

# ... in Action

Helping people, changing lives



Fall 2009

## Surviving domestic violence

When Sally\* finally escaped the man who threatened to kill her and her family, she had no job, no home and no confidence. What she did have were health problems and a lot of fear.

At the suggestion of police, she contacted our Family Support Center and met with Victim Advocate Lyni Smith, who helped her find housing, create a safety plan, get medical care and counseling and re-enter the job market.

Today, Sally is doing well and has her own cleaning business.

“Lyni saved my life,” she says. “I never could have recovered so quickly from such a traumatic time in my life without the support I received.”

Each year, the Family Support Center serves more than 350 new victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Stevens County, helping them and their families find the safety and support they need to recover and move forward.

Free and confidential services include a 24-hour help line, temporary safe shelter, crisis intervention (including safety planning), information and referrals, help with court orders, and advocacy.

With October being national Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Nancy Foll, director of our Family Services Division, wants those who are living in

*Continued on page 2*



## Calling all volunteers: Insurance help line needs you!

Want to help people in your community get through the health care coverage maze?

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program needs volunteers in Stevens, Pend Oreille, Ferry and Lincoln counties to counsel people about health-care coverage, enter data and speak to community groups.

No experience is necessary, just a desire to help. SHIBA, an all-volunteer program created by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner, provides free counseling to people on health-care coverage issues including Medicaid and Medicare, Medicare Part D, private insurance, long-term care, and insurance fraud and abuse.

Trained and caring volunteers counsel people over the phone and in person, giving unbiased information and options to help them make sense of confusing insurance language and make better choices about their coverage.

For example, many low-income people on Medicare are unaware that they may qualify for a “Low-income Subsidy” or “Medicare Savings Plan” that can save them more than \$100 a month in insurance costs, says Ruby Page, SHIBA coordinator with Rural Resources.

Volunteers don’t need to have a background in

insurance, Ruby notes. SHIBA will provide free training and compensation for mileage.

“We have 10 dedicated volunteers in the four counties, but we need more,” she says. “Even if they can commit to just one day a month, we can use them.”

SHIBA is approaching a busy time of year with the six-week window (Nov. 15 to Dec. 31) for changing coverage under Medicare Part D. People need to check their plans every year because insurance companies will change coverage, she says.

For more information on volunteering, contact Ruby at **509-685-6077** or [ruby@ruralresources.org](mailto:ruby@ruralresources.org).

To talk to a SHIBA counselor, call Rural Resources at **509-684-8421** or the statewide toll-free HelpLine at **1-800-562-6900**.



### 12 signs of a batterer

1. Jealousy
2. Blames you and others for their faults
3. Blames circumstances for their problems
4. Unpredictable behavior
5. Belittles you verbally
6. Doesn't control anger
7. Always asks for a second chance
8. Says they'll change, that they won't do it again
9. Their family resolves problems with violence
10. Plays on your guilt: “If you loved me...”
11. Behavior often worsens when they use alcohol or drugs
12. Closed minded; their way is the only way

### No one deserves to be abused: 12 affirmations

1. I'm not to blame for being beaten and abused
2. I'm not the cause of another's violent behavior.
3. I don't like or want it.
4. I don't have to take it.
5. I'm worth working for and changing for.
6. I deserve to be treated with respect.
7. I can exercise control over my life and my children's lives.
8. I don't want my children to grow up to batter or be battered.
9. I deserve to make our lives safe and happy.
10. I can make changes in my life if I want to.
11. I'm not alone. I can ask others for help.
12. There are options.



## Emergency shelter addresses root causes of homelessness

If it wasn't for an unassuming home in a quiet Colville neighborhood, Greetus Ruggirello isn't sure where she'd be.

Early this year, the house provided emergency shelter for the homeless mom in her escape from domestic violence.

Now she and her three younger children are living safely and comfortably in a transitional apartment while they wait for subsidized, permanent housing.

"It's like a big weight has been taken off my shoulders," says Greetus of the shelter and support she's received through Rural Resources. She and her three school-age children feel "100 percent" more secure.

For more than 20 years, Rural Resources has been providing temporary refuge for the homeless. In 1992, we purchased a 1911 vintage home and remodeled it to create the Stevens County Emergency Shelter, which houses more than 20 local families each year and provides services and support to many more.

Homeless services have come a long way since the days when shelters simply provided a roof, bed and food, says Shelter Services Coordinator Jenny Jones. Rural Resources staff members work with families to identify barriers to independence and develop plans to transition into permanent housing and achieve stability.

"The causes of homelessness are as varied as the families we serve," she says. "What might appear to be a simple loss

of income may turn out to be a substance abuse, domestic violence or mental health problem. To break the cycle of homelessness, we must first assess the root causes."

In addition to housing, Rural Resources helped Greetus and one of her children get the counseling they needed to move forward.

"The staff is so wonderful," she says. "When you come from a domestic violence situation, it can be hard opening up, but I felt comfortable talking to them. They never judged me. They were helpful and compassionate. You can't get any better than that."

*To learn more about emergency shelter and other housing options, call us at 509-684-8421 or visit our Web site at [www.ruralresources.org](http://www.ruralresources.org).*



*Jenny Jones coordinates shelter services for Rural Resources. (Photo by Valerie Lamont)*

## Family Support Center helps violence victims recover

*Continued from page 1*

abusive situations to know that help is out there. It can start with a call to center's 24-hour help line at 509-684-6139.

Domestic violence doesn't have to be physical. It can also be verbal, emotional, sexual, economic and social (such as isolating a victim from family and friends), Nancy says. "It takes many different forms, but usually follows a familiar pattern toward a common end: control of one person by another."

More than 42,400 incidents of domestic violence were reported to law enforcement authorities in Washington state in 2008. That same year, nearly one in four homicides and almost half of all assaults stemmed from domestic violence, according to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police.

Sally's batterer was a former friend and co-worker she

took into her home and tried to help. He controlled her through threats and violence, once slapping her across the room and other times throwing things at her, including a 15-pound cat and a crockpot.

"I want people to know that you do *not* have to be romantically involved with someone to be a victim of domestic violence," she says. "During that time in my life, my confidence was shot. I don't even think I could have held a job, but Lyni really helped me. Thanks to her and Rural Resources, I feel good about myself again."

*The Family Support Center and Kids First Children's Advocacy Center need caring volunteers who want to make a difference in the lives of children and families in our community. For more information, including a list of volunteer opportunities, visit our Web site at [www.ruralresources.org](http://www.ruralresources.org) or contact us at 509-684-6139 or at [info@ruralresources.org](mailto:info@ruralresources.org).*



## ActionSteps

By Barry Lamont

*Rural Resources Executive Director*

What's the number-one priority of the company or business that you work for? To sell more products, increase your profit margin, survive the recession?

Here at Rural Resources, we've been working with our Board of Directors to establish our top priority for the coming few years. Like for-profit businesses, we pay close attention to the revenue we bring in, to efficiencies of operation and to making a good return on every investment – whether it's a \$5,000 government grant or a \$5 contribution from a community member.

But as a non-profit business, our top priority is simple. We want every resident of Stevens, Ferry and Pend Oreille Counties who needs our help to know we're here. Yes, we want more "customers." We want those who are hungry, cold, homeless, unemployed or hurting to know that Rural Resources is the place to turn. We want to give them all a hand up, not a handout, to make their lives better. Here, those in need find no stigma, no judgment. If they're willing to do their part, we're willing to help.

That's why we began the new ResourceLink program that you can read about on this page. We're going to where our potential customers are in the most rural areas of Stevens County to reach them one-on-one with the help they need. And, we hope to soon expand ResourceLink to the two other counties we serve.

For the past few years, we've stepped up our efforts to let people know we're here. You may have seen our posters around town, read articles in newspapers about us or visited our Web site. And, the newsletter you're holding in your hands or reading online right now is another major effort to raise awareness of our services.

The best way we reach our neighbors in need, however, is by word of mouth. It's through all of you who know about us and who stay on the lookout for people who need us. So, please help us be successful in our top priority. Tell others about Rural Resources. Or, visit a ResourceLink site yourself to learn more about the help that may be available to you.

*Since 1965, Rural Resources has helped residents of Northeastern Washington help themselves and each other. Through education, resources and support, we offer real hope to children, seniors and families, working to create a strong and stable community for us all. Contact us at 509-684-8421. On the Web at [www.ruralresources.org](http://www.ruralresources.org).*

## New program connects Stevens County residents to the help they need

Rural Stevens County residents are now able to go to their local libraries for free and personalized information on programs and services that could improve their lives.

ResourceLink, a joint project of Rural Resources Community Action and the Libraries of Stevens County, connects people in outlying areas to the help they need, including job training, family programs, housing, senior services, transportation, and utility assistance.

A resource specialist from Rural Resources is now visiting nine libraries to meet one-on-one with residents interested in learning about local, state and federal programs and services for which they may be eligible.

"It can be a burden for rural residents to come to our offices in Colville," said Rural Resources Executive Director Barry Lamont. "So we're bringing Rural Resources to them."

Funding for the project comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal stimulus package enacted early this year to help improve the economy.

## ResourceLink >>>

Stevens County Library Director Amanda McKeraghan says the program is a welcome addition to the many resources already offered at the nine libraries.

"People living in outlying areas already depend on their local libraries for other resources, including books, magazines, multimedia and Internet access, so basing this outreach project here was a natural choice," she said.

ResourceLink is available at the following Stevens County libraries:

- Chewelah Public Library
- Colville Public Library
- Hunters Public Library
- Kettle Falls Public Library
- Lakeside Community Library (Nine Mile Falls)
- Library of the Lakes (Loon Lake)
- Northport Library Station
- Onion Creek Library Station
- Springdale Library Station

For the days and times of the ResourceLink visits or to learn more about the program, please call 1-877-219-5542 or visit [www.ruralresources.org](http://www.ruralresources.org) or [www.scrld.org](http://www.scrld.org).