

Mid-Valley Women's
Crisis Service



Serving Victims and Survivors of
Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault,
Stalking & Human Trafficking
Since 1973

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AT YOUR SERVICE

Testimony of Jayne Downing
Executive Director, Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service
In support for Increased ODSVS Funding in DOJ Budget (HB 5018)

February 27, 2013

Co-Chairs Williamson and Winters, and Members of the Public Safety Sub-Committee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Jayne Downing, and for the last 15 years, I have had the privilege of serving as the Executive Director of Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service (MVWCS). Our agency serves survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion County.

During my time at MVWCS, we have seen a dramatic increase in demand for our services. Over the last three years, we have nearly doubled the number of contacts to our program; averaging about 18,000 contacts to our program each year. One of the major reasons for this increase is there were six women and children murdered in the Salem/Keizer area in the last two years due to domestic violence. In 2012 alone, domestic violence related homicides accounted for 45% of the total homicides in Marion County. Another reason we are busy is because MVWCS staff and volunteers have reached out to 21 small towns and communities in Marion County to make sure victims and survivors know about our services.

The huge increase in calls to our 24-hour crisis line and survivors walking into our office for support with safety planning and protection orders has placed an incredible strain on our advocacy staff. Including myself, there are 10 full-time advocates in our office, and an additional two co-located advocates (1.7FTE) who spend 80% of their time in DHS Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare offices. As you can imagine, we are very busy!

With increased ODSVS funding, we could hire two additional advocates for our office, increasing our direct service staff by nearly 20%. By adding an additional advocate to work with volunteers and another to work with youth, we will be in better shape meet the current demand and reach even more victims and survivors. If funds with ODSVS were increased, our portion would be leveraged to build a stronger volunteer base and educate youth in our community.

I will highlight two current staff positions, so you can see the ways an increase would impact our community:

Our Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for managing all aspects of our volunteer program. Last year, more than 50 volunteers gave 16,000 hours of service to our program. That's the equivalent of nearly eight additional full-time advocates. Between recruiting, training, scheduling, and mentoring, our volunteer coordinator has a full plate. However, the time and effort she gives is returned to our program eight-fold.

The Youth Services Coordinator speaks to thousands of middle and high school students every year. Her presentations include information on violence in dating relationships, oppression, and more. We consistently hear from students and teachers who say she has changed the way teens think about relationships and actions. This work is creating social change, and we hope the long-term effects will be future generations where violence is not tolerated.

We know you are called upon to consider many issues when you put together the funding package for our state. Thank you for considering how our services fit into the overall picture.

Jayne Downing