notary Public.

As she exited the courtroom after receiving a PFA Order, Amala was served the deceptive documents. Unable to read them, she handed them to her AWP advocate who immediately took her to CLR. Bucksner and Haines filed a petition to reopen and vacate the divorce decree and invalidate the Property Settlement Agreement. Litigation was costly and required the deposition of the corrupt lawyer and the Notary Public, the hiring of a forensic handwriting expert, the assessment of complicated financial documents, and the services of an interpreter who could attend attorney/client meetings and court proceedings.

Due to the complexity of the litigation, it took two years to get to a hearing. During that time, Bucksner successfully litigated a custody agreement and obtained substantial child support for Amala. AWP staff helped Amala find housing and access other resources to begin a safe life for she and her children.

Amala's hearing was held over two days in the winter of 2015, and Bucksner tore through the husband's case. The handwriting expert testified that Amala's signatures on the divorce agreement and Property Settlement Agreement were

forges. After Bucksner's cross-examination of the husband's lawyer, the Judge pronounced that he would report the corrupt lawyer to the PA Disciplinary Board. When the Notary Public took the stand, he could not identify Amala as the woman who had signed the divorce and Property Settlement Agreement, as the woman who came into his office had been wearing a veil.

When I met Amala, she was so terrified and alone. Two years had gone by and she was still waiting for justice. This was her real life, her children and the husband she was devoted to. When the husband's case began to fall apart, I could see a sigh of relief in her but also of disbelief and heartache.

– Lauren Bucksner

Facing defeat, Amala's husband withdrew his objection to the divorce decree being vacated and the Property Settlement Agreement being invalidated. Furthermore, the husband was ordered to pay court expenses, as well as spousal support retroactively to the date that the counterfeit divorce complaint was filed.

Thanks to AWP's CLR program and other services, Amala is flourishing. She is conquering the English language, has custody of her children, has a job she enjoys, and is reveling in a sense of freedom and safety that she has long yearned to experience. The Judge in the case was so impressed with the quality of AWP's CLR program that he personally telephoned Bucksner and invited her to become a member of the prestigious Bucks County Inn of Courts. But Bucksner hasn't finished

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Join us for our DVAM events, and wear purple on Wednesday, October 14 – Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day – to show that you're working to end domestic violence.



working on Amala's behalf – her next step is to file a divorce complaint.

Unbelievably, the continuation of AWP's indispensable CLR program was in question just a few months ago due to limitations on the part of the funder. Funding that has traditionally covered the entire \$200,000 cost of the CLR program was lost. AWP leadership and Board was faced with a serious question: Can this program survive? The answer was simple: Not only can it survive, it must.

While funds have been diverted to ensure the preservation of the CLR program, we need your help to ensure that Bucks County's domestic violence victims do not lose access to all this program offers. Amala's story is not unique, but her outcome is. Without the free programs of AWP's CLR program, there is no telling where Amala and her children would be. We must maintain this program to ensure equality for victims of domestic violence, as well as the equity of the judicial system.

When I first met Lauren, I never knew anything about what my husband had done to me. I was told by my husband and his family not to trust her. But Lauren was always by my side and helped me. I knew I could have trust in her. She was always calling me to make sure I was okay and to make me feel better when I was scared. She helped me be strong. – Amala

*AWP client name has been changed to protect the victim.

Candlelight Vigil Remember, Honor, Advocate – October 1



Domestic Violence Awareness Month begins with AWP's Candlelight Vigil – an important and meaningful evening to remember those we've lost to domestic violence and to honor the survivors. AWP's Candlelight Vigil sends an important message that we will not stop until the violence ends. Please join us Thursday, October 1, 2015 at Woodside Church, 1667 Edgewood Road, Yardley. The Vigil begins at 7:00 p.m., with a reception to follow. RSVP to Heather Giampapa at hgiampapa@awomansplace.org or 215.343.9241 x120 by Thursday, September 28.



Where Your Purchase Brings Delight to More Than Just You

Do you know that happy shopping feeling you get when you find that perfect item at the perfect price – the skirt that fits you just right, the necklace that goes great with your little black dress, the sweater that will actually please the impossible-to-shop-for man in your life? Yes, that feeling that leaves you with a satisfied smile and not-empty wallet. That feeling can be found on every rack at **In Full Swing**, AWP's fabulous thrift store. Gorgeous women's clothing, fun children's apparel, dapper men's items, handbags, shoes, accessories, jewelry, and housewares are in stock every day at incredible prices.

But more than filling you with shopping enjoyment, your In Full Swing purchases leave you with a full heart. Every penny spent at In Full Swing comes back to AWP and supports our mission to empower women and end intimate and domestic violence for all. That skirt that fits you just right helped to fund a client's counseling session, the necklace helped pay for a client's meeting with AWP's civil legal representation attorney, and the sweater purchase went to arts and crafts supplies for a child staying in AWP's safe shelter. That's a feeling you can't buy anywhere else.

In Full Swing is open
7 days a week for shopping
and donation drop off.

Mon – Sat, 10 am to 6 pm
Sun, Noon to 5 pm

225 West State Street, Doylestown, PA 18901 215.340.0120

Race to Empower
5K Run/1-Mile Fun Walk
October 17, 2015
www.awomansplace.org www.bfs.org

Registration begins at 3:00 p.m.,
Race to Empower begins at 4:00 p.m.

AWP is proud to announce that we have partnered with Buckingham Friends School (BFS) for the 6th annual **Race to Empower 5K Run and 1-Mile Walk**. BFS' values of equality, peace, and nonviolence perfectly align with AWP's vision of a world where all individuals are safe in their relationships and can flourish.

This year's Race to Empower will be a unique trail run held in the hills and woods of BFS' beautiful campus. A challenging course, the 5K will work your muscles, while running to benefit survivors of domestic violence will keep you energized! The 1-mile fun walk is the perfect outing for adults and kids alike.

All participants will receive souvenir t-shirts and race bags, prizes will be awarded, and attendees will enjoy a festive afternoon of music, refreshments, and more!

Empowerment is huge at AWP. This year we are celebrating the one-year anniversary of **The Empowerment Project (TEP)**, and we couldn't be happier with our progress! Consisting of programs offered free of charge to adults and teens in our community, TEP creates the conditions and builds the skills needed to strengthen individuals and communities through fellowship, discussion, and personal growth. The Race to Empower is a wonderful way to support these tremendous programs!

For registration and sponsorship information (there are many terrific benefits of sponsorship!), please visit www.awomansplace.org, or contact Director of Public Advocacy, Heather Giampapa, at hgiampapa@awomansplace.org or 215.343.9241 x120. For more information on The Empowerment Project, visit www.awomansplace.org, or contact Director of The Empowerment Project, Ann Ciliberto, at aciliberto@awomansplace.org or 215.343.9241 x114.

#Run2Flourish




Deck AWP's Halls With Gift Cards & Paper Products

Fa la la la la, la la la la! The tremendous generosity of our community is never as evident as during the holiday season. Every year, we are overwhelmed by the kindness of friends and neighbors engaged in making the holiday season brighter for AWP clients and their children. If you're hoping to find the Season of Giving in action, you need look no further than the AWP offices in November and December!

This year, we're asking supporters to focus their giving in support of two of AWP's greatest needs – gift cards and paper products. Gift cards to Wal-Mart, Target, CVS, Walgreens, grocery stores, and gas stations provide our clients with the freedom to purchase what they need when they need it. Gift cards are given to clients at AWP's annual Client Holiday Party, and are also used throughout the year whenever clients are in need.

Paper products are always in demand. Think about the paper towels and toilet paper you use in your home. Now think about AWP's safe shelter – year-round housing for 8 women and their children. For a few weeks this past year, the shelter was home to 19 children! So while paper products might not seem festive, they will keep our safe shelter humming along happily!

For more information on donating to AWP at any time of the year, or to discuss a holiday collection drive, please contact Director of Public Advocacy Heather Giampapa at hgiampapa@awomansplace.org or 215.343.9241 x120.



Chocolate Lovers' Is On The Move!

A sweet change is coming for AWP's 21st annual **Chocolate Lovers' Fantasy!** Save-the-date for **Saturday, March 19** and join us at The Fuge, Bucks County's historic astronaut training site for Alan Sheppard, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, and countless other space heroes. Your favorite ways to celebrate Chocolate Lovers' Fantasy will still be in effect – enticing cuisine and drinks, desirable silent and live auction items, a singular travel experience raffle, and lively music that invites you to dance the night away. You won't want to miss AWP's signature event, moving this year to a truly original venue!



#Chocolate2Flourish



It's back – AWP's fabulous **Coach Bag Bingo**, where your chance to win a gorgeous Coach or Michael Kors bag is as easy as B-I-N-G-O! Please plan to join us for a night of fun and furious bingo on Saturday, January 30, 2016, 7:00 p.m. at Benner Memorial Hall in Richlandtown. Proceeds benefit AWP's vibrant Prevention Project, which strengthens our community's understanding of the issues of domestic violence and how working together, we can create safe, flourishing futures for all.

#Bingo2Flourish

#GivingTuesday – December 1 – Support AWP's Client Fund for the Small Things

An AWP client's road to flourishing is made up of many steps – Big and Small.

AWP's Executive Director, Ifeoma (Ify) Aduba, recently heard from a client working with the Legal Advocacy Team on obtaining a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order. During the 10 minute conversation, the client mentioned her broken clothes dryer 5 times. You've probably been there yourself – there's a Big Thing going on in your life that you're trying to get through, but then a Small Thing keeps popping up and you find yourself focusing on that, while still trying to manage the Big Thing. Using funds from AWP's Client Fund, Ify had the dryer fixed. The client was elated and relieved – the Small Thing was taken care of and her attention could return to the Big Thing – safety for herself and her children.

#GivingTuesday, the global day dedicated to giving back, is December 1. Be a Big Deal on #GivingTuesday by donating to the Client Fund and help with someone's Small Thing.

Small Things make a Big Difference. We invite you to be a part of #GivingTuesday by donating to the Client Fund. Donate to AWP's Client Fund on December 1, take care of a Small Thing, and harness the joy of giving.

- On #GivingTuesday, December 1, visit www.awomansplace.org
- Make your gift - \$1 to \$1,000 - every cent can be Big!
- Post your gift on social media with the #GivingTuesday hashtag.
- Feel Big Joy with each "like" and comment from your friends, and for each AWP client who no longer has to worry about their Small Thing.

Donations to the Client Fund may be used in the following ways:

- Bus tokens or gas money to help AWP clients get to jobs, court, or support groups
- Money to cover prescriptions when the client can't afford the co-pay
- Utility bill payments, or car and home repairs when clients are just getting on their feet and don't have the extra funds handy
- Costs for client's children to attend AWP's Peace Works summer camp
- Scholarships to assist with a certificate program or other educational pursuit
- Assistance with relocating to or settling into a new home

#Give2Flourish

P.O. Box 299
Doylestown, PA 18901

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 24 Hour Hotline | 1 800 220 8116 |
| Business Office | 215 343 9241 |
| Fax | 215 343 3411 |
| In Full Swing | 215 340 0120 |

www.awomansplace.org

Return Service Requested

Remember to designate AWP
A Member Agency



of Bucks County

**October is
Domestic
Violence
Awareness
Month**


A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within PA 1 800 732 0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

— PA Commission of Charitable Organizations

Calendar of Events • Calendar of Events • Calendar of Events • Calendar of Events

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Vigil

Thursday, October 1, 7 p.m.
Woodside Church, 1667 Edgewood Rd,
Yardley

Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day

Wednesday, October 14
Wear purple to show that you're working
to end Domestic Violence

Race to Empower 5K Race and 1 Mile Fun Run

Saturday, October 17, 2015,
registration 3 p.m., race 4 p.m.
Buckingham Friends School,
5684 York Rd, Lahaska, PA

Direct Service Training

Mondays & Wednesdays, October 5,
October 7, October 12, October 14,
October 19, October 21, October 26,
October 28, November 2, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
AND Saturdays October 10 & October 24,
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

#GivingTuesday

Tuesday, December 1
On your computer!

Teen Training

Tuesday, December 1 & Thursday,
December 3, 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 5, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

C.O.R.E. Training

Tuesday, December 8, 2015 &
Thursday, December 10, 2015,
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Wednesday, December 9, 2015,
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Direct Service Training

Monday, January 11 - Friday, January 15,
2016, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Coach Bag Bingo

Saturday, January 30, 2016, 7 p.m.
Benner Memorial Hall,
1260 E Cherry Rd,
Richlandtown, PA

Chocolate Lovers' Fantasy

Saturday, March 19, 2016, 6 p.m.
The Fuge, 780 Falcon Cir #200,
Warminster, PA

Women's History Month Award

Thursday, March 31, 2016, 5:30 p.m.
James Lorah House, 132 N Main St,
Doylestown, PA

Volunteer Appreciation

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Annual Breakfast & Community Recognition Ceremony

Thursday, May 19, 2016,
8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Northampton Valley Country Club,
299 Newtown Richboro Rd,
Richboro, PA

Vision...

A Woman's Place envisions a society where all individuals are safe in their relationships and can flourish.

Mission...

A Woman's Place is a community-based social change organization committed to the empowerment of women and to ending intimate and domestic violence for all.

Values...

To accomplish our vision of a society where all individuals are safe and can flourish, the programs, services, and decision making at all levels of A Woman's Place are rooted in and guided by the following values:

Courage: A Woman's Place acts bravely and boldly, not withstanding fear.

Creativity: A Woman's Place encourages the creation of meaningful new ideas, interpretations, and rules.

Equality: A Woman's Place believes each and every one of us must collaborate to create a new society based in equal power and rights.

Integrity: A Woman's Place is of sound moral character and adheres to ethical principles.

Respect: A Woman's Place is considerate and honors the worth and dignity of all beings and resources.

Social Justice: A Woman's Place analyzes structural social inequalities in order to promote justice.

A Woman's Place Newsletter is published twice a year by A Woman's Place to inform supporters and partners of news and events at the organization. For additional information, please contact hgiampapa@awomansplace.org. Newsletter written and edited by Heather S. Giampapa, Michael Hicks, and Jacalyn A. Hartzell. Design and printing by CP Commercial Printing.