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## For funding, victims' group tries thrift store on for size

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**DOVE's Executive Director Sue Chandler is quoted in Boston Globe article on funding for Domestic Violence organizations.**

PLYMOUTH - During a one-day, nationwide census of domestic violence cases last year, Massachusetts aid providers logged requested services during the 24-hour period, and the numbers were staggering.

Statewide, 750 domestic violence victims found refuge in emergency shelters, but an additional 600 seeking shelter were unable to secure beds. More than 1,000 adults and children received nonresidential services. And hotlines were fielding more than 30 calls for help every hour.

The need for help is greater than ever, advocates say, yet the funding to provide it is ever shrinking.

Because of substantial cuts in government grants over the past few years, many agencies have turned to fund-raising, hoping the public will pitch in.

Such is the case in Plymouth, where the South Shore Women's Resource Center, which lost \$100,000 in federal grant money in the last year, opened a thrift store downtown last month hoping to raise cash by selling donated goods.

"We're hoping to make the shortfall up, but it's a long shot," the agency's program director, Kathy Spear, said.

The resource center recently had to cut three full-time employees who were working with police departments in 16 area communities on domestic violence prevention. "Right now, we have a staff of 14, and only eight of those are full time," Spear said.

She said federal and state grants often come with mandates and restrictions on use of the money. "Many times we have to fund-raise for things like paying for our building," she said. Her agency holds a Psychic Fair, run by staff and volunteers, that has proven helpful. But other attempts, such as golf tournaments or a recent boat raffle, have fallen flat, since the agency doesn't have a development staff that can devote time to fund-raising.

"A thrift store came up as an idea when we were looking at ways to bring in revenue, and then the location became available," Spear said.

The Thrift Boutique, at 71 Court St., functions with volunteer help. A professional consultant donated her time to help with layout and did all the creative interior painting.

"We put the word out in newspapers and by word of mouth," Spear said. "There has been one store that has promised to give us some excess merchandise it didn't sell, and we're hoping for more of that."

According to Boston-based Jane Doe Inc., a nonprofit that lobbies for state and federal funding and offers training and other support to social service agencies, more than 80 full-time staff positions have been lost in Massachusetts domestic violence programs since July 2009.

Waiting lists had to be created for individual services, directors and staff, are working well beyond their 40-hour schedules, and prevention efforts have been curtailed. Support groups have been eliminated, and clients have to pay for training classes that used to be free. Jane Doe is hoping to spotlight the issue this month, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The organization's policy director, Maureen Gallagher, said any cuts to small anti-domestic violence agencies are significant.

"They're working on a shoestring," she said. "Services were cut by the state in 2009, and we're trying to recover that funding level. Federal cuts were enacted back in the early 2000s, and we're still trying to get that money back."

Family and Community Resources, a Brockton-based agency, for example, serves Brockton and 10 contiguous towns on an annual budget of \$1.2 million.

"In the last three years, we've seen a 30 percent increase in the number of victims reaching out for services," said the agency's president, Pat Kelleher. "We have many coming in who are beyond our regular programs, but we don't turn anyone away. You just have to stretch your dollars."

Kelleher said fund-raising has become increasingly important; her agency recently held a walk to raise money. "We spend a lot more time on fund-raising than we used to," she said.

**Domestic Violence Ended, or DOVE, a Quincy-based agency, has seen a 50 percent increase in demand for services, according to its executive director, Susan Chandler.**

**"We operate on a pretty lean budget," Chandler said. "Our way to respond has been more fund-raising. We just hired a director of development and communications, who will work with me and the board of directors to strengthen donations from existing supporters. It will be a full-court press."**

**The agency recently held "Divas Dance for DOVE," which proved successful. "Now we're working hard on a 'Harvesting Hope Gala' planned for Nov. 4," Chandler said.**

But fund-raising is a tough road, particularly in tight financial times, said Gallagher.

"It's challenging because you're competing with so many other organizations, and there are only so many people who can donate," she said. "Most of these agencies are struggling because they don't have development staff to plan the fund-raisers."

**The United First Parish Church in Quincy will hold a vigil from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday** for victims who lost their lives to domestic violence. Similar events were planned for this month in several area communities, including a vigil last Thursday in Randolph.

*Christine Legere can be reached at [christinelegere@yahoo.com](mailto:christinelegere@yahoo.com).*

**For more information contact DOVE at 617-770-4065 or visit [www.dovema.org](http://www.dovema.org)**

