March 2024

Women's History Month

As recently as the 1970s, domestic violence was not considered a crime in many jurisdictions.

Our understanding of domestic violence is now radically different and today, domestic violence is acknowledged as a serious, violent crime and part of society that harms those of all genders, increases child abuse, reduces medical resources, and endangers the lives and welfare of law enforcement officers.[1] "*Our knowledge has also grown with respect to the types of abuse, expanding beyond physical violence: abusers often use other means like isolation, threats to family members and pets, controlling of personal finances and psychological abuse to hurt their victims. Domestic violence is not a way to sort out issues: it's a systematic and calculated means for perpetrators to control their victims.*" [2]

This expanded understanding is codified in the most recent reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act: for the first time the definition of abuse now includes financial abuse. Furthermore, the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor is prioritizing the solutions that address gender-based violence in the workplace with focused grants via its FARE program.[3]

While the U.S. may be making progress in its approach to the issue, violence against women and girls remains the most pervasive human rights violation in the world, affecting more than 1 in 4 women[4]—a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the last decade. As an organization, what can you do to create a support network and effect systemic culture change?

- Let survivors and champions know you stand with them. Amplify their voices and stories. And most importantly, create safe spaces for dialogue.
- Know what to look for by familiarizing yourself with the different kinds of violence; it's not just physical. Abuse can be emotional, spiritual, sexual, and financial. The Bright Sky app is a resource to use and share.
- Challenge common beliefs.
    - Reflect on your own ideas about masculinity and femininity.
    - Think critically about depictions of gender in media and culture.
- Support local organizations that empower and support survivors, and promote policies designed to reduce and prevent violence. Encourage your employer to become a member of STANDING FIRM.
- Join in calling on governments to bridge funding gaps to address violence against women.
- Demand more data.
    - Current data and research are critical in providing safety, equity, and essential services to survivors.

March 8th was International Women's Day

The movement in the United States: *"The first National Woman's Day was observed in the United States on 28 February. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honor of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested working conditions.*

But the first milestone in the US was much earlier - in 1848. Indignant over women being barred from speaking at an anti-slavery convention, Americans Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott congregate a few hundred people at their nation's first women's rights convention in New York. Together they demand civil, social, political, and religious rights for women in a Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions. A movement is born." [5] To learn more about the international movement, click here.

The United Nations' states, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." This year, they are focusing on these key points:

- **Investing in women, a human rights issue**
- **Ending poverty**
- **Implementing gender-responsive financing**
- **Shifting to a green economy and care society**
- **Supporting feminist change-makers**

To learn more about each of these, click here.

Inspire Inclusion

Women's History Month

A Women's Place: How Women Shaped Pittsburgh

1920: The 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is ratified, declaring "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

1963: President John F. Kennedy signs into law the Equal Pay Act, prohibiting sex-based wage discrimination between men and women performing the same job in the same workplace.

1994: President Bill Clinton signs the Violence Against Women Act as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, providing funding for programs that help victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, stalking, and other gender-related violence.

As WC&S commemorates the 50th year of service to survivors and their children, check out this story from KDKA News, featuring President/CEO, Nicole Molinaro, and our Chief of Prevention, Intervention & Outreach, Rhonda Fleming!

We welcome and say “Thank You” to our new and renewing Employer Alliance Against Domestic Violence Members: **Breathe PA and Howmet Aerospace**

STANDING FIRM celebrates women who have been at the forefront of the fight against intimate partner violence.

[1] Changing Attitudes About Domestic Violence | Office of Justice Programs (ojp.gov)

[2] https://shelteringwings.org/2021/03/25/pioneers-in-domestic-violence/

[3] FARE | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)

[4] National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

[5] https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day/background