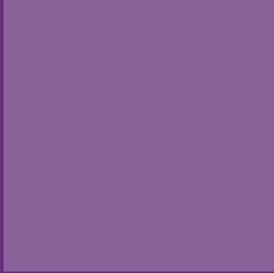
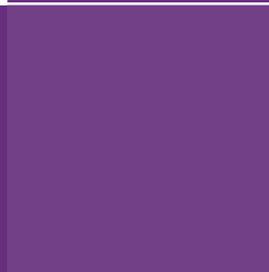
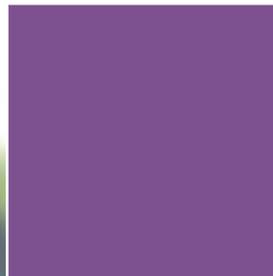




Fairfax County Commission for Women

The commission's charge is to **promote the full equality of women and girls** in the county.



FY 2011- FY 2012
BIENNIAL REPORT

Message from the Chair

Jeanie F. Jew (Springfield)



Fiscal years 2011 and 2012 were challenging but exciting years for the Fairfax County Commission for Women (CFW), as we transitioned to new leadership, new members, new staff and new budget realities. CFW has made substantial progress on its current strategic goal to advise the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on the needs of domestic violence victims for expanded housing resources.

Indeed, I am happy to report that our efforts have led to new levels of cooperation with other agencies and a greater focus by the county on the needs and realities of the growing number of individuals who are at risk of homelessness because of domestic violence.

CFW has also explored new avenues of community outreach. We sponsored a Women's History Month essay contest for Fairfax County high school seniors, participated in George Mason University's Breastival during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and assisted in the organization of a "Friends" committee in the hopes of leveraging resources to support Commission projects. More on these efforts is outlined below.

I know I speak for all of my fellow Commissioners in thanking the Board of Supervisors for giving us its support and this opportunity to serve our community.

Who is CFW?

Jeanie F. Jew (Chair), Springfield

Kathy Goggin (Vice Chair), Sully

Sondra Seba Hemenway, At-Large

Mattie Palmore, Minority At-Large

Nancy Krakover, Braddock

Diane Hoyer, Dranesville

Cathy Baum, Hunter Mill

Emily McCoy, Lee

Lee Helfrich (Vice Chair, 11/2011-3/2012), Mason

Kari Wright Warren, Mount Vernon

Miriam Swydan Erickson, Providence

Sakshi Chhabra, Student Representative

Ina Fernández, Executive Director

Michelle Mueller, Liaison

CFW's Strategic Focus:

Safe, Affordable Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and housing were the two top concerns of constituents in CFW's 2010 survey of policy priorities. CFW's focus on the policy intersection of domestic violence and housing was initiated in FY 2011 during strategic planning, with facilitation by Shirley Reed and Patty Clark of the Choose 2 Lead Foundation. CFW's Domestic Violence and Affordable Housing Committee, which currently includes Commissioners Kari Warren (Committee Co-Chair, Mount Vernon), Cathy Baum (Committee Co-Chair, Hunter Mill), Emily McCoy (Lee), and Lee Helfrich (Mason), has been leading the CFW information-gathering and advocacy efforts around domestic violence and housing since Spring 2011.

Throughout FY 2011, CFW gained invaluable information and input from victim services professionals, housing and economic specialists, and domestic violence (DV) victims who graciously shared their expertise at CFW monthly meetings. With this input, CFW is progressing towards the development of recommendations for enhancing the housing options of DV victims.

DV victims face unique safety and economic challenges, which the human services community must help them address. DV victims often choose to separate from their abusers as their route to long-term safety, but this transition can be very dangerous for DV victims and their children. A lack of available, appropriate resources for assistance can compound this danger.

CFW conducted a survey of providers of emergency, transitional and permanent housing in Spring 2012, and found that Bethany House turned away 252 individuals who sought domestic violence shelter in FY 2011, and Artemis House turned away 158 families. These statistics demonstrate a large unmet need for DV shelter beds in Fairfax County. The 2012 Fairfax County Point in Time Homelessness Survey results confirmed that domestic violence must be singled out for response in housing policies. Fifty-two percent (52%) of homeless families were homeless because of domestic violence. While the number of people in families whose homelessness was not due to domestic violence had decreased 21% between 2010 and 2012, the number who were homeless because of domestic violence increased 31%.

As a next step, the CFW is organizing a dialogue event for public and private agencies and organizations in the County who are working to address the housing barriers and needs faced by domestic violence victims, thereby leveraging the CFW's knowledge towards the eventual institution of cooperative solutions to this growing problem.

Projects

Domestic Violence in the Workplace Policy

In Spring 2012, the CFW's project to institute employment accommodations and protections for victims of domestic violence who are County employees was finally approved. The CFW is currently working with the County Security Office to refine the policies, which will benefit not only domestic violence victims, but also County employees who experience any form of workplace violence.

CFW to Get Support from New "Friends"

Through the leadership of former CFW Chair Diane Hoyer (Dranesville), the "Friends of the Fairfax County Commission for Women" was established to raise and leverage resources in support of CFW's mission to promote the full equality of women and girls in Fairfax County. The "Friends" will operate as an educational and charitable organization under state and federal law.

Lending a Helping Hand



Commissioners Cathy Baum, Sakshi Chhabra, Miriam Swydan Erickson, Kathy Goggin, Sondra Seba Hemenway, and Jeanie Jew with some of the thousands of used cell phones collected by the CFW.

The CFW facilitated financial assistance for a number of vital projects in Fairfax County. The CFW:

- Participated in the Verizon Hopeline Project, collecting used cell phones which were redeemed for donations to Artemis House, the County's emergency shelter for domestic violence victims.
- Underwrote the printing in Spanish of an updated divorce guide.
- Donated grocery gift cards to the Fairfax County Police Department Victim Services Section to provide emergency funds for domestic violence victims, after learning that public servants were using personal funds.

- Allocated funds for supplies for the Fairfax County Mother's Rooms.
- Sponsored the Vienna, Virginia Women's Center 2012 Leadership Forum.
- Provided gift cards to assist victims seeking help at the Domestic Violence Action Center, Fairfax County's co-located multi-agency service center for victims of domestic violence.
- Facilitated the donation of funds from the Global Children's Foundation to aid the children of Artemis House.



Commissioners Sook Kim, Kari Warren, Lee Helfrich, and Executive Director Ina Fernández meet with officers of the Global Children's Foundation.

Fostering Awareness

Women's History Month "Personal Sheroes" Essay Contest

In a successful outreach project, CFW honored the Women's History Month 2012 theme of "Women's Education, Women's Empowerment" by sponsoring an essay contest for public high school seniors on their "Personal Sheroes." The BOS Proclamation was received by the first place winner, Briana Neuberger of Chantilly High School, who described the support she received from her 5th grade teacher. Thomas Jefferson's Tien Ngoc Bui won second prize for a piece on her mother and self-acceptance. Honorable mention prizes were also issued to one student from each Magisterial District. Prizes were underwritten by a private charitable trust, which chose to remain anonymous.



Women's History Month Essay Contest finalists and winners with Commissioners Lee Helfrich, Cathy Baum, Kari Warren, Emily McCoy, Sondra Seba Hemenway, Jeanie F. Jew, and staff Sandy Bromley and Ina Fernández. Student finalists shown: John Tenorio, Mt. Vernon District; Teresa Tedrick, Braddock District, Briana Neuberger, 1st Place Overall (with her Shero Ms. Harris); Tien Bui, 2nd Place Overall (with her Shero, her mother); Bridget Jamison, Hunter Mill District; Courtney Cook, Lee District.

Notable Women of Virginia Display

"Our History is our Strength" was the national theme of Women's History Month in 2011, which CFW recognized through a pictorial display of Notable Women of Virginia. Kathy Wheeler, of the Community Business Partnership, received the BOS Proclamation on behalf of the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia, which was celebrating its 10th anniversary of helping women start and expand small businesses.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

More than 50 cancer survivors joined CFW for the FY 2011 Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) proclamation ceremony. Belinda Conte, Director of Inova Cancer Services, received the proclamation from the BOS.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue arrived in pink force to help CFW raise awareness during FY 2012 BCAM. The BOS proclamation was received by Bonita Pennino of the American Cancer Society, who also organizes the fundraising efforts of the Pennino Penguins, a county support group. CFW also participated in "Breastival" at George Mason University.



Members of the CFW, and staff of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and the Office for Women & Sexual and Domestic Violence Services at the FY 2012 BCAM proclamation by the Board of Supervisors.

Turning Point Suffragist Memorial

To inspire and educate Virginians, CFW has partnered with the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association to erect a memorial at Occoquan Regional Park commemorating the courage and sacrifice of the women imprisoned at Lorton Workhouse in 1917 for campaigning in favor of a woman's right to vote. The CFW was also a sponsor of the Memorial Committee's Silent Sentinel Awards, honoring individuals who have been instrumental in advocating for women's equality.

Listening and Learning

The CFW is grateful to the following guests who provided CFW and its committees with invaluable information at meetings in FY 2011 and FY 2012. These individuals and agencies provided useful knowledge and insights, as well as links with the CFW which can be used to build future partnerships.

- Tom Barnett, Program Manager, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness
- Toya Codjoe, Project Coordinator, Office of the County Executive
- Vanessa Cullers, Economic and Housing Specialist, Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services
- Carol Erhard, Director of Rental Services, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Ron Fitsimmons, Alice's Kids
- Dr. Sheila Hearne, George Mason University
- Dr. John Paden, George Mason University
- Dr. David Armor and Cheryl Choy, George Mason University
- Catherine Keightley, Executive Director, Girls on the Run of Northern Virginia
- Jennifer Lockwood-Shabat, Vice President, Washington Area Women's Foundation
- Shirley Reed and Patty Clark, Choose2Lead Foundation
- Suzanne Scott, Director of Women and Gender Studies, George Mason University
- Hanan Scrapper, Director of Artemis House
- Detective Melissa Wallace and Victim Services Specialist Sarai Heath, Mount Vernon Police
- Kari Wright Warren, The Women's Group of Mt. Vernon
- Barbara Wrigley, Executive Director, Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia

Thanks



Former Student Representative Rachel Nohe provides information at the 2011 George Mason University Breastival.

CFW acknowledges the outstanding efforts of the Commissioners who retired during FY2011 and FY2012:

Rachel Nohe (Student Representative)

Keeshea Turner Roberts (Providence; Vice Chair 6/2011-10/2011)

Sook Kim (Minority At-Large)

Toni-Townes Whitley (At-Large)

Diana Shermeyer (Mt. Vernon)

Michelle Jones (Hunter Mill) and

Alotta Taylor (At-Large)

as well as our former Liaisons **Sandy Bromley, Esq.**, and **Carla McTigue**.

The CFW would like to thank Sook Kim for providing design services for many CFW documents, including this Biennial Report.

What is the Commission for Women? A Brief History

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors established the Commission for Women in 1971 with the charge to promote the equality of women and girls in Fairfax County. Since then, it has advised on issues ranging from employment to sports facilities, and assisted in the development of victim assistance programs and resource directories.

CFW is composed of 12 Commissioners: one from each Magisterial District, two serving At-Large, and a Student Representative. The Commission is affiliated with the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, working closely with it and the community through a part-time Liaison.

CFW represents the concerns of women and girls on the following County organizations: the Fairfax County Public School Human Relations Advisory Committee, the Office to Prevent & End Homelessness Governing Board, and the Domestic Violence Prevention Policy Coordinating Council. It is a member of the National Association of Commissions for Women and the National Council of Women's Organizations, and supports The Women's Center in Vienna, Virginia, the National Clearinghouse on Women's Issues and the Southeastern Women Studies Association at George Mason University (Women and Gender Studies).

Fairfax County Commission for Women

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Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Call 703-324-5730; TTY 711
Fax 703-324-3959
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cfw

The Commission meetings are public meetings held on the second Monday of each month (except August) at 7:00 p.m. in the Fairfax County Government Center. Check the website, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cfw



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