
Public Meeting

of

ASSEMBLY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 3348

(Establishes assessment and treatment services program in DHS; appropriates \$1 million)

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 3413

(Supplemental appropriation of \$2.2 million to DHS for domestic violence programs)

LOCATION: Committee Room 3
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: May 2, 2001



10:00 a.m.

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck, Chairman
Assemblywoman Marion Crecco, Vice-Chairman
Assemblyman George F. Geist
Assemblywoman Linda R. Greenstein
Assemblywoman Loretta Weinberg

ALSO PRESENT:

Miriam Bavati

*Office of Legislative Services
Council Aide*

Anthony J. Shissias

*Assembly Majority
Council Aides*

Christine Scullion

*Assembly Democratic
Council Aide*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Karen E. Beckmeyer Domestic Violence Program Development Specialist Division of Youth and Family Services Office of Policy, Planning, and Support New Jersey Department of Human Services	1
Jean L. Metz Division Director Providence House of Catholic Charities Burlington County and Ocean County	4
Paloma Coleman Program Director Providence House of Catholic Charities Ocean County	4
Sue Kozel Consultant Women’s Center of Monmouth County, Inc., and Trustee Amanda’s Easel	28
Anna M. Diaz-White Executive Director Women’s Center of Monmouth County, Inc., and Operator Amanda’s Easel	30
Karen Wengert Founder Friends of Amanda Foundation, and Founder Amanda’s Easel	48
William H. Thomas Founder Friends of Amanda Foundation	51

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Cynthia Westendorf Coordinator Amanda's Easel Barbara M. Price Executive Director New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women	58 65
Nancy L. Connor Executive Director Women's Crisis Services	 65
Mary Baughman Executive Director Jersey Battered Women's Service, Inc.	 72
Elaine Meyerson Executive Director Shelter Our Sisters	 79
APPENDIX:	
Testimony submitted by Jean L. Metz	 1x
Statement submitted by Sue Kozel	 3x
Testimony submitted by Anna M. Diaz-White	 5x
Testimony submitted by Karen Wengert	 7x
Statement	

submitted by
William H. Thomas 8x

Statement plus pictures
submitted by
Cynthia Westendorf 10x

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

APPENDIX (continued): **Page**

Guide to Services
submitted by
Barbara M. Price 18x

Pamphlet
submitted by
Nancy L. Connor 28x

Testimony
submitted by
Mary Baughman 30x

Letter addressed to
Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck
from
Senator John O. Bennett
District 12 33x

Proposed amendments to A-3348
submitted by
New Jersey Department of Human Services 34x

rs: 1-94

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ROSE MARIE HECK (Chairwoman):

Good morning, everyone. I am so pleased to see all of you today.

We made this an inclusive kind of meeting in case anyone wanted to address any of the other domestic violence bills that are coming up later on. But we're mostly concentrating on the two that appropriate money for particular programs, the 3348 and 3413.

And I'd like to begin with--

Is the Department of Human Services representative still here?

KAREN E. BECKMEYER: (indiscernible; speaks from audience)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, both of you.

Are you going to speak to these amendments, or do I -- did you just hand them to me?

It wasn't you, it was a gentleman before.

MS. BECKMEYER: It was Ray Castro of the Department's Legislative Unit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, okay.

MS. BECKMEYER: My understanding, Assemblywoman, is that they're for your consideration and the committee's consideration, and that I would be available as a research person today.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, all right. Thank you.

Karen, would you just introduce yourself to the Advisory Council?

MS. BECKMEYER: I'm Karen Beckmeyer. I'm with the Division of Youth and Family Services. I'm a Domestic Violence Program Development Specialist at DYFS.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Karen was in attendance and is a member of the working group in domestic violence and gave a wonderful overview of the PALS Program. That is the reason why I introduced the bill. I think it's an important piece of legislation. And I also introduced, almost at the same time, the \$2.2 million to DHS for the domestic violence programs, because we know the shelters are not well-funded, and that bill will address that particular subject.

But we are going to begin with 3348. And I'm going to take a look-see who's testifying.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Madam Chairwoman, do we have amendments to the bill, or they're not anything that you've had a chance to look at?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: The amendments actually--
Do we just have the one copy, Karen?

MS. BECKMEYER: Yes, that's my understanding.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. Because it was just dropped off.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Is it something you're agreeable to?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Pardon me?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Is it something you're agreeable to?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just started to read it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Oh, okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: So maybe someone could make copies.

Would you make copies so all the members of the panel can have it?

Thank you very much.

I think we'll begin.

First, let me introduce all the members who are here on the Council. And, of course, Assemblywoman Crecco is the Vice-Chair, and George Geist is the newest member. Loretta is one of the original members.

And we're very pleased. This Council has been responsible for many changes in the child abuse and neglect laws, the domestic violence laws, the crime victims' rights laws, and, as Loretta pointed out, we had a magnificent change in the law of the -- what we call the mother-baby bill, when we held that very big meeting at Holy Name Hospital to fight the insurance companies who wanted to really shorten hours of new moms and their babies in hospitals. But this Council pulled together a very quick meeting, good meeting, after approaching many of the hospitals who were threatened with HMOs not using them anymore. But Sister Patricia of Hackensack -- of Holy Name Hospital in Teaneck at the time was the bravest of all, and we held our meeting there. And it was a success, and everything changed, didn't it, Loretta, in a bipartisan way?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: It did.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And which we do most of the time, Loretta.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: That is true, particularly in this subject.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Absolutely. Absolutely.

So I'm going to ask Paloma Coleman to come forward. She's from Providence House.

Paloma, you have several people -- or a couple of people to testify with you?

Who has the bad throat?

J E A N L. M E T Z: Actually, it's Jean Metz.

I'm Jean Metz. I'm going to testify.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, Jean, you're going to testify.

MS. METZ: Yes. Paloma's going to join me. She's not going to be able to--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: She's going to whisper in case you forget something.

MS. METZ: Whisper occasionally.

P A L O M A C O L E M A N: Exactly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

Again, I was very pleased to hear about the program, and also very pleased to hear about the evaluation -- I believe it was an independent evaluation done by Rowan University.

Jean, you're going to address all of these things and give an overview of the program?

MS. METZ: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Good.

MS. METZ: Good morning, everyone.

My name is Jean Metz. I'm the Division Director for Providence House, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton.

It is my sincere privilege and honor to be speaking to the Assembly Advisory Council on Women today.

And, Assemblywoman Heck, I would really like to thank you and your committee for holding this hearing and for your many years of supporting domestic violence programs and legislation.

In regards to Bill 3348, I am here to enthusiastically support the establishment of an assessment and treatment program for child witnesses to domestic violence in all regions of New Jersey.

The Division of Youth and Family Services has been the domestic violence movement's strongest advocate, beginning in the late 1970s, when the first contracts were awarded for the provision of core services. Over the years, DYFS has supported the domestic violence providers, listened to our needs, and has genuinely been our partner in the never-ending battle to reduce domestic violence in our communities. A fairly recent example of their innovative and steadfast desire to protect the children of this state was to develop a pilot project offering services to child witnesses of domestic violence.

Providence House responded to the RFP and was awarded the only contract in the state to develop and implement an intensive therapeutic treatment program for children living with violence in their home. PALS, which stands for Peace: A Learned Solution, was developed with the philosophy that both violence and peaceful solutions are learned experiences.

PALS uses creative art therapy modalities in order to help children ages 3-10 begin the healing process. The program employs a drama therapist,

who utilizes costumes, face painting, masks, puppet theaters, and play to assist the children; two art therapists, who use paints, clay, brushes, crayons, and other art materials to assist the children; and a dance movement therapist, which is our newest employee, who uses music, musical instruments, scarves, and costumes, as well as the individual's self expression through dance and movement.

The children create artwork, plays, and dances that represent their traumatic experiences. All of these modalities use the child's internal resources and experiences to create symbolisms that provide enough emotional distance for the child to express and heal from their experiences without having to be retraumatized from having to directly talk about the experiences. It's very important that they don't have to talk directly about it, that they can act it out.

During the six months of treatment, the children attend therapy twice a week, once for individual and once for group therapy. While the children are working on their experiences, the custodial parent is also involved with a therapist and a case manager who address the individual's own victimization, parenting concerns, and other concrete needs the family has. The overall therapeutic components of the program serve two major purposes: the healing of traumatic experiences, and the prevention of the reoccurrence of the intergenerational cycle of violence. This is a true prevention program. The parent learns about ways of identifying potentially violent partners, and the children learn that violence is not an acceptable form of expression, as well as alternatives to violent behavior. The program also assists that parent in finding appropriate child care services and assists with payment to the provider. Finally,

the program provides recreational activities for the parent and child, which allow them to experience some fun activities at no expense.

This pilot research project began in 1998 with a unique partnership between the State of New Jersey, Providence House of Catholic Charities, and the Psychology Department of Rowan University. Because of the good judgment of DYFS, specifically the foresight of Karen Beckmeyer, who wrote the RFP, PALS has an objective outside evaluation component.

Dr. Linda Jeffery, a psychologist from Rowan University who has done extensive research on the effects of domestic violence, has been an integral part of PALS since its inception. I cannot stress enough the importance of this outside evaluation component. Based on her advice and guidance, several assessment tools were identified and are a crucial part of the evaluation. Each child, and their custodial parent, undergoes a series of assessments at the beginning and at the end of the treatment cycle.

Since its inception, 68 children who have experienced domestic violence have completed the PALS program. The effects of this intensive therapeutic program have been extraordinary. The results of the assessments indicate that 62 percent of the children displayed clinical ranges of behavioral and emotional impairment upon entering the program. These kids experience intense anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression, you name it. These kids are in the clinical ranges when they come into the program. Upon completion, almost 80 percent of them are in the normal range of the scale. We're very excited about this data. The improvement these children experience is observed by the parent, the child, and their teachers, and is noted in their behavior, their social skills, self-esteem, and scholastic ability.

Let me share just two short examples of how PALS has made a difference in the lives of these children. First, there is Danielle, a seven-year-old girl who witnessed abuse by her stepfather toward her mother, as well as verbal abuse directed toward her. This first picture (indicating) was drawn by Danielle in the second month of treatment. She created a pencil drawing -- black and white picture of herself doing homework. She talked about how she is too stupid to go to school. The picture clearly has her isolated. Her self-esteem when drawing this picture was quite low, as indicated by her verbalization that she was stupid. The second drawing was drawn at the end of treatment, after six months. She drew her connected to other children. She spoke of how she had made friends in the program and how she was happy that she graduated from something, which was the PALS program. Everybody goes through a little graduation ceremony at the end.

The second story: Josh is a four-year-old boy. Now, working with three- and four-year-olds in therapy is very challenging, because you can't get them to verbalize how they're feeling. He's a four-year-old boy who came into the world at the time his father's verbal, physical, and emotional abuse toward his mother was at its worst. As he got older, Josh was threatened and called names. In addition, he witnessed both his mother and his brothers being beaten up. He developed fear, would become upset, and cried often. During individual dance therapy, Josh worked toward mastering his fears. He worked on anger de-escalation and coping skills. He developed a simple tag game into a dance in which he expressed feelings of hurt, fear, and anger. He titled this dance the vampire dance. It employed patterns of approaching and retreating movement and various movements to symbolize bats, wings, and vampires. Josh created

many variations of the vampire dance. He related his dances to fears of monsters under his bed, but eventually expressed that he didn't feel so scared anymore. He often cheered for himself and seemed to feel a sense of pride and happiness when dancing.

I have many more stories I could tell, but in the interest of time, let me conclude by saying that the State of New Jersey began an initiative three years ago in the PALS program which is truly cutting edge. It is innovative, a model program for the State, and most importantly, it works. We have the documentation to show it.

We at Providence House strongly believe that to end the cycle of violence and to increase the chance that one day there will be a peace in all New Jersey homes, we must reach the children.

I feel incredibly proud and privileged to be a part of the PALS program and thank DYFS and the State of New Jersey for having the vision and the spirit to create this project. I strongly believe that PALS should be in every domestic violence program in the State of New Jersey.

Thank you.

If Paloma and I can answer any questions-- We have some brochures for you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Are you going to pass out the brochures?

MS. COLEMAN: Sure I can.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

Now, Dr. Jeffery's evaluation showed, I believe, if memory serves me correctly, a 60 percent success rate. Am I correct in that, Karen?

MS. BECKMEYER: Assemblywoman Heck, I believe it was slightly higher than that. As we continue to input new data, it appears that we're between 80 and 90 percent--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Really.

MS. BECKMEYER: --in terms of the children who were initially assessed at the clinical to borderline levels upon intake -- post-six-month services. That number of children -- about 80 to 90 percent of them are scoring back in the normal range.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Excellent.

Thank you, Karen.

There is a need for many of our programs. And when I heard the report given at the working group, I felt that we should move very rapidly towards the suggestion -- the recommendation that we immediately fund for regional programs.

You're saying, Jean, that there's a need for a lot of programs -- many programs.

MS. METZ: Absolutely. I believe it should be in all -- in every county.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And I know that working with the other -- even the shelters-- They have not been able to get money for their smaller programs to take care of the children who come into their lives, so to speak. So we're going to be looking at all of those things as we go along.

But I think, initially, and why I sponsored the bill, was to move this quickly so that we can see these four programs in the regions.

I will tell you that the gentleman who came this morning gave us some information, and I'll mention it. It says, "As proposed, requires that the programs be established in the northern, north central, south central, and southern regions of the state. The bill, however, does not define the county composition of the four regions. We recommend that the county composition of the regions, as well as the regions themselves, conform with the regional structure which DYFS presently uses." And then they give us a breakdown of those regions.

"Since DYFS is currently operating the PALS program in Burlington County, which is located in the DYFS southern region, we suggest that A-3348 authorize the creation of three rather than four programs. These new programs will be located in the northern, metropolitan, and central regions of the state and would thereby establish a solid program base in each of the DYFS four regions."

And then they've gone on to say that they further proposed -- this is in part, "that the bill provide the Department with the authority to award \$300,000 to each successful applicant for a total \$900,000." And they also request that we authorize the Department to utilize the remaining \$100,000 of the million to expand the program evaluation component with Dr. Jeffrey at Rowan University and that the evaluation component would then be expanded to cover the three new programs that we hope will be established.

"While the Department strongly supports the concept, it defers the issue of funding to the Department of the Treasury." I don't like deferring to the Department of the Treasury, do you?

Go ahead, Loretta.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: They also mention in here, if I read this correctly, that they would like three new programs, but they should be limited to the county in which they are established, not to service the region--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: --because, I guess, for obvious reasons they feel that's too big a--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Too broad.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: It's in the first paragraph of the second page.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

MS. METZ: Excuse me, may I respond to that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah.

MS. METZ: Just from our experience, the children come a minimum of two times a week. We have a driver who goes and picks them up and brings them to the program. In the southern region, for example-- We're in Burlington County. If this were to be a regionalized program, therefore opening it up to, say, Cape May County, it just would not be feasible for us to go and pick someone up two times a week -- two hours down, two hours back, two hours down. We're talking the whole day driving kids back and forth.

That's just one example.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I bring that up because -- I mean, it sounds appropriate, but then we are talking about this as going to be three new programs -- or four programs, if we count what's doing there -- and 17 more counties to go.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But I don't understand, and I'll ask you, Karen, why we say they conform with the regional structure, and then we're going into the county piece.

MS. BECKMEYER: Essentially--

HEARING REPORTER: Madam Chair, I hate to interrupt, but she won't be heard on the record.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, you have to come forward, please.

HEARING REPORTER: I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's okay. That's good.

HEARING REPORTER: There's a microphone here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Here, first chair, Karen, please.

MS. BECKMEYER: With the PALS program in the southern region, it's been our experience that the intensity and the length of the services that are provided for six months--

In the first year, we very quickly found that the demand for the services was much higher than we could actually accommodate -- that being that 40 children per year are currently served in the PALS program. They come in like a revolving admissions, however, as the groups finish, but we found the waiting list, in the first year, that basically closed admissions to the program. The Division had to add additional funding into the PALS program so that we could then eliminate part of that waiting list. Now, that was just located only in Burlington County. At the level that PALS is operating at now, the budget is just under \$400,000. They can accommodate 40 children per year.

To go regional--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Is there a waiting list down there?

MS. BECKMEYER: No. We were successful in eliminating that, and it has dwindled as the program has continued.

To go regional in scope of the services would require a very, very large facility with, I believe, a huge operating cost.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: So the suggestion that was made at the working group, before regional, really, is saying four counties within those regions. Is that what you're saying?

MS. BECKMEYER: I think what we were looking at was--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Pilot.

MS. BECKMEYER: Yes, I think to establish a solid program based in each of our four regions so that ideally, someday, we would be able to secure additional funding, hopefully, to implement it in each of the counties. At that point, we would have a solid operational base in each of our four regions who could assist with the replication in the other counties. And I think from a program development perspective, that's what we were looking at.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

When you read the bill as it was projected, which came from the information that was given to us at the working group, do these proposals seem correct -- I mean, appropriate?

MS. BECKMEYER: Indeed they do. We were very excited when we read the bill. We recognized immediately that, indeed, it was the PALS program, and we also recognized your commitment to make that happen.

The suggestions that the Department is offering are just that, suggestions. We would hope that-- It would make it easier for us to implement it and to roll it out. We feel that if we were to move forward with four programs at this point, we would end up having two agencies in the southern region, and that would be just disparate.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But when we have the other domestic violence units that have their own programs for programs connected to them that deal with children, are we going to now look at this as a guide after the pilot, not currently? You're not going to go into other grant areas, are you?

MS. BECKMEYER: No, we are looking at this as a guide. We have the data, the research, that shows empirically that what we have in Burlington County works very effectively. We have a very significant treatment effect. We would look to go with what we know works right now and move with the replication of the PALS.

In fact, for the past year or so, I have been working with the Providence House staff in creating a manual to assist in that replication effort, when that becomes a reality.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Go ahead.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I just want to be clear, and I'm not being adversarial. I probably agree with you, in fact. What you're talking about, if the sponsor accepts these amendments, is three new programs to be county-based--

MS. BECKMEYER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: --from whatever agencies might be putting in RFPs -- or that you would be putting out RFPs to existing

agencies. So you could-- You're saying that the Burlington County one, now, costs \$400,000. So we'd have a little more money to give to three new programs if we stay with this funding rather than creating four new -- or a fourth additional program. And hopefully, if I'm hearing you right, we have the pilot program. It works. That's Burlington County. So we now are going to establish three more county programs, and I say, again, if my arithmetic is right, with 17 to go.

MS. BECKMEYER: Correct.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: One piece that I would probably want to add to this, Karen, because I'm not finding it in here, and I don't think I specified-- I would really like to have the evaluation of the programs given to the Legislature for review at the conclusion--

MS. BECKMEYER: Perfect.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --of the programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: You have that in your bill, don't you?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm not sure if it's in here. I can't find it.

MS. BECKMEYER: It is in your bill, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is it there?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I think I read that. Yeah.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Then I'm missing it. I'm looking quickly, and I can't find it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I didn't read it in the bill. I read it in the bill comments.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

I just want to make sure it was there.

Go ahead, George.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Thank you, Chairwoman.

Your location in Burlington County is situated where?

MS. METZ: Delran.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And where is that?

MS. METZ: Delran, in Burlington County. It's 40 minutes from here.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Is it on Route 130?

MS. METZ: Right off of Route 130, on Chester Avenue.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And what type of transportation is available?

MS. METZ: We have two drivers that pick up the children through -- with minivans or vehicles that we have.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Did I hear \$400,000?

MS. METZ: Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Did I hear 40 students?

MS. BECKMEYER: Forty children.

MS. METZ: Forty children.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Am I correct in my math, \$10,000 per child?

MS. METZ: Yes, you are.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Respectfully, why not more children?
Why so much?

MS. METZ: Children ages three to ten need real specialized, individual attention. We have our groups broken down into three- and four-year-olds.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Could you use your microphone?

MS. METZ: I'm sorry.

The children -- three-, four-, five-year-olds -- you have to have just a few children at a time in a group setting. You just can't have a therapeutic program going on with 10 or 12 kids at a time, so they have to be very small groups. They have to get specialized, individual attention.

As I stated, they're severely traumatized. And so to give them this intensive treatment over the six-month period, unfortunately, is very costly, but the cost to the children's emotional well-being is--

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: How many people are employed?

MS. COLEMAN: It's 10 of us, including me.

MS. METZ: How many staff? I'm sorry, were you talking about the staff?

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Yes.

MS. METZ: There are 10.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: So that's one per every four children. Is that correct?

MS. COLEMAN: It's not really broken down like that.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: You said 10 people, 40 children. Is that correct?

MS. COLEMAN: Yes, but you're assuming that each one of these people are all working with the children. If I could tell you how the program is set up, that might help answer some questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: How many people are working with children? I'm real interested in this.

MS. COLEMAN: I have four staff, two full-time, two part-time therapists who work with the children. Each child gets access to two different therapists, because they have to have to have access to two different modalities.

In addition, I have two drivers that take the children back and forth, so that's another two individuals that are involved with the children.

I have two full-time case managers and a full-time therapist that are working with the custodial parent and plan all of the recreational activities for the children and then take them there. So they also have this interaction with the children, not as intensive as the therapist and the drivers do.

And then there's me that manages the entire thing.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Respectfully, Chair, I have continuing questions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Go right ahead.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: I'm having some difficulties on the fiscal accountability aspect. How many people work with how many children?

How many people work with how many children -- 40 children--

MS. COLEMAN: Six, directly.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: So there are only six people that work with 40 children. Is that correct?

MS. COLEMAN: Directly, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And how many people work, 10?

MS. COLEMAN: Including me, 10.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And this costs \$400,000?

MS. COLEMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And how does one qualify? Is it first come, first served?

MS. COLEMAN: For the program?

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Yes.

MS. COLEMAN: They have to be Providence House clients. So basically, anyone, be it DYFS, the police, the courts, and any other mental health services can offer a referral. The custodial parent goes through the Providence House regular intake process, and then they get to the PALS program.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: What is Providence House?

MS. COLEMAN: Providence House is a domestic program for Burlington County.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And where is that located?

MS. COLEMAN: In Delran.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: May I recommend, also, that you look at the last page of the brochure, just for informational purposes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Can I just follow up on his question--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Go right ahead.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: --because he raised some other issues?

Is it 40 children for six months, or 40 children for the year?

MS. COLEMAN: For the year.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So, in addition to the six who work directly in a clinical setting, I guess, you have two drivers, you said.

MS. METZ: That's correct.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So that's eight of the ten.

I'm sorry, it sounds like it's really--

MS. COLEMAN: That's okay. I have four therapists. They're all creative arts -- certified therapists that work with the children in clinical settings.

I have two drivers that transport the children. I have two case managers that, besides working with the custodial parent--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So that's eight people.

MS. COLEMAN: Right. They also plan the graduations for the kids, plan the trips for the kids, and go with them. And I have a therapist that works exclusively with the custodial parent.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So there are only two of the ten who don't work directly with children. That's you--

MS. COLEMAN: Exactly, myself and the custodial parent therapist.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Who works with the parents.

MS. COLEMAN: Who works with the parents exclusively.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So you're the only one who doesn't work directly with--

MS. COLEMAN: I do not direct service unless it's absolutely necessary.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I just wanted to clarify.

MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Madam Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: I just want to say that this is an excellent program, Chairwoman.

I have known some youngsters. I didn't know at the time that they were abused. But when I see them now as adults with tremendous potential for doing so much for the community -- and they're really stifled because they never had help, and they held this all in, and they never really were that involved as children. And we can do so much now. It's time.

So I'm just delighted with this program. And thank you for putting the bill up.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

I did want to-- I think that looking at every one of our programs that we have that are successful, and some of them that aren't successful-- And we have to evaluate them, but I don't think we can do that strictly on the basis of how much per child, but at the success rate. It's very important.

When I was at the crime victims summit last week, we spoke in terms of educating a child costs between \$7500 to \$10,000, depending on the school district. But when we look at the Corrections Department, we're talking about between \$25,000 and \$40,000 per inmate.

Many of these people who end up in corrections have had very difficult lives. I've been to the juvenile center, correction centers, and seen them at 12 to 16, 17, going back after they serve their time into the same situation from whence they came -- back into a drug addicted family and a bad street environment.

I think that we have to base our vision on making certain that we spend our money not only for rehabilitation, but in the early stages of young people who had been abused, who have been hurt by people who were supposed to protect them, and make a difference at those early ages.

If, indeed, we're getting an 85 percent success rate, I think that's almost a miracle in today's society, because I think, again, you are treating not only the children, but you're looking at a balance with the custodial parent and trying to make a change in that person's life.

We see a lot of young people -- young parents in society who have not been given the opportunity to learn how to parent. We're learning that in even the areas where we have behavioral problems in children, and I can go into many programs -- the American Red Cross has a 12-week parenting course so that they can deal with behavioral problems, as well as the school system and the team effort that's going on in the school -- that the parents make a change, as well. So it's a whole support system that we need.

And I don't think there's any program out there that we shouldn't support, if it's doing its job correctly. It is expensive, but if we do have a success rate where those 40 are not coming back -- and we talked about this at graduations of children in group homes, who have stayed in there for almost all of their lifetime saying that they want help early on. And this seems as if this is a step in the right direction, as are some of the programs here today -- steps in the right direction. They're not totally going to solve the problems of the world, but each step that we take in a positive way will help to make the recidivism rate change.

We've had children in DYFS who keep coming back and forth. That's why we move towards the termination of parental rights, to give the children to lead a successful, healthy life. We haven't had that in the past. We're beginning to see that happen with these children.

And, George, maybe you remember when we held that hearing all the way back -- again, the Women's Advisory Council -- in your neck of the woods, when we talked about helping children early on.

And we had a woman come up who was 44 years old and said that she had been through the entire -- run the entire gamut from getting help as a juvenile, then going into the Juvenile Justice Division and then became a drug addict, became a criminal.

And somewhere, at the age of 40, who said there was hope for her? And she changed and turned her life around, because someone believed in her, someone gave her the opportunity, gave her that one-on-one. Well, one-on-one, in a professional experience, is expensive. So we have to continue to grow with society and society's needs. That's why--

We should go down to your area again, because they don't think we know where that area is.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: You're always welcome.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Always welcome.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But I think we'll start moving our meetings around a little bit to get that--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Make them closer to where we are.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, yeah, that would be good.

MS. COLEMAN: May I add something, quickly?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes, Paloma.

MS. COLEMAN: One of the reasons why PALS works so well is because we function as a team. So even though it might be my drama therapist who is in charge of one particular child, no decision is made about that person's treatment unless all 10 of us are in agreement. So that's one reason why it functions so well.

The other part of it is, there is a very, very high burnout rate with working with children who have been this traumatized. If you think about the statistics, our kids are in the top 2 percent of the population. There's 98 percent of children that are working better than ours. So, if we try to function as a team, and I burn out my staff because I keep on giving them too many clients, I am defeating the purpose of PALS.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah.

MS. COLEMAN: So it's a very delicate balance between serving more children -- but at the same time making sure that my staff can handle the load and work positively with the children instead of being so depleted that they can't give the kids what they need.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

MS. COLEMAN: Somebody just passed us a piece of paper that -- if you look at the numbers differently-- If each one of our children gets four hours of intervention, which they get a minimum of that a week, then the program only costs \$48 per hour, as opposed to \$10,000 per child. That might change the perspective a little bit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Did you hear that, George?

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Uh-huh.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

Oh, by the way, I just remember that one young lady, if you recall, George -- it just came back to me -- that her mother had six children, all by different fathers. And every time she had a child, she put that child away into the system. And every child thought she or he was an only child until this woman investigated and then found out she wasn't the bad one -- that they were all in similar circumstances. They thought they were alone and unwanted and weren't good enough to stay in a family. Can you imagine? And each one abused by the male who came into the mother's life.

Terrible. Terrible.

Go ahead--

But that's why these programs are so important. I get chills when I think about this woman. She had me in tears. But she felt relieved that she wasn't the bad seed.

But that's what you're changing, you're changing lives. It's not an easy thing to do. All of us in this room have a lot of work to do. And certainly, we in the State have to try to find that money to get the work done, and I think all of these programs are important.

MS. BECKMEYER: I'd like to offer you just one quote from Dr. Linda Jeffrey. To me, it sort of like sums it all up.

She says that ,“With the PALS program, fatalistic resignation is no longer necessary, that there is hope for our children.”

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Very good.

MS. BECKMEYER: And I'll leave you with that quote.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

MS. METZ: Thank you.

MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm going to ask that--

Now, I know that Barbara and Max is the battered women's -- the shelters--

I'm going to go to Sue Kozel, Anna Diaz-White.

Do you all want to come up together or like in half and half? Whatever you decide is fine with me.

S U E K O Z E L: Thank you so much, Chairwoman.

I'm going to pass out a packet.

If Anna could come sit with me right now--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

MS. KOZEL: We have some extra packets for the other members, Madam Chairwoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Good.

MS. KOZEL: And this was donated; we didn't pay for this.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I know, you told me.

MS. KOZEL: We just need to say we're not a wealthy agency.

Assemblywoman Heck, thank you so much for setting forth another proactive agenda to promote the needs of women and children, and in particular, crime victims. I look at you, personally, as a mentor. It's nice to be in front of old friends sitting around the table here today.

The Women's Center of Monmouth County is very honored to describe, in brief testimony today, our nationally recognized, award winning program for children, Amanda's Easel.

Some of you may or may not know that I was a child survivor of domestic violence. So for me, being involved in the creation of Amanda's Easel with Senator Bennett and the Friends of Amanda Foundation and Anna Diaz-White was an extraordinary moment.

Joined by Karen Wengert and Bill Thomas, our collaborative partners, Amanda's Easel has transformed the lives of 392 children and 214 nonoffending parents since its founding in 1997 and as of March 30, 2001.

Because of your bipartisan committee, Assemblywoman, women's and children's needs have always been addressed, and we're extraordinarily grateful.

Today, you will hear briefly from four individuals who will describe the national and local impact our DYFS-supported program has had. And you have in your packages-- And I just want to take a minute to just flash what we have here. You have, in your packages, a letter from Senator John O. Bennett, Senate Majority Leader, asking that you support the amendments we're proposing today.

You have all of our written testimony. You have a letter to the Chairwoman from the Board of the Women's Center of Monmouth County supporting our amendments, a letter from the Friends of Amanda Foundation supporting amendments. And Cindi Westendorf, our extraordinary art therapist, will walk you through some artwork that's to the left in your packet a little bit later.

We know that the Advisory Council on Women will not be voting formally on the amendments today. However, we respect the Chair and the bill's sponsor so much we wanted to bring them to your attention today. We, like you, support and believe in art therapy.

We thank you, Rose, for your advocacy.

Thank you for also sponsoring the \$50,000 for each emergency shelter through A-3413 and the \$1.1 million in grants. We need that money. We're prepared to talk about that, too.

And I have the honor of introducing Anna Diaz-White, the Executive Director of the Women's Center. Anna is very modest, so I'll boast. She won a national award -- the 1998 United States Domestic Violence Coalition's Sunshine Peace Award for domestic violence administration. That's,

I think, our fifth award that our program has won, counting all the other art therapy awards recently.

Anna will outline the amendments we're seeking, and then I'll introduce Karen Wengert.

Anna.

ANNA M. DIAZ - WHITE: Thanks, Sue.

Thank you, Assemblywoman Heck and committee members, for your leadership in advocating for responsible crime victims' rights policies to benefit women and children fleeing family violence.

On behalf of our board of trustees, let me personally thank you for introducing legislation to provide an additional \$50,000 in funding for emergency shelters which house our women and children, A-3413. And I'll testify later in support of that bill, as well. As we have to do more and more with less funding, we appreciate your advocacy and leadership to help us continue to provide quality services.

Today, we are asking for your consideration of amendments that we hope will further enhance your efforts to promote the best of art and related therapies for children throughout New Jersey.

Assemblywoman Heck, you asked us to secure the opinion of Senator Bennett, the initial conceptualizer of Amanda's Easel, for his opinion on amendments.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I have to clarify that. When I said that to Sue-- When I talked to Sue, I think she misunderstood what I said.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, okay. Please correct me. I'm sorry, Rose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's okay. Because I know that he sponsored a bill for \$300,000 for Amanda's Easel, didn't he?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Not that we're aware of.

MS. KOZEL: Not for \$300,000.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: What was it?

MS. KOZEL: It went from \$50,000 to \$75,000 to \$100,000 to \$125,000, and hopefully another \$125,000 will--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But total.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, yeah, total. Just like, I guess, PALS had hundreds of thousands.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah, because John and I spoke about it just the other day.

MS. KOZEL: Okay. Very good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And I told him how pleased I was--

MS. KOZEL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --about that, but that this bill was more or less a pilot -- again, a continuation of a pilot program, not exclusionary, but to move this particular pilot program into other regions. And it came from the recommendation that was made at a domestic violence working group--

MS. KOZEL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --meeting -- not exclusionary, but one that would just focus on this particular program. And I asked him to continue to amend his moves to support Amanda's Easel.

I wasn't clear to you.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, no, that's all right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But he understood me, because it is an excellent program. I support it myself.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, no, we know.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But, again, that's what I had asked him to do, to continue those efforts, with my support, as well.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

MS. KOZEL: I know that the letters that he sent, and will continue to send, will support the amendments we're proposing, and Anna will outline the amendments, because we're concerned if whether or not we'll ever be eligible for funding under this bill.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

And I did tell a couple of other people who spoke with me about their children's programs that are connected to the shelters and that after we move -- and we intend to move these and expect that they will be accepted -- that we will be looking towards other bills that will support children's programs in conjunction with the shelters.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It's not exclusionary, it's just another step, just so you know.

MS. KOZEL: That's wonderful, Rose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. Thank you.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Thank you, Assemblywoman.

Like you, we want to do what's best for children that overcome the trauma of domestic violence. And like you, we are here to protect a program

that has changed the lives of 392 children and 214 parents since our inception and through March 30, 2001. And we're going to have Cindi Westendorf, the Program Coordinator--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Good.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: --speak about the program shortly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Where do you get your funding from now?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: \$125,000 is a special appropriation that Senator Bennett has worked for. And we also support it with fund-raising of about \$50,000.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So your program costs \$175,000.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: \$175,000.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And how many children do you--

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: We serve-- In this fiscal year, there's a chart-- I'll give you the figure that's freshest in my mind. In our last fiscal year -- full year, we served 101 children and 66 parents.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And has your program been evaluated in the same manner as--

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: We didn't receive study funding. We do conduct our own internal evaluation, and we use various tools, and Cindi will be speaking to you about those tools and how we evaluate the program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: The \$125,000 from Senator Bennett's bill, is that a yearly appropriation, or was that a one-year appropriation?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: We received that in the current State fiscal year, and we're hoping to receive it in the coming fiscal year. The program was initiated with a \$50,000 special appropriation.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It went -- it gradually -- it graduated each year.

MS. KOZEL: And we've been told by Senator Bennett that we may not necessarily have to count on funding every year for this -- that he had -- his vision of us seeking a way to institutionalize the program. So that's why we applauded your bill, Rose--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's right.

MS. KOZEL: --because we thought that it would provide for PALS-like -- or independently -- quality programs to be considered. We didn't understand it as only a PALS bill.

But Anna was going to explain that, because she is our program brains.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: I'll continue.

The first amendment that we're suggesting is that you please list by name the Women's Center of Monmouth County, Amanda's Easel, and the PALS program as two outstanding models of art and related therapies for funding consideration under A-3348.

The Amanda's Easel program has won national recognition and honors for our unique collaboration in helping children. Given the way the bill

is written, and the statement of our DYFS staff person earlier, that only PALS models will be considered for funding -- that's why we're asking for this amendment. At this time, no program model is named in the legislation. And we believe the Legislature and the public should know what models are to be followed.

The second amendment -- and of course this will -- obviously we defer to you in everything -- was to create five, not four, centers and to provide funding of \$1.25 million, and not \$1 million, to support operations.

The reason for this is, Burlington County's Providence House implemented the PALS program and study. Burlington County's Providence House also operates Ocean County's Providence House program. Ocean County and Monmouth County are in the same DYFS region. We believe the Amanda's Easel program will not be able to compete against the program that implemented the PALS program and study. And therefore, we would not be eligible for funding for that reason either.

In my written testimony, I ask about clarification -- whether there's going to be four regional centers or-- And that was clarified earlier. I don't know that I need to discuss that.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns. I know you can understand how, given the structure of the bill, we're very concerned that our program will be adversely affected.

We look forward to working with you and DYFS to clarify language so the best programs in the State can be eligible for funding based on the appropriate therapy models.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: In reality, I do not think that you would be adversely impacted. This is an additional program with an additional-

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Assemblywoman, my concern is that because DYFS, in my conversation with Karen Beckmeyer and also in her testimony earlier, has suggested that only the PALS model would be replicated.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: In this bill.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Only the PALS model is being promoted as-- In fact, she mentioned the statewide model for children's therapies for children. It entirely ignores other unique programming that's going on in our state, such as Amanda's Easel. I'm not familiar with other programs that my colleagues run. There may be incredibly unique programs, such as Amanda's Easel. Some might be more financially--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Secure, viable.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: --secure, viable. Some have unique qualities. For example, our program-- We operate our program at five sites throughout our county so that transportation is less of an issue. Monmouth County is one of the largest counties in the state, both geographically and also in terms of number of residents -- so that we operate out of a church in Asbury Park, a church in Red Bank, out of our shelter, out of a Howell Youth and Family Services in Howell, out of an office in Howell. And what that allows us to do is really kind of spread sites out so that families have--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I still think that with Senator Bennett's support, and continued support, which you told me was there, and I

encouraged, that there's going to be no problem. There are more than enough children who need help to cover all of these programs.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Oh, I think there's no question.

My suggestion and concern is that because DYFS is promoting PALS as the only model that can be funded, that in the future, that will eliminate the ability--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I don't think they're saying the only program that can be funded.

Are you saying that, Karen?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: That is what I heard.

MS. BECKMEYER: No, I'm not, Assemblywoman. What we are saying, however, is that it is clear to us that this bill--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, you want to come forward, because it's not getting recorded.

You can tell us why.

MS. BECKMEYER: What we are saying is that this bill clearly is looking towards the PALS program. And we know the PALS program. It's been our newest domestic violence initiative. We have dumped in resources to secure an evaluation component that is researched-based.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is that dumped in -- technical term?

MS. BECKMEYER: Yeah, that's technical. (laughter)

But that--

It was very unusual for the Division to fund a research-based evaluation component. We knew, however, that it was no longer -- that anecdotal information was no longer the way to go in terms of program

development, particularly when we were dealing with our youngest population, and perhaps, our most vulnerable.

So we decided to move forward and do the evaluation piece. And we took it very seriously, and we contract with Rowan University's psychology department.

And in your discussions with Dr. Jeffrey, I think it's clear that the evaluation component has spun off a lot of research that has made a tremendous difference in the field of domestic violence and has forever changed the way we view domestic violence programming, particularly as it applies to children.

Now, with that, we have to go with what we know right now. And we know that the PALS program works.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But this is not being done to preclude any other program--

MS. BECKMEYER: Absolutely not.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --or its growth.

MS. BECKMEYER: Absolutely not. And the Women's Center of Monmouth County will be more than welcome and eligible to submit a proposal in response to any RFP that we would issue.

We support the Amanda's Easel program. We are very pleased that it is part of our DYFS domestic violence program network. And this would in no way serve as a detriment to that agency or in any way disregard or disrespect the wonderful work that has been done there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Good.

George.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: How does one differentiate having an RFP project -- process that would enable this wonderful center to participate in their region, but simultaneously in your proposal, where you're making a recommendation for the southern seven -- that it would preclude all the six other counties from participating in our RFP program?

MS. BECKMEYER: The Women's Center of Monmouth County is located in the DYFS central region. If we were able to negotiate and have the authority to issue an RFP in each of the other three regions -- that would be the northern, the metropolitan, and the central region -- the Women's Center would be able to submit a proposal. We don't see Amanda's Easel as being too far afield of the PALS program. We see it as, basically, including one component of PALS.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: Maybe, respectfully, you could address my question.

Why should we have an RFP program for three regions, but for the southern seven, we should not have an RFP program?

MS. BECKMEYER: Because we have the PALS program currently operating in the DYFS southern region.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: And how do you decided to preclude any and others from participating in RFPs?

MS. BECKMEYER: I think what we were looking for was to establish a pilot program in each of our four regions. This would give us a solid base.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: I understand the answers. I don't subscribe to the approach.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Go ahead.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: If I understand you correctly, you are worried that you will -- if you don't apply for this RFP if it goes out into the central region, I guess, where Monmouth County is located, and you keep your Amanda's Easel program running, you will lose the other funding that you get.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Amanda's Easel is not fundable under this bill, and that's been made very plain.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: But you already have funding.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Currently.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Right.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: But that's certainly not--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But you also have had it.

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: We've had it for a few years, as had the PALS in Burlington County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, no, I understand.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: What I just want-- I want to see if you'll put on the record what your real concern is -- that since you can't, with the way you understand the bill, you could not apply -- you could not answer an RFP--

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Correct.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: --for a PALS program. But what does that mean in terms of the Amanda's Easel program? Why can't it continue to operate with the existing funding that it has?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: Amanda's Easel can likely continue to operate with the existing funds. My concern is that when this bill and DYFS effectively promotes only one model, that it does -- it will, in time, preclude Amanda's Easel and other innovations throughout the state from being developed. That's my first concern.

My second concern is that because Ocean County is operated by the same organization that runs the Burlington County pilot, that it will be difficult for us, even if we chose to apply for the RFP in the central region-- I think it would be difficult for us to compete against Ocean County, when Ocean County is basically the same agency that's running the pilot now.

We're not arguing that PALS is not a good program. We're saying that Amanda's Easel is also a good program. And while it didn't receive study funding, we have done our own internal evaluation, not anecdotal evidence, but an internal evaluation using tools to oversee what's being done, both with the children and the parents. And these, too, point to success in terms of outcomes for these children.

Amanda's Easel is less intensive and less expensive, but no less effective. When we drove down here today, we drove down in a Prism, which is a pretty inexpensive little vehicle. We could have driven down in a Lexus. It's a much more expensive vehicle and has a lot more doodads. Nevertheless, both vehicles got us here.

I know that's a silly analogy.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, it's not. But do you know what's creeping into all of this? You're actually giving the impression that you're worrying that PALS is going to move your program out. I don't visualize

it that way, because Bergen County has some viable programs, as well, that I want to see supported. But that does not preclude my support of this particular program to expand.

I don't think when John Bennett put your finance appropriation through, as a bill-- It was my understanding it was a bill.

MS. KOZEL: No, it wasn't a bill--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: How did he do it?

MS. KOZEL: --it was a rider as part of the budget. Every year, we have it as a--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: So it was a line item in the budget.

MS. KOZEL: --Christmas tree item as part of the budget.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. So it was a line item in the budget.

MS. KOZEL: Yes, there was never legislation.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No one else had an opportunity to move in that direction.

MS. KOZEL: No, as others have done for domestic violence programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, no, I know that. I'm not saying that. You see, you're making it confrontational. I don't want it to be.

MS. KOZEL: Oh, no, no, no, no. I understand, Rose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Because what I'm saying is, we're also looking for Smile program in Bergen County connected to the shelter -- Shelter Our Sisters. And as I said, this has nothing to do with my not seeking

funds -- or our not seeking funds for that program, because every program-- There is a need for every program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I apologize, because this was probably discussed in the beginning, so I think I'm missing one linkage here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Not necessarily.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I understand what these folks are getting at. They're trying to move their program from having to go through this every year to, as they put it, being a more institutionalized part of some larger scheme.

But what I didn't get was the Department of Human Services-- This bill doesn't mention a particular model, as you call it, or program. But are you saying that somewhere, you have said that this PALS is the model that this bill will follow, in a sense. I'm trying to see the linkage between this and the bill. That's what I'm missing here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Let me add, because it was actually my bill, because it came out of a report -- one of the reports given at the working group on domestic violence, of which I am a member--

I was so impressed with the evaluation done by Rowan University and its success rate. And I thought it was 60 percent, but Karen corrected me, its was 85 percent or better.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And I was impressed. And I said,

“Well, we should have a few more of these, not to the exclusion of everybody else,” because I made that very clear when I was discussing with individuals that I want to see other programs move.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Will the funding in 3348 go for PALS programs?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes, they will.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: It will.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: So that--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: And the goal--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --again, this pilot program into three other areas. Today we received this paper from -- just before you walked in, from Human Services, outlining some of their recommendations that we'll look at -- I will look at.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: But the goal of these folks up here is to try to see if there's a way they can be part of this.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And again, I empathize, but not to the point where it's going to hurt the movement on these three pieces.

I still would like -- and as I spoke to John the other day -- I would like to see a bill. And that's why I said amendment, Sue. I thought it was a bill. And John said he's very happy to do that. So we will work in that regard, as well, because there's such a need out there that the more we can focus attention of this Legislature on the need and get those dollars, the better off our children will be in the future.

I don't really-- That's one of the reasons why I could not do what I did with the bill for the shelters saying \$2.2 million -- \$50,000 for each of the

22 shelters, plus another million in grants that they would put together so that everybody could access more as they showed a need. I think that's very important to our shelters. Each of our shelters are in dire need, and that's why I think the \$50,000 plus the million-- I'm hoping, because -- even some of the women had said to me, "Are you kidding me? Do you think it's going to happen?" I said, "Well, if you don't try, it's not going to move." I have to put bills in to get it going.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I have full confidence in you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: You're quite welcome.

MS. KOZEL: Rose, money, money, money.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's right. (laughter)

But we get focused. We focus our attention on these things--

MS. KOZEL: That was our fear here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --but not to the exclusion of getting more money, and we will.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Can I just ask one other question?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: You said you have done an evaluation of the--

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: We've done an internal evaluation of our program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Have you shared that with the Department?

MS. DIAZ-WHITE: It's shared with DYFS in an annual report that we publish annually.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Do you oversee that program?

MS. BECKMEYER: I do not oversee the Amanda's Easel program. I, however, am connected with the Women's Center of Monmouth County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: One of the things that was brought to my attention -- also that existing programs have to be looked at again -- the ones that have existed over the years, and no oversight is given.

We'll talk about that later. But it was brought to my attention. And I said, "Well, we should be looking at--" I shouldn't say no -- limited oversight and reports are given on those pilot programs. And perhaps within the bill structure originally -- or the Christmas tree item -- it was never noted that you should have written reports on their movement and have the money as used to the best of all possible -- for the best of all possible reasons.

Again, we have so many things going on.

Marion, you have worked on these issues, too, over the years, and George. All of us are interested.

Any other questions on this, George, Loretta, Linda?

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: No, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: No.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Do you want to make any other--

MS. KOZEL: Yes, I think we have Karen Wengert--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --which is good.

MS. KOZEL: --who wants to--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, I'm not precluding that. I meant of the both of you.

MS. KOZEL: No, no, no, no.

Thank you, Anna.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

Do you want to stay there, Sue, with the other members?

MS. KOZEL: Oh, yes. Would you mind? Is that okay?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Not at all. Just move a chair up.

MS. KOZEL: Come on up.

We're so fortunate to have with us--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Bill Thomas.

Bill, are you coming forward?

MS. KOZEL: Yes, Bill, why don't you bring a chair and sit next to Karen here?

And then we have one last one. We apologize--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No problem.

MS. KOZEL: We're so fortunate to have the Friends of Amanda Foundation, and in particular, its founder, Karen Wengert, as our collaborator.

Karen, too, has received from the United States Department of Justice, I think, the only award in New Jersey's history -- the 1998 Crime Victims' Rights Service Award for her work on behalf of Amanda's Easel and on behalf of crime victims. She also won, as did the Women's Center and Amanda's Easel, the only art therapy award, I believe, issued by the National Art Therapy Association. So we are, really, some of the best in the country.

Karen brings another special funding and programmatic voice to Amanda's Easel. Senator Bennett has worked closely with Karen and Bill.

Karen, please make a statement.

KAREN WENGERT: Good morning.

Assemblywoman Heck, I am proud to be here with you today, because you helped support the Amanda Act many years ago. I remember when you came to Manalapan and championed bills to help protect children. You are a true advocate for the families of murder victims, and I will always remember your kindness and support.

My name is Karen Wengert. I am the Founder of the Friends of Amanda Foundation and Amanda's Easel. As I look around the room, I've seen many of you before when I testified about the No Early Release Act, Joan's Law, and other very important bills.

I need your help. Our Amanda's Easel program may be excluded from funding and future funding because of the way A-3348 has been worded. I sent a letter to Senator John Bennett, in addition to you, Assemblywoman, explaining my concerns. As you know, Senator Bennett supports our amendments to open up the models to be used for funding to include Amanda's Easel.

Senator Bennett also supports our efforts to make certain that Ocean, Monmouth, and Burlington counties are not in the same designated region. It would be like having the World Series champions compete against each other for the same funding. Doesn't it make better sense to spread the best examples of art therapy programming throughout all the DYFS regions? In our case, we ask that Amanda's Easel be named along with the PALS study in the

bill as an outstanding provider of art therapy. Additionally, we would like to see a fifth regional center created with additional funding so our program can be assured.

Amanda's Easel has been operating for five years -- two national awards in five years. And I just learned that Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco just received a national award from the New Jersey Art Therapy Association for his support of art therapy, including Amanda's Easel. We have a winner that helps children smile, parents become better parents, and families laugh again.

Please change A-3348 so we can be eligible for funding in a fair and equitable manner. Please acknowledge our work and leadership in the art therapy field. Please help us to continue to help other children overcome domestic violence.

I have included a pin of our Amanda's Easel program for each of you, and my sister-in-law is going to give them out. In case you're unfamiliar with the symbolism, this is my daughter Amanda's self-portrait. She created this just six months before she was killed.

Please know I appreciate all your assistance.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Any questions for Karen?

George.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: First of all, a comment.

Congratulations.

MS. WENGERT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GEIST: I've never met you before. It's been a pleasure. And I have to say to all of you, as advocates of Amanda's Easel, I'm impressed. You certainly have a solid supporter in the future Senate President.

I look forward to learning more about you. I, obviously, through my questions, have raised questions about why not. I don't subscribe to this current proposal from DYFS to preclude you. I think you should be welcome to participate.

I like your accessibility. I like the testimony about your being available to provide services to more children. I like that. I don't necessarily know the best formula to recognize the best. You certainly have impressed me. I'm saying this on the record, because I don't necessarily know whether there's any objective criteria to evaluate the best and the brightest. I'm impressed. And I look forward to learning more about how we can perhaps expand this type of program statewide.

MS. WENGERT: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Questions.

Go ahead, Marion.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: I just want to welcome you. We have met before. And it's good to have you here. And we certainly, all of us, are supportive of Amanda's Easel.

Thank you.

MS. KOZEL: What would we do without Bill Thomas, the Founder of the Friends of Amanda association with his daughter. Bill has been a staunch advocate of Amanda's Easel from the first day it started.

I remember when Bill said, in Karen's kitchen, this is going to help the kids. It's the right thing to do.

Bill just wants to speak ever so briefly and say thank you for today's hearing, Rose, to help the children through art therapy.

WILLIAM H. THOMAS: I don't know whether it will be very brief.

I have a script. I am going to read part of it, and I'm going to add to it. Rose knows I have to do that.

First of all, I'm proud to be here. I'm proud to be able to speak here.

Assemblywoman Heck, the first thing I want to do is thank you. You're a champion for victims. You've done great things all across the state. You've helped us, and I certainly appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Can I interject? I will continue to do that.

MR. THOMAS: I know that. I thank you. That's why I'm here. You've given outstanding support to crime victims, and I want to express my thanks for myself and my family.

But today, I'm here to support Amanda's Easel and the Women's Center of Monmouth County and Senator John Bennett for all of the work in art therapy to help New Jersey's children that are surviving domestic violence.

We started this. It was unheard of, except in Monmouth County, where they had an art therapist that introduced us to it. I know it works, because it worked with my daughter, it worked with my granddaughters, and it worked with the kids in the neighborhood. So the program does work.

The Women's Center of Monmouth County has been excellent. They put this program together, and they made it go. We have helped New Jersey's children. And my thought was, we were going to help them all across the state. But I've been held back, because we want to do it right when we go. I wanted to go in Ocean County a long time ago. And I have the support in Ocean County to do it. I have the funding in Ocean County to do it.

And I also support Providence House. When they had financial problems a couple of years ago, the Friends of Amanda Foundation stepped forward, and we made a good donation to keep them going. And I do support everything you do. Believe me.

Amanda's Easel, with us, is a labor of love. And it's gained national recognition. I was privileged to go to Washington one day with my daughter and some of the other people here and accept a national award for what we have done. And we started with \$50,000. And we've treated 300 and some children and parents out of Monmouth County.

And I want to go someplace else. And some people wish I would. (laughter) I'm asking you to support the changes in this bill so that we may be included within the bill so that we can do something. We've proven that we've got a program. We've done it with more children, more parents. And I'm not knocking anything that Rowan college did. Studies are good. Studies produce what you want.

We've not only made changes in the lives of children, but we've made changes all around. Now I'm talking about the Friends of Amanda Foundation. I've worked for seven years since the death of my granddaughter

to change things. I've got prisoners working. I've got prisoners helping Human Services. They're rebuilding their institutions.

All labor is donated. We're putting them back together so that they look like they should. It costs Human Services absolutely nothing except for materials. And it gives the people in our corrections system that are nonviolent and ready to get out something to do so that they can look at something that they can say, "I did this." It teaches them, and that's what we're doing. And I want to go forward with everything we're doing. And I hope that I can.

But I want to thank you.

I've got another note here somewhere. I don't want to miss it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'll just add to the fact that the work that DOC is doing is really commendable, and they have been doing it for a lot of years, and we do it in our counties, as well as our state. And people who need help should really avail themselves of that service. I think the community action program that has been expanded in recent years is commendable. We don't see too much publicity in that regard. But it is-- It is really--

I know you're working on it.

It is really commendable, because a lot of those young people have an opportunity now to enter a good working field where they can get paid a decent living wage and have the experience to back them up. So there is-- That is also a very good additional help to society by making people ready to enter the work field again.

But thank you for that, too.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

I just want to close with another statement.

We just ask that you make some changes in the bill so that we may be not only included, but help lead this thing. You've always promoted things that help us, Rose. I said, Rose, and I mean it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's fine.

MR. THOMAS: I thank you.

Amanda's Easel is a program that works. It's a program of love. It was done and created by people that were volunteers. And when something works, we don't change it, we build on it and promote it. And I thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Any questions for Bill?

Go ahead, Linda.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I have to say I'm still, based on the things that I've heard here today, I'm slightly concerned about some of the concerns that they've expressed. One of the things that I like about a program like this-- I know that it did grow out of a personal tragedy. And sometimes that leads to the most commitment. So clearly, a group like this is always going to be on the forefront.

And I'm wondering if there could be a problem that the other group that would become part of 3348 would somehow overtake this whole art therapy field and the whole program, maybe overshadowing their program in some way, unless there's a way to institutionalize their funding. Maybe that's something we can work on, as well. Maybe it doesn't have to be this bill, but I would certainly like to see attention paid to keeping this program on the forefront, as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's what I mentioned at the beginning, having spoken to John.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Yes, and I think that's a great idea.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Also, again, I think this is an outstanding program--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Oh, I know. Everybody feels that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --unique unto itself and should not be pushed aside. Absolutely. And that's why I spoke to John -- to Senator Bennett, because--

Now, let me say this, so you get the full picture and the full impact. One of the reasons I am not making those kinds of amendments is because as you're sitting here and telling us about all the good things you've done and all the wonderful awards you've won, which I've always been not only impressed with, but I admire the commitment of the family in expanding all of the work that you do-- We will have another 50 to 100 people coming in to put changes on the change. I don't want to see that happen, because then none of us, not one of us, will get anything out of it. Believe me, I've seen it happen before.

I do feel that this bill is important. This bill is something I wanted to see happen. But not to the exclusion of your -- of Amanda's Easel.

And Monmouth County, I commend you. You've done an outstanding job. You are an example not only on this level, but with the domestic violence work that you do in helping others -- helping people.

So I have no qualms about, again, not taking away the leadership of Senator Bennett with Amanda's Easel, but we work in conjunction with him

as we move ahead to put a stable source of funding and recognition for Amanda's Easel and your domestic violence program, as well.

So feel comforted in that that you're not going to be excluded, per se. You may not be in this particular bill, but we will put something together as we move along. And none of this--

Karen, I don't think it's the intention of DYFS to exclude anybody--

MS. BECKMEYER: Not at all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --from this.

So we will work on a way of keeping it open as we move along. But in this particular instance, to add the three other areas-- We'll talk about that. I'm not accepting this -- that all the amendments that were given to me today, even by Human Services, at face value, because I have to look at it and dissect it.

But would you relate that to Human Services, please, because it's all--

All of these hearings are important, because it's with input that we make things better and not hurt anyone as we move along, because that's not our intention to do that, ever.

MS. KOZEL: Can we put--

Assemblywoman, can there be clarification inserted in the bill's statement that indicates that no programs are to be excluded, that this is not a PALS-only funded program?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I told you I'm not going to do anything with any of the amendments.

MS. KOZEL: Even the fact that we cannot compete against Ocean County for consideration, because they are the program that have it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, no. What I'm saying is, I'm not answering that question, per se, as I'm not answering Human Services yet. I have to look at it and measure it.

MS. KOZEL: Okay. We appreciate consideration.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: We'll look at it. Absolutely. Absolutely.

But again, we'll move in that direction--

MS. KOZEL: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --of keeping everything open.

MS. KOZEL: No, that's marvelous, Assemblywoman, because we're prepared to come to all the committee hearings on this bill to say these things.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I know that. I know that. And I'm prepared to be there, as well.

MS. KOZEL: I know. I can't wait to see you again.

Our last person, because we know the time is running out, and we apologize--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Time is not running out, because we have to hear the shelters.

MS. KOZEL: --is Cindi Westendorf, if she can join us. She is our certified art therapist, who's coordinating the program. She is the backbone of our great program, as licensed staff. Cindi brings passion and professionalism.

And, Madam Chairwoman, I'm going to leave with you a detailed report by Cindi of her program findings, since you asked for evaluative comments.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah.

MS. KOZEL: Cindi is responsible for innovative programming, including the hiring of one of two African-American art therapists in the State of New Jersey to provide culturally sensitive and diverse art therapy. So we have a strong women of color component.

Accountability stops with her. And even though our program was not funded, as was the other, to collect accountability measures under Cindi's leadership -- she has the number. She's going to describe that for you, as well as the photos that are in your packet.

CYNTHIA WESTENDORF: Thank you, Sue.

Thank you, Assemblywoman Heck.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You're very welcome.

MS. WESTENDORF: I'm very pleased to be here and hear all the support for all of us, because first and foremost, I strongly agree that there's plenty of children that can use the intervention, and we're able to help them every day.

As you heard, Amanda's Easel is an established art therapy program entering its fifth year this summer. We are staffed by four master's level, licensed, professional counselors and registered art therapists. We also have a clinical psychologist that does the supervision for the program with us.

Individual, group, and family art therapy sessions incorporate culturally relevant activities for diverse populations. I think you heard Anna say

that we run nine groups per week in five locations right now, and we have grown according to the need. We are in Asbury Park, in Howell, in Hazlet in the shelter three days a week, and also-- I missed one -- Howell, Hazlet -- two places in Howell.

The families we serve have steadily increased since 1997. And last fiscal year, 101 children and 65 parents had participated. As you know -- again -- was going over -- although we have not received funding -- we have received funding for direct service, not for research studies. But we have compiled our own accountability measures that do demonstrate how well Amanda's--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Let me ask you, as you're saying that--

MS. WESTENDORF: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Did you ever seek funding for an evaluation program and independent study? That's all I'm asking.

MS. WESTENDORF: No.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. That's okay.

MS. WESTENDORF: We have selected 100 child-client records randomly from the 392 children that we serve at the various program sites, and I found that the results are profound. One of my evaluation tools is a subjective parent evaluation that I ask each client to fill out at the end of the program. The program does run in 12-week cycles throughout the year. Many families stay for a minimum of two to three cycles.

We found that 95 percent, according to those program evaluations, of the children have exhibited positive change in their behavior after enrollment in Amanda's Easel. Their parents are very highly satisfied with the results and

the improvements. Parents have noted things to me that their children have settled down, decreased their rage and anger, and have learned to communicate more openly about their feelings.

Eighty-seven percent of the children were determined to have had definite improvement in their self-esteem and enhanced ability to communicate their needs and concerns. I do pretty extensive art therapy assessment evaluation pre and post, and I'll share a little bit of that with you.

There were few children with little or no change out of the random 100 that I selected and whose family circumstances had deteriorated during the course of their treatment. Overwhelmingly, there's a significant change for the better. All the children and moms that participate--

We have a holistic approach in treating the family unit. Child, parent, and family groups are offered at each and every site. There's two therapists that work at each site five nights a week. We run children and parent groups simultaneously with up to six children in a group. And again, we do a revolving enrollment. So whenever you come in, you go in your cycles from that point on. So there's always older and newer children.

Intensive case management with the nonoffending parent's individual counselor, which is a requirement of the children participating -- the nonoffending parent or guardian must be in their own counseling in order to take advantage -- only enhances the quality of the care that we give and continuity of services. We have really found that the addition of parent groups and family art therapy sessions, like you had mentioned before, Assemblywoman, really treats the whole family. The children have very specific concerns that they can't voice to their parents. The parents have specific

concerns that they can't voice. Bringing the family together, which we do at least two to three times each cycle, really helps everybody be on the same page and heal together.

The case management with the other counselors gives the opportunity to address the dysfunctional parent's behavior, which stems from family abuse and violence. And the family group, as I said, addresses these behaviors on a continual basis.

The artwork and the imagery of the children directly, for me, illustrates where the improvement is experienced. I have included two examples of pre- and post-test drawing assessments in your packet. What I ask the children to do when they come into the program is to do a kinetic family drawing, which is an established art assessment tool that is used for many different populations.

The examples that I included-- The first one is of an eight-year-old male child that initially came in and demonstrated a drawing called the breakup. And it's very hard to see, but it pictured himself in the middle, kind of in a walkway, neither here nor there, between the two houses and between the conflict. And posttreatment is able to -- even though his family has changed and is not together -- is able to feel more secure and connected to the people who care for him.

And the second one is an older child. Keep in mind that although our guidelines are six- to twelve-year-old children, in the shelter program, we serve whoever is in the shelter. So if they're three and they can sit at the table and do the art therapy, they'll do that. If they're 13 or 14 -- we can get an adolescent group -- we'll do that.

This is an older female child that came from a tremendous amount of conflict and really saw herself feeling pretty hopeless in the middle -- very similar to PALS drawing. Very often we'll see monochromatic or pencil drawings with very little effect displayed at the beginning of treatment. These children feel very bad about themselves. They have a lot of anger -- sometimes take the anger and hold it all inside. The art therapy gives them an awesome opportunity to begin to get some of that out. And then posttreatment -- her family now -- how it is. And again, the difference is significant and easy to see in those drawings.

Amanda's Easel has been recognized, as you heard, for many awards. And the American Art Therapy Award that was given in 1999 at the National Convention in Florida was quite exciting, because they entered -- honored the Women's Center, Senator Bennett, and our program as a real outstanding example of the bridge between community leaders and legislature and the public and how, with the right players, that can really make quite a difference.

And just to end, I want to say our success is certainly built on the efforts of many dedicated individuals committed to this project. Our program works. Its accomplishments, and the benefits for the children and the nonoffending parent, should be acknowledged.

I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to share this special program that, I know, changes the lives of children and parents every day.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think I'm going to suggest -- you don't have to do it -- but I'm going to suggest that the Advisory Council might

wish to visit both of these programs, just to take a look-see around. I love visiting these kinds of programs.

MS. WESTENDORF: I would be honored to have anyone visit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: All right, Paloma?

MS. COLEMAN: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. We'll set up a kind of a date. Anthony, you have a new job.

MR. SHISSIAS (Assembly Majority Aide): Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And Michael, you have a new one, too.

So I'd like to kind of--

When is the end of your program, Paloma? Is it still going on in June?

MS. COLEMAN: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Your program still goes on in May, June?

MS. COLEMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. We'll have staff reach out to you.

MS. COLEMAN: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And we'll set up a date. Not everyone will come. We will not disrupt, but we will come. All right?

MS. WESTENDORF: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'd love to see.

MS. WESTENDORF: That will be fine.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'd love to visit. It would be very good.

I do want you to know that as a mother, I always used arts and crafts as a good wedge to keep my kids happy and content, and me.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Did you make them draw in the lines?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, they didn't have to draw in the lines.

I thank you very much.

I would like to ask Barbara--

Do you want to come up for the Battered Women's Coalition?

BARBARA M. PRICE: Assemblywoman, if you wouldn't mind, some of the shelter directors who are here to testify do have some time constraints.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, all right. Well, they can come up together if they'd like.

MS. PRICE: And I would be happy to go afterwards if that is--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: All right. That's very good.

Who has the most pressing time constraint?

MS. PRICE: Nancy Connor.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Why don't two of you come up at a time? Do you want to do that?

Oh, we have two. All right. Okay.

Sorry.

NANCY L. CONNOR: Hi. My name is Nancy Connor. I'm from Women's Crisis Services, and that's located in Hunterdon County.

I was just-- I'm sorry, but can I speak on both of the bills?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes. Certainly.

MS. CONNOR: Following up with the support from previous testimony, I'd like to first thank you for the opportunity to come here today and speak about the issue of domestic violence and the struggles facing the battered women's movement in New Jersey.

I'm proud to say that I've been working in the battered women's movement since 1986. So, for the past 15 years, you've just done incredible work, and I'm really proud to have watched. And I come here with the support of past Assemblywoman Barbara McConnell, who's President of our Board. And she extends her--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, yes.

MS. CONNOR: In regard to bill A-3348, first I'd like to make a brief statement about my commitment to establish the assessment and treatment services for children witnessing domestic violence in Hunterdon County -- from a small rural perspective, without access to supplemental funding, without evaluation tools, just a commitment to the children that we all see-- And each child that we see is experiencing a tragedy at his or her own personal level.

Each month, I sit with staff, colleagues, and members of the Multidisciplinary Team Against Child Abuse, which you all have been part of in supporting and forming. And I listen to the tales of horror regarding children witness to domestic violence. In Hunterdon County, there are literally no counseling services and therapeutic services for children witness to violence. Women's Crisis Services is providing minimal -- and I see minimal skeletal

services for children through basic psycho-educational program-- It's an education-based-- It goes on the level -- the educational level of the child. It's not a counseling-based service, but it teaches children that they can be safe, free of abuse, and how to tell their secret to someone who will listen.

At this time, I employ a child advocate at the Safe House Program who listens to their small, frail voices and provides them with an opportunity to safely share their secret. So when they're in the shelter -- that they have someone that they can align themselves with and tell their secret to.

Because of the lack of affordable housing, ongoing crises, and personal safety issues, these children never have the opportunity to completely heal from their pain. Again, it's crisis counseling.

We proudly implement an adjunctive therapy program, very much different than what you heard today. We have a registered art therapist, and we have a music therapist. We have a pet therapist. And we operate with a budget, I'm somewhat embarrassed to say, of under \$6000 a year -- a pittance. We're very fortunate that many of our professionals donate their time to work with these children on a very small, individual crisis period of time.

Services for children whose mothers are in counseling at our outreach office are minimal. A child advocate provides, again, psycho-educational material, which is an instruction at five hours a week. In the past year, she's provided 30 individual children's appointments -- 197 times she's met with people -- with children. And fortunately -- unfortunately, now the children are on waiting lists, seeking to use her psycho-educational time, because there are no services available in Hunterdon County.

I urge you to support Bill A-3348, and I applaud Assemblywoman Heck's commitment to serving the needs of our children, and all of your support.

Would you prefer if I went into Bill 3413, or would you like Mary to continue with the children's bill?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think we understand that need. I'd like you to move into the shelter.

MS. CONNOR: Okay. I would love to.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Certainly.

MS. CONNOR: I want to speak regarding my experience from the rural perspective, because I think it's very different than a city or-- I heard transportation, and I-- We have transportation between 10:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon, on a loop. So, from the rural perspective, it's important to hear the needs and to know where a program like Women's Crisis Services of Hunterdon County is coming from.

Shots fired -- what comes to mind? In Hunterdon County, it may define the hunting season -- or that a boy or girl practicing in their backyard-- This is very different than many sister agencies throughout the state. The difficulties for a rural domestic violence program are not seen in the faces of our clients, as they all experience the same relentless forms of abuse.

However, they are quite notable and different in the culture, political climate, and geography of our extended community. A rural community such as Hunterdon is 423 square miles -- 423 square miles from end to end -- three area codes -- population of 130,000 people. Many residents are victims isolated by their abusers, afraid to call law enforcement due to the

shame, humiliation, and fear of not being believed, yet our hot line answered over 5000 calls, our shelter provided safety for women and their children 365 days a year, and our counselors provided counseling and support for hundreds of victims and their children. The need for ongoing services continues to rise, yet our funding to maintain services dwindles, and opportunity for increases are minimal.

I am here today speaking on behalf of domestic violence providers who manage a thin, lean line in the struggle to provide victims a continuum of services and maintaining a competent foundation of employees in a rural community. There are many, many obstacles that we face and continually overcome. The first that comes to mind is the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified staff. These are experienced, educated women and men who are professional individuals who cannot afford to live in the county they work because of existing salaries and lack of affordable housing.

Women's Crisis Services is an agency in which the majority of employees are women. Practicing the philosophy of empowerment, we provide choices for our clients in order for them to find ways to be safe and ultimately achieve complete independence. Reflecting on the needs of the agency, I am sorry to say that due to budgetary constraints, we are unable to provide staff members with the same choice and goal of financial independence. All of us are responsible for employing individuals that will be retiring without benefits such as pensions, retirement funds, or assets, and will be facing poverty during their golden years. At Women's Crisis Services, a master's educated staff person with three years of experience reflects a salary of \$32,000.

In Hunterdon County, we call our shelter a safe house. Again, being sensitive to the culture, victims who hear the word shelter become fearful and imagine the stereotype and prejudice that many people surmise with the word shelter. Our safe house is featured on our Web site, which allows victims a tour of the facility, which decreases some of their anxiety and allows them to come in and feel safe with their children.

Despite having a limited financial basis, Women's Crisis Services manages to provide the bulk of the domestic violence services as expected by our DYFS contract. As you are aware, the safe house is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. I, like many of my colleagues, am forced to make complicated decisions and strike a difficult balance by walking a fine line in meeting basic requirements. The additional funding associated with bill A-3413 would enable us to meet very basic licensing requirements, as well as ensure staff and client safety within our program.

The lack of sufficient funding is also evident in the housing options for victims and their children. After we completed an extensive needs assessment, it quickly became real that affordable housing is nonexistent in Hunterdon County. Currently, women and their children are able to utilize the services of the safe house for 30 to 60 days.

I feel fortunate that with the assistance of COAH and the local municipality, we were able to obtain a facility and two years ago, opened a transitional housing program. This program allows women and their children to leave our safe house and live in an affordable supportive communal housing program for 18 to 24 months. This program provides a continuum of services for victims. A bill such as A-3413 will ensure the necessary support by

providing life skills and tools such as on-site job training, parenting workshops, financial seminars, mentoring, and counseling, all skills which are critical for victims to master in order to achieve self-sufficiency, ultimately breaking the cycle of violence. This pilot program is a model for second stage supportive housing and currently is critically understaffed.

Women's Crisis Services was fortunate and grateful to Assemblyman Leonard Lance. With his support, we were able to hire two staff members and begin program operations. While we are grateful for the Assemblyman's assistance, we realize that in order to maximize this opportunity to further assist our clients, the program would require additional funding. For the past two years, we've received a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$50,000, which hires two staff people, the only two staff people that are in our transitional housing program.

On behalf of Women's Crisis Services, and my colleagues, I gratefully appreciate Assemblywoman Heck's recognition and insight on the ever-changing needs of thousands of victims of domestic violence and the many programs we serve. It is with much respect that I wholeheartedly support this bill and appreciate all of your time in hearing this testimony.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

We did hold a hearing up in Sussex County, I believe. Assemblyman Garrett helped us find the-- I think we went to one of the schools in that area. It was very enlightening. This was years ago, when we heard about the response of State Troopers and the need for education of law enforcement community in total.

It is different. Your area is totally different than Bergen County, where you have a faster response time. I know my daughter lives in Warren. And they are serviced by State Police. And if there's a burglar in the area, maybe they'll come the next morning, the next day. (laughter)

MS. CONNOR: Yes. A quarter--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It's kind of frightening.

MS. CONNOR: A quarter of the entire county is covered by the State Troopers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah.

MS. CONNOR: We only have one communication system, so if you call 9-1-1, it goes to the county. You don't go to a police department. You need to tell them your address, because many times--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And we've heard from many battered women how difficult it was and how-- Well, that's what made a change -- big dramatic change -- when they said the State Policemen came in and laughed and -- "What did you do to antagonize him that he shot?" And then it missed the child in the crib in the next room -- was her fault--

MS. CONNOR: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: This has changed to some degree, but I don't think, totally, attitudes have changed.

MS. CONNOR: I urge you to continue your quest in working with the New Jersey State Police.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yeah, we are. We are -- as well as the judges.

MS. CONNOR: I was trying to say that nice.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you very much for the support of both of the bills and the need for more to help with your services, as well.

Thank you.

Did you want to add to that?

MARY BAUGHMAN: I'm actually representing a different agency.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, good.

MS. BAUGHMAN: Just by way of introduction, I represent Morris County's agency -- Jersey Battered Women's Service. And my experiences are somewhat different than Nancy's, as you'd expect.

Just personally, my name is Mary Baughman. I'm the Executive Director there. I've been there about 18 months, having retired from corporate America, actually two years ago and decided to do something different and join the nonprofit world.

On behalf of JBWS, Jersey Battered Women's Service, I am here, though, to endorse both of the bills, 3413 and 3348. I'll spend most of MY time, though, on 3413.

JBWS is a private, nonprofit organization that serves people affected by domestic violence. Our mission, really, is the prevention of domestic violence. And we focus our attention in three different dimensions as we do that. First, we do work to protect and empower the victims of domestic violence. We also work to rehabilitate family members, and we work to educate the public about domestic violence and its consequences in order to ultimately address the issue of prevention.

JBWS began in 1976. We began primarily as a hot line service. It was staffed by volunteers in one of the volunteers' homes. Our present day shelter did not open until December of 1978, so it was about two and a half years later, which, unfortunately, was too late for two women, Lois Gilmore and Rita Ascensio. Both of them were residents of our county. Both were victims of domestic violence, who had been clients of the hot line service, who feared for their lives, and separated from their husbands, but ultimately could not find safety.

Lois was shot and killed at her hair salon, where she was working as a hairdresser. And Rita and her mother, by the way, were shot and killed at her parents' house -- at Rita's parents' house, where she went to live following the separation from her husband. In both cases, some of their children were present at the time of the killings.

The police officers in Butler, where one of the murders occurred, were so moved that they then initiated a door-to-door campaign to raise the funds that ultimately resulted, when joined with other funds, in the opening of our emergency shelter.

In fact, their support provided the community level support that was necessary to get the matching funds from a Federal grant, appropriations that already existed, so that our shelter was opened in December, as I said, of 1978.

While the case stories that I share with you date back some 25 years, I think they're really relevant to today's issue, as well, because they serve to remind us that domestic violence isn't effectively addressed unless it's addressed as a community-wide effort. It's not just the community-wide effort

of having the involvement of different constituents, from the law enforcement agencies to the judicial services, to the medical professionals, to DV specialists like those that we employ, or the clergy or educators, but it also requires a community-wide response on creating resources that can be available from public and private domains, from individuals, and from organizations. All of that is necessary to ensure that those that are fleeing from their homes for safety have a warm and welcoming place to go to.

JBWS, as one agency, owes its heritage to the volunteers that started it, also to that Butler Police Department and to the other private donors and to the wisdom of the government officials that set aside the appropriations for emergency shelters.

New Jersey has a number of laws on its books -- thank you for the work that you've done in that area -- that proactively protect women and children that suffer the consequences of domestic violence. These new appropriations bills will further allow us to provide the growing services that are needed for even more victims.

Before I discuss how we'd most likely utilize some of those funds, let me tell you a little about the present-day JBWS, as well. Again, in 1976, we began with a handful of volunteers. We had a five-person board of directors. We had no paid staff, and we had no facilities to speak of. We offered a hot line service, and we had some nonresidential counseling groups.

Today, by contrast, JBWS has a 22-person board of directors. We have over 100 active volunteers at any point in time. We have 30 full-time staff members with as many more part-time staff members. We have two wonderful buildings. One is our emergency shelter that can house 11 families -- 12 families

if we reutilize a teen room that we have reserved for the teens. And we also have a transitional living building with 11 apartments in it. And we offer a full array of comprehensive services.

To give you a sense, in the year 2000, we saw an increase in the need for services. We answered over 4500 hot line calls in our 24-7 hot line. We provided safe emergency shelter and protective services to 80 families, with nearly 100 children in our emergency shelter. That represented over 7500 nights of shelter. We counseled over 250 women and children in our nonresidential counseling programs. We provided court accompaniment and legal advocacy to over 1000 victims of domestic violence that tried to navigate their way through the complex court system. We assisted 10 families gain self-sufficiency and safety through our new transitional living program. That program, by the way, was launched in November of 1999. And we educated more than 40 women in the also new -- same time period -- new vocational development program.

We counseled, in addition, over 400 batterers on ways to improve and modify their abusive behaviors. And we educated 13,700 community members -- included in that number were 5000 high school students -- about partner abuse and dating violence. Every one of our programs in the year 2000 reached more people than we had done in 1999. And overall, we had a 10 percent increase in the number of clients that we served, and a 50 percent increase in the number of community members educated.

Since November of 2000, we saw the first five graduates of our transitional living program. We can now provide apartments, vocational development so that they can do more in terms of job opportunities and careers

in the future, case management, counseling, and life skill training to 11 families that seek self-sufficiency.

With the five graduates, we saw a transformation of people. We saw women who were frightened and timid victims changed to become independent and competent survivors. We also saw changes in their children, who when they first joined us, were huddled by their mom's side entering the emergency shelter -- and then later were able to leave the transitional living program with a new sense of self-respect, as well as respect for their moms.

I don't know if any of those five women -- or five families would have met the same fate as that which has happened to Lois Gilmore or Rita Ascensio, but I do know that their experience demonstrates that programs such as ours can work. And I think that that's true of all of the domestic violence agencies across the state -- they have, for those women and for those children and for many more.

In 2000, JBWS' expense budget topped \$2 million. Through the State, DYFS is our single largest donor. They represent 16 percent of our revenue stream. Total government sources contribute about 25 percent of what we need to operate our programs in the year 2000. United Way, by the way, is our second largest single contributor, representing 13 percent of the revenue that we received in the year 2000. The rest of our funds -- so the balance of that, basically, 60 percent, roughly, comes from foundations, corporations, individuals, and some internally generated sources.

Clearly, we work hard every year to earn the money that we need to operate those programs. And we know that funding reductions are likely from United Way, because many of the businesses that have been headquartered

in Morris County, and that will affect the United Way available funds to the county-- And we also note that the stock market's performance will certainly affect the ability for foundations and individuals to support us as much as they've done in the past. So the opportunity for additional funds from the State, as noted particularly in the Assembly Bill 3413, could not come at a better time.

With an incremental \$50,000, JBWS would strive to continue to offer the quality services to a growing number of victims, both women and children, that are victimized in their homes by domestic violence. For example, it would allow us to offer a more extensive children's counseling program in our -- to our children in our transitional living program, where today we have only one part-time counselor, or also to provide in-language, nonresidential services -- nonresidential counseling services to a growing number of Latino clients. While we do have bilingual counselors in the shelter, we don't have any in-language, Spanish speaking group sessions that we're able to offer right now.

The incremental dollars available from a competitive bid would also allow us to improve the services that we offer to existing clients. We believe that we need to do more in terms of financial education for our clients, both for their safety planning processes, as well as preparing for self-sufficiency. And we also believe that there's more that can be done to tailor the programs to specific targeted populations such as elders that are facing domestic abuse or women that find the need to use force.

At this point, I don't know whether JBWS would formally submit against the RFP proposal that's recommended in the other bill that's on the table, A-3348. I only mention that because I'm not answering or supporting

that bill from a perspective of what it might do for my agency or my county. However, I do believe that there is valid reason to move forward on such a bill. We fully understand and have seen the devastating effects that children have when they either hear or see their parents beating on one another in any form.

And we know, without doubt, the intergenerational issues and impacts that domestic violence has. It's for those reasons that I support Assembly Bill A-3348, because it represents, to me, an important step towards continuing our learning on how to help these children overcome the hurting effects that they did nothing to earn, and it allows us to proactively expand those services within the State of New Jersey.

JBWS, and I believe all of the New Jersey domestic violence agencies, have come a long way in the past 25 years, but we all recognize that there's still much more that needs to be done. We very much appreciate your assistance in setting an agenda and increasing the possibility for public funding.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you very much.

Any questions? (no response)

I think it was pretty well covered.

Thank you, both.

Elaine.

Elaine, you can begin anytime.

E L A I N E M E Y E R S O N: Good afternoon. It's no longer good morning, it's good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

MS. MEYERSON: Elaine Meyerson, Executive Director of Shelter Our Sisters.

I don't have a formal testimony. I'm just going to go through some bullet points. Hopefully, I'll be brief.

Our history is similar to everybody else. As an executive director who's been around for 15 years, every time we hear there's an opportunity for some funds, we get extremely excited. I want to applaud the efforts to support the functioning of both the emergency shelters, as well as the transitional shelters. And Shelter Our Sisters was, I believe, the first agency who provided transitional housing, called second stage, in the early days in the mid-1980s. And it's a continuing growing problem because of the need for affordable housing in particular, as well as the continued support services for the clients.

Fifty thousand dollars per shelter would be quite a feat for all of us. And when I was trying to think about how -- what we could tell you -- how we would use the money, of course, the list went on and on. We're all faced with the cutting of funds. Two years ago, Shelter Our Sisters children's program was defunded by the United Way. We're looking at a reduction of our emergency shelter grant for our personnel line. And as many of you may know through the victim assistance grants, the maximum per year, through the Division of Criminal Justice, was \$75,000. It's now been lowered to \$65,000. And many of the ongoing programs of the agencies have not been funded at all. And those are just some of the -- the loss of government funds -- ourselves--

Also, DYFS, in 1978, was probably about 95 percent of our funding, and today is closer to 25 percent. Our budget is about \$1.2 million.

We have to privately raise about \$250,000. That takes staff time away from the day-to-day functioning of the programs.

Most important, of course, is to have competent, well-trained, mature staff. And staff salaries is continually an issue. We are working to raise our bottom-line level to about \$25,000. We are now closer to \$24,000. Many agencies are around that. I did a quick survey yesterday of my staff. And between my counselors and my coordinators, our average salary is about \$28,000, and our average length of tenure in my agency is five years. So that's not a lot of money for people who we rely on day-to-day to work with the very vulnerable population.

We've had staff, of course, who have been eligible for Section 8 housing over the years. And the \$28,000 is actually -- after last year -- my board supporting a \$2000 raise for most of our staff. And yet, we're still looking at how we're actually going to fund it starting next year--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You're thinking about the power of positive thinking.

MS. MEYERSON: --due to vacancy rates and lots of pregnant women, but next year will be a challenge. But the board's very committed to trying to raise the salaries.

Staff with a bachelor's walk out and go to DYFS for about \$30,000. The mental health system pays a lot -- much more money. And I understand that-- It was in the *Bergen Record* today, Rose -- the editorial about legislation that's been proposed that beginning teachers who have bachelor's should be receiving \$40,000. Are teachers with a bachelor's level any more

important than our staff who work with the most vulnerable and most sensitive of all issues?

And, of course, agencies are faced with rising health insurance. This year, we were very lucky. We only had an 8.5 percent increase in our health insurance. Last year, we had a 25 percent increase. And you cannot have staff work for you without the insurance. And our agency, I think, is one of the few who is committed to at least giving parent-child insurance, because we feel that this is the population that we serve, and we need to support our female staff--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Absolutely.

MS. MEYERSON: --in the same realm.

And, of course, you all know that we have the continual technology needs, because if we're not up with what's going on -- our computers are not networked and don't have the best maintenance, etc., and we don't have the top -- best possible computers to do all the kinds of research and data and everything that we all need, we will not be effective.

So, as far as-- We really applaud you for the efforts, as far as really giving everybody across-the-board funding, as well as special programs. Many of us are looking at the expansion of the crisis response teams, thanks to Rose and legislation.

Bergen County, of course, has 70 municipalities. We have, now-- I think I have about six or seven crisis response teams going. It is a tremendous amount of work. Most of the towns, unfortunately, are looking to not necessarily regionalize. However, Pascack Valley is kicking off a regional team with nine towns. However, the continuation of the administration of the teams, the coordination of the teams, the training of the volunteers -- the ongoing

training, the relationships with the police, etc., etc. -- that that would be a marvelous way for us to be able to support these teams, possibly through that -- the special funding.

We're also looking at the need of continual culturally sensitive programming. Our population is about 25 percent Hispanic, 2 to 5 percent Korean, and, of course, many other languages. But we have had a bilingual counselor for years. We are really in dire need to really expand. She works not only with the internal clients -- and she has a daytime shift worker -- she also works with community clients. We are in desperate need to expand that program to work with the Hispanic families in the community.

And lastly, just to speak to the A-3348 -- and in regards of Deb Donnelly, Director of Alternatives to Domestic Violence, who could not be here -- we both would support the funding of this legislation. We would be interested in considering the full coordination of services in Bergen County. We have two very fine agencies who work together very well. And we really support the local treatment of clients as opposed to the regionalization. Because of transportation, reliability of the women is very difficult.

I would question why there is a limit of age 10 in that proposal. Maybe there could just be no limit or include teenagers, because I'm not sure why we would not include younger children in programs, depending on the type of therapists and expertise of the individuals involved.

And I thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you, Elaine.

Anyone else?

Yes, Barbara.

MS. PRICE: Thank you, Assemblywoman Heck, for allowing me to come last.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I do want to just take a moment to thank you for all of your support over the years and being a resource person for me, personally. I could never have gotten all my work done without you, Barbara.

Thank you.

MS. PRICE: Thank you, Rose. We wouldn't be here without you sometimes, I think.

And I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on both of these bills. Both of the bills are very important to the members of the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women.

First, A-3348-- I think we're all aware that there's certainly national research -- has well established the effects of domestic violence on children. Child victims and witnesses experience physical, emotional, and psychological consequences. It affects their schoolwork, and it can have long lasting consequences, including delinquency. If we're to break the cycle of domestic violence, we must address the needs of child victims.

In the year 2000, Coalition member programs sheltered 2085 children and provided services to an additional 2007 children who were nonresidents. Programs offered these children individual, group, and family counseling and provided day care, recreation, educational support, and adjunctive therapy. And adjunctive therapy would be art therapy, dance movement therapy, theater, all kinds of other therapies -- alternative therapies.

Seventy-two percent of the children that received services from

domestic violence programs were under the age of 10, and 10 percent of the children were active DYFS cases, and 4 percent were already classified by their schools with some sort of learning problem. And one of the things I'm aware of from the PALS research is that they're finding an inordinate number of the children have been classified and that the same characteristics that children with learning disabilities exhibit are the same characteristics that children exhibit who are victims or witnesses to domestic violence.

If we help these children, how many of them are not going to need special education anymore -- another area of savings that we could look to in the future, aside from reducing delinquency rates and juvenile crime.

New Jersey domestic violence programs have long recognized the need to provide services to children of victims since the Core Services for Victims of Domestic Violence were established by the Coalition in joint partnership with the Division of Youth and Family Services in 1985. In that respect, we were far ahead of the rest of the country. Unfortunately, while children's counseling and services are considered core services, when funding is short, children's services are often minimal. Ideally, every program tries to maintain the position of child advocate, but that one person is often providing services to all ages, from toddlers to teens. The Coalition State office facilitates meetings of program child advocates at least four times a year to promote networking and sharing of resources. Child advocates find this extremely helpful, but we can and should do more.

Other programs in the State do have pieces of PALS in place, such as some of the programs that you've heard about today. And we hope that

eventually, we can ensure that such expanded services will be available to children at all domestic violence programs.

As to A-3413, offering the supplemental appropriation for emergency shelter and transitional housing and other programming costs, I would like to thank Assemblywoman Heck for her foresight in appropriating half of the funds evenly to all programs, with the remaining funds made available through a competitive process. The last major increase in State funding for domestic violence programs was in 1994, when the marriage license fees were increased. That was an increase of approximately \$1.1 million. Unfortunately, a few years later, those funds were decreased because fewer fees were generated when marriage rates declined. And they remain at that lower rate.

Of course, programs received additional funding from the annual DHS cost of current services increase, but the percentages were small. I think the highest percentage in all over the past 10 years has been maybe 3 percent, but it's averaged around 1.5, and some years nothing.

Even with increases for direct care staff salaries over the last two years, domestic violence staff with a B.A. degree are paid approximately \$5000 less per year than DYFS family service specialist trainees. Programs are finding it increasingly difficult to hire and keep qualified staff, especially bilingual, bicultural staff, as required by shelter licensing standards. I'm not proud of this, but we're a great training ground. Come and spend about a year or two with us, and you can increase your salary tremendously if you're bilingual, bicultural, moving on to just about any other agency out there.

In the year 2000, domestic violence programs in New Jersey sheltered 1741 women and one man and provided nonresidential services to 10,737 women and 483 men. An additional 19,025 women and 1743 men received legal advocacy services. We served clients with disabilities and substance abuse problems and clients from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. We also served non-English speaking clients, including those who spoke Arabic, Creole/Haitian, Hindi, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and many others. We served clients from age 15 to over 60 and clients from all economic levels. It takes highly skilled and trained staff to be able to relate to such a wide variety of people, know all the domestic violence laws, and police and court procedures.

Several years ago, a graduate student used the Coalition's statistics to do a research paper to determine what variables might predict the number of clients sheltered by a program. The regression analysis looked at the population of the county, the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police by county, the number of crisis calls from victims to the program, the number of beds in a shelter, indicating capacity, and the number of full-time staff. The conclusion was that the only predictors were the number of full-time staff and the number of beds. This translates clearly into dollars and cents. Without the ability to increase staff or the number of beds, we will be limited in the number of clients we can serve. I hate to say it, but if you build it, they will come.

Another major problem for programs is the need to constantly raise money, and you've heard some of that today. The only funds programs can count on from year to year are the funds they receive from DYFS. This includes

State grants in aid, marriage license fees, Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funds, and Federal Social Service Block Grant funds.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there have been severe cuts to the Social Service Block Grant in Washington. While there are other funding streams from the Federal government that are available from other departments in State government, they are not guaranteed. The money is available only on a competitive basis each year. One of the funding streams which comes from the Federal Victims Assistance Grant was changed this year to be a two-year grant. While this was meant to ease the burden of submitting a competitive grant every year, several programs lost funding that they had received each year for as long as fifteen years. This means the program will not have this funding for at least two years. The amount, \$65,000, was significant for some programs. So some programs across the state lost totally \$65,000 for the next two years. That is, at least two and a half staff positions.

The other stream of funding comes from the Federal Violence Against Women Act, which many people have heard a lot about. This, again, is a competitive grant each year. And the funding is limited by Federal allocation requirements. At a recent national conference on the reauthorization changes to VAWA that just happened last fall, it was made very clear that VAWA funding is not meant for ongoing support. It is intended only for project seed money. As a result, programs spend a great deal of time looking for funding, writing grants, and fund-raising. Some programs do this better than others, which means uneven services around the State. Ensuring continuity of service from year to year for victims of domestic violence is extremely difficult with this patchwork of funding.

The Coalition also appreciates the recognition of the need for transitional housing in A-3413. Currently, seven of the twenty-two domestic violence shelters have transitional housing, but all of them should. In 2000, these seven programs had 225 women and children in residences for an average length of stay of 10 months. And I'm sure that that's short, because, as you heard, some of the programs have just recently opened, so we're not even looking at a full year of availability.

Research has shown that victims of domestic violence are highly successful in moving on to self-sufficiency when appropriate counseling and support is available through a domestic violence transitional housing facility. This is beyond shelter.

The lack of affordable housing in New Jersey places many victims in the position of choosing between starting a new life free of violence and returning to the batterer. New Jersey has the second highest rent in the country, second only to Hawaii, with the average cost of a two-bedroom apartment approximately \$864 a month last count. The average length of stay in shelter has increased over the years from 25 days to 31 days in 2000. Depending on the county, the stays can be 50 days plus. I saw one county had an average length of stay of 79 days last year.

This is not emergency shelter service. This is a direct result of the housing problem. We can immediately see the correlation to a 50 to 60 day average length of stay in shelters in Essex County to the 10-year waiting list for Section 8 housing there. No victim should have to choose a violent home for herself and her children because there is no other housing available.

The Coalition appreciates the efforts of this committee and Assemblywoman Rose Heck to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence by ensuring that services are available in every county for victims and their children so they can live safe and productive lives.

And we thank you, again, for your continued support.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

Every time we hold one of these hearings that pertain to domestic violence and children, we always learn more. Even though you're doing such good work, all of you, there's still so much more to be done. And I thank you again, very much. And, hopefully, we'll move ahead with not only the bills we have today, but to introduce several more bills that are needed.

MS. PRICE: Thanks, again.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

Any questions?

Linda?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I don't have any, thanks.

It was very enlightening.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And thank you all for coming and sharing with us.

Do we have any more to speak? Do we have any others to speak?

MS. METZ: I just would like to-- Just one more minute.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Jean.

MS. METZ: I spoke about the other bill, but I didn't get a chance to speak about this one.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

MS. METZ: Three minutes, I promise.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

MS. METZ: I believe I have a unique perspective to add, and that is because, like a lot of folks that you've heard today, already, I've been working in the domestic violence field for 23 years, first as a caseworker, then as a supervisor, and for the past 11 years, as the Director of not one, but two domestic violence programs.

We started in Burlington County. Catholic Charities started that program 23 years ago. And then 14 years ago, we were asked by DYFS to start the program in Ocean County. And so I'm the supervisor -- the Director of two completely separate programs.

I want to thank the New Jersey Legislature for their tough stand on domestic violence, because, like I said, having been involved for so long-- I remember way back in the '70s and early '80s, before we even had the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act. So today, things are so much better.

But what happens as a result of that is that we continue to see an increase every year since the mid-'70s. Every single year, more and more people are coming forward, which is good news -- that more and more women seek out services, because they know that they don't have to put up with the domestic violence. What that translates into, though, is that we need more funding. And the funding doesn't keep pace with the demand for service.

Assembly Bill 3413 would go a long way in helping the domestic violence programs to partially fill the funding gaps. And I'd like to emphasize, which really has been already emphasized though -- is that all 22 programs have significant funding needs. We may not have all the same needs. And I know

this, because in my two counties, which go from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean, have very different, distinct needs.

For example, in Ocean County, the FEMA funding that I get and the emergency shelter grant dollars I get almost pay for the operating cost of the shelter facility, whereas in Burlington County, they don't have emergency shelter grant dollars available, and FEMA only accounts for less than 10 percent of the budget. So what I have going for me in Ocean County, I don't have going for me in Burlington County, and I know the same thing applies across the state.

Therefore, I believe it would be most helpful if each domestic violence program were allowed to utilize this funding as they see fit to keep it as broad as possible.

The proposed additional funding would assist us in so many different ways. My biggest challenge would be to really kind of narrow down all my different priorities. For example, I currently use substitute workers to fill in for regular workers when they're out sick or on vacation. This is not the best way to do it, but they're paid hourly, and we don't have to pay them benefits; therefore, it's cheaper. However, it's not consistent. It's not reliable to have substitutes. So it would be much better for staffing, for training, for consistency, if we were able to hire salaried folks to fill that need.

Another area I could use an additional \$50,000 is to increase the double coverage of the shelter. You may all be aware that it's a licensing requirement for the shelters to have double staff around the clock. And many of us don't have it because we can't afford it. It's a safety issue. And as Karen has pointed out to me many times, the Providence House Program is the, unfortunately, glaring example over the many years we've been here.

We've had only one incident, but there was an incident many, many years ago, where one of my staff was stabbed. It was not a life threatening situation. It was a little penknife, but she got stabbed several times in the head -- unfortunately very bloody, but she was never in danger. But it was very traumatic for her, for the residents, for the other staff.

I believe in the whole state, it's only happened once, thank God, in all of these years. And unfortunately, it was in my facility. But it's something that we all need to be aware of. The potential does exist, and so staffing is very-- Safety is very important. And double coverage would be really necessary.

A third area of concern is the increasing numbers of shelter residents who have substance abuse or mental health issues. I don't have a certified substance abuse counselor in either one of my facilities, and it's a glaring need.

The most distressing aspect of what I'm sharing with you here is that these identified areas are all new initiatives for me. I still have the issue of finding funding sources, which pay for the administrative costs associated with operating a large social service program.

Every year, starting in January, I need to look at how I'm going to raise approximately \$250,000 from private sources just to maintain services in my two counties. So the additional funding from DYFS would really go a long way in helping to resolve that problem.

The services that DYFS funding enables us to provide are delivered to those in fear of their lives. Our services are critical to their survival. And I applaud this committee for sponsoring the domestic violence legislation and supporting the Department of Human Services domestic violence lead agencies.

Thanks for the opportunity.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you very much.

As I said before, there are lots of needs, and we're trying to address them, not one at a time, but a bunch at a time.

We also have a bill in specifically for Essex County, where there is a great need.

And if anyone noticed that we have 22 shelters-- I thought there were 21. Elaine corrected me and said we have 22 because in Essex -- in Newark -- in Essex County, we have two, because there is such a tremendous need there.

And Kevin O'Toole and I have a bill for a pilot program because of the large number of domestic violence cases there are in his county and a tremendous need not only for education, but for safety of the individuals.

I thank you very much.

We'll see you at the real hearing, hoping to get these bills out and others.

Again, thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)