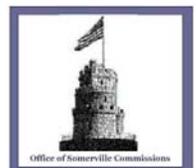




Anti-Violence in Somerville

City's 2013 Anti-Violence Efforts

Submitted to the
Somerville Commission for Women
December 18, 2013



Somerville Commission for Women



The Somerville Commission for Women was created in March 1988 by City ordinance. The SCW's bylaws state that the Commission's purpose is "to act as a centralizing force in the City of Somerville to ensure the equal status of women in educational, economic, political, health, legal, and social spheres including the provision of information, referrals and guidance... [and] to take any action considered appropriate by the SCW to ensure the equal status of women of every race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, ability, age and sexual orientation."

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognized the Commission on its 10th and 20th anniversaries for years of outstanding service in advocacy for women, opposition to domestic violence and working for social justice. The SCW is currently marking its 25th year of service to Somerville.

Office of Somerville Commissions



The OSC provides leadership, representation, and administrative support to the Commissions for Women, Human Rights, and Multicultural Affairs along with supporting the LGBT community with the City's LGBT Liaison. In addition, the OSC promotes commissions in the community.

Some key goals of these commissions include education and raising awareness, enforcement of City's ordinances, protection of rights, support and awareness about vulnerable populations, and recruitment. The OSC researches data, conducts surveys, and writes reports relating to communities served by the commissions and LGBT Liaison. Also, the OSC researches and develops policies, programs, and activities to support targeted communities. A key role is to make relationships with leaders, community groups, and residents along with facilitating and participating on collaborations. The OSC director hosts the monthly television program "Voices of Somerville" (on the City's cable channels 13/22) to raise awareness about topics, programs, and issues relating to the commissions.

Commissions focus on important issues, programs and events on behalf of the Mayor and Board of Alderman. Joining a commission is part of a community-based government. The Office of Somerville Commissions asks for residents to volunteer from two to five hours a month for a commission. Participants will find many personal and community-wide benefits.

Short workshops are presented by the OSC throughout the year to let people know about commissions and meet interested applicants for appointment. Material is available online. Applicants are welcome to begin the process to apply to a commission at any time.

Anti-Violence Actions

Activities for Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

Awareness Actions

- Annual Candlelight Vigil for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October
- Muslim/Arab Community Panel on Domestic Violence Data in October
- “Voices of Somerville” television program episode with guest Jessica Brayden from Respond in October

Fundraisers

- Theater First’s presentation of “Vagina Monologue” fundraiser in February
- Cell Phone Collections and Donations for Local Provider Drive

Cases and Resident Support

- OSC Director on monthly Somerville High Risk Domestic Violence Team
- Support/refer individuals to services

Collaboration and Systems Development

- Produce Anti-Violence Service Providers Directory
- Co-Facilitate with SPD Chief monthly Immigrant/Police Dialogue Sessions
- Facilitate Somerville Anti-Violence Taskforce
- Facilitate SPD Victim/Witness Advocate Meet-and-Greet Presentation Event
- Collaborate and support development of domestic violence leadership with Muslim/Arab community
- Develop recommendations for preparedness of system response and service provision to the Muslim/Arab community as well as multicultural community in general
- Develop inter-agency connections
- Collaborate with Asian community leader
- Collaborate in Greater Boston anti-violence coalitions for LGBT & multicultural community

Trainings

- Provide trainings to first responders at the Somerville Fire and Police Departments “Improving Response to High Risk Domestic Violence”



2013 Candlelight Vigil Walk for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Union Square

Allies

Relationships for Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

New Allies

- ◇ Muslim Health Initiative of Greater Boston Area
- ◇ American Arab Association of Women (AAAW)
- ◇ National Latin@Network (domestic violence, LGBT issues, and restorative justice)

Government and First Responders

- ◇ Somerville Fire Department
- ◇ Somerville Police Department
- ◇ Cataldo Ambulance Services
- ◇ Victims' Advocates, Middlesex County District Attorney's Office

Anti-Violence Agencies

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence
Association of Haitian Women, Inc. (AFAB)
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)
Boys and Girls Club of Middlesex County
Cambridge Health Alliance
Councilio Hispano
Community Action Agency of Somerville
GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project
The Guidance Center Inc.
Home for Little Wanderers
Institute for Community Health
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese
Speakers (MAPS)

The Network/ La Red
Office of Somerville Commissions
Parents Helping Parents
RESPOND
Somerville Cambridge Elder Services
Somerville Cares about Prevention (SCAP)
Somerville Commission for Women
Somerville Human Rights Commission
Somerville Mediation Program
Somerville Mental Health Center
Somerville Police Department
Transition House



2013 January to July Year's Activities

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention & Services

The Office of Somerville Commissions' events and projects related to high risk case support, anti-violence programming and awareness along with relationship building.

Feb 9: Vagina Monologues dedicated its proceeds from its show to the Somerville Commission for Women.

March: cell phone donation to The Network/La Red was 16 phones

April 25: Co-sponsored and MC'd Somerville Police Department's Family Services Unit's Open House to introduce new, full-time Victim/Witness Advocate. Introduced Victim/Witness Advocate to school counselors.

May 20: Attended Muslim Health Symposium (at Boston University)

June 21: Attended the monthly meeting for case reviews with the Domestic Violence High Risk Assessment Team (at Public Safety Building)

July 19: Attended the monthly meeting for case reviews with the Domestic Violence High Risk Assessment Team (at Public Safety Building)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, 2013 Domestic Violence Awareness Event (SPD Police Academy)

July 24: Attended the data presentation and discussion of Tod@s, a survey about partner abuse in black and Latin@ LGBTQ communities, presented by Fenway Health.



2013 Candlelight Vigil Walk for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Union Square

2013 August to December Year's Activities

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention & Services

August: Donated over 100 phones to The Network/la Red as part of the LGBT Liaison and the Somerville Commission for Women's ongoing cell phone drive. The cell phones were generously donated by City Hall.

Sept 6: American Arab Association of Women (AAAW)—a Moroccan community agency—introductory meeting at 10:30am-12pm the City Hall Annex (50 Evergreen Avenue).

Sept 20: Attended the Somerville Domestic Violence High Risk Assessment Team meeting.

Oct 2: Presented the annual domestic violence vigil with the Somerville Commission for Women. Featured guest speaker—Corey Yarbrough from Black Hispanic Gay Coalition. Speaker and reader of murdered victims in MA—Tiffany Melendez of Respond. Tabling by BARCC, Respond, The Network/La Red, Asian Taskforce, Black Hispanic Gay Coalition, MAPS, and the Commission for Women.

Oct 2: Taped the October episode of Voices of Somerville (monthly television program airing on the City's cable 13/22 channels) on domestic violence with the executive director of Respond (for October's DV awareness month).



2013 Muslim/Arab Community Panel on Domestic Violence Data

Oct 3: Donated 23 phones to The Network/la Red as part of the LGBT Liaison and the Somerville Commission for Women's ongoing cell phone drive.

Oct 16: Met with Cataldo Ambulance Service's Shift Commander/CFS to create an agreement of collaboration between the Office of Somerville Commissions and Cataldo. Cataldo approved the collaboration and re-initiate the Somerville Anti-violence Taskforce.



Panelists from the 2013 Muslim/Arab Community Panel on Domestic Violence Data

Oct 21: Held a Muslim & Arab Community Panel on Domestic Violence Data at the Public Safety Building with approximately forty participants.

Oct 24: Met with the National Latin@ Network to establish collaboration on domestic violence, LGBT issues, and multicultural initiatives.

Nov 13: Muslim/Arab Domestic Violence Experts Phone Meeting on Greater Boston collaboration and next steps

Somerville Police Department

The Family Services Unit has one Sergeant, two Detectives and one Victim/Witness Advocate since February 2013. The Victim/Witness Advocate was responsible for almost all “follow-ups” by the unit with a multi-lingual capacity that adds value to the unit’s services.

The unit is responsible for the following:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrests or Complaints 2. Court Appearances 3. Follow Ups 4. DV Meetings 5. Interviews or Interrogations 6. Child Sex Abuse Cases 7. Adult Sex Assault Cases 8. Grand Jury appearances 9. Entering/modifying Restraining Orders in the SPD database | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. SAIN Interviews 11. SOR Registrations 12. SOR Audits 13. DCF 51a referrals 14. Assisting other agencies 15. Preparing Police reports written 16. Preparing Search Warrants 17. Investigating hate crimes 18. Investigating crimes against elderly and the disabled |
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Somerville Police Department Family Services Unit Data (abbreviated)

ACTIVITY	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Restraining Orders	73	61	101	101	66	119	95	132	100	59			907
Follow Ups	84	68	79	70	91	70	82	84	103	105			836
Police reports written	32	25	18	7	30	16	16	17	15	21			197



Somerville Public Safety Building (photo credit: Somerville Times)



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
City of Somerville

Somerville Commission for Women
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