

WOMEN FOR WOMEN

WCCJ » BREAKING CYCLES OF ABUSE AND VICTIMIZATION



The women sitting around the room are diverse – Caucasian, African American, Native American – but their stories are the same. “I was married to an addict, and I became an addict.” “I had to go to jail to get clean.” “This program has taught me that the abuse I suffered as a child wasn’t my fault.” “Without this help I would have gone right back to using drugs.” “I started the program so I wouldn’t lose my kids, but I learned that I had to get better to save myself.”

These are the voices of women in a substance abuse program provided by Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice (WCCJ). Most did not enter voluntarily, but were referred through the criminal justice system. Now, after years of intensive counseling and group therapy, stories of hope are emerging. In gender-specific programs such as this one, participants can freely share experiences in their lives that led them to drugs – such as sexual abuse, mental illness and domestic violence – with the understanding that only other women in the program can share.

Women for Women awarded a \$100,000 grant (over two years) to WCCJ to launch a similar program for women at risk of going to prison or losing custody of their children. The new program will offer intensive therapy and treatment in the evenings and will also provide child care and transportation for women who cannot afford them.

Here, Clinical Specialist Dottie Saxon Green, center, leads a weekly support group of women who are staying clean and sober, and working every day to turn their lives around.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN 2006 GRANTS

REACH of Jackson County - \$41,604 to launch a new program to help women escape domestic violence and sexual assault by providing personal life skills and job skills training.

Pisgah Legal Services - \$71,396 over two years to create a unique partnership with Mission Hospitals and MAHEC that will provide legal advocacy for women in a medical setting and help strengthen the safety net for women in crisis.

Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice - \$100,000 over two years to begin an intensive treatment program for women in Buncombe County who are involved in the criminal justice system and the Department of Social Services.

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