



Text File

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Committee: City Council

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WHEREAS, the Women’s Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S) was founded in 1974 by Ellen Berliner and Anne Steytler, beginning its mission to create a safe and welcoming environment for survivors of domestic violence in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and,

WHEREAS, founders Ellen Berliner and Anne Steytler first began the Women’s Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh in their homes, eventually relocating to a small storefront to host a meeting space for the women of Pittsburgh, never expecting the organization would form a movement; and,

WHEREAS, at its conception, the Women’s Center & Shelter conducted its work with the dedication of hardworking volunteers and two employees serving as a Director and an Overnight Shelter Worker receiving very little financial compensation; and,

WHEREAS, in 1978 the Women’s Center & Shelter grew its staff to seven full-time employees to address the changing needs of the communities it served; and,

WHEREAS, the Women’s Center & Shelter has expanded to include almost 100 staff positions, reflecting the complexity and evolving understanding of what is needed to support survivors of domestic violence and their families; and,

WHEREAS, equipped with a skilled team of outreach specialists, lawyers and legal advocates, shelter advocates, educators, therapists, children’s advocates, and more the Women’s Center & Shelter’s staff continues to adapt to meet the needs of all survivors; and,

WHEREAS, the staff of the Women’s Center & Shelter is robust with backgrounds in mentoring, accounting, fundraising, information technology, administration, training, data management, and human resources all in the effort to support the organization’s sustainability, infrastructure, and success for neighbors in need; and,

WHEREAS, in March of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic altered the ways that the Women’s Center & Shelter’s staff traditionally worked, but not their tremendous commitment or resolve; and,

WHEREAS, the epidemic of domestic violence intensified, increasing in severity, frequency, and complexity as the COVID-19 pandemic limited in-person opportunities, prompting neighbors to rally around organizations such as WC&S with increased donations, including necessities, and staff members created and delivered care packages directly to those in need; and,

WHEREAS, in May of 2020, within two months of the COVID-19 pandemic, WC&S led a county-wide outreach campaign by distributing informational materials in supermarkets and food bank sites, and upgrading

Hotline services to include both text messaging and online chat features, ensuring that survivors were aware of the resources and services available to them even in the presence of an abusive partner; and,

WHEREAS, staff members rapidly adjusted to the public health crises by working remotely, continuing to work in the emergency shelter, staffing the 24/7 hotline, assisting survivors with protection from abuse orders (PFA's), and visiting clients in their homes to provide safety and critical support during a time of increasing violence; and,

WHEREAS, WC&S' staff worked diligently-both internally and with local partners-to shift regular programs and services to virtual platforms to maintain the safety of staff and clients; and,

WHEREAS, many of these changes proved to have a positive impact on clients' ability to participate in programming and legal proceedings, and they will likely influence WC&S' long term service delivery; and,

WHEREAS, throughout this time of rapid change, WC&S also grew, increasing counseling hours by 15% overall and expanding some departments and programs to build capacity and extend services.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby celebrate the 48 years of transformational and lifesaving service that has been provided by the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh's Staff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare May 6, 2022 to be "**Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh Staff Appreciation Day**" in the City of Pittsburgh.