

FCN HISTORY

Family Crisis Network began in 1982, a grass roots organization whose sole function was a 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline. The Hotline operated from a room in the basement of the United Church of Christ in Newport, Washington. It was manned entirely by volunteers. Shortly after beginning operations, a Victim's Support Group was formed. Looking ahead it was hoped that the volunteers might provide community education regarding domestic violence. The FCN also provided service to sexual assault victims until 1983 and resumed service to SA clients in 1986 and continues that work today.

The Network quickly outgrew the room in the basement and relocated to the Newport Post Office Building. Paid staff became necessary, and grants were awarded. The Post Office Building, being the hub of the community, became a problem regarding the confidential nature of the service. After moving to a residential house on 1st street, FCN received a HAP Grant in 1991 with which three homes were purchased. These homes presently serve as the FCN office and homeless shelters.

In August of 1997 the Family Crisis Network opened a satellite office in the town of Metaline Falls, Washington. Metaline Falls is 72 miles north of Newport, ten miles from the Canadian border, with a population of approximately 250. The area surrounding the town is home for many families living in substandard housing, under extremely isolated conditions. It is a difficult area to serve, however, during our first year the community learned of our existence and many have come to trust our professionalism. Due to financial constraints, the office was closed after only 2 years.

In February of 1998 FCN hired Olivia Brown, MSW, to provide therapy to victims of sexual assault and/or domestic violence, free of charge. This service has proven to be essential in helping victims understand that they are not responsible for their victimization, and in healing and finding their own strengths.

In 1998 the Family Crisis Network and the Kalispell Tribe of Indians collaborated on a Dept. of Justice Grant application and demonstrated the need for domestic violence advocacy on the Kalispel reservation approximately 20 miles north of Newport. FCN opened a part-time office at the Tribal Court Building in December of 1999. The program grew into an independent entity, with trained tribal advocates supervised by FCN administration. Currently, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians has their own domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy programs as well as a Crime Victim Assistance program and many services for youth. The tribal advocates have become a professional, skilled and effective team in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault in Indian Country.

In August of 1998 FCN put Earnest monies on a residential property in Newport, Washington with the intent to remodel for the purpose of a two-family transitional housing unit. Funds for the project were made possible through grants and loans from HUD McKinney, DCTED Housing Finance Unit, Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle and local funds. Finally, in June of 2000, FCN was able to hold an open house at the finished project. Currently, two families with children are

residing in the two three-bedroom units and are participating in the program which will assist them in obtaining and maintaining a home of their own, whether as a tenant or homeowner.

Since 1997 FCN has doubled the square footage of office space and done extensive rehabilitation on the shelter houses in order to provide a comfortable environment for victims and their families.

In early 2006 the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) provided money for the purpose of providing services to victims of ALL crime other than domestic violence and sexual assault. Pend Oreille, Stevens and Ferry Counties became the Region 6 Crime Victim Service Center and collaborated on a proposal to provide services to victims of all crime in their perspective counties. Direct services include legal advocacy, therapy and various emergency financial services. The Family Crisis Network hired a new staff person to fill the position of Crime Victim Advocate. Bringing the total staff number to 7.

As a result of the new VOCA funding and expansion of services, FCN changed its name in 2007 to **Pend Oreille Crime Victim Services** to describe the broad scope of services provided and to invite victims of all crimes to access our services. In 2016, our name was changed back to **Family Crisis Network**, because our supporters preferred the later.

In early 2009, FCN hired a part-time sexual assault prevention specialist to provide prevention activities to the community. Early in her employment she attended a Darkness to Light workshop in Oregon to become a facilitator of the workshop. The program is intended to bring awareness and appropriate response skills around child sexual abuse and assault to people who work with children. We feel this is an essential addition to our services. In recent years, the SA Prevention Specialist has also facilitated an awareness and skill building curriculum called "Where We Live". In 2015 Prevention funds were cut and our specialist retired.

In 2009, Pend Oreille County lost funding for the Youth.com program which provided shelter to homeless youth between the ages of 12 and 18. FCN collaborated with the former Youth.com program manager, put her under our 501(c)3, went before the county commissioners and presented a similar program for homeless youth and youth at risk, named YES (Youth Emergency Services). Currently funds collected from HB2163, earmarked for homeless services, are used to fund this program

YES has been operating under its own 501(c)3 status for several years and is an important entity in Pend Oreille County.

Recently FCN has opened a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Newport. A CAC provides a safe and comfortable place for children who have been abused and/or neglected to be interviewed after disclosing their abuse. A highly trained forensic interviewer conducts the interview. The interview room is equipped with high-tech audio and video equipment so that the interview can be used as evidence is necessary. Previously, victims and families would have to schedule an appointment in Spokane. The space is also used for supervised visitation, and other law enforcement interviews when needed.

During the pandemic, FCN has maintained hotel rooms to provide isolation and quarantine rooms to persons who tested positive for COVID-19 and could not isolate in the place they were

staying. Persons were referred to our office from the Tri-County Health Department. FCN staff provided food, medical supplies, laundry, etc., and professional cleaning at the end of their stay.

The Family Crisis Network currently has a staff of 9 and is ever expanding. Our Housing Program has been expanding rapidly as many housing issues have arisen due to the pandemic.

All of us at FCN are proud to serve the community of Pend Oreille County and look forward to many more years of doing so.

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