

From: Shannon Barry [mailto:shannonb@abuseintervention.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2008 3:47 PM
To: Noel, Laura; O'Donnell, Mary
Subject: E-mail for Community Services Commission Members

I am unable to attend tomorrow night's meeting to deliver my comments in person. Could you please share this with the members of the Community Services Commission?

Thank you,
Shannon



Dear Community Services Commission Members,

I am writing to thank you for the continued support that you have shown to individuals and families coping with the devastating effects of domestic violence in our community. All of us at Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) appreciate the fact that the City of Madison has been a leader in the fight to end domestic violence in our community through supporting such critical services as shelter, case management, and children's programming for those who are most at risk.

This summer and fall have been especially challenging for DAIS staff and volunteers as we have seen greater numbers of people requesting and accessing our services who have multiple barriers to their safety. At the end of the third quarter of 2008, we had already served 390 unduplicated people through our shelter program compared with 381 unduplicated people in the entire year of 2007. This includes individuals and families who stayed briefly in hotels when our shelter was full. (It was new CDBG funding in 2008 that allowed us to provide hotel stays to individuals and families when our shelter was at capacity.) With the economy taking a down turn, individuals and families who are already at risk of domestic violence have been put in greater danger as financial stresses have escalated the violence they are experiencing in their relationships and families. Perhaps even more alarming have been the multiple domestic violence homicides in our region over the past couple of months. These tragic cases reaffirm what the staff and volunteers at DAIS already know – that services such as those offered through DAIS are crucial **homicide prevention**.

I do not envy the difficult decisions you must make during this challenging budget time. There are many worthy non-profits in our community providing wonderful services that make our city one of the best places in this country to live. I hope that DAIS can count on you to continue the same level of support for our services in 2009 so that we can do our part to ensure that every individual and family in our community has a safe place to turn. It is our hope that no one in our community ever has to make a life or death decision because of lack of domestic violence services.

Respectfully,

Shannon Barry, MSSW
Executive Director
(608) 251-1237, ext. 307
shannonb@abuseintervention.org

Thank you for supporting a community where
"Peace Begins at Home"