

ACTION OHIO COALITION FOR BATTERED WOMEN

∞ HISTORY & ACHIEVEMENTS ∞

Formally organized in May 1976, ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women was created as the direct result of a needs assessment of women and girls in Ohio. The Council of Ohio YWCAs and leaders in Ohio's statewide women's community conducted the study at the urging of the National YWCA.

ACTION OHIO's initial focus was to foster the growth and development of local battered women's shelters in Ohio. The goal was to ensure that each battered woman would have access to a shelter and quality victim services, no matter where she lives in Ohio. To achieve this goal, ACTION OHIO developed standards for shelter services and provided training opportunities for shelter staff persons and volunteer advocates. ACTION OHIO produced printed resources and offered technical assistance throughout the state. Publications included *Justice for Ohio's Domestic Violence Victims* and *Volunteer Guide* and *Volunteer Coordinator's Guide*, detailing how to establish community volunteerism to support battered women's shelters.

Beginning in the early years ACTION OHIO assumed the role of statewide advocate for the battered women's movement in Ohio, and especially in Columbus, the state capital. ACTION OHIO was recognized by state agencies and members of the Ohio General Assembly as the go-to organization for issues related to domestic violence and battered women's services. ACTION OHIO was active in the Ohio Women's and Children's Budget Coalition and numerous state task forces and problem solving groups. ACTION OHIO was successful in obtaining funds for domestic violence shelters in the state budget and for the passage of numerous bills that addressed victim's issues and increased penalties for batterers.

In an effort to promote community cooperation and professionalism, ACTION OHIO spearheaded a statewide campaign to develop countywide domestic violence protocol task forces. The purpose was to promote community partnerships among victim services, law enforcement, prosecutors and other key professional groups and to charge them with developing their own local protocol aimed at helping victims and holding batterers accountable. ACTION OHIO also became the leading organization to provide training events for various professionals about domestic violence, victimization and the dynamics of abusive relationships as well as legal and legislative issues.

ACTION OHIO has a proud history demonstrating commitment to helping battered victims and to leading the way in terms of advocating for victims and the professionals who serve them. We continue to play a leadership role in the domestic violence community today and we embrace changes necessary to broaden our scope, our impact and the effectiveness of our efforts. We use every opportunity to partner and collaborate with other organizations to address victim needs, to monitor law making and to advocate for changes in the law related to victims and offenders. We also connect the dots in the violence continuum, recognizing that domestic violence, family violence, child abuse, elder abuse and even animal cruelty are all interconnected and interrelated.

Now ACTION OHIO sponsors legal seminars on various issues, including divorce, custody, visitation and domestic violence, as well as stalking. ACTION OHIO works with the law enforcement community to increase understanding about family violence and the important role that officers play on each domestic call. ACTION OHIO organizes local training events for human services and health care professionals about the increased vulnerability of pregnant women and teens. ACTION OHIO conducts programs on college campuses aimed at increasing awareness of students about relationship violence and stalking and training campus police to be better prepared to respond when students report incidents of violence or stalking. ACTION OHIO is working in local communities to create safe havens programs for battered victims' pets, in an effort to enable victims to flee with their pets and know that their pets will be protected from abuse as well.

ACTION OHIO's mission is to promote quality programs, services and resources to survivors of domestic violence and to ensure equal rights and empowerment for all individuals as we work toward the eradication of family violence in our society.

ACTION OHIO's core services are information (printed and online resources), referral services (including problem solving and personal advocacy), domestic violence classes for victims (particularly victims involved with Children Services), technical assistance, professional education, public awareness (including An Empty Place at the Table, memorial exhibit at Ohio Statehouse), community outreach, and public policy leadership within the domestic violence community. ACTION OHIO works to educate legislators about violence-related issues and to recommend legislative provisions that will help victims and their children and hold offenders accountable within the legal system.

ACTION OHIO continues to play a leadership role in Ohio and is represented on many state agency advisory groups within the Ohio Attorney General's Office, the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. ACTION OHIO is involved in statewide initiatives to address underserved populations (including victims with disabilities and immigrant and refugee victims). (Most information on ACTION OHIO's web pages is available in Spanish as well as English. In addition, ACTION OHIO produced a Service Guide for Refugees in Columbus and two brochures about domestic violence and child abuse, printed in English and Somali.) ACTION OHIO continues to co-sponsor the Ohio Attorney General's annual victim services conference, Two Days in May, and to recommend workshop sessions that address emerging needs and increase quality services for victims.

Although ACTION OHIO no longer stands alone in promoting services for domestic violence victims, now we know more about the complexity of the problem and the need for a comprehensive approach to human violence in every community across the state. Solving the problem of family violence begins much earlier than the domestic call to 9-1-1. And it takes the whole community to work together to identify problems early on and to turn those problem areas into opportunities for change. ACTION OHIO will continue to play a leading role in the struggle to stop family violence and to create strategies to prevent it in the first place. We welcome the partnership of many others to create violence free communities and a culture that will not tolerate family violence, because that is the only way that it will ever happen.

For more information, please contact or visit
ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women

5900 Roche Dr., Suite 445

Columbus, OH 43229

Phone 614.825.0551

Toll-free 1.888.622.9315

Fax 614.825.0673

Email actionohio@sbcglobal.net

Website www.actionohio.org

