

# The Freeman Flash

JANUARY 2016

ELIZABETH FREEMAN CENTER'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE XXXXI



## Action of the Month: Sign up for EFC's volunteer training, Jan 19-Feb 10

Want to make a difference? Now is your time! EFC's next 40-hour volunteer training starts on January 19th and runs into mid-February. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Denise at (413) 499-2425 or [deniseb@elizabethfreemancenter.org](mailto:deniseb@elizabethfreemancenter.org) to learn more.

Once trained, you can answer Hotline calls, help with childcare at our shelter, be there for somebody who goes to the hospital after a sexual assault, advocate at court with survivors getting restraining orders, table with us at community events, and much more.

When you sign up for the training, you commit to volunteering 8 hours/month at EFC. It is a significant commitment and one of the most meaningful and impactful ways to work for a world free of violence. Sign up for the training today and join our amazing volunteer team!

## Money School is back!

EFC is getting ready to offer our next Money School series in Pittsfield this winter – contact us to sign up.



Money School is our free financial independence initiative for survivors of domestic or sexual violence. It features personal financial coaches, college connections, valuable resources, and practical skills. Stipends, dinner, and childcare are provided. Ongoing support, counseling, and advocacy are available during and after the series ends.

Money School is so good, last year's graduates wanted a Money School II!

If you're a survivor interested in signing up for the Money School series in Pittsfield this winter, please contact Becca, Money School coordinator, at (413) 499-2425 or [beccab@elizabethfreemancenter.org](mailto:beccab@elizabethfreemancenter.org).

## “You have brought relief in a place of darkness to my family”

Every year, we are blown away by the kindness and generosity of our community during the holiday season. Various organizations, businesses, and individuals go above and beyond to help our clients in need and to spread the holiday spirit.



Words cannot capture the joy these gifts bring to those who have lost so much but are bravely moving forward.

Thank you to everyone who donated gifts, time, or money to make the holiday brighter for our clients and their families.

## Marking Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Anti-Muslim and anti-refugee sentiment, an absence of legal accountability in the police killings of unarmed black citizens, mass attacks on women in Cologne, Germany....Dr. King's call for racial and social justice rings out as loudly now as it did during his lifetime.

In his memory and in honor of all those who work for freedom, we will keep moving forward.



24 hour hotline 1-866-401-2425

**Pittsfield**  
43 Francis Ave.  
(413) 499-2425

**Gt. Barrington**  
401 Stockbridge Rd., Ste. 3  
(413) 429-8190

**North Adams**  
61 Main St., Ste. 202  
(413) 663-7459

Supported locally by: Berkshire United Way • Northern Berkshire United Way • Williamstown Community Chest • City of Pittsfield • Verizon Foundation • The Mary Kay Foundation • The Green Foundation • Berkshire Bank Foundation • Town of Great Barrington • Berkshire Life Charitable Foundation • Coolidge Hill Foundation • Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Funds including the William and Margery Barrett Fund and the James and Robert Hardman Fund • Guardian Life Insurance Company • Many community members, groups, businesses, and towns •



## You keep us going

Thank you to everyone who donated to Elizabeth Freeman Center after receiving our December appeal letter.

You keep our doors open and ensure that anyone experiencing domestic or sexual violence in our county has a place to go for help, hope, and healing.

Haven't given yet? Visit [www.elizabethfreemancenter.org/donate](http://www.elizabethfreemancenter.org/donate).



## Response to the murder of Halena Huda Gill

We are grief-stricken and outraged at the murder of Halena Huda Gill, 37, in Pittsfield last month. Her husband, Timothy Gill, has been charged with the murder. Excerpts from a letter to editor of the Berkshire Eagle, written by Janis Broderick and Jane Lawless, our Executive Director and Board president respectively, are below:



“Though we do not yet know all of the circumstances of her death, Ms. Gill would be the 17th victim of murder by a spouse or partner in Massachusetts this year. This figure is shocking. It also cannot be understood outside the context of domestic violence. Domestic violence is devastating and it happens a lot, often behind closed doors with no clear clue for outsiders. We know this and sadly, we have known this for a long time...

For all that we as a society know, domestic violence is still shrouded in silence. Victims are still blamed for “tolerating” the violence. Society spends few resources on services to help violence survivors get safe and build a new life. Society spends even fewer resources on violence prevention programming, particularly for our youth who can be taught to talk or walk instead of hit. Violence prevention education is our greatest hope for breaking the patterns of violence...

The tragedy and loss caused by domestic violence must be acknowledged and prioritized. It can be stopped. This is a community problem and we as a community must respond.”

Read the full letter at [www.elizabethfreemancenter.org/news](http://www.elizabethfreemancenter.org/news).

## Welcome Flo, Amy, and Valerie!

Congratulations to Flo, who has joined our emergency shelter staff as the children's advocate; to Amy, who has joined our Great Barrington office as a south county counselor; and to Valerie, our new afternoon receptionist and shelter relief staff member! Please join us in welcoming all three (Amy not pictured).



*Flo*



*Valerie*

## A toast to Berktoberfest

Thank you, Berktoberfest, for donating proceeds from this year's 'fest to EFC! We are honored to be chosen as a beneficiary of this incredible community event.

