



Building Community

Keeping You Up-to-Date with the Work of the Acton-Boxborough United Way

Summer 2003

Local Dollars Helping Local People

The Mission of the Acton-Boxborough United Way is to identify and raise public awareness of community needs, link needs with quality services, and raise and allocate funds to support the charitable efforts of the community.

Building Community, the Acton-Boxborough United Way newsletter, is published three times a year and distributed to corporations, businesses and households in the Acton and Boxborough communities. Its purpose is to communicate the health and social service needs of the community and to describe the ways these needs are being addressed.



Agency Spotlight

Cooperative Elder Services, Inc.

Providing essential care for the elderly and their families



CESI Fall Recreation Activity



CESI Exercise Program

Cooperative Elder Services, Inc., one of the agencies that receives ABUW funding, provides day care services to frail elders and disabled adults, including clients with dementia and Alzheimer's. With a growing senior population that is living longer than ever, day care has become an important service for the elderly and their families. In order to meet the wide range of client needs, CESI offers health care and rehabilitation services, social activities, light breakfast and hot lunch, counseling services, an exercise program, and therapeutic activities. Typically,

the client lives at home with an adult child or elder spouse.

CESI operates six centers, one of which is located in Concord on the Concord/Acton town line off Route 62. Twenty eight Acton and five Boxborough residents are currently enrolled in the CESI program.

The value of CESI's service is best described by Laura Erb, Activity Director and Site Supervisor at CESI: "We help maintain each client at his/her highest level of functioning and we offer respite for the families of our clients."

Touching the Lives of Neighbors in Need

As we commute to and from work, run to the grocery store, take trash to the transfer station, and meet with friends on the weekends, we think of Acton and Boxborough as comfortable, affluent communities. In the whirlwind of our busy lives, we do not always see the needs and struggles of our neighbors: the mom who picks up groceries at Community Supper, the senior who receives his daily lunch from Meals on Wheels delivered by Minuteman Senior Services, the domestic violence victim who is being counseled by the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP), or the uninsured patient who receives mental health services from Eliot Community Human Services. When we read statistics like "6240 meals served to Acton and Boxborough residents" and "248 reported domestic violence incidents in Acton in 2002," we become more *aware* of the needs that are being met by our local service agencies. But making a contribution of time or money to the ABUW offers us the opportunity to *touch the lives* of those living near and around us. We invite you to think about what you can offer your neighbors in need.



Agency Spotlight

Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program

248 incidents reported in 2002 may represent only 10% of actual cases

Founded in 1998, the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP) provides direct service to victims of domestic violence. DVVAP has established close working relationships with local police departments and through these contacts, as well as others, are notified about abuse victims. In addition to calling victims who have been referred to them, DVVAP provides a pager number that allows an advocate to respond to calls. Advocates offer crisis intervention, safety planning, referrals, and follow-up care to victims. DVVAP also offers education programs to police departments, and training for volunteer

advocates serving victims. ABUW has funded DVVAP since 2000.

Although domestic violence is hidden to most of us, it occurs on a regular basis in our towns. The Acton Police Department reported 248 domestic violence incidents in 2002, yet research indicates that only 10 percent of domestic abuse assaults are reported to the police. Studies show that almost 33 percent of emergency room patients are domestic violence victims.

“Out here in affluent communities . . . people can be under the assumption that this isn’t happening,” said DVVAP’s Executive Director Kiersten Warning, “but

the incidents are just the same as in poorer communities. Because of the income and social status of many victims in wealthier communities, victims are often asked, “What are you going to do—leave your big house and live on the streets with your kids? You should stay for the kids. How bad can it be?”

Micki Williams, ABUW President added, “The Acton Boxborough United Way supports DVVAP because it furnishes information about divorce, custody, property, real estate, and banking laws that would allow victims to create comprehensive escape plans . . . and these are services that no other local organization provides.”



Business Recognition

Steve Steinberg

The ABUW has been fortunate to receive the support of many local business owners. One of our most notable benefactors is Steve Steinberg, the owner of Colonial Spirits and other commercial properties in the area. In addition to his own generous contributions, he has been an active participant in our business campaign, successfully raising over \$14,000 during the past eighteen months. He also co-sponsored the underwriting of our information pamphlet that was published last fall. When asked why he has been so supportive of ABUW, Steve responded: “My mother and father were very poor as children and could not attend college. But they worked hard and eventually achieved a better life for their family. They never forgot charity, even when they had little themselves, and set a fine

example for their children. I know of no better organization than the United Way for my charitable goals. The United Way provides help to many excellent causes—all in our community. I look forward to supporting it for many years to come.”

The ABUW would like to extend our deepest thanks to Steve for his generosity, time and hard work.

Corning – CoStar Division

One of the ways local businesses and corporations support the ABUW is through payroll deduction programs. Corning–CoStar Division, located in Nagog Park, has been one of the more active and enthusiastic participants in this program. Corning’s corporate headquarters in Corn-

ing, New York has a deduction program, but the program is not typically offered in their field offices. An employee from the corporate office who transferred to Acton wanted to see if it was possible to establish the program locally. The human resources department subsequently called the ABUW and after meeting with our office, decided to offer the deduction option to their employees. A short time later they held a campaign drive to educate their staff about the program and its benefits. It was a highly successful effort and approximately 30 percent of the company signed up to participate. With their payroll contributions, the employees now support the ABUW, as well as other United Ways in employees’ communities.

The ABUW is grateful to Corning and all its employees for their initiative, interest and generous donations.

Want to Volunteer, But Are Not Sure Where? Check Out “A Caring Community”

A Caring Community”, part of the ABUW website (www.abuw.org), lists volunteer opportunities available in the Acton/Concord—MetroWest area. The site is database driven, allowing users to search the site by category—such as Environment, Food Pantries and Shelters, Special Needs, Housing, Animals—or by agency name. For example, the Acton Community



Supper is listed under the category Food Pantries and Shelters, as well as under the alphabetical listing of organizations. For each agency, there is information on the mission, volunteer needs, age requirements of volunteers, days and times available, and contact source.

Because it is possible to search the site by age requirements, as well as interest, “A

Caring Community” is a great way to discover volunteer opportunities appropriate for kids. With seventy two organizations and twelve categories of need, the site provides a comprehensive source of volunteer information for any age, individual or group. For anyone interested in volunteering, this is the place to discover the possibilities!

Want to Become More Informed About Your Community?

Check Out the ABUW Website

The ABUW website (www.abuw.org) is a multi-purpose information source—it provides a description of your local United Way, but it also serves as an important link to community resources.

It includes information on:

- what we do;
- how to get help;
- how to give help (either as a business or a resident);
- how to volunteer, including opportunities listed under “A Caring Community;”
- who we fund (a list of our grant recipients, both past and present); and
- who contributes (a list of our business and organization donors).

The ABUW acts as a bridge between need and assistance, and the site is a vehicle for disseminating this important information to the community. Check it out!



A Look at Last Year: Some of the Needs and the Agencies that Helped

- **90 low-income victims of domestic violence** in Acton received free civil legal services from South Middlesex Legal Services
- **6,240 meals** were served to Acton & Boxborough residents through the Acton Community Supper
- **152 seniors participated in the Eating Together Luncheon and the Meals on Wheels programs** through Minuteman Senior Services
- **177 uninsured, under-insured and needy Acton and Boxborough residents received mental health and substance abuse services** from Eliot Community Human Services
- **55 non-English speaking residents** received tutoring from Eastern Mass. Literacy Council
- **201 developmentally delayed and disabled** Acton & Boxborough residents received diagnostic, vocational, therapeutic, and residential services through Minuteman ARC
- **33 Acton & Boxborough frail elders and disabled adults** received day care services through Cooperative Elder Services
- **55 summer “camperships”** were given to low-income children in Acton & Boxborough by Doli Atamian Campership Program
- **11 Acton children participated in the mentoring program** for troubled youth through the Big Brother, Big Sister Association of South Middlesex
- **51 Acton and Boxborough victims of domestic violence** received services from the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program

**All these agencies
were ABUW grant recipients.**

Building Community

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Local Dollars
Helping Local People



News & Updates

ABUW Receives Community Service Award

The ABUW is proud to have received a Community Service Award at this year's high school graduation "in recognition of dedicated service to the community and its young people." The ABUW has been involved with youth in a variety of ways—we have funded a social worker at the high school, included high school students on the ABUW board, provided funding for the Project Wellness Day at the junior high, and have actively participated in Community Alliance for Youth (CAFY) activities, including board membership.

Fall Campaign

This fall we will be conducting our business campaign in conjunction with our residential drive. We are trying to increase the number of businesses, as well as households that contribute to ABUW. Cuts in the state budget and the economic downturn have left many social services agencies in financial distress. If you have never given, please consider doing so this year; if you have given before, please consider increasing your donation. Your support is critical—we cannot make a difference without it.

ABUW Reviews Agencies' Requests for Funding

The Budget and Allocations Committee, a subcommittee of the United Way Board of Directors, recently completed their annual review of funding requests for the next fiscal year. The subcommittee held their deliberations meeting in early June and has submitted their recommendations to the full board for approval. The awards will be announced in early July.

If you wish to make a contribution, please send a check to:

ABUW, 570 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA 01720. If you would like more information, visit our website (www.abuw.org), contact our Executive Director, Sandy Campbell at (978) 263-1777 or at abuw@fiam.net, or stop by our office in West Acton.

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