



Center helps women find footing after loss of spouse or divorce

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By Sally Kalson / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A Center for Women has opened in Squirrel Hill to assist those going through life transitions such as separation or divorce, loss of a spouse, work force re-entry, or who have experience domestic abuse.

Financial literacy workshops, internship placements to help build up resumes that may have been dormant for a while, mentoring support and legal consultations are among the free or low-cost services.

The center is an initiative of the National Council of Jewish Women with major funding from the Jewish Women's Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh. They were looking to fill gaps in services for women trying to get back on solid footing following a major life change. Additional funding is coming from United Way of Allegheny County. Programs are open to all women throughout the region.

"Women in transition tend to fall through the cracks a little. Our goal is to fill those needs," said Becky Abrams, director of the Center for Women (not to be confused with the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh).

"We're adding services not provided elsewhere to help women build economic independence," she said. To avoid duplication of effort, the center makes referrals to other providers.

The center opened in August in Anathan House, 1620 Murray Ave., and has served about 100 women so far, Ms. Abrams said.

A woman in transition, she said, "may be facing a number of frustrating challenges in finding the resources and support she needs to make ends meet and support her family. We aim to help women return to a sense of security, focus on their families and ultimately thrive in our community."

In addition to "financial fitness" workshops, the center is looking to match women with community volunteers for mentorship, job-shadowing and internships, as well as other professionals who offer guidance on interviewing, resumes, financial planning, computer skills and other areas. Legal consultations with volunteer attorneys can help with matters of child support, bankruptcy and marital issues. The cost is \$15.

More information is available at www.centerforwomenpgh.org or 412-421-4400.