

The Freeman Flash

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2016

ELIZABETH FREEMAN CENTER'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE XLIII



Action of the Month: We Are With You

These have been difficult weeks. We are heartbroken over the loss of 49 people – most of them LGBTQ and Latinx - in Orlando, crushed by the Supreme Court ruling that blocks expanded immigration protections, and outraged that California Judge Persky did not understand the gravity of Brock Turner's choice to sexually assault an unconscious woman at Stanford.

These events remind us how much work there is to be done - until all lives are seen as equally valuable; until those who are marginalized, trivialized, ignored, and often targeted for violence have justice, autonomy, voice, and safety; until we start to dismantle the systems of power and privilege in the world, and within us, that lend some in our society a sense of entitlement (for being male, for being white, for being straight, etc.) that stokes harm and violence.

This month, we ask you to take care of yourself, to seek support and community (EFC is here – call our 24/7 Hotline anytime), and most of all, to reach out to all those who might be especially affected by recent events and remind them, as the woman who was assaulted by Brock Turner wrote in a letter to victims everywhere:

“You are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you. To girls everywhere [and we would add, to people of color, to LGBTQ folks, to the undocumented, to people living with a disability], I am with you.”



Berkshire Leadership Program Selects EFC for Capstone Project



This spring, the 29 incredibly dynamic and talented leaders in the Berkshire Leadership Program (BLP)'s Class of 2016 selected EFC for their capstone project.

Their project included a multi-level marketing effort to make EFC's services better known and accessible to all, with billboards (one in each major area of the county), new written materials and stickers, a review of our website, improvements to our social media presence, the creation of a 30-second promotional video (viewed over 7,000 times so far on Facebook!), and fundraising with local businesses and community members to support these efforts.

Not only did BLP participants deliver real products, they also provided us with fresh eyes, education, and tools that we will continue to use to more effectively reach our community - so that more people will know who we are, what we do, and how we can help.

An enormous thank-you to the Berkshire Leadership Program Class of 2016 and its supporters for your incredible efforts.



Class of 2016 Leaders



24 hour hotline 1-866-401-2425

Pittsfield
43 Francis Ave.
(413) 499-2425

Gt. Barrington
401 Stockbridge Rd., Ste. 3
(413) 429-8190

North Adams
61 Main St., Ste. 202
(413) 663-7459

Supported locally by: Berkshire United Way • Northern Berkshire United Way • Williamstown Community Chest • City of Pittsfield • Verizon Foundation • The Mary Kay Foundation • The Green Foundation • Berkshire Bank Foundation • Town of Great Barrington • Berkshire Life Charitable Foundation • Coolidge Hill Foundation • Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation including the William and Margery Barrett Fund and the James and Robert Hardman Fund • Guardian Life Insurance Company • TD Charitable Foundation • Many community members, groups, businesses, and towns •



Meet our new South County Counselor/Advocate!

We are thrilled to welcome Jessica S. as our new South County Counselor/Advocate! Look for her friendly face in our Great Barrington office (401 Stockbridge Road) and around town.

Jessica, who goes by Jesi, has worked for social justice for many years in many settings, from Sisters for Peace in Great Barrington to the Berkshire County DA's office in Pittsfield to a workers' rights organization in Bangladesh. At EFC, she'll be offering free and confidential individual counseling and advocacy, group support, and some specialized LGBTQ support and advocacy. Call (413) 429-8190 to schedule a time to meet with her.



3rd Thursday, July 21st

Third Thursday is back! Come say hello to us on Thursday, July 21st at our table in front of Bagels Too. As always, we'll have free candy and temporary tattoos for kids, plus lots of great informational goodies.

The Cookie Crumbles... into Awesomeness



This spring, Hinsdale Girl Scout Troop stopped by to donate boxes upon boxes of Girl Scout cookies for our clients. Having a surprise treat made our clients' day. Thank-you, Troop 957! You are an inspiring group of young women.



Support Groups at EFC

You are not alone! EFC has a variety of support groups, all free and confidential, for people impacted by relationship or sexual violence – come on by:

Transitions Group, Pittsfield

Weekly group for people who have or are currently having housing issues because of domestic or sexual violence or the effects of violence. Support and resources around finding and transitioning into stable housing, plus art activities like pottery, knitting, painting, repurposing items, and more. Ongoing on Monday mornings, 10am, at our Pittsfield office (43 Francis Ave, Pittsfield). Contact Heather at (413) 499-2425.

Drop-In Group, Pittsfield

Weekly drop-in group for survivors of domestic violence. Come talk about healthy and unhealthy relationships, helping children who witness violence, self-care, DCF advocacy, and more, plus journaling, writing reflections, and TED talks. Wednesdays, 1:30pm, at our Pittsfield office (43 Francis Ave, Pittsfield). Contact Nakeida at (413) 499-2425, or just come by (come a ½ hour early if it's your first time).

LGBTQ Support Group, Pittsfield - *New!*

Weekly group for LGBTQ people impacted by relationship violence or sexual assault. Support and resources around healthy relationships, healing from past trauma, gender identity, sexuality, respect and trust, and sex, love, and dating in small communities. Safe and confidential, supportive atmosphere, optional creative arts and meditation. Contact Denise at (413) 499-2425.

Women Warriors, Pittsfield

Weekly group offering peer support, resources, and social activities for survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Social outings (picnics, fairs, trips), holiday celebrations, stories on courage, peer support, coping skills, and more. Ongoing on Friday afternoons, 2-4pm, at our Pittsfield office (43 Francis Ave). Contact Linda P. at (413) 499-2425.

The Power to Change, Great Barrington - *Starting soon!*

An 8-week support group for survivors of emotional abuse. You no longer need to feel isolated or alone. Will be meeting weekly at our South County office (401 Stockbridge Rd, Great Barrington). Contact 'Ce (pronounced like 'sea') at (413) 429-8190.

Survivors support group, North Adams - *Just started!*

An 8 (or more)-week support group for survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Get support around feeling you deserve good things, accepting help, recognizing abuse, healing from trauma, navigating dating after leaving an abusive relationship, and much more, plus journaling and art projects. Wednesdays, 10:30am, at our North County office (61 Main Street, Suite 202, North Adams). Contact Mary at (413) 663-7459.