

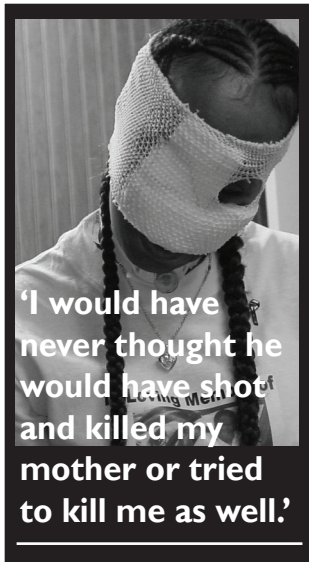
A publication of the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH), a project of the Texas Council on Family Violence

Carolyn Thomas: A Survivor Speaks Out

By Patty Perez
NDVH Communications Project Specialist

NDVH staff traveled to Waco, Texas in January to meet and interview Carolyn Thomas. Carolyn agreed to share her story with *Hotlines* in hopes of showing the possible effects of domestic violence.

"I just thought I could handle it. I felt like I didn't need help and looking back, I did. I needed to call the hotline. I needed to come to the shelter. If I could change a lot of things that would have been two of the first things I would have done. But I thought I could make it right." While in the abusive relationship that has altered her life, Carolyn Thomas had a friend who visited the Family Abuse Center to get help. In retrospect, Carolyn, 34, recognizes she needed that help, and is now speaking out to women across the country in hopes of spreading awareness about the potentially life-threatening effects of domestic violence and the importance of seeking help from a hotline or local shelter.

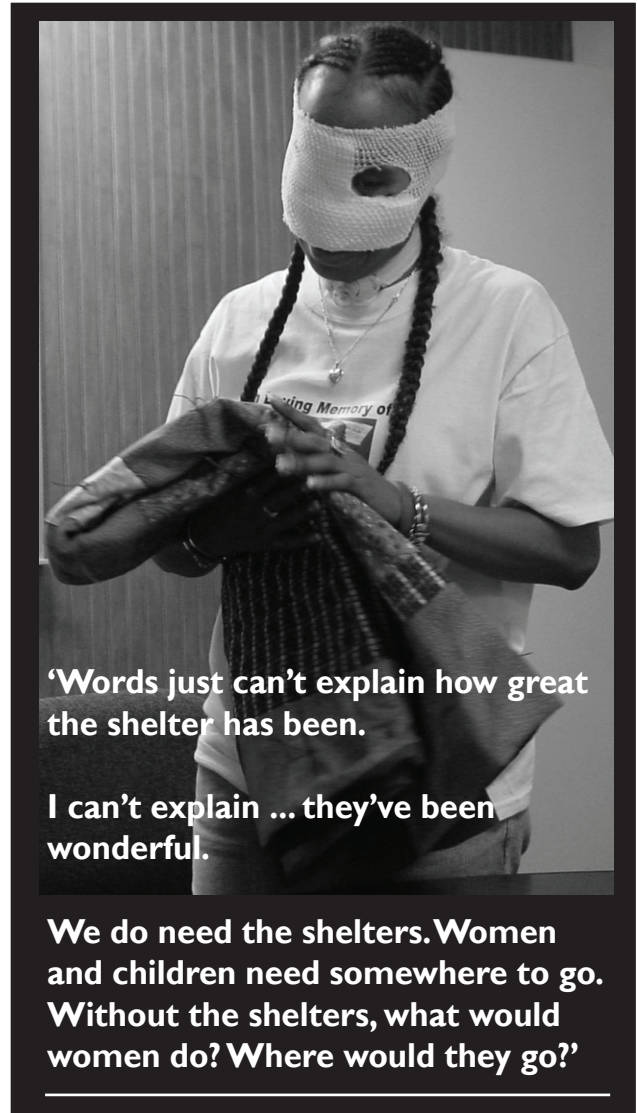


'I would have never thought he would have shot and killed my mother or tried to kill me as well.'

2003. The single shot went through Carolyn's right eye shattering her cheekbone, nose and upper jaw. Kelly also shot and killed Carolyn's mother, Janice Reeves.

Carolyn recounted the events of that night last month in an interview at the Family Abuse Center in Waco, Texas, surrounded by the support of her counselor, Dione Jackson, Deidra Simmons, the center's executive director and a friend. The shelter has become a lifeline for Carolyn, providing counseling, managing media and television talk show requests, facilitating doctor visits and offering friendship.

"Words just can't explain how great the shelter has been. I can't explain ... they've been wonderful. We do need the shelters. Women and children need somewhere to go. Without the



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We do need the shelters. Women and children need somewhere to go. Without the shelters, what would women do? Where would they go?'

shelters, what would women do? Where would they go?" added Carolyn.

Carolyn met Kelly in 1992. Although his abusive behavior was not apparent initially, it increased over time. Kelly had pulled a gun on Carolyn once before. "I had told a friend at work what he had done, but I thought he was just trying to scare me, shake me up. He was abusive, but I would have never thought he would have shot and killed my mother or tried to kill me as well. I would have never thought that," Carolyn said.

Carolyn had been rebuilding her life and gaining the strength to leave Kelly while he was serving a short prison term.

"When he came home (from prison) I wasn't the same person that I was when he left. When he left I was timid and quiet and whatever he said I did. But when he came home I was a lot stronger, and I knew what I was and what I was not going to put up with," Carolyn said as she took labored breaths through a trache-

(continued on page 5)

National Domestic Violence **HOTLINE**

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VAWA Anniversary Prompts Reflection

In the Fall 2004 issue of *Hotlines*, we reported on the 10th anniversary celebration of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and its accomplishments. In this issue, as the VAWA reauthorization is upon us, I would like to highlight the specific accomplishments of the National Domestic Violence Hotline over the years, which include increased call volume, expansion of quality services and growth in national partnerships.

The Hotline was specifically designed to be a vital link between the caller and their local community. In 2003, we received our millionth call. To date, we have answered 1,270,587 calls while saving and touching lives, and creating the opportunity to change lives. This is our most exciting accomplishment. Since taking the first call in February 1996, the Hotline has experienced a continual increase in the number of calls, ranging from 18-20%.

As incoming calls have increased over the years, we have improved the quality of our services by adjusting our methods of information gathering and call preparation to accommodate the various types of calls we receive. For example, the Hotline began as an information and referral line. Now, we can also provide crisis intervention and empowerment-based advocacy. Technology has enabled us to use "direct connect," in which we directly connect our callers in crisis to programs in their area. We have been able to make it one step easier for them to get help via the appropriate referral, and ensure that the caller was, in fact, able to connect with a program.

Additionally, technology has enabled us to help callers with various needs, including those that speak foreign languages and those that are deaf, blind or hard-of-hearing. At the Hotline's inception, we were able to provide assistance in 139 languages; now we can provide assistance in up to 150 languages. In 1998, we began a deaf outreach partnership to better serve hearing-impaired victims of domestic violence and established a separate toll-free telephone number for a TTY line, 1-800-787-3224. Later, we expanded on that program by partnering with Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) and we created a specialized e-mail address, deafhelp@ndvh.org, for domestic violence victims that are deaf, blind, and hard-of-hearing.

The Hotline has been able to create a broader safety net for women by forming partnerships in the broader national community. Over the years, we have aligned ourselves with various corporations and domestic violence coalitions that have been active in ending violence against women. We have befriended various national media outlets, many of which have been generous in airing donated public service announcements throughout the country to publicize the Hotline number; have contacted us for expert opinions; and have included our number in regular columns and programs. We have also acquired the support of various lawmakers and celebrities.

As a vital part of VAWA, the National Domestic Violence Hotline continues its commitment to providing crisis intervention, safety planning, appropriate referrals, options and opportunities for victims, survivors, friends and family. In order to ensure that VAWA III is passed, you can help by communicating with your legislators via visits, letters, and emails to maintain their support. We have made great strides over the last 10 years in providing greater protection for the lives of women, children, and families; however, we must continue to work toward safer families, neighborhoods and communities.

We could not have achieved these great accomplishments without the help of the 50 state domestic violence coalitions nationwide, domestic violence programs, national domestic violence institutes, advocates, The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), our corporate partners and individuals. So, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your tremendous support over the years.



Sheryl Cates,
Executive Director

ON THE LINE

Every hour of every day, Hotline Advocates answer calls from all over the nation.

The calls are dramatic, touching, and real.

Here are a few examples, as shared by Hotline Advocates.

“Will I lose everything I ever worked for if I leave...?”

The caller had been married for eight years. The physical abuse stopped four years ago after her husband was arrested. Though the physical abuse ended, her husband continued to be emotionally and verbally abusive. With no car and no privacy, the caller said she felt trapped by her husband. He never left the house, and she was rarely alone.

After we brainstormed about possible alternatives to change her situation, the caller's tone of voice became hopeful and positive. I spoke to her about local services and accessing them without the abuser finding out. She said she would overcome her situation despite being closely monitored and having no transportation.

When the abuser is arrested...

A caller was arrested after she called the police about her abusive boyfriend. He had scratches on his face from when she tried to defend herself.

The caller moved out after this incident. The abuser owed her over \$60,000. She was pregnant and had an upcoming court date from her arrest. When I spoke to the caller, I gave her local referrals for counseling and legal advocacy. The caller was referred to the NDVH website and book titles so she could educate herself on domestic violence. The caller was grateful for the information, and to know we existed.

I told her that she could call us back at any point if she needed emotional support again.

A survivors' thanks...

A woman called to say “Thank you!” Her husband had pushed her out of a window and she called for help some years ago. She called to say that she had survived the violence, and he was serving a lengthy sentence in prison. She was trying to contact each agency that she had called those many years ago to tell them the outcome and that we really did make a difference in her life.

HOTLINE STATS

Advocates received **17,874** calls in January 2005.

54% of the callers identified themselves as victims.

12.4% of the callers identified themselves as friends and family of the abused.



NDVH Launches Wellness Program

Minerva Chiu Martinez
NDVH Hotline Advocate

Thanks to a grant from the Hogg Foundation, the Austin Community Foundation, and the Simmons Foundation, NDVH was able to create an innovative program for Hotline Wellness and Mental Health Education. The program provided an awareness of mental health issues to better serve callers as well as wellness debriefing on secondary trauma to

Hotline advocates. As a result, Hotline advocates are better equipped to deal with the stresses of crisis calls.

“The wellness project was established based on the need to provide advocates who are taking crisis call after crisis call with tools that would help minimize secondary traumatization and its effects. Participation in the wellness project would mutually benefit advocates as well as callers,” said Shaun Thompson, Associate Hotline Director.

The Response

Hotline advocates had positive responses to the program:

“ I found that the mental health training, together with the wellness sessions were incredibly helpful. Empathy and understanding for the mental health client, as well as techniques for working with the callers have helped me tremendously as an advocate.”

“Wellness has changed my attitude when taking a call. Instead of feeling burned out, I know what I am willing and able to give when helping callers. This change of attitude has helped me become a better and more patient advocate.”

“I really appreciated the wellness debriefing sessions. I got to know the other advocates better. Improving friendships and support has been good for my well being and made me a better advocate.”

“I had no expectations going into wellness sessions. I was pleasantly surprised about how beneficial they were. Learning breathing and de-stressing techniques, and the importance of self-care, as well as the information and tips on working with callers have helped me become a more effective advocate.”

The Program

The wellness program was created and facilitated by Martha Duffer, who holds a doctorate in psychology. As a psychologist with over 10 years of experience, she understood some of the systemic challenges of the Hotline. Duffer had experience developing wellness programs and working with group facilitation and training. She offered the following insights into the wellness program:

What did you hope to accomplish? It was my intention that through the wellness program, advocates would gain information, skills and internal resources that would transform their hotline work into a rewarding, energizing experience, preventing burnout and making them more effective in responding to callers.

Do you feel this was accomplished? I do. Through verbal and written evaluation processes, advocates consistently reported gaining skills and awareness that assisted them with callers and made the challenge of working with mentally ill callers or hostile callers less stressful. Pre-tests and post-tests suggest that the program decreased overall stress and improved job satisfaction.

What have been some of your favorite reactions to the wellness program? Many advocates incorporated new wellness practices into their lives and gained awareness of what matters most to them and made choices that allowed them to cultivate time and space for their priorities. Many reported increased overall life satisfaction, increased job satisfaction, decreased anxiety and increased sense of purpose and clarity. Many began to eat healthier and exercise regularly, some began meditation and relaxation practices. Some reported improvements in their personal relationships and parenting. Many reported being more excited about their work and feeling that they were able to be more useful to callers due to taking better care of themselves in multiple ways. The vast majority reported decreased work stress. Overall, program participants were very appreciative of the space to think about their self-care and eagerly gained skills and practices to support ongoing, aware, informed, daily healthy choices.

What do you hope to see in the wellness program in the future? I hope to see more advocates become involved in leading and facilitating wellness sessions - the creation of a sustainable cost effective program with a small collective wellness leadership team that allows the Hotline to maximize the wonderful array of skills, expertise and creativity of the hotline advocates.

Shelter, Assistance Groups Help Survivor Build a Future

(continued from page 1)

otomy tube that supports her breathing.

Carolyn said she now knows that Kelly saw her independence as a threat. She tried to end the relationship and began seeing someone else. However, Kelly assured Carolyn that he wasn't going back to prison. She said she wanted to give him another chance; she had no idea the relationship could end in tragedy.

"When he came through the door he was just screaming about who was in the apartment? Me and my mother were trying to assure him there was no one in there, just us three," Carolyn remembered. "When I saw the look in his eyes, and the way he was acting, I knew it wasn't good."

When Waco police arrived at the apartment Carolyn shared with her mother, they found the women's bodies and thought they both were dead. As the police were leaving, Carolyn reached out and grabbed the ankle of one of the officers. "I just remember having the time to say, 'God forgive me for all my sins and if you see fit, bring me back into the world. I remember hearing my mother's voice...the of-

ficer coming in, thinking I was dead. I grabbed his ankle and I was able to tell him who did it," Carolyn said.

She was hospitalized for six months and, under the care of her physician and nurses, learned to change and dress the large hole in her face left by the gunshot. Carolyn was also taught how to feed herself through a tube to her stomach. Since she must change her bandages three times a day and give herself nourishment, Carolyn spends much of her time at home in the apartment she shares with her pit bull, Tangy Marie.

A request for help came to the Family Abuse Center in Waco, Texas from a group of community service providers stating that a survivor of domestic violence was in desperate need of facial reconstructive surgery. Deidra Simmons could not have known the impact this one survivor and her story would have on her life and the

shelter she directs.

"I sent an e-mail to the Executive Director Listserv to see what experience they had in situations where there was a huge need for facial reconstructive surgery," Simmons said. The Executive Director Listserv is an e-mail group that allows executive directors of Texas domestic violence shelters and programs to share information and offer advice to one another. "The Houston Area Women's Center sent an e-mail back that I should contact *Face to Face* and *Give Back A Smile*," Simmons said.

Face to Face is a project sponsored by the Educational and Research Foundation for the American Academy of Facial and Reconstructive Surgery. *Give Back A Smile* is a project sponsored by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. The groups work in partnership with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) to repair facial and dental injuries of victims of domestic and dating violence.

Carolyn's first in a series of surgeries began in February at the Methodist Hospital of Houston, under a team of surgeons led by internationally recognized facial plastic surgeon, Dr. Eugene Alford. The cost of Carolyn's surgeries and medical care is being donated by the surgeons and hospital, and is estimated to exceed six figures.

Dr. Alford has donated his time and expertise to *Face to Face* since its inception in 1994. He emphasized the role of counseling the victims must go through in shelters and programs before they can be accepted by *Face to Face* for surgery. "The ultimate goal is for the victim not to return to her abuser. The surgery is an incentive for the victim. Two patients that I have operated on have ended up back in my office; two of about 20," he said. "The pattern of domestic violence is learned. There is a lot of counseling the victim must go through. Whatever we can do to help break that



Carolyn Thomas, shown above with her counselor, Dione Jackson, at the Family Abuse Center in Waco, Texas.

cycle is important."

Kelly's trial begins in April. Carolyn will be there to testify along with Simmons, Jackson and domestic violence advocates from across the country that have contacted the shelter to show their support.

Carolyn's perseverance has not only been an inspiration to Simmons, Jackson and shelter staff, her story has opened the eyes of women currently at the shelter, Simmons noted.

Featured in *People* magazine, the *Dallas Morning News* and other publications, and interviewed by Larry King for CNN, Carolyn is doing all that she can to make the potential effects of domestic violence known. The exposure has brought an influx of calls and e-mails to the shelter from people across the country who have been touched, inspired and amazed by Carolyn's story. The Discovery Health Channel plans to follow Carolyn's story, and *SELF* and *Texas Monthly* magazines, as well as the Oprah show, have made requests for additional coverage of Carolyn's story and progress throughout her surgeries.

"Just waking up every morning and looking at her (Janice Reeve's) picture, it just motivates me to get up and do the dressings and to just get dressed," Carolyn said. Janice, Carolyn's mother, smiles from a picture memorialized on the T-shirt Carolyn wears. She has become Carolyn's inspiration to speak out. "I have to be strong. Everything that I am doing, and in going to the trial, it's all for my mother and other women that have been in my position."

"Just waking up every morning and looking at her (Janice Reeve's) picture, it just motivates me to get up and do the dressings and to just get dressed," Carolyn said. Janice, Carolyn's mother, smiles from a picture memorialized on the T-shirt Carolyn wears. She has become Carolyn's inspiration to speak out.

National Center for Victims of Crime Establishes January as National Stalking Awareness Month

By Clarissa Hernandez
NDVH Staff Writer

Stalking is a serious and deadly crime that victimizes more than one million women and nearly 400,000 men in America each year. In 2004, the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) established January as National Stalking Awareness Month to increase awareness about stalking. The effort to begin National Stalking Awareness Month was inspired by Peggy Klintke, a stalking victim who was murdered by an ex-boyfriend after repeatedly seeking law enforcement intervention.

In its first year, NCVC's efforts were considered a tremendous success; the organization distributed posters, fact sheets, brochures for victims, sample resolutions, and op-eds across the country. Advocates across the country worked to bring attention to stalking by participating in interviews, training law enforcement and passing local resolutions to establish Stalking Awareness Month in their area. This year's efforts increased throughout the country with 23 states recognizing

National Stalking Awareness Month.

According to Shaun Thompson, Associate Hotline Director, the majority of stalking victims are also domestic violence victims. A survey by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control found that 59% of female victims were stalked by their intimate partner. The pattern of controlling behaviors in stalking is very similar to domestic violence. Hotline advocates help callers who report being stalked by problem solving and creating safety plans for the victim.

Established by the NCVC in July 2000, the Stalking Resource Center reports that stalking can occur during a relationship, after a relationship or in the absence of a relationship. Research has established a connection between femicide and stalking. According to NCVC, 76 percent of women killed by their intimate partners were stalked by these partners before they were killed. For more information on stalking, visit www.ndvh.org or www.ncvc.org/src.

11-year-old Girl Launches Effort to Help Domestic Violence Victims

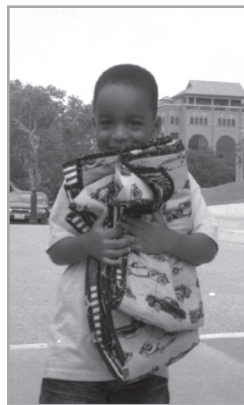
By Patty Perez
NDVH Communications Project Specialist

In 2002, an 11-year-old girl from Minnesota started *Quilts for Kids*, a program designed to reach out to the youngest victims of domestic violence by sending quilts to children whose mothers were killed in domestic violence incidents across the country.

"The quilt reminds me of my mommy and how her arms might feel around me," wrote a child who received a quilt from the program. Now 13, Augusta Rogers adopted that statement as the motto for the nationwide project she directs from her home. "I always knew that I had a

purpose in life, and I have found it in helping kids," she said.

Since the program started, Augusta has sent 23 quilts to children across the country. The quilts are handmade and donated to the program. To donate a quilt or if you would like for a quilt to be sent to a child who has lost his mother or father in a domestic violence incident, email Augusta at quiltsforkids@hotmail.com.



Isaiah Jordan,
recipient of a quilt

New Chief Development Officer Joins NDVH

The National Domestic Violence Hotline welcomes its new Chief Development Officer, Mitchell A. Willis. Mitchell has more than 15 years of



fundraising experience. His work with the American Red Cross and his strategic fundraising methods gained national attention, as did his implementation of a now modeled special event honoring local heroes. After receiving the Tiffany Award, the American Red Cross' most prestigious recognition for fundraising efforts, Mitchell was promoted from a Regional Development Officer position to the Major Gifts Officer for Disaster Fundraising serving under Elizabeth H. Dole at their National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. After many years of fundraising and cause related marketing success, he closed his tenure with a first ever nationally televised holiday special on CBS highlighting heroic individuals that were affiliated with the Red Cross.

Mitchell went on to work for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) as their Director of Annual Giving where he learned first hand about advocacy work and raising money in a diverse community. He is a nationally recognized speaker on volunteerism and an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. He recently served as a People to People Ambassador for Philanthropy in the Czech Republic and Poland. Mitchell is thrilled to be back in the human services field and helping women and families who are victims of domestic violence.

Jewish Women International Training Provides Awareness

Minerva Chiu Martinez
NDVH Hotline Advocate

On December 13 and 14, 2004, the first Jewish Women International (JWI) training was held to give Hotline advocates awareness of the Jewish community.

The training included testimonials from two survivors and a dynamic look at stereotypes and anti-Semitism. A detailed history and cultural training, as well as a role-playing segment, gave advocates a hands on opportunity to implement the information they learned in the training.

Advocates said they found the training to be eye opening and helpful:

"The JWI training was great because it not only provided basic information on Jewish culture and religion, it also gave us practical tools to use during our calls."

"The training helped us gather concrete understanding of Jewish women and their experience of violence. We are able to identify possible queues Jewish women may give, therefore we are able to offer appropriate referrals."

Maria Limon, NDVH training coordinator, schedules this and future in-service trainings to keep up with current trends in the domestic violence field; other topics will include economic/human trafficking and the legal process.



Hotline advocates at Jewish Women International training.

Around the Nation

The 2nd International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community

Jewish Women International (JWI) will hold their 2nd International Conference in Washington D.C. on March 20-23, 2005. The conference is a forum to discuss, learn, share and commit to ending violence against all women. It is a milestone event reflecting new attitudes toward the issue, engendered by survivors of domestic abuse, activists and Jewish domestic violence agencies. For information, email Kayla at knicolay@jwi.org.

When Push Comes to Shove... It's No Longer Love!™ A Jewish Perspective on Gender, Power, and Relationships

Jewish Women International's young leaders' retreat will immediately precede the second international conference. The retreat is for 18-25 year old men and women to explore healthy relationships in a Jewish framework. The retreat is being held at the Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center, just outside of Baltimore on March 18-20, 2005. For information visit www.jwicalltoaction.org.

4th Annual Honoring Women in Our Lives

The Texas Council on Family Violence will hold the Honoring Women in Our Lives luncheon on May 3, 2005 in Austin, Texas. The luncheon will pay tribute to the women in our lives who inspire, care, mentor, support and nurture us. In addition, Liz Claiborne will be recognized for their dedication and commitment to ending domestic violence and ensuring quality services to families experiencing its effects. Liz Claiborne will be recognized with the Leadership in National Awareness Award (LINA) for encouraging men and women to speak out on relationship violence through its "Love is Not Abuse" program, which has reached millions of Americans over the last 13 years." For information, contact Marie Albino at (512) 794-1133 or malbino@tcfv.org.

If you have information you would like to appear in this section of the Hotlines, please contact Clarissa Hernandez at 512/794-1133

Hotline Donors

The National Domestic Violence Hotline extends its deepest gratitude to the following contributors for their generosity (September 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004):

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Microsoft Corporation Answers the Call for Help DONATING OVER \$300,000 IN TECHNOLOGY

The Hotline has become a vital link to safety for over 1 million victims, friends and family for the past eight years and now receives up to 16,000 calls *each month*. Over 62% of callers report that they are calling for the first time, making it even more critical to ensure that calls are being answered promptly by an informed and caring advocate.

As a key member of the *Connections Campaign* Corporate Partners, Microsoft is donating over \$300,000 in technology to the Hotline. Their generous contribution will help guarantee that the Hotline has the technology necessary to provide life-saving assistance to victims of domestic violence and their children.

The Hotline's unique ability to connect callers to 4,800 local domestic violence programs and services depends on an adequate number of trained staff and a strong foundation of technology to answer an ever-increasing number of calls.

Microsoft®

The *Connections Campaign* kicked off in March 2004 when Senator Joseph R. Biden, D-Del., enlisted the support

and expertise of leaders in the technology field to update the Hotline's technology systems, software and training. The push to update the technological capabilities of the Hotline was part of a larger campaign, *Every Call Must Be Answered*, which delineated the Hotline's need to be able to answer more calls and make the process more effective.