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celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women

inside:

spring calendar

young mothers speak

the challenge of infertility

ending gun violence

protecting children

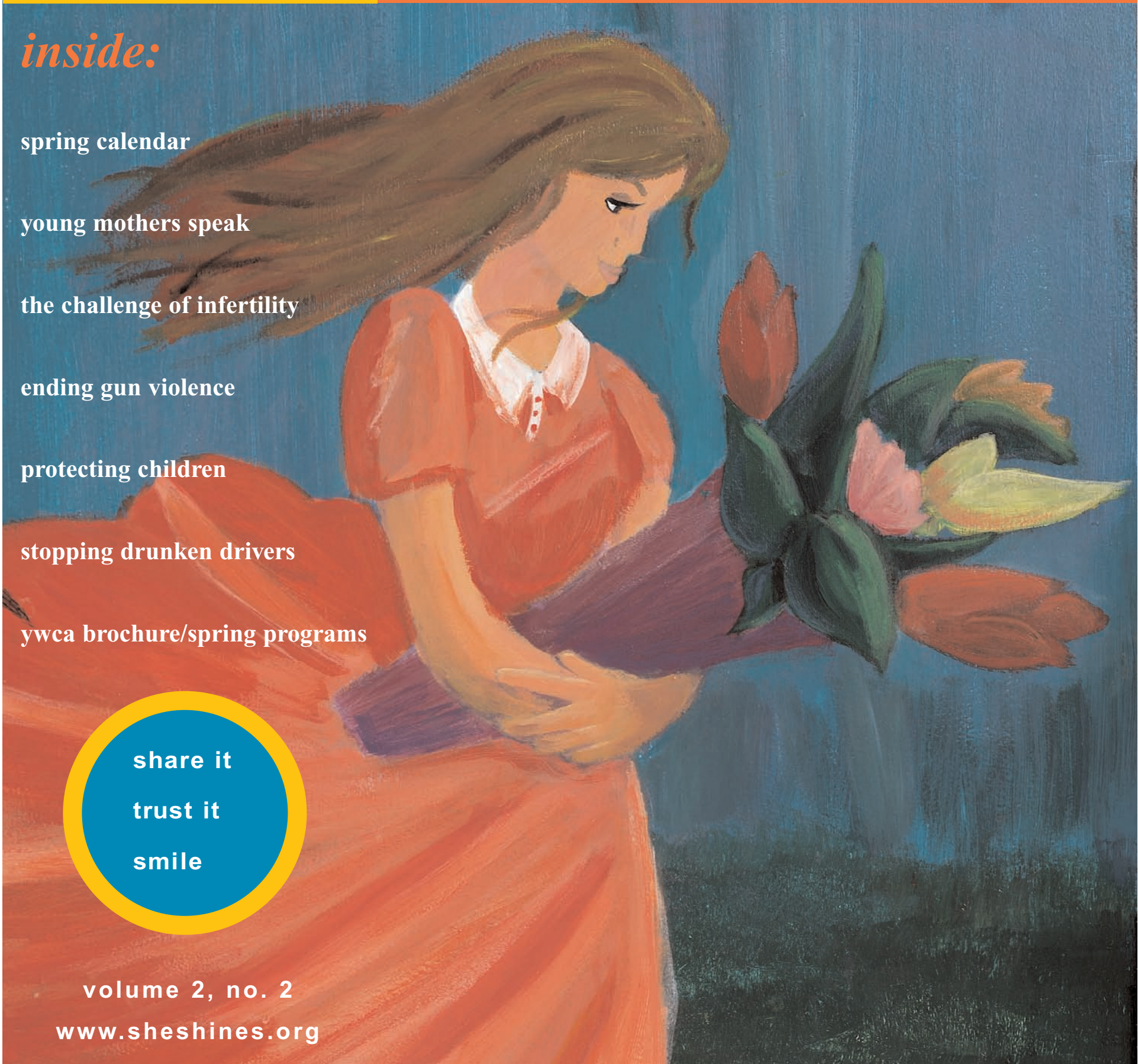
stopping drunken drivers

ywca brochure/spring programs

share it
trust it
smile

volume 2, no. 2

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april

● **April 26 All that Jazz Meets Motown** at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet from 5:30– 9pm. Featuring John Allmark's East Side Horns with vocalists Cassandre McKinley and Mac Odom & Chill. Tickets are \$55 for this 6th annual event to benefit Big Sisters of RI. www.bigsistersri.org

● **April 26 Aligning Your Leadership Presence** from 8am-noon at Bryant University's Executive Development Center. Reflect on your core identity and understand how you are seen/experienced by others as a woman and as a woman leader. www.LeadingWomen.biz

● **April 27** at 11am. Claire Silva, author of *A Child's Heart Speaks: Surviving Sexual Abuse*, is a speaker at Tri-Town Community Action in Johnston. Call 351-2750 for more information. Silva shares her family's story on page 12.

may

● **May 1 May Breakfast** at Oaklawn Community Baptist Church, 229 Wilbur Ave. in Cranston. 139th May Breakfast to be held at 6-11am served family-style: scrambled eggs, ham, cornbread, clam-cakes, juice and coffee. \$6 adults and \$3 for children 10 and under. Call 944-0864 for details.

● **May 2 "Stress" - Spring Women Wellness Series: What Every Woman Wants to Know.** Workshop is held at YWCA Northern Rhode Island in Woonsocket from 6:30-8pm. Call Joyce at 769-7450 x12 to register.

● **May 5 at Center for Women & Enterprise**, a free information session from 9-10am. Information about classes, seminars, counseling, financial packaging, networking, and more. www.cweonline.org

● **May 6 - 7 Women in the Outdoors** at Alton Jones Campus in West Greenwich. \$125 for weekend. Interactive educational outdoor opportunities for women 14 and older. Register online at www.womenintheoutdoors-ri.org

● **May 8 In PeaceFull Rage** an event of entertainment and praise that features feminist artists. Providence Black Repertory Company in Providence at

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Time to
get out and
do something
fun!

8pm. For more information contact Laura at JanusCode@gmail.com.

● **May 13 Waterfire** begins after sunset - art installation that centers on a series of 100 bonfires that blaze just above the surface of three rivers that pass through downtown Providence. www.waterfire.org

● **May 13 Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center Spring Gala** - "Our Fair Lady" to benefit victims of domestic abuse. 6:30pm at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. Cost \$125. Dancing, silent and live auction items, great food and of course, horses. Hats and ascots are encouraged! Contact Karyn Rhodes for tickets (738-9700).

● **May 14 - June 2 VOICE: Women in Contemporary Art Exhibition.** New work by 27 American women at the

sights and sounds for the she spirit



Cathy Clasper-Torch is performing at INDIA Restaurant in Warren, RI, on Fridays in April and May with Phil Edmonds and Otis Read. She appears on their CD *Under the Arch*, www.otisread.com. She is also on *The Blackest Crow*, www.atwater-donnelly.com, playing as part of the Atwater-Donnelly Trio, at Vanilla Bean Cafe in Pomfret, Conn., on June 10 at 8pm. Contact her at cathfiddle@hotmail.com. Photo by Agapao Productions

notes to feed a soul

Cathy Clasper-Torch combines her early classical training with a love of improvisation and music of all genres and cultures. She performs locally with various groups and has been on over a dozen recordings.

She plays many instruments including the piano, violin, er-hu, mbira thumb piano and cello. Although piano was a first love, Clasper-Torch performs mostly on the fiddle. She works with traditional music and makes up harmonies, exploring new ways to express the work.

Clasper-Torch teaches private lessons in piano and violin at Wheeler Conservatory. She also directs the religious education program at Central Congregational Church in Providence.

She describes the importance of music, "a shared act of family and of having friends over when you get out the percussion instruments and everyone sings." Her husband is a professor at Moses Brown School. Speaking about the younger days of their two daughters, "so many delicious moments . . . a note, a made up funny song."

About six years ago, she noticed her hearing was going. Three surgeries later it is now almost fully back. "I had always taken music for granted, at any minute it could be taken away", recalls Clasper-Torch. Now she says, "It is important for me to balance all aspects. Music has found me, which makes it a real gift. It is important for me to play . . . and feed my soul."

Lisa Piscatelli

Providence Art Club. www.providenceartclub.org

● **May 19 - 21 Women's Wilderness Weekend of RI.** A weekend for women of all ages and backgrounds that offers an escape from the rigorous demands of modern living. Women join together to connect with themselves, each other and nature. Cost \$165. www.womenswildernessri.com

● **May 20 Coastal Growers Farmers Market** season begins 9am-noon at Casey Farm in Saunterstown. Visit the chickens and horses, from 11am-5pm a tour guide is available. Call 295-1030 for details.

● **May 20 "Outside the Box!"** to benefit the **Providence Children's Museum.** Held at the Convention Center Ballroom is a cocktail reception, gourmet dinner and dancing to the Latin Jazz Band of Carlos de Leon. Dress is black tie with a twist. Event will include

a silent and live auction. For tickets, donations, sponsorship and information, contact Andrea Miller at 273-5437, x121 or miller@childrenmuseum.org. See page 19 to learn more about the museum's executive director.

● **May 23 "Nutrition" - Spring Women Wellness Series: What Every Woman Wants to Know.** Workshop is held at YWCA Northern Rhode Island in Woonsocket from 6:30-8pm. Call Joyce at 769-7450 x12 to register.

● **May 31 Women and Minorities Make Your Money Work for You** - at RIC Faculty Center at 2pm. Free event. Sponsored by RI Coalition for Affirmative Action. Contact Donna Fishman for more information 423-0397.

june

● **June 1 Auction for the Arts** at the Stadium Theatre in Woonsocket at 5:30pm. Featuring "A Taste of Northern RI", Encore Repertory Company performers, and Silent and LIVE auctions. www.stadiumtheatre.com

● **June 2 Annual Parent and Professional Partnership in Health and Education Conference** at the Radisson Hotel in Warwick from 8am - 4pm. Conference will help parents and professionals understand the health system (health insurance, transitioning, newborn screening, etc.) Contact: Barbara Torres 727-4144 x161.

● **June 6 "Alternative Medicines" - Spring Women Wellness Series: What Every Woman Wants to Know.** Workshop is held at YWCA Northern Rhode Island in Woonsocket from 6:30-8pm. Call Joyce at 769-7450 x12 to register.

● **June 10 Atwater-Donnelly Trio**, at the Vanilla Bean Cafe in Pomfret, Conn. at 8pm. Aubrey Atwater's poem Laundry is featured on page 11. www.atwater-donnelly.com

● **June 17 Women in the Outdoors** at Narragansett Archery Club presented by Big Sisters of RI. \$35 per pair of girls. Activity choices are basic archery, canoeing, fishing, letterboxing, gun safety, outdoor survival, mountain biking, outdoor photography, rock climbing, self-defense, container gardening, nature bike, animal rehabilitation, and Native American culture. Contact: Mandy Boragine at 921-2434 x108.

Events are listed in the calendar as space allows. Submissions for the calendar may be e-mailed to sheshines@mac.com, faxed to 769-7454, or mailed to She Shines, 514 Blackstone St., Woonsocket, RI 02895.



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how to

contribute. She Shines welcomes letters to the editor and "Ask Mama", articles, poetry, stories, graphics, photos and calendar events. Please contact us if you have an inspiring story to tell or have a suggestion of someone to be featured. A self addressed, stamped envelope must accompany all unsolicited material. Only original contributions will be considered and may be edited due to space limitations. Include contact information including name, e-mail, address, and phone number. Images provided electronically must be high-resolution.

submit cover art. The cover is reserved as a gallery of art in keeping with the theme of She Shines. For consideration, please send in a photo by e-mail attachment or mail. This is a wonderful opportunity for local artists to show their work. A biography is published in conjunction with the "Artist Canvas" section of She Shines.

advertise. Visit www.sheshines.org to view the advertising media kit. She Shines reserves the right to refuse to sell space for any advertisement the staff deems inappropriate for the publication.

receive the magazine. She Shines is a free publication mailed to members and friends of YWCA Northern Rhode Island. To be added to the mailing list, a subscription form is available on this page and on the website www.sheshines.org. The magazine is also available at YWCA Northern Rhode Island and at various special events.

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subscription form ✂

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"I got the idea from a splotch on my paint bucket that was in the shape of a beautiful girl." Teenage artist Samantha Mandeville describes the birth of *Alone in the Gust*.

girl paints wishes true

While drinking hot chocolate, Samantha Mandeville warms up from the chilly 40-minute walk from school. Three days a

artist canvas

week, she attends an inner city, youth-led, arts and entrepreneurship program.

On these days, she spends about three hours at RiverzEdge Arts Project in Woonsocket.

She began there in September of 2004 and now has completed nine paintings. When she has an idea in her head for a painting, she'll ask someone to pose. It may take around a half hour to do a sketch, from which she will then begin to paint.

Her current work is a bit whimsical. It is of a young woman leaning over a toad with a wand in her hand. "I already know who I would turn into a toad," Samantha laughs and in fun nods in the direction of a fellow artist.

She fondly remembers herself being little, playing, and knowing all the kids in the neighborhood. "Until they all moved away," shares Samantha. She also speaks of her godmother and grandmother as the special adults in her life, "(they) have done everything for me."

At age 15, Samantha offers advice, "Don't listen to other people. When they say you can't do something, I usually do the opposite."

••••• Lisa Piscatelli

in her words •••••

the unexpected challenge of infertility and mother's day

by Kristen Magnacca



Paula felt weak, as though all the energy had been drained from her body. As she sat staring at the phone she felt so conflicted. It wasn't that she didn't want to honor or be with her mom on Mother's Day it was the overwhelming sense of shock that she was still faced with.

All she wanted was a baby and as the months ticked away she had the knowing that something wasn't right. Then she was confronted with the diagnosis of infertility. Infertility as she had been told by her doctor is a disease. It is defined by the inability to conceive after a full year having unprotected sex. Paula and her husband, Steve unfortunately had joined the statistic of 1 in 8 couples or 7.3 million Americans of childbearing age, who are infertile and are faced with challenges to create their family.

She tried in vain to control her rambled thoughts. How could this be? I eat right and exercise. I hardly drink and never smoked. I've made healthy choices but still I can't do what should be so natural. Then her thoughts changed to having to be with her family at the mother's day brunch that her sister and sister-in-law had planned.

As Paula sat drumming her fingers on the table, in hopes of stirring up the courage to call and back out of the brunch she once again felt paralyzed by her thoughts. The question was could she muster the courage and go to the gathering, but she wasn't sure she could put on a happy face. Knowing for sure that her sister would take one look at her and know there was a problem. She needed help but wasn't sure of where or whom to turn to.

Receiving a diagnosis of infertility brings an immediate crisis, upheaval and chaos into ones life. Here are four proven, powerful strategies that when implemented can create a sense of control, empowerment and an environment of safety.

1. Creating a fertility game plan: This strategy changes the energy of this circumstance from reactive to proactive. A fertility game plan is a written document that prepares a plan for the "what ifs". It also can be used to remind your partner what you need during the journey by expressing what is necessary physically, emotionally and spiritually. Start by writing down the three things that you feel you need during this time of trying to create your family. Then get more specific. Are you willing to move on to high tech fertility treatments? What are your thoughts about adoption? Would you use donor sperm or egg if necessary? By sharing this information with your reproductive endocrinologist your whole team will be on the same sheet of music which is very powerful.

Find the modality of holding this information that would work best for you as a couple. An accountant in the midst of infertility used a spreadsheet, something that she was comfortable using. Some couples use a journal where they keep their notes from their doctors' appointments too. Your fertility game

plan can change with new information, so creating a system that can be tweaked is best.

2. Keeping a journal is so beneficial to chronicle your fertility journal for multiple reasons. Purging your emotions down on the written page is an excellent way of getting rid of the toxic energy associated with the daily trials and tribulations of infertility. It will be a record of what happened so that you can refer back to your story if necessary for a reminder. Next, it can and will help to change your focus with adding a gratitude list at the end of each entry. A gratitude list is a list of items, simple and extravagant that you are thankful for. Infertility has a way of directing your focus on everything you don't have, a child, creating amnesia to all the other abundance in your life. (clean sheets, a full tank of gas, a warm meal, supportive friends and a loving spouse)

Mother's Day Survival Tips:

1. Try to arrange an outing with your mother or mother-in-law the weekend before or after so that you're not faced with the pressures of the day. Plan ahead what you'll be doing and where you'll be going. Being prepared creates a sense of control.
2. Give yourself permission to take care of yourself on that day. Even if that includes saying no to invitations and church settings. Create an elevator speech or script for responding to why you're not attending: "Thank you for including us, but it's not going to work for our schedule," for example.
3. Plan something to look forward to as a couple that is not about creating your family. Focus on an event that would make you both feel loved, supported and cared for, perhaps a dinner and a movie, a long hike, or a bike ride?

3. An elevator speech is another powerful tool to have in your fertility survival kit. Typically used in marketing a business when applied to the fertility struggle it takes the fear and panic away from "those" inquiries: "So, when are you going to have baby?", "Don't you two want to have children?", or "I'm waiting for a grandchild." An Elevator Speech is a well-rehearsed, scripted answer to those questions that you are likely to get. It will lower the stress from the anticipation of the questions and the uncomfortable situation of what that question brings.

Here are a few examples of what works well:

- "Babies come when babies come."
 - "We have a whole team of experts working on that."
 - "Not yet, but you'll be the first to know."
- Practicing your response out loud with your partner can help you feel more prepared and in control.

4. Creating a support system, whether in person or on-line is critical. For example, RESOLVE is the national Infertility Association. The regional chapter is RESOLVE of the Bay State which offers support groups, on-line chats, workshops and an annual symposium.

Finally, remember that there is a beginning, middle and end to everything. You just have to manage each step of the way in the manner that is best for you as an individual and couple. Infertility will come to an end, really it will. •••••



Kristen Magnacca is a board member and volunteer of RESOLVE of the Bay State, a non-profit organization that provides support and information for infertile couples - www.resolveofthebaystate.org. She testified before the US Senate in the spring of 2000 about the importance of government funding for fertility research and treatment. Photo provided by Kristen Magnacca.

Books by Kristen Magnacca are available at www.kristenmagnacca.com.

Love and Infertility

Girlfriend to Girlfriend: A Fertility Companion

communicating can work wonders

*“Anger makes you smaller,
while forgiveness forces
you to grow beyond
what you were.”*

Rose Weaver
quotes
Cherie Carter-Scott

In this issue, performance artist, mother, actress and writer Rose Weaver invites young mothers in the Parenting in Progress Program at YWCA Northern Rhode Island to “Ask Mama” their parenting questions. To read more about this alternative education program, see page 14.

What do you do when your child refuses to get up and go to school?

You can't do anything until you know why your child refuses to get up and go to school. And of course the first step is to find out what is putting dread in the child's heart about doing these things. Find out if something is happening at school that the child does not want to face, or that she/he does not know how to cope with. Is someone or something at school causing the child anxiety? Or is there something going on at home that the child would rather avoid in the morning? What you're seeing is a symptom of an underlying issue. Once you know what that is, you're in a position to do something about it. Please let me know what you discover.

Is it okay to be a mom that's aggravated at times? How do you know when to walk away from a frustrating situation?

First of all, it is very normal to feel aggravated or frustrated at times. But never walk away from the situation. Walking away does not make the problem or the cause of the situation go away. Most likely it will get bigger or hang around to haunt you forever. I always say use your communication skills to face the situation and find a solution that you can live with. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to follow your good instincts and simply do the right thing.

I'm a single mom and have my baby 24/7. I would like to have some me time, but feel guilty. Am I wrong for wanting a couple of hours for me to do what I want to do?

You must take time for you in order to be able to do what you have to do for those who depend on you. This is not about guilt, young sister, but about using your common sense. If you don't take those couple of hours when your body and spirit tell you that you need to relax, pamper yourself, reflect, and plan, then everything around you will feel it. And most likely, things will fall apart because you let yourself become overwhelmed. Be good to you first and you will succeed at dealing with all the pressure. ❖❖❖



A familiar face in Rhode Island, Rose Weaver is now a familiar face in She Shines. Look for her next column in the fall issue. Or for more information, visit www.roseweaver.com. Photo provided by Rose Weaver.

Write to “Ask Mama”:

If you have a question for “Ask Mama”, fax it to 769-7454, mail it to She Shines (514 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895), or e-mail it to info@sheshines.org.

This advice column is not intended to cure any ills and is not the opinion of a medical doctor. All answers are based on research and discussions with other women and are intended to assist in showing different ways to think about the questions asked. Rose Weaver and She Shines are held harmless from any claims.

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peace by peace

Million Mom March co-chairwoman
Cleora O'Connor says the violence must end

by maria caporizzo

Cleora Frances O'Connor sits in a leather chair by the fireplace, a photo of one of her sons on the mantel. Her house in Providence's Elmwood section is a 1916 bungalow on a street of such houses built for the bosses of the city's bustling factories of the Industrial Revolution. The fading afternoon light plays through her paned windows. Months after the holidays, French doors bear Christmas cards and close off the foyer and stairway. Jazz plays on the stereo. A pastel portrait of her four sons watches over the room, her youngest is at college studying to be a physical therapist. Has he called today, her husband asks, passing through. She sips raspberry tea and the fire and her presence warm the room.

The co-chairwoman of the Rhode Island chapter of the Million Mom March, O'Connor leans forward. She is passionate about bringing an end to gun violence.

"We have to look," when a young person is killed. She is afraid of complacency and denial of the issue, which she says is nationwide.

People adopt a disconnect that keeps them from outrage, O'Connor says. The violence is not just an issue for poor communities, but a national one that takes too many of our young people and concerns us all. Consider Columbine.

It could happen anywhere.

Like many nearby, O'Connor has lived in her neighborhood for years and word there travels fast, she says.

She remembers a day in the mid-1990s when she learned that a young man by the name of Johnson had been shot and killed.

Two Johnson families live within a block of the O'Connors. Although acquainted with both, they know one family especially well.

"How do you make a call?" O'Connor asks, recalling her struggle that day.

Her friend Mrs. Johnson answered the phone. "It wasn't Michael," she said, relief tangled with grief.

"I said, 'There but for the grace of God,'" O'Connor remembers.

Within a year or so, she and her friend would be forced to revisit that conversation.

O'Connor lost her 17-year-old son Malik in March 1997, when he and a friend were shot while sitting in car.

Growing up in Boston, she was not raised with a gun in the house. O'Connor says she never lost a friend to gun violence, nor did her parents. Violence, she was taught, was only a last resort, used only to protect "your

own self." And guns weren't as prevalent as they are now.

Today, "just about every young person I ask has lost someone to gun violence," she says. "It makes me terribly sad."

understanding

After two years of being silent in the wake of her son's killing, O'Connor said she felt like she would explode.

While searching the Internet, she came across information on the Million Mom March. Typing her experience in a message to the organizers was the first time she had put the words down. She was contacted soon after and ended up being asked to coordinate the Rhode Island chapter.

"That was a big task." O'Connor knew she couldn't do it herself, but said she'd help.

She ended up sharing that task with co-chairwoman Karina Wood, and the ensuing friendship will be lifelong, O'Connor says.

What drove her to get involved was that she didn't want anyone else to have to see the grief and see the agony she and her family had.

O'Connor says she makes it a point to go to every wake of a young person, to let that family know that "someone is standing in your corner."

"When you're losing your mind, you can call me," She tells parents.

"If they take you up on it, fine. If they don't, you understand that too."

O'Connor says the Million Mom March in 2000 was powerful and heart wrenching, seeing family members, looking in their eyes, and knowing their pain.

"We have too many friends who have lost kids, to asthma, to suicide, to gun violence."

She is blunt about her fellowship in such a club. "It sucks," she says.

To her, the march was one massive understanding: We don't want this happening anymore.

"I got many hugs that day. It was very tiring because it was emotional (but) it was good to see people connecting."

moving forward

O'Connor says she can see certain effects of Malik's death in her youngest son.

He has learned to be less reactive at times when someone else his age might not be as restrained.

He has borne the brunt of the fear she and her husband cope with every day.

"You get quite fearful of the young ones going out."

Late one night after a ball game, her



Cleora O'Connor, whose teenage son was shot and killed in 1997, says "If more people verbalized their feelings about their want of peace, we could really change what's going on." Photo by Agapao Productions

youngest son simply forgot to call.

It was a difficult evening.

He was okay.

But every member of the family makes the extra effort to spare one another any extra pain reminiscent of losing Malik. If O'Connor's husband is having a "good day" and she needs to talk, she tries to avoid "taking him there."

As time has passed, she says, she has learned to develop better coping strategies.

"Trying to move forward with your life afterwards, that is a very difficult thing."

As a parent, there is no good answer. But you're going to ask the questions, O'Connor says.

On the night he was killed, preparing to visit his girlfriend, Malik and a friend, Herbert Brown, were sitting in a car in South Providence when a vehicle pulled up next to theirs and shots were fired into the driver's side of the car. Brown survived the incident. The police say Malik was not the intended target of the shooting.

No one has been brought to justice in O'Connor's son's death. The police had a few ideas, she said, but they couldn't prove anything.

"I would not wish death on the person who

killed my son," O'Connor says, "my conscience would not let me do it."

impact

One of Malik's friends is a nonviolence street worker with the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, based at 239 Oxford St. in Providence.

It is a mission for him to stop the violence.

He and his peers are out there "in the trenches," teaching nonviolence, intervening in and mediating conflicts, preventing retaliation. The street workers are talking with people about the effects their actions have, and their work is having an impact.

"Once you see this young adult making that type of difference in the community, that makes me smile," O'Connor says.

"I just want to hug him. And say thank you."

Educators from the institute are working with young people in schools to offer some alternatives, some tools.

O'Connor contrasts moving through disagreements by discussion, even agreeing to disagree, and then moving on, with "they're mad at you, they look at you the wrong way."

There's no good reason to kill someone.

continued on next page

uphill battle

by maria caporizzo

Long-time peace activist, grassroots organizer and Million Mom March co-chairwoman Karina Wood remembers the first time she heard Cleora O'Connor speak.

She had come to a meeting and press conference looking to network with the Rhode Island chapter about another effort she was coordinating.

"I was just wowed."

O'Connor's story, the energy in the room, the plan to send busloads of people to Washington and a message to the nation, it all really impressed her. Somehow, a few months later, Wood had become local co-coordinator with O'Connor.

But "because we're moms [of small children], we couldn't go on the buses."

So they planned a local rally and turned out 1,000 people at Waterplace Park in Providence in conjunction with the march in the nation's capital.

Some 750,000 people demonstrated on the National Mall that year, with smaller demonstrations held at sites across the country, comprising the "million" in the event's name.

Gun violence was a hot issue in 2000 – the Columbine shootings had occurred a year before, in April 1999 – and there was a tremendous push to do something that would make a difference.

Wood's role was to field much of that interest here in the Ocean State.

"I was swamped – people e-mailing and calling every day."

She spoke often on radio talk shows.

"There was national attention, real attention. It was just a hot issue. People really cared and they gave you money. We decided to capitalize on it."

After the national march, the local chapter decided to use that support and undertook a two-pronged approach: education and legislation.

Rhode Island already had "fairly decent gun control laws," according to Wood, but there remained a lot of loopholes and the thinking was, "we can do better."

"It was interesting," Wood said, "to try and get it real."

Advocating for gun safety "showed me how difficult it is for ordinary people, especially mothers, to advocate for legislation with babies and small children," says Million Mom March's Karina Wood.

tough fight

What was real was the strength of the national and local gun lobby.

At the Statehouse, Wood and others worked with legislators who had been supportive of gun control legislation for years, including Rhoda Perry, David Cicilline and Edith Ajello.

They introduced an omnibus bill, a sort of wish list of every legal gun safety measure they thought should be codified in state law.

It was "an ambitious bill, we knew it wouldn't pass. But if you start with a lot, maybe some of it will pass," Wood said.

It turned out to be a really good public education vehicle.

Its supporters included the Providence Journal editorial board and the Rhode Island Association of Police Chiefs, pediatricians, emergency room doctors as well as many victims of gun violence.

The bill got nowhere.

"We had some horrible hearings, hunters in flak jackets packed the meetings," Wood remembers.

"It showed me how difficult it is for ordinary people, especially mothers, to advocate for legislation with babies and small children.

"When you need to go to hearings and testify with children in tow or a babysitter

[at home] and the meetings start at 4:30 and go on 'til midnight . . ."

And it's "a very male institution up there on the hill. The feeling was 'You can't be serious if you're here with your child.'"

outrage

What had become a coalition of gun-safety advocates assembled victims of gun violence and domestic violence and asked them to testify.

Wood is still outraged at the reception they received.

"The way legislators would treat them wasn't respectful. It just wasn't."

One witness Wood asked to speak was treated so badly she left in tears and said she would not return.

Another tactic gun safety advocates faced was the argument that criminals don't obey laws anyway, so that any new gun control measures would serve only

to abridge the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Wood remains passionate on this point.

For people who live in fear, she says, anything you can do to give them something is worth doing.

"Laws start to lay down the foundation of morality. Once you establish a pattern over time, it really does make a difference," she says.

"There is a line. One day you're not a criminal, the next you are." If there is a law in place, it will shape the behavior of some who have not yet become criminals, she argues.

Eventually all the foundation-laying and persistence paid off and gun safety advocates began to see some legislative success. The most recent, the so-called Homicide Prevention Bill, was passed in July 2005 and allows judges to order defendants served with a permanent restraining order to relinquish firearms in their immediate possession or control.

perspective

Wood, who is British, moved to the United States as a young adult. She says this affords her a different perspective.

"Coming from Britain, we don't have the same culture."

Here there is "a love affair with weapons, a whole different culture.

"When I came here it did shock me. I was shocked."

It is not uncommon when Europeans move to the United States, for people back home to worry, she says.

"You might get shot," they warn.

"Everyone in Britain knows (Washington) D.C. is the murder capital of America," Wood says.

These days the war in Iraq has the nation's attention, Wood says, and gun safety has dropped from the public's attention.

She continues the educational component of her work with the Million Mom March, although at a less intense level. And she monitors legislative initiatives nationwide on both sides of the issue.

She and her husband, Cliff Wood, live with their two young daughters on Providence's East Side. Wood works for downtown developer Arnold "Buff" Chace's Cornish Associates, and her husband just finished three years as director of the Providence Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism in the Cicilline administration, and is said to be considering a bid for City Council. ❖❖❖

Rhode Island and Gun Safety

Overall, Rhode Island has received a B- from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence "because the state does a reasonably good job of enacting sensible laws to protect children from gun violence," according to the campaign's Web site. Founded by Sarah and Jim Brady, who was critically wounded in the 1981 shooting of President Reagan, the campaign has united with the Million Mom March and has ranked states' records on gun violence for the past eight years.

The state does require safety locks to be sold with guns, but imposes no standards for those locks to ensure they are of sufficient quality to work well.

The state does not allow cities to regulate guns.

In 2003, the most recent year for which data is available, a total of six young people died in shootings, whether suicide, homicide, or in another manner.

In 2002, a total of 10 young people died in firearm deaths. In 2001, 6 young people were killed. And in 2000, 10 young people were killed by a gun.

The Million Mom March:
www.millionmom
march.org

The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence:
www.nonviolence
institute.org

continued from previous page

She cites television, where she sees so much raw violence, and says some people just accept it as the way life is.

That's scary, she says.

Watching too many young people die, O'Connor demands a better way: teaching young people and adults nonviolence, giving people ways to make more informed decisions.

The alternative is frightening.

"When I think about the impact," of a young person witnessing a peer being shot and killed for no reason, just because they happened to be standing near someone, of young people growing up in a climate where knowing someone who died is the norm, O'Connor

says, without intervention, she can see such violence increasing.

"There's the potential for that," she says.

Middle school is a decisive time, and trainers from the institute for nonviolence are reaching some of those students, teaching non-violent conflict resolution.

With every child getting trained in nonviolence, saving lives, saving parents grief, siblings grief, "that brings me some joy," O'Connor says.

"The institute is a big piece of my heart."

peace by peace

Through her advocacy, reading and conversation, in the decade since her son's death

O'Connor has reached a measure of peace.

O'Connor works as a computer networking technician. She also practices and teaches yoga. Her husband of 29 years, Barry O'Connor, is a retired superintendent of the Port of Providence and before that, a longshoreman.

Finding a peace within, O'Connor says she is able to share that peace with others. She wants to see the death rates decrease, so parents and their children do not live in fear. She wants to see fear diminish. She does not want parents to be afraid of the phone ringing at night.

She believes that if each one of us does what we can to make a small difference, all those differences can come together to make a huge impact, "to take us down a more peace-

ful existence."

"If more people verbalized their feelings about their want of peace, we could really change what's going on," she says.

Although her mother and grandmother have passed on, she can hear their voices as if in stereo: This must stop NOW.

There is no excuse, none whatsoever, for taking a life. On this she has perfect clarity.

Hate is such a powerful word and emotion, O'Connor says.

People have got to learn the power of that word, she says, to make another word more powerful.

She offers coexistence, love, understanding, peace, just for starters. ❖❖❖

foremothers open a world of possibilities



Growing up I had the most amazing role models.

My mother Elizabeth ran a fleet of school buses and knew the location of every house in our city.

My grandmother Marion, left, learned to drive a car in her 50s and ran her own business.

My great grandmother Myrtis wrote stories, read tea leaves, was an artist and an accomplished seamstress.



They always stopped to smell the roses.

My mother taught me that I could do anything . . . and that taking time to have tea with friends goes a long way.

My grandmother, seated, taught me the value of volunteering . . . and that memorizing Bible verses could build character.

My great grandmother died when I was very young . . . her spirit still speaks to me.



Everyone should be so lucky. ❖❖❖

just the facts

Motherhood: There are an estimated 82.5 million mothers of all ages in the United States.

Source: www.census.gov/pressrelease/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/006232.html

Employment: 65% of mothers with children under age 6 and 80% of mothers with children ages 6-17 are in the labor force.

Source: Karen Schulman (March 2003) Key Facts: Essential Information about Child Care, Early Education and School-Aged Care 2003 Edition.

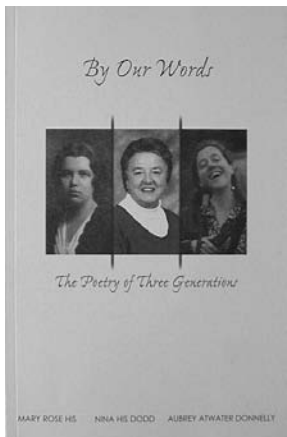
Child Care: One year of quality care for a child can cost a family more than one year of in-state tuition at a state university. Child care may range from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year. Compare this to the average price of in-state tuition and fees at public four-year institutions, \$4,694 in the United States (\$6,035 in New England).

Source: Children's Defense Fund (February 2003) Early Childhood Development" Frequently Asked Questions about Child Care. Sandy Baum and Kathleen Payea Trends in College Pricing 2003 The College Board. http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/press/cost03/cb_trends_pricing_2003.pdf.

laundry

by Aubrey Atwater

I have folded a generation of clothing for today is your twentieth birthday and I am looking at old photographs. Here you are on the ferry with your light blue, oversized t-shirt. I remember its slow thinning over years through washing. How you loved that shirt and then one day you put a green garbage bag in the kitchen and said, "These are clothes you can give away." I remember, also the gradual growing of the trousers. They were so little at first, easy to wash. Holding them fresh out of the laundry I would snap the legs to remove creases and then when the pants got bigger and exceeded my own I was the tiniest person in the basket. How many times I have stood at those machines, folded your shirts three ways, and wondered how your were doing-- in fourth grade, in seventh grade, in high school. The years chronicle themselves by clothing and haircuts. Here you shaved one side of your head and for months wore a shirt that said WHATEVER. Now, only weeks ago, you have moved out -- soon to buy your own garments, perhaps trade with friends and when you visit to use the machines you will carry your soiled laundry packed tight into the black hamper and pass over my threshold in stranger's clothing-- a t-shirt I don't know, unacquainted frayed pants, and mismatched socks I never bought.



"Laundry" is from the book "By Our Words: The Poetry of Three Generations", a collection of poems by Aubrey Atwater, her mother Nina Dodd, and her grandmother Mary Rose His. The book contains approximately twenty poems by each author. The poem also appears in Atwater's book "Don't Bother the Phoebe". "Laundry" was recorded in concert and is included on the CD "And Then I'm Going Home: Atwater-Donnelly Live".

Atwater's career spans performing, writing songs/poetry, and teaching. Visit www.atwater-donnelly.com for a sampling of music, to view the performance schedule, and to purchase a recording or publication.

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protect your children from sexual abuse

Editor's note: Claire Silva is a mother of a child who survived sexual abuse, about which she wrote a book. Here she talks about the book and how her family continues the process of recovery.



"Parents are not taught what signs to look out for. We are not taught to scrutinize everyone around our children and to trust our instincts. Unfortunately, the way most parents learn what the warning signs (are), is when it is too late — and their

child has already been violated. I wrote A Child's Heart Speaks: Surviving Sexual Abuse, to give parents the ammunition they need. No child should ever experience the horror my children suffered," stresses Claire Silva.

by Claire Silva

I spent years educating my kids about strangers, good touch and bad touch, and general safety. I thought my children were 'safe'. But I didn't know that a perpetrator could expand and use their fears against them. I could have never imagined the terror my children would eventually experience at the hands of a juvenile — their older stepbrother.

When he was 9 years old, Adam (Silva's stepson) was brought home to America by me and my husband Bob. Adam transitioned well from his life in Cape Verde and quickly learned English, did well in school, was active in sports, and fit into American society as a 'good kid'. But when Adam turned 13, his mask was unveiled. Five year old Joey disclosed what Adam had been doing to him each night as the whole family slept. The next day, Adam was removed from the home and my family was thrown into a whirlwind of legal, mental health, and social service issues.

A Child's Heart Speaks: Surviving Sexual Abuse is about my family's story and also incorporates national interviews with adult survivors. The perpetrators who committed the crimes against the people I interviewed were their mothers, fathers, neighbors or friends of the family, local priests, and other family members.

This work gives a voice to the many children who silently suffer in terror, isolation, and confusion. This is a must read

for any parent. It is never too early or too late to talk about sexual abuse with your children. Young children need the crime to stop. And children who are now adults still carry their hidden scars deep within — and they often wait for someone to reaffirm that what happened to them was wrong and they are never to blame.

Readers of *A Child's Heart Speaks: Surviving Sexual Abuse* will learn:

- How to prevent the crime
- Warning signs of adult and juvenile perpetrators
- Signs that a child may have been violated
- What to do if child abuse is suspected
- The stages survivors go through in their own healing process
- How to support survivors and their families

At this point, I am happy my children are able to be kids again. They survived complete terror and fear. Now they deserve to be free and have fun. They are involved in sports, music, and playing with friends. I love to see them laughing, climbing a tree or finding a frog to name — the stuff boys should be doing in their spare time. Any time we can spend together as a family is so valuable. For their future, I just want them to be happy, comfortable with themselves, and appreciate their own individuality. My boys are

wonderful. They have proven that children are extremely resilient when nurtured and protected. They know they are loved and understand what happened to them was horrible and wrong.

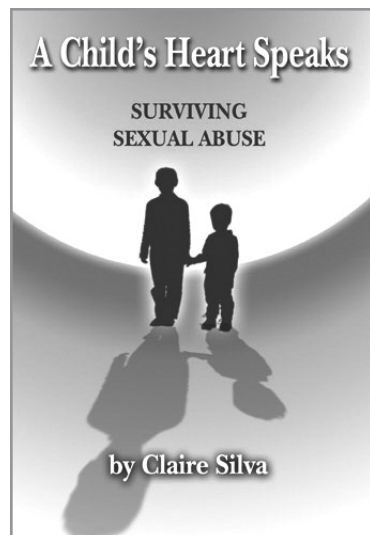
My husband and I are stronger together. It is a painful topic, but we manage to support each other the best we can. What is difficult for my husband is that he feels torn between his first-born child and our family. We know there can never be family reunification in our case, so for him (my husband), there is always going to be a part of the family that is missing. He still holds onto a lot of unnecessary guilt.

For me, the book has been a source of strength and cleansing. There were many times I broke down crying while writing and begged God for answers. Several times I screamed why! But, now that the book is done, it will be interesting to see how it can help others. Already several people have said they have learned from our experience and from the information in the book. The goal in writing the book was to help parents and survivors — and that is what it is doing, so it makes me feel fulfilled. I look at us now as a united family that supports each other. We are proof that there can be a happy life after abuse.

Since I've gone public with our story and the interviews with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, I often get comments from survivors who have read the book. Many of them lived quietly through their childhood trauma and remained silent as young adults. They grew up feeling isolated, vulnerable and lost. But when they read the book, they told me that they finally feel affirmed and empowered. They realize their feelings and thoughts are very normal for survivors and they no longer feel alone." ❦

Claire Silva has worked in the field of substance abuse and violence prevention for over 15 years. She has worked as a detoxification counselor, outreach worker, grants manager, task force coordinator, and became the executive director of YWCA Greater Rhode Island in June 2005.

Silva has provided lectures and book signings at: Salon Serenity in Coventry, the Other Tiger Bookstore in Westerly, Ye Ol' Bookshoppe in Providence, the North Smithfield Town Hall for the North Smithfield Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force, the Lincoln Public Library for the Lincoln Substance Abuse Prevention Task, and Tri-Town in Johnston. *A Child's Heart Speaks: Surviving Sexual Abuse* is available at www.clairenilva.com. Photo provided by Claire Silva.



To support the family of a survivor:

1. Be an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on.
2. Never blame or find fault with the family. The parents/family members are usually blaming themselves already for not seeing the signs earlier.
3. Help them understand the mental health, legal and social service systems they will soon be thrown into.

4. Know that eventually they will re-gain their strength and continue to encourage them.

To support a child who is a survivor:

1. Children need to be believed and supported immediately.
2. All connections with a perpetrator have to be broken for the child to feel safe again.
3. Open communication needs to

be welcomed and encouraged.

To support an adult survivor:

1. Listen to the individual's story and empathize with his/her trauma.
2. Reaffirm that the guilt and blame always lies with the perpetrator.
3. Congratulate the person for surviving and telling their story.

A child's rights when placed in state care

When placed in DCYF care, children have the following rights:

- to basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and personal belongings
- to be treated with dignity and respect
- to contact family and friends by phone, mail and/or visits unless there is reason to stop this due to treatment issues or safety
- to a hearing before being placed over 30 miles out of state
- to go to school
- to practice religion
- to other rights contained in the law and the Children's Bill of Rights.

Source: Kids Rights Brochure, Child Advocate's Office

Jametta Alston is the state's child advocate

On being an advocate for children:

The Office of Child Advocate has legal authority to advocate for children whose legal and civil rights in the Department of Child, Youth and Families system or family court proceedings are not being met. Daily, an average of 10,000 children receive services from DCYF.

- Two issues top Alston's agenda; improving foster care and enforcing statutory rape laws.

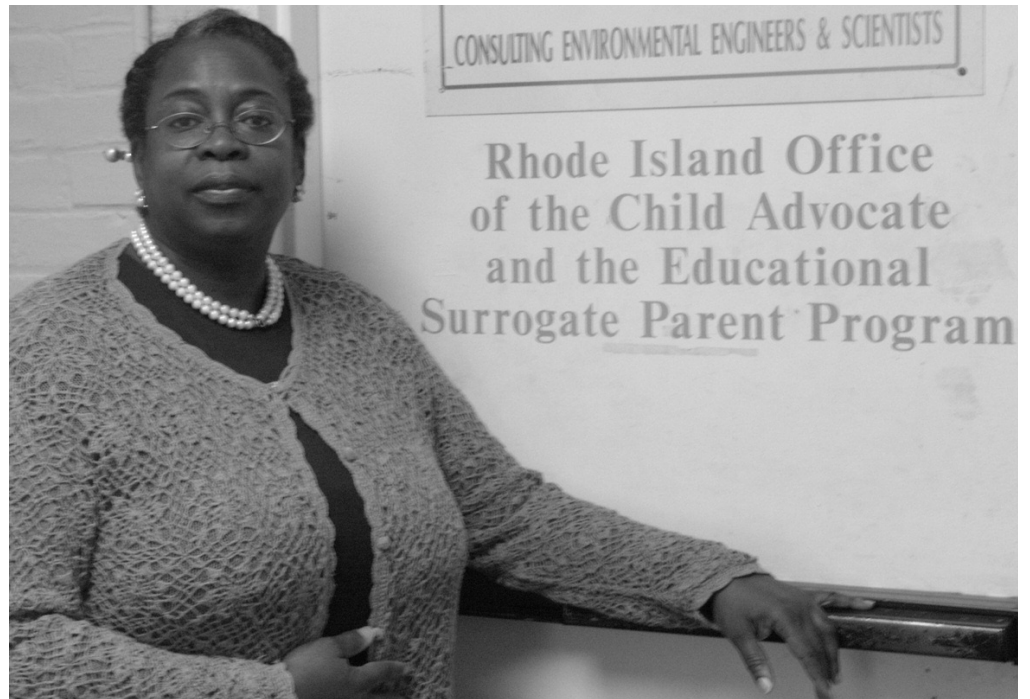
By focusing her attention on foster care, Alston says, "I would like to never again see a child killed in foster care."

- Preventing adult males from having sex with teenage girls is also a priority for Alston. "Why aren't we prosecuting or why aren't we teaching young women that this is not safe or necessarily a beneficial relationship? What are we doing to protect our young women?"

On motherhood:

A single parent, Alston adopted her daughter when she was 7. Alston recalls asking her what she wanted to be when she grew up. She said she wanted to have a baby. "To me that was startling," At her age I wanted to be a veterinarian."

Not long after when someone asked her what she wanted to be she responded that she wanted to have a baby, but would



"I would like to never again see a child killed in foster care," says new state child advocate Jametta Alston. Photo by Agapao Productions

go to college first. "It shook me, in two weeks she had changed," Alston said. "That's how quickly children can be won or lost."

Alston daughter is 12. She describes her as "delightful, brilliant, intelligent, wild and crazy."

"Being a mom is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," Alston said. I don't think I'm confident in my skill, it is much easier being a lawyer than being a mother."

A pioneer:

- Jametta Alston, is the first African American to head the Rhode Island Child Advocate Office.

- She was the first black Rhode Island Bar Association president.

- And she was Cranston's first black female city solicitor.

Deborah L. Perry

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Parenting in Progress Coordinator Deb Smith visits with Jason, whose mother attends the program at YWCA Northern Rhode Island.

changing whole lives

Deb Smith says her work with teen mothers is the most rewarding job she's ever had.

by Deborah L. Perry

Her sons might say it's an occupational hazard. Over the years Parenting in Progress Program Coordinator Deb Smith's work with young women sometimes seeped into her parenting.

And that's the way she likes it.

"I keep them aware, everything you do, everything you say, your body language, all of those things affect people," she said of her sons.

She recalls the time when one of her sons, at 13, made a degrading remark to a female classmate. Smith spoke with him at length and had him apologize to the young woman. "I gave him a book list," Smith said. "I had him read *The Color Purple* and every book I could think of to help bring home the damage that people do to each other. And the damage that men can do to women."

Most of the young women enrolled in PIP have had difficult lives. They have left abusive parents. The people entrusted with their care have failed them. The men in their lives have not respected them. Many have had difficult childhoods, have not succeeded academically and are living on their own.

PIP is a hands-on program. "Everything we do, every interaction in and out of class, in home, with them, with their children, with their baby's fathers, it's all about opening up their minds and giving them other perspectives and other points of view," Smith said.

When a young woman enters the program, Smith gives this advice: "This is all about you. We can offer all kinds of assistance. We can bring a lot to your attention and open some doors. But this is all about you. If you roll over in the morning and hit the button on the alarm or pull the plug out of the wall, you have just taken a step backward for yourself. Every time you get up, get dressed and get out there, you're doing something positive for yourself, your children and your community. What you put in is what you are going to get out. Don't ever say 'I'm not good enough, I can't' because you can and you are," Smith says.

The PIP program at YWCA Northern Rhode Island include GED test preparation, job training, child care, parenting skills, case management, life skills training, and violence prevention.

Smith spends a great deal of her time helping young women develop

skills to become empowered. "I hear them saying 'I'm only doing this for my kids.' It's never about 'I care for myself, I value myself,'" she said.

Smith smiles when she speaks of the women who have graduated from PIP. She tells their stories.

A young woman entered the program at 13. She was pregnant. Her mother was addicted to crack cocaine. Her father a sexual predator and physically abusive. The young woman couldn't remember a time when someone wasn't having sex with her, even when she was a toddler. She was pregnant again at 15.

Today she is 21, married with four children and working full time in a professional office setting.

"She's doing a lot of positive things for herself all across the board," Smith said. "She has a very strong commitment to advocating for herself and her children."

Another young woman came to the program when she was four months pregnant. She was dancing at a bar in order to meet her and her daughter's basic needs.

Now Smith says, she is working at a hospital as a certified nursing assistant and is enrolled in a hospital training program for career advancement. Her child almost 4, has special needs, and she advocates well for the services he requires. "She's doing a wonderful job

taking care of her child," Smith said.

Another PIP graduate was pregnant at 14 and initially tested at the fourth grade level for math and reading. It took her four years to earn her GED. Her academic test scores were very low Smith said.

Now she is 21, has a 7 year-old girl and a 1 year-old boy. She and the boy's father are raising his three siblings age 11, 15 and 17.

"They took them in when he went and had his father arrested for sexually abusing him and another sibling. They are doing a marvelous job raising five kids, they're both working full time, and she has her GED," Smith said.

Parenting in Progress is collaboration among YWCA Northern Rhode Island, the Woonsocket Education Department, Project RIRAL and a variety of social service agencies that provide services to pregnant and teen mothers who reside in Woonsocket.

The collaborative is solid and diverse. "I have not seen this level of interaction and cooperation among agencies anywhere else," Smith said. "Woonsocket cares about people and community."

When she's not at the YWCA, Smith can often be found volunteering at her church, St. John the Evangelist in North Smithfield. She helps run the food pantry there and is a member of the St. Vincent DePaul Society where

students speak

PIP participant Crystal Marley and her 20 month old daughter on their way home from school. Photos by Deborah L. Perry

Of what are you most proud?

"That I am actually staying in school. I get my daughter and myself ready (for day care and school) every day. It is hard sometimes."

How has Parenting in Progress helped you thus far?

"I am ready to take my tests (GED). PIP helped me to get ready for them quicker."

What are your dreams for your child?

"She is going to have her own dreams. I hope she stays in school and doesn't have a kid young."





students speak

Debbie Ortiz and her 2 1/2 year old daughter playing on the piano during PIP. Photo by Deborah L. Perry

What gives you hope? *"Sometimes I don't have hope. When I come to school my teachers say, 'you have to have faith and you can do this'."*

What does being a mom mean to you? *"It is a very big responsibility – caring, loving, and teaching."*

she advocates for social justice and emergency assistance, to help meet the most basic human needs, such as food and heat.

Faith motivates Smith. "I think there is tremendous potential in religious organizations for impacting lives," Smith said.

She also makes time for family, her 8 year-old goddaughter and herself.

"Time by myself is important, I get re-fed," she said. Alone, Smith likes to walk, kayak, and remodel her summer home on the Cape.

Her husband of 34 years, Richard 'Woody' Smith is a pediatrician. Their work is similar. He works with people who have low incomes and no medical insurance. "We have a similar patient

population. We brainstorm solutions about potential problems within individual families and within the community..." Smith said.

Prior to moving to Rhode Island, Smith and her husband lived in nine different states. She has worked as a nurse in an emergency room, operating room, and nursing home, and she's worked with the handicapped on an American Indian reservation.

Although Smith found those jobs rewarding, she says PIP is by far her favorite. "PIP is about impacting whole lives," she said. "It's about getting people through real crisis and getting them to believe in themselves. I'm always amazed by these young women."



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one woman's mission to save other people's children

Pauline Allard gets MADD

by Deborah L. Perry

Starting a Mother's Against Drunk Driving chapter in Rhode Island was so important to Pauline Allard that she missed her father's wake to host the first chapter meeting. Eight months earlier, on June 19, 1982, her daughter Denise Allard had been killed by a drunken driver.

Her husband Eddie thought the job was very big for her and had some doubt about whether she could accomplish what she set out to do.

"Watch my dust," Allard told him.

Allard knew she was onto something when she appeared on Woonsocket based radio station WWON's "Coffee An" program with station manger Dave Russell, to talk about MADD. "The calls started to pour in," she said.

In 1983, drunken driving was not recognized as a crime. "I kept going to the Statehouse, trying to get victims' compensation for survivors..., with little response." "They were the meanest people, no empathy, and no compassion," Allard said. She recalls speaking one afternoon when the legislators told her to leave; they said she was too negative. "I was hurt by this response and said I guess we have to wait until it happens to one of you."

"I was very bold," Allard said.

Allard cites the help of the community as well as some key contributions from public officials in creating justice for families who had lost loved ones.

Governor J. Joseph Garrahy was supportive. "If he needed me at the Statehouse for a meeting or to testify, he would send a trooper for me," Allard said. "I had a regular driver."

Eddie Allard recalls their efforts to help increase the legal drinking age to 21. "Senator Charles Baldelli called; he said you've got to get Pauline to the Statehouse right away to testify." Allard drove quickly from Woonsocket to Providence and parked right in front of the Statehouse rotunda when an official asked him to move. "When I told him who my wife was, he responded that he knew who my wife was and that it was OK for us to park there."

According to RI MADD executive director Gabrielle Abbate, due to Allard's leadership, the drinking age in Rhode Island was raised to 21, a governor's task force on driving while drunk was created, and a victims' support group formed.

"When people like Pauline come to the table it is amazing," Abbate said. "It's easy for someone who has not suffered a tragedy, because they have the strength and fortitude. For people like Pauline, it's amazing."

Learning to grieve

For four years after her daughter's death Allard worked at a furious pace, centered on MADD and drinking and driving awareness. Her husband said she had little time for anything else. "I had to go out and buy a microwave



The original home of the Rhode Island chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving was Pauline Allard's house in Woonsocket. Below, Allard's daughter, Denise, was killed by a drunken driver. Photos by Agapao Productions

"I just wanted to give her one more kiss, but I wasn't allowed."

— Pauline Allard



so my son and I could eat," he said.

Amid all the change she had wrought, she was not attending to her loss. Pauline Allard eventually had a breakdown. It was for one reason. "She did not take care of herself. She never grieved," Abbate said.

Allards' memory of an "unusually warm June night" 24 years ago is very clear, as if it all just happened yesterday. She describes sitting up in bed, in her Woonsocket home, waiting for her daughter, who was due home by 11:30. At 2:15 a.m. the doorbell rang. It was a police officer. Officer Charlie Allard, no relation, said Denise had been in an automobile accident; Allard and her husband would have to go to the scene to identify her. They left the house with their younger son Michael, then 15, still asleep.

"No one can ever imagine what that shock is, it is just unbelievable. I was stiff," Allard said.

Upon arriving at the crash scene, Allard saw a new

white sneaker, similar to the one her daughter had just purchased; it was lying on the ground next to an unrecognizable car. As she went to the other side of the wreckage "they uncovered her and there was our Denise," Allard said.

Allard remembers torn skin and blood dripping from her daughter's head, "I just wanted to give her one more kiss, but I wasn't allowed."

"I had a hard time with that for a very long time," she said.

A firefighter held onto her belt and slacks, preventing her from touching her daughter. Allard believes he restrained her because he thought she was going to pass out. Her husband Eddie remembers it differently, saying officials said they had to keep her away because they did not want to destroy evidence.

Forgiveness

The Allards say they were shut out of the process of punishing the man who killed their daughter. At the time of Denise Allard's death, there was no official role for victims to participate in the judicial process and no impact statements could be submitted by families. "We were told he had plea bargained, to keep our mouth shut," Eddie Allard said.

On two occasions when the man who killed her daughter was up for parole, Allard went to the parole board requesting they deny probation. It was denied.

Allard remembers watching television and seeing a segment about prisoners at the state Adult Correctional Institutions that shocked her. Her daughter's killer was on television. "I yelled and I screamed, and don't they show him in his cage, he was painting." "I did not realize how much hate I had in my heart," Allard said.

Not too long after that Allard met a minister who worked at the ACI. She asked the minister to give a Bible to the man who killed her daughter. Allard said it was that moment that she realized she had forgiven him.

When he came up for parole a third time, Allard did not go before the parole board. "It was time to let go," she said. "He is going to have to answer to God."

A phone call away

Although she had forgiven the man who took her daughter's life, Allard had a difficult time interacting with girls her daughter's age. "For years I could not look at teenage girls, I always saw my daughter."

That changed. A group of students from Scituate High School's victims' adoption program have become part of her family. "They send cards, they sent a valentine card, and they have a warm and wonderful heart."

And although a back injury and fibromyalgia keep Allard close to home these days, she still is active with MADD when they call her, and she is also an active intercessor. "I pray for people. I lift them up in prayer."

Prayer has always been and continues to be important to Allard. "Without my faith I would be in the crazy house," she said. "The Lord is my strength, he is my all." ❖❖❖

“ . . . It is very important for parents to model good behavior.” – Lisa M. Carcifero, substance abuse task force director

parenting for prevention

by Lisa M. Carcifero

Youth are being exposed to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs at a very young age, even in elementary school. The younger someone begins using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the more likely they are to develop problems associated with substance use.

There are many reasons why young people begin using such substances. Some use them to feel grownup; to fit in and feel as though they belong; to relax and "feel good"; to take risks and rebel; and to satisfy their curiosity.

Remember, children and teenagers like to imitate adults and being grownup is very desirable. Therefore, it is very important for parents to model good, responsible behavior. They enjoy behaving as adults do. So, be careful when asking them to bring you a beer from the refrigerator or an ashtray from

Teens and pre-teens are less likely to do drugs when they:

- have something positive to do with their free time.
- are praised for their accomplishments.
- have caring adults involved in their lives.
- are encouraged to spend time with drug-free friends.
- have positive role models.
- are educated as to the risks of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- are involved in structured, skill-enhancing activities.

the cupboard. You may be surprised at how grownup they really feel.

Young people are constantly looking for ways to belong. Sometimes they think that the group that they want to belong to is the group that is using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. So, it is very important for parents to maintain open communication with their children. Listen to your children's views and talk to them about peer pressure and the desire to fit in. Take time to get to know their friends. This is a great time to communicate your expectations that you do not want them to use these substances.

Being young doesn't necessarily

mean being carefree. Young people often give stress and worries as reasons why they use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Some believe that alcohol or other drugs will cheer them up or make them forget about their problems. It is important for parents to teach alternative, healthy ways of dealing with their problems and offer outlets for them to express their thoughts and feelings.

Also remember, the media and the environment play a big role in impacting youth development and risk taking is part of growing up. At various stages in development, they need to take risks to learn their own boundaries and

employ their own problem-solving skills. However, some take more risks than others, especially if they are unclear about boundaries, rules and expectations. This is an especially important time to impress upon teens that taking risks with drugs is not acceptable risk-taking behavior.

There are a variety of reasons why young people are curious about using drugs. Even if parents have done an outstanding job of educating and nurturing their children, some children remain curious.

Parents play a powerful role in helping their children remain healthy and drug free.

For more information on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, please contact the Woonsocket Task Force on Substance Abuse at 766-3332.

Lisa M. Carcifero, MSW, LICSW is executive director of the Woonsocket Task Force on Substance Abuse and an independent clinical social worker. Source: "Keeping Youth Drug Free," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us/tsk_frc.htm

a quote from herstory

Zora Neale Hurston (1903-1960)

“Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to ‘jump at de sun.’ We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground.”

As a folklorist and writer, Zora Neale Hurston was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Today she is acknowledged among the classic American writers of the twentieth century.

Jone Johnson Lewis. "Zora Neale Hurston Quotes." About Women's History. URL: http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/zn_hurston.htm. 1/23/06

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Women's Summit 2006

The ninth annual Women's Summit was held March 15 at Bryant University in Smithfield, along the theme, "Vision: the Power that Shapes the Future." Broadcast journalism pioneer Jane Pauley, at right with Kati Machtley, was one of three keynote speakers. Machtley was the director of the day-long summit, which was attended by more than 900 participants, among them Rhode Island First Lady Sue Carcieri, below left, and assistant Cheryl Martone.



Photos by Deborah L. Perry



Summit participants included Denise Barge of the Minority Investment Development Corp., above left, with Lorraine Peloquin and Claire Haynes, volunteers at Sojourner House. Also, at left, Christine Nowak, of the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and state Deputy General Treasurer Joan Caine.



Representing Amgen, at left from left, were Linda Lougee, Kimberly Davidson, Deborah Bock and Erin Collins. Above, Cheryle Simon and Sarah Knowlton attended from the 2006 U.S. Women's Open, set for June 26 to July 2 in Newport.



Phoebe Eng, left, seated, a leadership and change strategist specializing in maximizing performance in multicultural workplaces and co-founder of the Opportunity Agenda, signs her book, *Warrior Lessons: An Asian American Woman's Journey into Power*, for a summit participant. Eng was appointed to the Ms. Foundation's board of directors in March. Above from left, Alessandra Borges, Linda Antunes, and Gina Borges, no relation, work in the business department at Central Falls High School. At right, Kathleen Hittner, MD, president and CEO of Miriam Hospital in Providence, is awarded Bryant University's 2006 New England Businesswoman of the Year Award by Kati Machtley.

What do you like about your job?
"I have always been interested in how children learn."

What does the museum try to achieve? *"The value of play, it is how children learn. They get to try and mistakes are allowed. If an exhibit is designed correctly, you hardly ever have to say no. It is so wonderful to see a child discover."* O'Donnell recalled a little girl pumping water who shouted, "I didn't know water was heavy."

What important lesson should we teach children? *"So many. Empower children to think for themselves. They have choices and are in charge of their own lives."*



shining

with
janice o'donnell

**executive director
of the Providence
Children's Museum
for 21 years**

Photo by Agapao Productions

child

Do you have any toy recommendations? *Open-ended toys, like a cardboard box. You can make it into whatever and set up environments. Find things. A bottle cap is a perfect dish for a doll. Tin foil is a moat for a castle. It says 'huh' - imagination. Give kids cool stuff to mess around with and let them be messy."*

Where did you like to go as a child? *"Outdoors. I loved to explore the woods and climb up high in a tree. Bliss. I lived in the country and loved 'secret places'."*

What were your favorite childhood books? *"Little Women, in my mind I was Jo March. Black Stallion. Fairy tales. I always was a reader and often read under the covers with a flashlight."*

Describe a favorite moment as a mom. *"We went to a wild place and just saw where the path led us." This was when her daughter was around 5 years old, and O'Donnell described a special trip into the woods in Narragansett.*

What did you enjoy doing with your own children? *"Everything. I really enjoyed having children and cherished the times with them. I always was a working mother and know how hard it is to balance work and kids."*

mom

What do we learn from our children? *"We look with new eyes, through their mirrors. They take in the world. I am who I am because of my child."*

What makes you smile? *"When my granddaughter was 4 she pointed to the sky and said 'there are stories in the stars you know. I think that one is the three bears'."*

fun

What do you do for fun? *"Spend time with the grandchildren. Love to read. Go to wild places - canoeing, knocking around the water ways."*

What have you always wanted to do? *"I love to travel and want to see everything. Would love to live in an entirely different culture for a good part of a year. I would love that."*

Who is an admirable role model for young girls today? *"In our own life there are a lot of interesting, smart, outgoing, outspoken women. Rather than someone famous, have a role model as a two-way street. Look around. Who are the cool women around you? Get to know them."*

Is there a woman that you admire? *"My boss Jane Jerry, the first director of the children's museum, a wonderfully encouraging boss. She allowed us [and the museum] to blossom in our own way. She allowed us to figure it out."*

Of what are you most proud? *"I am proud that my daughter is a wonderful mother and proud of the museum."*

female

- Lisa Piscatelli

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