We’ve been having lots of conversation about race and racism and brutality and even kindness here at YWCA Charleston, just as many of you are at home and in the workplace.

These are tough conversations about topics whose time seems to finally have come after more than 400 years of simmering and roiling to a full boil. It is past time to learn about centuries of systemic racism and how it has shaped our country. It is past time to voice our outrage over the violent deaths of people who died because of the color of their skin. Women who have died at the hands of law enforcement. Despite being only 7% of the population Black women and girls have accounted for 20% of the unarmed people killed by police since 1999.

We honor the lives of Black women who have been assaulted or killed by police in our country. We ask our readers to go over the list, speaking each of the names aloud. These women are mothers, sisters, daughters, friends, and so much more.

In the fight towards eliminating racism, Black women can always be found on the frontlines. When we speak about tragedies of police brutality, they are often the last mentioned. We must remember their names, so that we do not forget their stories.

Black women are one of the most educated groups in our country, attaining the highest proportion of bachelor's degree. Still, they face disparities at every turn. Black women are four times more likely to die during childbirth than their white counterparts. While being highly educated, Black women with degrees are more likely to work a job that doesn’t require a college degree. They make up 1/3 of our country's service workers.

Black lives matter at YWCA Charleston. Black women’s lives matter. When Black lives matter to everyone, when we all feel the outrage at the injustice of racism, that is when we are moving toward a more fair and just society.

What are we doing at YWCA Charleston to address racism? We have been providing implicit bias training to our community. We are expanding the conversations and asking questions of our leaders. When questions are not enough, we are asking for policy changes to support anti-racist systems and institutions. We are calling people in to conversations and when needed, we are calling people out for their behavior.

We are asking members of our team to do the work we need to do as individuals. Those of us who are white need to unpack our privilege, then we can not only be allies to people of color, but we can be accessories to change our community. We can be a part of what the world needs and create the society that all Black men, women and children deserve. It is past the time for silence.

When we say her name, we see her and we seek to understand her humanity in a way that is more personal and more powerful than a statistic. By saying these names, we remember these women and we commit to doing more to change the future of our community. Won’t you join us?

More than 600 people have completed our Implicit Bias Training and demand is growing. There are resources available and we invite you to visit our web page for action items, video and article links, suggested reading lists and contact information if you’d like to take the next step. Please visit ywcacharleston.org/racialjustice.

“"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." - Archbishop Desmond Tutu
JOIN US FOR OUR FIRST-EVER, WEEK-LONG VIRTUAL EVENT CAMPAIGN!

AUGUST 9th–15th

While COVID-19 has forced us to make the difficult decision of canceling any in-person event this year, we are still determined to Make Lemonade Out of Lemons and unite with you virtually in celebrating Our Power, Our Passion, and Our Purpose in raising awareness & funds to help victims of domestic violence. So join us for #GNI2020 beginning August 9th as we kick off our virtual fundraising event. Visit gnowv.com to learn more!

Questions?
304.720.0541

Connect with us!

YWCA RESOLVE
FAMILY ABUSE PROGRAM
Providing shelter and support to victims of domestic violence

YWCA
eliminating racism empowering women

2020 Leaders for Change
eliminating racism empowering women

DO YOU KNOW A WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT?
NOMINATE THEM TODAY!

NOMINATION DEADLINE: JULY 19, 2020

Visit ywcacharleston.org/woa for nomination forms and more information!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT SHANNON LESTER
slester@ywcacharleston.org
(304)-720-0541

thank you!
A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR'S STORY
by Julie Haden, YWCA Resolve Program Director

*Cindy had called the Resolve Family Abuse 24-hour crisis hotline so many times that the Hope House Shelter Advocates knew her voice. In the beginning she needed someone to talk to. She wasn’t sure if what she was going through was “really domestic violence.” Cindy’s abuse started off as verbal. Her husband had always been controlling. He said it was how he showed he loved her and was worried about her. Cindy came from a small family and her parents were not ones to shower affection, or kind words, on their kids. When her husband started yelling at her and calling her names, she thought it would pass.

When her father-in-law died she watched her husband change before her eyes. He was depressed and refused to go to work. He began drinking heavily and his abusive behavior became intensely physical. He purchased a gun and would often threaten her, their dogs, and her family with it. He’d say things like “If you ever leave me, I’ll kill your parents. You’ll have no one left who loves you but me.” He would rage at the most inconsequential things and she never knew what would set him off. Some days, he would be angry that she didn’t bring dinner home with her from work then he would beat her with a walking stick. Other days she would walk into the kitchen in the morning to find him already angry because they were out of coffee. Then he would throw her against walls or to the ground.

Cindy’s husband was always careful, he never hit her in the face. She was always able to cover up the bruises. Until the last time. Cindy wasn’t the one to call us when she needed emergency shelter or court services. Her nurse at the local hospital had to do that. Cindy’s husband had beaten her so badly that her jaw was broken, she had multiple head wounds, and bruises all over her body, even her feet.

At the time we had just opened our second handicapped accessible room, which was possible because of Girls Night Out Funding. Cindy needed this room until she was able to negotiate stairs. Hope House staff linked her immediately with our support group and counseling. Resolve’s Court Staff were able to meet with her and prepare her for what would happen with her case once it reached the court system. Meanwhile, Court Advocates assisted her with getting a Domestic Violence Protective Order. Cindy had always worked outside the home but had never been allowed to be in control of her own money. Resolve staff helped her understand basic banking and went with her to get her very first checking and savings account. Once she was physically healed she was able to transfer her position at a local restaurant chain to another restaurant closer to the shelter. Cindy became a regular at Resolve’s support group and through sharing her story and helping others to heal, she crafted a new network of support unlike one she had ever known.

Meeting one-on-one with our counselor allowed Cindy to begin the work of healing from what had become a way of life for her. She was able to, with the help of the counselor, process traumatic experiences and learn how to move on with her violence-free life.

With the support of the Victim and Shelter Services Coordinator, Cindy was able to find safe, affordable housing in an area far from her now ex-husband. It’s been three years since Cindy signed divorce papers and she hasn’t looked back. “Words can’t express how thankful I am for all of those at Resolve. Coming to the shelter literally saved my life.”

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, please call YWCA Resolve Family Abuse program at 1-800-681-8663 or 304-340-3549.

*The name in this story has been changed to protect the identity and safety of the individual.

YWCA RESOLVE FAMILY ABUSE PROGRAM

In the last year alone, 160 victims of domestic violence stayed at YWCA Resolve Family Abuse Program’s Hope House.

By supporting YWCA Resolve through fully tax deductible donations, donating items to the shelter, or participating in Girls Night In, YOU are bringing HOPE to victims who have nowhere else to turn. Visit gnowv.com for how to get involved.
Handmade from the heart. Volunteer sews PPE for YWCA Charleston staff.

Julie Fine is no stranger to the YWCA Charleston. For years, the seamstress and founder of The Dressmaker’s Closet in downtown Charleston has created custom pieces for our annual Girls Night Out event and has always supported our cause. But this year, her seamstress skills were utilized in a way she never imagined and this rockstar volunteer has now sewn upwards of 800 face masks for the YWCA Charleston staff, employees and shelter residents!

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, Julie was sewing masks for families she knew and handing them out to the general public. Then she heard about the YWCA’s need for PPE and dedicated her next 6-8 weeks to creating beautiful handmade face masks that were given to every employee. “We couldn’t be more grateful for Julie’s generous heart by creating these vital pieces of protection for our employees while we continue to serve our community’s most in-need during a global pandemic,” said Debby Weinstein, CEO of the YWCA Charleston.

“I did this because I saw a need and it was nice to be able to use my skills for a greater cause. I couldn’t do it without the donations of fabric and by also working with amazing businesses such as Kreinik, based in Parkersburg, WV, who created one-of-a-kind elastic for these masks at no extra cost,” said Julie.

Thank you Julie for protecting us here at the YWCA Charleston!