



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**  
*Join the Starting Point Team!*

Starting Point is currently hiring for a full-time advocate to provide quality direct services to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking in Carroll County. If you have a desire to make a difference now's the time to email your resume to [execdirector@startingpointnh.org](mailto:execdirector@startingpointnh.org).

Not looking for full time, paying work with benefits? We've got just the job for you...volunteering!!

**Upcoming Volunteer Training Dates:**  
**September 9, 10, 18, 19, 23 and 25, 2019**  
 Email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org) for a volunteer application. *BTW, Volunteering does have benefits – unconditional love from our staff and the joy of making a difference!*

*"People ask me how I can do the work I do; it seems hard to them. The truth is the work of an advocate is extremely rewarding. Some days are hard, there's no way around it, but I know that I make a difference. There's a lot of joy in helping someone regain their life. Plus, working with the Starting Point team is the best office experience I've ever had. Everyone is so supportive."*  
 - Starting Point staff member.



**SHELTER NEEDS**

**Starting Point Shelter, The Grace House**, has the capacity for 13 victims - 5 adults and as many as 8 children. We are almost always at capacity. Many of our guests arrive with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Our staff and volunteer are quick to supply them with all the basics to get settled in, but we are always in need of more help. If you are interested in volunteering at the shelter providing transportation, child care or personal advocacy please email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org) to learn about our volunteer program. If you would like to donate gift cards for the local supermarkets, supply stores or gas cards please contact [shelter@startingpointnh.org](mailto:shelter@startingpointnh.org)

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**Starting Point:**  
*Services for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence is a non-profit organization dedicated to:*

- Ensuring quality services are provided to victims of relationship violence and sexual abuse.
- Preventing future relationship violence.
- Promoting social change.
- Encouraging accountability and education for perpetrators and stalkers.

*Starting Point is dedicated to creating social change because when we restore basic human rights we open the door to joy.*

- Beth Carpenter** Co-President
- Jess DellaValla** Co-President
- Mary Vigeant** Vice President
- Amanda Beegle** Treasurer
- Megan Penny** Secretary
- Gloria Burdett, John Skelton, Janice Andrews**



**THE POINT**  
 Services for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1  
 FALL 2019

Carroll County, New Hampshire



In 2021 we will be marking our fortieth year as an agency, (read "It All Started with a Point" to learn more about our anniversary efforts). We recognize that from 1981 to today we have come a long way, unfortunately we started the journey in the dark. There were no laws protecting women from their abusive spouses when we started, there were no federal funds, no central shelter, no court advocates, and no memorandums of procedures with the hospitals and health centers. What we did have going for us was community engagement. A small but mighty band of advocates (some survivors themselves) banded together to create a hotline, a network of safe houses for victims, and a spark of interest for the plight of those being oppressed by domestic and sexual violence. The work was slow going at first, as most underground, grass roots efforts are.

In the mid 1980s the work gained momentum as more national attention was paid to the "battered woman" movement, a phrase we no longer apply to the work (see "Evolution of Violence Theory" to learn more). PTSD was recognized as something that effected not just veterans of war but victims of domestic terrorism, terror experienced in their own homes and in their neighborhoods. Prevention programs took root in our schools and local businesses and program partners supported our efforts to reduce the incidence of violence in our community.

**COMMUNITY 'ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT' -**  
*with a Truly Happily Ever After Ending*



*Raetha Stoddard, Community Outreach & Prevention Specialist, Deb Weinstein, Executive Director and Liz Stillman, Business and Grants Manager.*

Today Starting Point has a staff of 11 and a volunteer pool of more than twenty (...and we're still growing - read "Make a Difference" for employment and volunteer opportunities), a shelter with the capacity for 13 victims, a dozen Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), that engage Starting Point advocates in the earliest stages of a victim's journey thus shortening the incident of abuse (according to the Bureau of Criminal Justice), with our hospitals and health centers, courts, schools, colleges, DCYF, law enforcement and others. We host forums, book discussions, house parties and trainings. In the last year alone we provided classroom instruction to 621 students in Carroll County.

Community engagement has become the focus of our advocacy, to improve the quality of life for all who live in Carroll County, by all.

And, still there is much to do, but the light at the end of the tunnel grows brighter with each passing year. 2019 has been a year of transformation birthed from our most recent strategic planning sessions. We welcomed a new Executive Director and moved staff around to better engage the community for the work ahead.

**Deb Weinstein** comes to us with a wealth of public service experience. "In addition to her expansive knowledge of the issues surrounding domestic violence and sexual assault and thorough understanding of the law, she leads with kindness and integrity. The Board feels very lucky to have found Deb", shares Starting Point Board of Directors Co-Chair, Jessica DellaValla. "Easy to talk with, Deb meets every person and issue with an open, but stout, heart!"

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**Raetha Stoddard**, who has been with Starting Point for nearly 10 years in numerous positions from volunteer to Executive Director, “has always served with passion for prevention and community engagement. Raetha meets every experience and role with energy and enthusiasm.” Beth Carpenter, Starting Point Board of Directors Co-Chair, adds, “No matter where we need her, Raetha is there. She truly cares about each person we serve, and whether sitting at the hospital, handing out flyers at an event, or dancing around the room at Boots ‘n Bling, there is no greater champion for victims in Carroll County than Raetha.”

**Brad Loomis** has been with the agency for 10 years as the Family Violence Prevention Specialist (FVPS) and has recently moved into the Direct Service Coordinator (DSC) position bringing a wealth of expertise in advocacy, court proceedings and supervision. “Brad is a stellar and reliable leader in the work to provide quality services to victims and survivors. He is also a great storyteller who often surprises us with his seemingly latent gift to gab! We are so grateful to

have him move into this important position.” -Deb Weinstein, Executive Director.

**Penny Frechette**, who came on staff in 2018 as a court advocate, has taken over the position as FVPS. “Penny has been a fabulous addition to Starting Point. Her knowledge of court procedures has allowed her to not only hit the ground running but at a full sprint”. -Brad Loomis, DSC.

In addition to these changes our Admin Assistant **Liz Stillman** has been elevated to the position of Business and Grants Manager helping to support the stability of our funding going forward. “All the moving parts at Starting Point are important and essential positions for getting the work done. What Liz does is oil the machine, making sure all the parts are in working order. Her care and concern for victims and staff alike is the heart of our office!” -Raetha Stoddard, Community Outreach

The addition of the federally funded Housing First Program in 2018, headed by **Shawna Peare**, has proved very successful thanks to Shawna’s passion for housing advocacy and is growing in leaps and bounds. Please see “Housing First” article for more information on our Housing First Program and an upcoming Landlord Summit for September 11, 2019.

Our newest staff include **Jena Stevens**, our prevention specialist. “Jena’s passion is matched only by her compassion and remarkable ability to connect with people, from grade school students to victims in the midst of trauma. Our prevention program is in good hands!”

**Trish Varney** started with us this month and is a much-appreciated addition to our Shelter “team”, which until recently was single-handedly run by **April Bona**. April has been with Starting Point for the past 6 years and has consistently improved the quality of our Shelter Program.

We were also lucky enough to have an intern this summer from Plymouth State College, **Christa Hysten**. BTW Christa, we were just kidding when we said you should drop out of college and stay on at Starting Point permanently...or were we? In seriousness, we are so proud of you and can’t wait to hear about what you teach them back at school this fall. You certainly taught us plenty this summer!

Much has changed since Starting Point first incorporated as a non-profit in 1981 and much still needs to be done. The good news is that there are now more of us to get it done.

## WHY DOESN'T SHE JUST LEAVE...

Here are a few of the reasons women can't leave and the explanations behind staying

**“He said I’d never see my kids again.”**

The fear of sharing custody and leaving children alone with an abusive partner is greater than the fear of staying. She stays to protect her children.

**“He controls all of our money.”**

She is unable to afford the cost of leaving. Often women who stay at home are not respected as equal partners and so have no access to their own money. Even women who work outside the home may not be allowed access to their money. Our shelter is at capacity most of the year; not by women who are homeless because of their inability to support themselves given the opportunity, but because of financial control by their partners. Most women transition from shelter to independent living.

**“No one would believe me.”**

Leaving may strip a woman of important support systems in the process of family and friends siding with her partner. Men who victimize often are productive, contributing, even compassionate members of our community. To help us understand the problem, it’s important to understand that men who victimize do not announce on the first or subsequent dates that they want to control and destroy a women’s life. No one goes on a second date with someone who says, “I’m going to take your money, monitor the

mileage on your vehicle, limit your phone use and refer to you as a useless fat cow.” Power and control occur over time, away from the public eye.

Then, there is the reason that is the most disturbing.

**“He said he’d kill me if I ever tried to leave him.”**

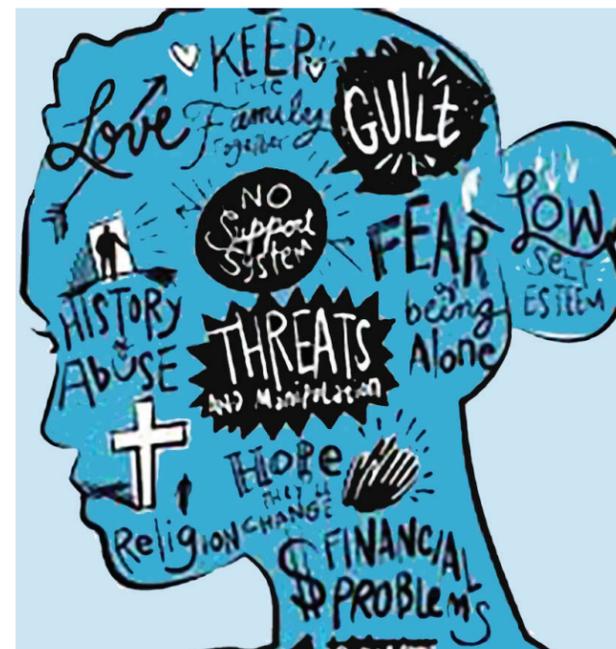
Women who understand that this is not an idle threat stay, because they want to live. Sadly, many die in the act of trying to leave. Eighty-four percent of domestic homicides occur when a woman is leaving.

This is an important statistic to consider as a friend. Sometimes encouraging a woman to leave may be the most dangerous advice of all. Helping a woman remain safe while she stays and when she leaves is a critical aspect of an advocate’s work.

The issue is complex, and until we understand and educate ourselves about those complexities, we, as a community, are

contributing to the problem.

**There are no simple solutions. We can start, though, by re-framing the question, asking, “Why can’t she leave him?” The answers will lead us to accountability and prevention. Until we demand accountability and culturally shift negative attitudes, we cannot end the violence.**



OCTOBER IS  
domestic violence  
awareness month





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 9, 10, 18, 19, 23, 25**

**6-9 pm** Volunteer training at Camp Calumet in Freedom. For more information or for an application please email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org).

**September 25**

**7-9 pm** Volunteer/Staff/BOD and Friends of Starting Point Potluck dinner at Camp Calumet in Freedom

**September 30**

**5-9 pm** Dine to Donate at Joseph's Spaghetti Shed in Glen

**October 16**

**5-8:30 pm** Dine to Donate at Max's Snowvillage Inn in Eaton

**October 22**

**6-8 pm** Bingo for a Cause at Red Parka Pub & Steakhouse in Glen

*Please check out our website for a full schedule of October's Domestic Violence Awareness Activities and check back often for more upcoming events!*

*For more information on events please call 447-2494 or email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org)*

**September 8**

**2 pm** 5th Annual Starting Point Challenge. Indian Mound Golf Club. Nine-hole, w/cart – Scramble. Live music, BBQ, raffles, awards and prizes. For more information call 603-651-7068 or email [cpgolfnetworks.com/events](mailto:cpgolfnetworks.com/events)

**September 11**

**7-9 pm** Landlord Summit at Adventure Suites in North Conway. This is an opportunity for landlords and property managers to learn more about our Housing First Program and enjoy complimentary wine and appetizers, get a sneak peek at the new spa and saloon at Adventure Suites and VIP tours of the rooms! See "Housing First" article for more information. To RSVP email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org)

**September 17**

**5-7 pm** Starting Point will be the featured non-profit at the Mt. Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce After Hours at Christmas Farm Inn



BRINGING BOOK LOVERS & CAUSES TOGETHER!

In April and October, Starting Point teams up with **White Birch Books** to promote a 'One Book One Cause' book discussion. The book for October will be Roxane Gay's most recent book, "**Not That Bad**".

"**Not That Bad**" is an anthology about rape culture. Rape culture is a term we often hear but even those of us who do the work to combat it struggle to, not so much define it, but to wrangle it into a common lexicon. Roxane Gay's valuable

and revealing collection makes clear that the common lexicon is in fact multi lingual, far reaching and far too common to women.

Although there are many personal experiences shared throughout the book, the author's intent is to uncover the common threads. For Gay it was the overwhelming number of stories that included a dismissive attitude of how bad the experiences were, 'not that bad'. The fuel that feeds rape culture is in

this acknowledgment - if women have been trained to downplay the terror of rape, how can we truly address the violence of it.

Please join us October 30th at 6 pm for book discussion, wine and appetizers at White Birch Books. "**Not That Bad**" can be purchased at White Birch Book at 2568 White Mountain Highway, North Conway, NH 03860. Call 447-2494 or [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org) for more information.



*It is important to remember that crossing the line is not something that can be determined by outsiders of a relationship*

## THE FOLLOWING IS A PARTIAL LIST OF SOME WARNING SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

*or by the abuser in the relationship. It is defined only by the victim and may encompass emotional, mental or physical abuse. It is also important to understand that abuse happens over time and is hard to identify sometimes as abuse, often minimized by believing it's "just" constructive criticism or deserved somehow.*

*The bottom line? If the behaviors cause the victim to fear their partner or it causes them to feel distressed or anxious than the line that separates healthy from unhealthy relationships has been crossed.*

*If you or someone you know is being abused, please call 1-800-336-3795 for confidential services.*

### Lines have been crossed if you:

- Feel frightened by your partner's temper
- Are afraid to disagree with your partner
- Are confused about the status of the relationship much or all of the time
- Experience a consistent high level of anxiety with your partner and about your relationship
- Do not see friends or family because of your partner's control or jealousy
- Have been forced to have sex or are afraid to say no to sex
- Have been forced to explain everything that you do, everywhere that you go and every person that you see to avoid your partner's temper

- Make unhealthy compromises (time, work, happiness, integrity, etc.) to keep your partner happy
- Are embarrassed to have friends and family witness how your partner treats you.
- Believe that you cannot live without your partner
- Take responsibility for all your relationship problems
- Believe you deserve to be mistreated or hurt
- Believe that marriage or pregnancy will change your partner for the better
- Are made to feel bad about yourself by your partner

- Have fewer and fewer happy times together, and more time is spent on apologies, promises, anger, guilt and fear
- Feel trapped or unable to leave the relationship
- Experience diminished self-worth, strength, and determination
- Experience feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, despair and lack of emotional control, stemming from the relationship
- Receive threats of suicide from your partner to control your behavior (*Excerpts taken from Crossing the Line: A Model for Domestic Violence Therapy, Charles A. Frazier*)

## ANNIVERSARY IT ALL STARTED WITH A POINT...

Wife beating was made illegal in the United States in 1920. Like any form of written emancipation, the law required years of grass root anti-oppression movement before it was truly recognized as a societal rule. Still there is a great deal of work to do before we can declare the rule a societal norm.

In the late 1970s, a couple of women from Carroll County, who had experienced the terror of abuse and hardships borne from the lack of support for victims, came together to support one another with an overwhelming desire "not to let it happen to another woman", an oft heard sentiment from many victims still today.

In 1981, *Carroll County Against Domestic Violence and Rape* was formed and soon after became known as **Starting Point**.

In 2021, we will begin a celebratory year acknowledging the founders and all those that have contributed and benefited from the support **Starting Point** has provided to our community.

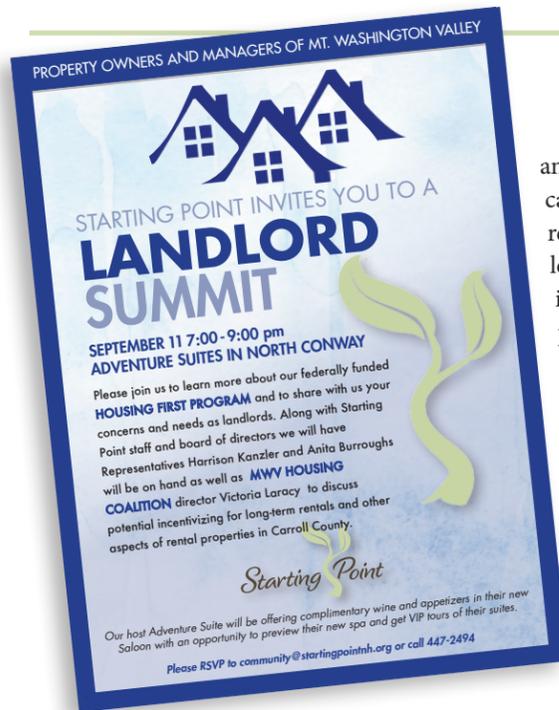
We would love to hear from you if you worked, volunteered or were a client at **Starting Point** over the past 40 years. Your stories will be added to a collage of our history and displayed throughout the year. We will be collecting written stories, poems, artwork or any other expression of experiences. We will also be collecting



recorded interviews for a short video. Complete anonymity will be upheld for all those requiring confidentiality of their story.

Stay tuned for dates and times of upcoming anniversary events and celebrations in 2021. We can't do the work without you and we can't celebrate without you either!

*To share your stories please email: [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org)*



## HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

For many victims the fears and anxieties of living independently can cause them to return to abusive relationships. Abuse can seem the lesser evil to homelessness, especially in the North Country when temperatures can be below 30 degrees a good portion of the year, not to mention the danger of living without security measures like a roof and four walls to prevent further victimization.

Starting Point advocates provide transitional services to survivors that include programming like “Tenancy 101” and “Financial Literacy” as well as work readiness supports and ongoing emotional support that takes the form of case management once a client enters the Housing First Program.

The federally funded Housing First Program helps survivors prepare for independent living and provides ongoing support to help stabilize them over months or years, depending on the need. “It’s an amazing program and a great resource for us to be able to offer survivors. I’ve seen huge transformation in people

who participate in our Housing First Program, the kind of transformations that are responsible for breaking the cycle. Unfortunately, the Valley has a critical lack of affordable long-term housing for us to access. Long term rentals are what we need to really make the program successful here in the Valley rather than finding housing outside the county which is something we end up doing too often” says Shawna Peare, Housing First Advocate.

On September 11 Starting Point will be hosting a Landlord Summit hosted by Adventure Suites in North Conway to provide a greater awareness to landlords and property managers about the Housing First Program. Along with representatives from Starting Point, local legislatures and Housing Coalition advocates will be on hand to discuss upcoming plans for incentivizing long term rentals.

**For more information see our calendar section or call 447-2494 or email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org).**

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. The Domestic Violence Housing First approach focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing as quickly as possible and then providing the necessary support as they rebuild their lives. The approach’s success relies on survivor-driven advocacy, flexible financial assistance, and community engagement.

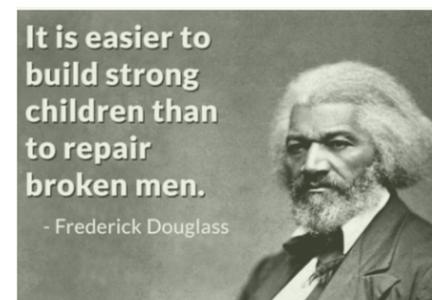
## THE COST OF PREVENTION IS FAR LESS THAN THE COST OF NO PREVENTION

Community Outreach and Prevention is currently the overall focus of the work at Starting Point. We are experts in crisis intervention and have done critical work in that area, but that work is triage if we don’t also provide prevention and engage the community to stand up for victims.

In preparation for October’s Domestic Violence Awareness Month Starting Point is offering open houses and training opportunities in September to increase involvement. “Our focus for October is prevention, and the engagement of men in the work to end domestic and sexual violence” shares Raetha Stoddard, Community Outreach Coordinator. “If domestic and sexual violence could be

stopped by women alone it would have been done. In 1920, women got the vote not because they voted for it, but because their counterparts voted for them to have the right. We need to work in tandem, not separately.”

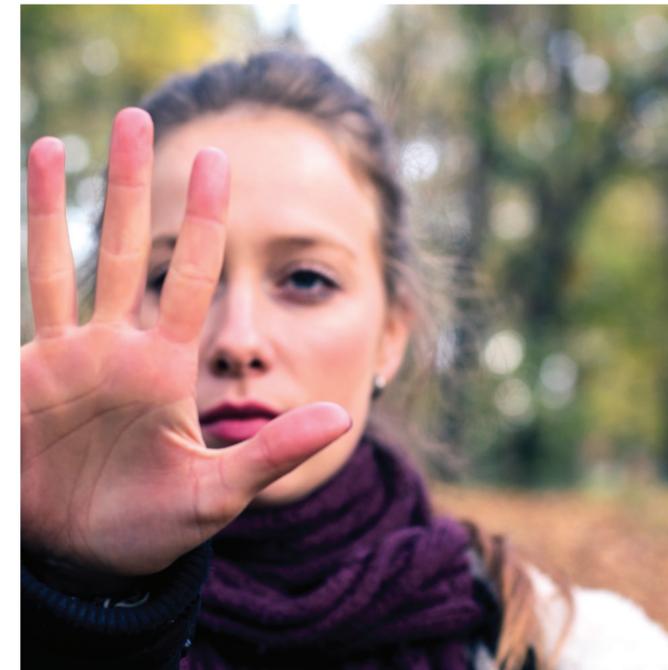
In engaging more men in the work, Starting Point hopes to better hone their expertise in working with male victims. The statistics indicate that more women are victimized. “I see those statistics every day, but I also believe that male victims may be less likely to reach out to an organization that is best known as a women’s organization. We help all victims and are anxious to do so more in the future for male victims and for our LGBTQ+ com-



munity”, says Stoddard.

Volunteer training sessions will begin September 10. For more information or to receive a volunteer application please email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org) or call 447-2494.

## EVOLUTION OF VIOLENCE



All parts of a community must share a clearly defined theory of violence to coordinate effective intervention strategies. In the United States, theories about the cause and contributing factors of domestic violence have evolved for more than 40 years.

The following is a portion of a paper entitled “Evolution of Theories of Violence”. To read the full article please go to our website, [www.startingpointnh.org](http://www.startingpointnh.org) or email [community@startingpointnh.org](mailto:community@startingpointnh.org) for a copy.

*The battered women’s movement gained traction in the United States in the 1970s. At the time the leading theory of causation for battering was a psychopathology, which holds that make batterers are mentally ill and in need of psychological remedies such as therapy or medication. The theory proved to be incorrect. The number of relationships that involved violence was much greater than original theorists guessed, and psychological tests did not support the theory that mental illness causes violence. One study showed that far fewer batterers have “clinical disorders” than previous studies supporting this theory of violence indicated. Furthermore, researchers found that batterers’ behavior was inconsistent with profiles of mental illness.*

*The psychopathology theory of domestic violence has been revived in recent years as researchers look to psychological disorders and individual characteristics of batterers as the cause of domestic violence. However, this theory is criticized as inaccurate and shortsighted, in part because it serves as an excuse for batterers and ignores the role of gender in society. Some researchers believe batterers are over diagnosed with these disorders, and treatments for psychological disorders have not consistently yielded successful results.*

*Early studies also characterized battered women as mentally ill. The results of these studies were distorted because they only examined women who were in mental hospitals. Their batterers, who appeared calm and credible compared to the institutional wives, minimized and denied their partners’ accounts of the abuse when they were asked about the cause of their partners’ condition. In reality, battered women are not mentally ill. Many of those who were institutionalized were misdiagnosed as a result of society’s failure to recognize or understand the physical and psychological effects of domestic violence.*



## HOSTING A HOUSE PARTY

Creating awareness for the myriad resources of Starting Point and the complexities of domestic and sexual violence is an ongoing challenge for us.

You can help by hosting a House Party! – We know these issues may not seem like party material, those of us who are advocates can tell you countless stories about the awkward moments at parties when we start talking about what we do for a living. However it doesn’t

## TO CREATE AWARENESS

have to be that way. Openly discussing the issues is the best way for us to tear down the walls of shame and secrecy that allows domestic and sexual violence to exist. Not to mention that when we model an open dialog about these painful issues we help victims know that they are not alone. Just knowing that their community cares is the key to healing for many victims.

Trust us, we are a life of the party sort of group and we will help you plan and

execute a fun evening while slipping in some social justice awareness! We can help provide entertainment, decorations and refreshments. All we ask is that you invite some friends who you think would benefit from knowing more about Starting Point, like survivors, donors, program partners, your neighbors, auto mechanics, hairdressers, astrophysicists...you know – **EVERYONE AND ANYONE!!**