

January 2024

Issue 27

WASHINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



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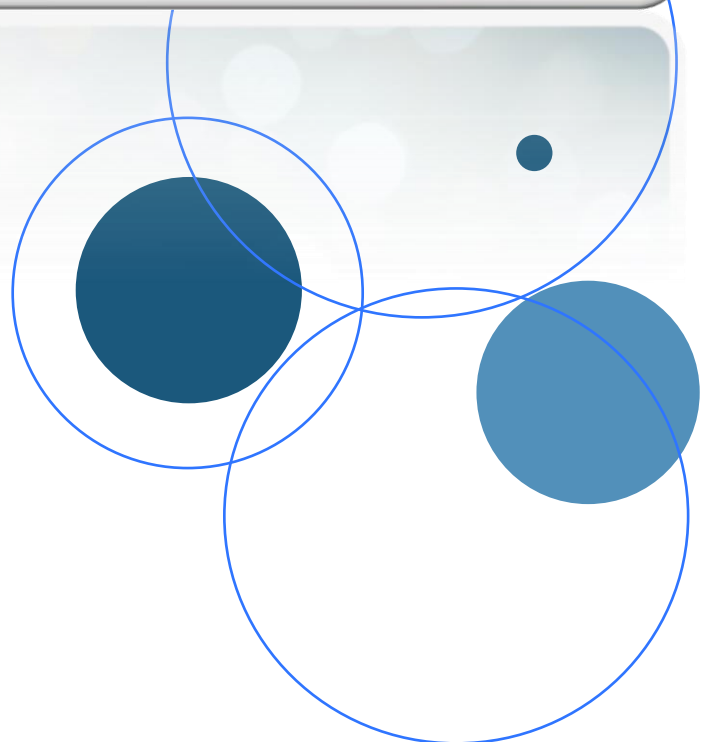
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Human Trafficking and Stalking Awareness Month



2024

WE NEED YOU!

- PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT
- GUEST COLUMNIST

Interested in being featured as provider spotlight and/or a guest columnist for 2024! Reach out now: Rebecca.Salsbury@co.washington.pa.us

YOU ARE INVITED TO A
GALA FOR HEROES



MASQUARADE THEME

MARCH
9TH
 4PM-9PM

340 RACETRACK RD.
 WASHINGTON, PA 15301

RSVP TO NICOLE +724-554-3548

\$60 EACH (tables have 8 seats)
VENMO: @PA-VETPETS
PAYPAL: pa.vetpets@gmail.com
WEBSITE: www.pavetpets.org/events



Washington County Department of Human Services Quarter 1 - Town Hall

Welcome

Interim Administrator/Deputy Director: Jason Bercini

Unit Director: Rebecca Salsbury

Aging Services Director: Mary Lynn Spilak

Behavioral Health and Developmental Services/Care

Management Director: Jennifer Scott

Children and Youth Services Director: Anne Schlegel

Housing and Homeless Coordinator: Nicole Masur

Veterans Affairs Director: Bobbi Cumpston

Washington Drug and Alcohol Commission

Executive Director: Cheryl Andrews

Guest Speaker Saffra Rahmany, Esq.:



January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and Stalking Awareness Month:



SPIC CARE Center



What's the Buzz at Washington County Department of Human Service

Please join us for the Washington County Department of Human Services Town Hall meeting on January 3rd at 3:00PM.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 210 215 962 424

Passcode: UhoT9X

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 872-212-5559,,6166787#](#) United States, Chicago

Phone Conference ID: 616 678 7#

Meet the Faces Behind the Department of Human Services:

Amy Begley, Human Services Research Analyst

Research analyst passionate about answering questions, solving problems, and helping people through data analysis. I worked many years as statistician at UPMC analyzing data on sleep, mood disorders, neurocognition and aging and much more. Also worked in business helping fleets managers understand and improve their safety, productivity, and efficiency metrics. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time and being active outdoors with family and friend.



Fair Housing Law Center

Guest Columnist: Saffra Rahmany, Staff Attorney, Summit Legal Aid

The Fair Housing Law Center is committed to our mission in offering education, legal representation, training and materials, and affirmatively furthering fair housing, to ensure access to housing free from discrimination. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) was passed in 1968 and has two main goals of preventing discrimination and reversing housing segregation.

Our office handles cases of prohibited acts against protected classes under the FHA. Prohibited acts range from making housing unavailable, steering, refusing to grant a reasonable accommodation or modification, sexual harassment, and more. Protected classes range from race and color, nation origin, religions, familial status and disability, and sex. Sex discrimination encompasses sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.

The FHA has a broad range of those who are liable including owner, landlords, Housing Authorities, managers, maintenance workers, lenders, and realtors. The FHA is also broad in what is considered an eligible dwelling unit including apartments, mobile home parks, condominiums, single family homes, a room in which people sleep even if they share living spaces, public housing, nursing homes, dormitories, and group homes for people with disabilities. Some examples of Fair Housing matters our office handles are reasonable accommodation requests for emotional support animals for people with disabilities or reasonable modification letters to install a handicap accessible shower.

Our office also works with Clients to file a complaint with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development or Pennsylvania Human Relation Commission when there has been a violation of the FHA. Housing Clients and cases are eligible for our services if they fall within one of our county coverage areas.

Phone: (724) 225.6170

Fax: (724) 250.1078

Toll Free Hotline: 1.877.725.4472

Our Website: <https://fhlaw.org/>



SPHS CARE Center STTARS Program

Human Trafficking Awareness/Stalking Awareness Month

Guest Columnist: Joanna Dragan

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month as well as Stalking Awareness Month. It is important to know how to recognize the signs of these and other abuses in order to stop them from happening in our communities and support those affected by these crimes.

Human Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where traffickers profit from the exploitation of others. It is a public health issue and crime that takes advantage of the most vulnerable among us and weakens the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

Trafficking can take different forms. Sex trafficking includes commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as instances where an adult is in the sex trade as the result of force, fraud, or coercion. Labor trafficking occurs when a person is forced or coerced to provide labor or services for the economic benefit of the trafficker.

Even though there has been increased awareness of this crime, human trafficking continues to go unreported due to its isolating nature, the misunderstanding of its definition, and the lack of awareness about its indicators.

According to the Stalking Prevention and Awareness Resource Center (SPARC), stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific individual that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalkers use a variety of tactics, including (but not limited to): unwanted contact including phone calls, texts, and contact via social media, unwanted gifts, showing up/approaching an individual or their family/friends, monitoring, surveillance, property damage, and threats. Anyone can be a victim of stalking. A majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know: a current or former intimate partner, acquaintance, or family member.

It is up to every business, community organization, faith community, family, and individual to make a difference by choosing products that are not made by forced labor; by working to protect our young people from sexual exploitation; by addressing the problem of internet sex trafficking and pornography; and by becoming more aware of the behaviors and attitudes that are conducive to sexual abuses. We must work together to find solutions.

The SPHS CARE Center STTARS Program staff has been trained to provide counseling and advocacy to survivors of sexual abuse, harassment, and assault, including sex trafficking and stalking in Washington and Greene Counties, and are proud to serve as a core team member of the Washington County Human Trafficking Taskforce. The taskforce is part of the Washington County STOP Team which focuses on sexual assault and domestic violence issues. Led by the Washington County District Attorney's Office, the taskforce brings together specialized law enforcement, victim services, and other providers with the focus of addressing and preventing trafficking in our area.

Increased community education on how to identify victims of human trafficking and sexual violence along with increased knowledge of local resources and services for those affected by these criminal actions, can help restore freedom and dignity to identified survivors, as well as diminish the number of future victims. The STTARS Program offers training for allied professionals and the community regarding a variety of sexual violence issues including Mandated Reporting, Trauma Response to Victims, and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. STTARS can also provide flyers, brochures, and magnets for your workplaces and communities with local and national resources. If you would like to learn more about addressing and preventing these crimes and how to support survivors, you can call the STTARS Program at 724-229-5007 or visit our website at: www.sttars.sphs.org. The Washington County Human Trafficking Taskforce also has a website with a variety of local and regional resources for those affected by trafficking: <https://httf-washcountypa.com/>

JANUARY
**HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**
PREVENTION MONTH



1 IN 3
WOMEN

1 IN 6
MEN

EXPERIENCE
STALKING
IN THEIR LIFETIMES



NATIONAL
STALKING
AWARENESS MONTH