



# Points of Interest

FALL 2017

The Newsletter for Friends of Turning Point



## HOMICIDE PREVENTION

Ninety-six (96%) of all homicides in Macomb County involve domestic violence. Reviews of these homicides show that 75% of them occur as the victim is getting ready to or has left. Over the past 10 years, we have learned a great deal, about when perpetrators are likely to kill. Threats of homicide, sexual assault, strangulation, access to weapons, and substance abuse greatly increases the danger many victims and their children are in. So how can we use what is known as lethality indicators to increase safety for victims and accountability for offenders?

In 2013, Michigan changed its strangulation law re-categorizing it as a felony with penalties up to 10 years in prison. Previously, strangling someone to the point of unconsciousness was a simple misdemeanor domestic assault and battery, with a maximum penalty up to 93 days in jail. More likely, however the abuser would receive some form of probation. "Most abusers do not strangle to kill. They strangle to show they can kill," says Gael Strack and Casey Gwinn in the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice. However, it is important to realize, "When a victim is strangled, she is on the edge of homicide." Studies have also shown that when the victim

survives strangulation they are subsequently 7 times more likely to experience an attempted homicide.

Using the new strangulation law, the Macomb County Domestic Violence Council (MCDVC) is spearheading an effort to test a promising intervention for homicide prevention in the County. A task group, Macomb County Strangulation Response Team (MCSRT) that includes representatives from the Macomb County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Clinton Township Police Department, Centerline Police Department, and Turning Point are developing the protocols to pilot the intervention.

Police will assess for strangulation at the time of a domestic violence call and connect the victim to Turning Point's Forensic Nurse Examiner Program for evidence collection and documentation. Advocates will be present as well to provide crisis intervention and resources for safety planning. Carmen Wargel, chair of MCDVC states: "The medical evidence of the seriousness of strangulation compels us to find ways to utilize the existing felony domestic violence strangulation law to hold offenders accountable while connecting survivors to support services, hopefully leading to fewer homicides"

### **Lethality Indicators:**

- **Access to weapons** • **Making specific threats** • **Sexual assault**
- **Increased depression or drug or alcohol use**
- **Escalating violence, physical assault including use of strangulation**

### **What You Can do:**

- **Safety Plan** – **Look at your situation, barriers, threats, resources etc., to determine best course of action and when and how to leave.**
- **Trust your instincts** – **you have the most knowledge of the abuser, his past assaults, etc.**
- **Take threats seriously** – **Often people surrounding the abuser hear the threats but don't take them seriously. Getting this information to the survivor and authorities, can help avoid a tragedy.**

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH



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## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### UNDERSTANDING NON-FATAL STRANGULATION

Sept 15

MISD, Clinton Twp., MI

3- 4:30



### TARA'S WALK

September 30

Freedom Hill

10am-1pm

### CRAFTIVISM

October 24

Grace Episcopal Church

6:00-8:00

### CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN

October 19

Partridge Creek • All Day

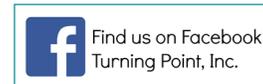
### ALEX & ANI

October 19

Partridge Creek

6:00-8:00

For more information on any of these events please visit our website [www.turningpointmacomb.org](http://www.turningpointmacomb.org) or find us on -



## ACTION ALERT!

House Bill 4691 proposes changing Michigan custody decisions to a presumption of joint physical legal custody and equal parenting time as the starting point for ALL custody cases. HB4691 would require "clear and convincing evidence" to negate joint custody when a parent has a concern about their child's safety and wellbeing.

Turning Point agrees that joint custody is ideal for many families "This proposed legislation assumes that joint custody is in the best interest of all children and that simply is false," Sue Coats, CEO of Turning Point states. "We see children in our counseling program traumatized by

forced visitations with their abuser affecting their academic and emotional health and stability. Domestic violence abusers often use custody and visitation arrangements as a way to continue stalking and controlling the victim, exposing the family to more danger. This policy creates a gigantic legal obstacle for domestic violence survivors trying to leave their abuser and creates a wide and long-range opportunity for the abuser to continue their battering. We urge the public to contact their state of Michigan Representative and ask them vote **NO** on HB 4691," Coats concludes. If you do not who your representative is check out -

<http://michiganlcv.org/at-the-capitol/find-your-elected-officials/>

## LEGACY DONOR CREATES A CHILDREN'S FUND

Former Turning Point volunteer and donor Mary Ann Jarrett has started The Children's Emergency Needs Fund, that will help meet the needs of children while in shelter. For several years, Mary Ann facilitated activities and provided support to children in shelter. Now she has begun a legacy fund that will help alleviate some of the obstacles faced by children in shelter and ease some of their pain and uncertainty.

"As a volunteer, I was able to witness firsthand the difference that Turning Point made in the lives of women and children. I cannot even begin to explain the extent of the need in our community or the ability of Turning Point to address that need at every level. I am in awe of the work done by the staff and volunteers at Turning Point. I am grateful to be able to support their work," states Mary Ann.

The first withdrawal from the Fund happened this summer. A child in shelter who also had autism was able to attend a camp that specialized in meeting his needs. This helped him get out of the shelter each day and greatly reduced his anxiety and helped him cope with the stresses of communal living. We are so grateful to Mary Ann for making his time at shelter tolerable for him!

## Second Hand



## ROSE Resale Shop

SERVICES TO END DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

DONATE \* SHOP \* VOLUNTEER