

(continued from page 3...)

In her groups, Siscoe aims to have conversations with youth about how these problematic behaviors can occur in relationships and the impact of these behaviors. Just as importantly though, she also makes sure to discuss healthy relationship behaviors.

“We have conversations about healthy behaviors so they have the tools to carry out a healthy relationship, instead of just being left with what not to do.”

Jessie Spinney, Sexual Assault Prevention Specialist for YWCA Clark County and facilitator for “Where We Thrive”, a prevention program for 15-18-year-olds, agrees.

“When it comes to talking about stalking with the youth in my high school prevention classes, we spend a lot of time talking about de-normalizing problematic behaviors while also emphasizing boundaries and empowerment to set those boundaries,” said Spinney.

“I think it’s definitely helpful to shed light in my classes that stalking is a mechanism of power, control and isolation, specifically with the aid of social media and technology, but I think it’s also really empowering to talk with youth about ways we can amplify behaviors that are not toxic or harmful and are instead rooted in respect and consent.”

Adds Schacht, “We need to talk to kids about how to receive a no, and have them understand it’s just as powerful to be able to give one respectfully as it is to hear one and not equate that with rejection.”

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the following recent grantors, whose generosity is helping thousands overcome violence and oppression in Clark County. To see an extended list of charitable partners please visit our website at ywcaclarkcounty.org.

Boeing’s Employee
Community Fund
Burning Foundation
iQ Credit Union
Northwest Children’s
Foundation

PeaceHealth of
Southwest
Washington
Umpqua Bank
Foundation
United Way of the
Columbia Willamette

VOLUNTEER

Opportunities remain throughout the year. Join us in our mission. Apply to volunteer at ywcaclarkcounty.org or call **360-906-9112**.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN APRIL AT YWCA CLARK COUNTY?



April is **Child Abuse Prevention Month**. Follow us all month long at [facebook.com/ywacc](https://www.facebook.com/ywacc) as CASA takes over our Facebook page and posts daily content about events, information, and ways you can help children in need.

April is also **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**. This year’s campaign theme “I, Ask” champions the message that asking for consent is healthy, normal, and necessary for everyday interactions. Follow us on Instagram [@ywacc](https://www.instagram.com/ywacc) and [@ywaccprevention](https://www.instagram.com/ywaccprevention) for ways to participate in the campaign.

Stand Against Racism is happening April 25th. This year’s theme is “**No Hate, No Fear: Immigrant Justice is Racial Justice.**” More information will be available soon at ywcaclarkcounty.org as well as on our social media channels.

NEW “FINDING OUR GOLD” WORKSHOP STARTS MAY 1ST



“Finding Our Gold” is a six-week series where participants explore topics of authenticity, relationships, courage, safety, purpose, and creativity. In this workshop, women over 50 can discuss ageism, feelings of invisibility, and their emotions around growing older all in a safe and supportive environment.

Register at ywcaclarkcounty.org

ON A MISSION: KEEPING YOU INFORMED

SPRING 2019

YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES



*Sarah had just turned 18 and left her former foster home with very few resources. Because she had nowhere to go, she ended up returning to live with several family members who were heavily into drugs and alcohol. Sarah quickly realized that this was not a safe place for her to stay, and she reached out to our Independent Living Skills (ILS) program for support.

Through her work with the program, and the commitment of her ILS Advocate, she was able to apply for a housing voucher, rent and furnish her own apartment, and have the length of the voucher extended to five years.

Your support helped Sarah with applying for basic food assistance, as well as connect her with a primary care physician and mental health counselor to help her find the tools for depression and anxiety.

Sarah recently shared, “If it was not for the assistance of the ILS program and my Advocate, I would most likely be homeless and would not be making steps towards achieving my life goals.”

Your support changed the course of Sarah’s life and gave her the resources to live a healthy, full, independent life.

You can help more kids like Sarah by visiting ywcaclarkcounty.org and clicking “DONATE” today!

**Name changed for privacy*

PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

We are several months in to 2019 and our tireless advocates, volunteers, and board members have already traveled to Olympia for various lobby days advocating for children and youth in the foster care system, survivors of sexual assault, assistance for domestic violence victims, as well as affordable housing and economic stability. We even had staff in Washington D.C. lobbying for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. **Visit ywcaclarkcounty.org or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to see how you can help!** For now here are four bills we currently have our eye on:



Our ILS team meeting with State Sen. Annette Cleveland to advocate for foster youth.

Expand Civil Rights Protections for Immigrants: SB 5165

Revises the state civil rights act to include prohibiting discrimination based on citizenship or immigration status.

Comprehensive Sex Education Bill: SB 5395

Requires comprehensive sexual health education that is consistent with the Washington state health standards and physical education

K-12 learning standards and that requires affirmative consent curriculum **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying legislation SB 5689**

Requires every school district to adopt a policy and procedure that prohibits the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. It also sets minimum standards for policies and procedures, which must include protections for transgender students.

New Hope Act: HB 1041

Modifies criteria related to certificates of discharge and eligibility to apply to have past criminal convictions vacated under certain circumstances. This criminal justice reform legislation that would improve re-entry, removing barriers to employment and housing by allowing more Washingtonians who have completed their sentences to apply to have their records cleared under certain circumstances.

BANK OF AMERICA SUPPORTS FOSTER YOUTH

In the summer of 2018 The Bank of America Foundation generously awarded a \$10,000 grant to YWCA Clark County's Independent Living Skills Program (ILS) for the program's project "Fostering Independence and Workforce Development for Foster Youth."

ILS helps foster youth age 15-21 successfully transition from state-supported care to independent living. One of the ways ILS provides support is by assisting youth with pursuing employment.

Not having access to a phone or appropriate work clothing can be a significant barrier when it comes to seeking employment. When youth don't have an income or support system to assist with these purchases, it can be the difference between becoming employed or staying unemployed. Bank of America's support contributed to the success of ILS participants.

Anna* asked ILS to help her with securing employment and address some barriers that she was experiencing. ILS was able to help Anna with her phone bill so she could maintain communication with prospective employers. A critical piece of obtaining employment is producing a state-issued ID. ILS was able to work with Anna to obtain a State ID as well as attend Driver's Education classes to work towards getting her Driver's License. Additionally, ILS purchased interview clothing. Once she was offered a position at Safeway, ILS helped Anna purchase work-appropriate clothing to adhere to their dress code.

Currently, Anna is saving up for a car and taking steps to finish her high school diploma. Bank of America helped Anna stay competitive and have success in the business market. Anna is excited about achieving her goals and working towards creating a life that she envisions for herself. One where she can flourish and provide for herself and her dog.

In addition to providing crucial funding for foster youth, representatives from Bank of America came to an ILS club meeting and shared valuable insights about budgeting, saving and how to use and build credit with our ILS participants.

Financial education is crucial knowledge that many youth in the foster care system don't receive as they age out of care and seek to build a life on their own.

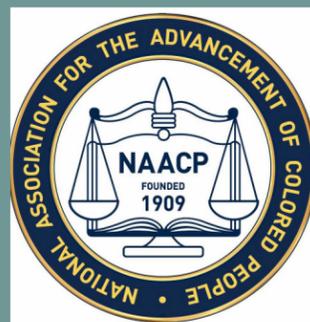
Both the funding and the commitment to financial education were extremely beneficial to our ILS participants.

"We're very thankful to Bank of America for supporting our youth's employment and financial literacy goals," said Kit Kuran, Director of Independent Living Skills Program. "Because of Bank of America's commitment to our community, participants in the Independent Living Skills Program learned invaluable money managing skills and received financial support to find and maintain employment, helping them meet their goals for independence!"



Jessica Hewitt and Kevin Jones from Bank of America presented the check and taught "Better Money Habits" to our ILS participants

Val Joshua Racial Justice and Youth Social Justice Awards



Save the Dates:

Nominations open
April 8, 2019

Award ceremony at
NAACP Juneteenth Celebration
June 22, 2019

More information available soon at
www.ywcaclarkcounty.org

CHALLENGING OUR PERCEPTIONS OF STALKING

While YWCA Clark County doesn't have a program solely devoted to stalking crimes, it is a behavior that can be both a precursor to sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as exist concurrently with these forms of abuse. According to the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) 81% of women who were stalked by a current or former spouse or cohabitating partner were also physically assaulted by that partner. Additionally, 31% of women stalked by an intimate partner were also sexually assaulted by that partner. Advocates in both our SafeChoice Domestic Violence Program and Sexual Assault Program have done work in helping participants who were victims of stalking and worked to keep them safe.

Risk Reduction

Vicki Hipp, DSHS Advocacy Specialist for YWCA Clark County, has aided participants who were being stalked by their abuser. "The first thing any advocate will do is listen and encourage documentation and evidence organization," said Hipp. "Keeping a detailed record of unwanted calls, visits and behavior can be helpful when trying to obtain a Protection Order (PO). I have helped clients organize their presentation to police by suggesting a timeline of events to help the process."

Laurie Schacht, Director of our Sexual Assault Program, agrees. "It's important to document things like date and time, when messages are left, here what happened when, here's when they showed up, things like that."

Obtaining a PO can result in stronger punishment for the offender if the behavior continues. "Stalking is a misdemeanor and often the consequence of a protection order stops stalking behavior, which is the goal," said Hipp. "However, if the stalking continues after the PO is in place it raises the offense to a felony charge, which puts some teeth in the consequence."

Taking it seriously

Schacht said it's important to encourage people not to minimize what's happening if they feel uncomfortable with someone else's behavior, and it's equally important for other people in the victim's life not to minimize what is happening.

"As a culture, we need to improve our response," said Schacht. "Often stalking isn't taken seriously until it escalates to something violent."

In addition to not being taken seriously, stalking behaviors can sometimes be portrayed as romantic, particularly in the media. "We need to have a discussion as to why people think this is a flattering way to get someone's reaction and find ways to help them understand that you're not being flattering, as well as encourage others to not to be flattered by this type of attention."

Ultimately education is what will lead to prevention. Schacht said that often times behaviors like going out in groups, being more conscientious and private about what you do and do not include on social media, and even going to the police are considered prevention, when really they are risk reduction.



"What I wish is that as a society we realize that we can never arrest our way out of these kinds of problems," said Schacht. "We need to be really clear that risk reduction is not prevention. Prevention is when someone doesn't do something in the first place, and to achieve that we need to examine just how are we talking about these issues with each other, and what we teach our kids. We teach body safety, but what is safety and accountability in our Internet actions?"

Prevention

To that end, YWCA Clark County offers several prevention groups aimed at teaching youth healthy relationship behaviors.

Tanika Siscoe, Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist for YWCA Clark County, facilitates "Where We Grow" a program geared for youth ages 11-14 that helps participants build knowledge and skills that support healthy relationships. One thing Siscoe notes is that stalking type behaviors (specifically cyberstalking) are sometimes minimized or joked about with the youth she works with.

"From my experience working with youth, the term is often used as a joke like 'I stalk them on Facebook' or 'I'm following you' in reference to following someone on social media. These jokes are problematic because some people are being stalked or heavily monitored via social media and technology."

Siscoe said a point of emphasis of her groups is to talk about behaviors that may be seen as "normal" in relationships, but are actually ways of monitoring partners, friends, or family in unhealthy ways.

Story continues on page 4...