



Clothesline Project



Every year the Alexandria Office on Women exhibits The Clothesline Project in the community during Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April) and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October). The vividly decorated t-shirts are strung on a clothesline to bear witness to violence against women and their strength to survive! There is also an on-line clothesline featuring t-shirts that survivors wanted to share on the internet. Click [here](#) (link) to view the on-line display.

The Clothesline Project began in 1990 when members of the Cape Cod Women's Agenda hung a clothesline across the village green in Hyannis, Massachusetts with 31 shirts decorated by survivors of assault, rape and incest. Women viewing the clothesline came forward to create shirts of their own and the line kept growing. Since the first display, The Clothesline Project has grown through cooperation with schools, universities, State Houses, shopping malls, churches, and women's events. An estimated 35,000-50,000 shirts have been made.

"Doing the laundry has always been considered women's work and in the days of close-knit neighborhoods, women often exchanged information over backyard fences while hanging their clothes out to dry," said Carol A. Chichetto of East Dennis, MA, quoted from www.now.org, the NOW organization website. "The concept is simple. Let each woman tell her own story in her own unique way and hang it out for all to see. It was and is a way of airing society's dirty laundry."

Creating opportunities for people to learn and speak openly about sexual and domestic violence is a main goal of the Office on Women. Twice yearly, the SARA Program and Domestic Violence Program host t-shirt making nights where survivors and their friends and family are invited to create a t-shirt that represents their experience.

Call Geneva Fuentes at 703-838-4911 if you are interested in making a t-shirt and participating in this year's awareness events. **The Clothesline Project will be on display October 15-23, 2009 in the Vola Lawson Lobby at City Hall, 301 King Street.**