March 23, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to provide some testimony as to how our clients have benefitted from this SASP Grant Program through the Rape Crisis Center of Milford. As you may know, homelessness has reached alarming levels in Connecticut over the past year. Among the many contributing factors, the one that is defined as a leading cause is interpersonal violence.

According to a recently released report, Portraits of Homelessness in Connecticut, an alarming 40% of Connecticut adults in families said that domestic violence contributed to their homelessness. More than half of Connecticut adults with children responded affirmatively when asked if they had been in a family or intimate relationship in which they had been physically hurt or felt threatened. In addition to these startling statistics, long-term physical and behavioral health conditions predominate along with substance abuse and mental illness.

Many of our shelter residents and most of our soup kitchen clients have experienced one or more of the above-noted situations. The services of the Rape Crisis Center staff have been offered to all of these clients on a regular basis through the on-site visits of the Rape Crisis counselors. The commitment of the Rape Crisis counselors to our clients, as well as their sensitivity to the potential issues involved has resulted in a positive response. The ability to build a trust level with this population is very difficult and those clients who might have had some experience with sexual assault in the past are reluctant to share this with "strangers". These counselors continued to find creative ways to reach our clients and to provide appropriate programs and assistance.

We believe that this program has had significant impact upon our efforts to assist our clients in rebuilding their lives by assisting them to deal with the issue and thereby possibly removing one of the obstacles to self-sufficiency and ultimately to independent living. This is a very valuable collaboration by two agencies that are committed to serving the underserved population.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Toni Dolan
Executive Director