Celebrating Solutions Awards
Roth Award for Underserved Populations
Nomination Form

Legal name of organization: Project S.A.R.A.H.
Year established: 1996
Program nominated for award (if different):
Year established:

Address: 925 Allwood Rd.
City/State/ZIP code: Clifton, NJ 07012
Agency phone number: 973-777-7638
Contact person: Raffi Bilek
Title: Outreach Coordinator
Phone number: 973-777-7638 x137
Fax number: 973-777-9311
E-mail address: outreach@projectssarah.org
Website address: www.projectssarah.org

Brief description of organization: New Jersey’s statewide resource for Jewish victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
Geographical area served: New Jersey
Is the organization tax-exempt under IRS 501 (c) (3) guidelines or a public agency/unit of government? Yes

In addition to your program being responsive to the underserved, please check up to four descriptors that best apply to the program you are nominating:

__ Batterer treatment
__X__ Coalition/collaboration
__X__ Communication
__X__ Counseling
__ Dating violence
__ Elder abuse
__ Employment/training program
__X__ Faith-based
__ Health care setting
__ Hotline service
__ Legal aid/assistance
__ Prison-based
__ Public awareness/education
__X__ School/youth violence
__ Shelter-based
__ Stalking
Technology/Internet service
Transitional housing
Victim relocation
Workplace intervention
Other ____________________

As one of the goals of the Mary Byron Project is to disseminate information about cutting-edge programs and best practices, we wish to post exemplary Celebrating Solutions Award nominations on our website (www.marybyronproject.org). Those posted will include the organization's website address, telephone number, and email address. If you have concerns about this request, please address them to information@marybyronproject.org, prior to submitting a nomination.

By my signature on this letter, I grant the Mary Byron Project permission to use the contents of my nomination for the Celebrating Solutions Award in the manner and for the purposes set above. I further affirm that I am fully authorized to grant such permission to the Mary Byron Project.

Signature __________________________________________

Date 12/1/11 ____________________________
1. Describe the mission of your organization in five sentences or less.

The mission of Project S.A.R.A.H. is to reach out and provide domestic violence services for the Jewish community of New Jersey, and particularly for the Orthodox Jewish community. We seek to overcome the cultural, religious, and linguistic barriers that prevent victims from acknowledging the problems of domestic abuse and sexual assault. We aid the Jewish community in finding appropriate ways to access victims' services that are in concert with the values of needs of their own communities.

2. Describe the most innovative aspects of the program you are submitting for consideration.

Project S.A.R.A.H. has multiple methods of reducing the barriers to treatment. We hire speakers of key languages, such as Hebrew and Yiddish, which for some members of the community are the only languages they speak; we staff the Project with workers from various different communities to represent the different Jewish groups present in New Jersey (including, for example, a Chassidic man, a Hispanic-Jewish woman, and an American-Israeli rabbi); and we provide heightened privacy to protect confidentiality by offering an off-site location, Sunday hours and weekday night hours. No fees are charged for participation in the program.

Project S.A.R.A.H. reaches community members through multiple channels to ensure that victims have many doors to walk through to receive assistance. We have provided successful trainings to rabbis of all denominations and their spouses as well, child protective services workers, physicians, law enforcement officers, domestic violence response teams, and shelter workers. We have also educated other members of the community which culturally and religiously specific, such as shadchans (Jewish matchmakers), mikveh (women’s ritual bath) attendants, and sheitelmachers (women who make wigs as religious hair coverings for Orthodox Jewish women). Project S.A.R.A.H. also reaches out regularly to staff and students at Jewish private schools – from preschools all the way up through college – and to staff of Jewish summer camps.

Finally, we aim to educate every community member about abuse in the home by putting on yearly county-wide trainings, but also by offering to come to their homes for small-group trainings, by creating culturally-sensitive videos on the issue, and by providing a large-scale, culturally-sensitive school program for Jewish schools.

3. Why do your clients need resources that are structured specifically for them?

The Orthodox Jewish community has a number of unique issues to contend with that necessitate special resources directed specifically at its members. The most marked of these is the system of Jewish law that governs every aspect of their lives. It is virtually impossible for someone who is not living in this system day to day to gain a full understanding of its nuances and implications. For example, the Jewish calendar is replete with days of feasting and days of
fasting, periods of joy and periods of mourning. It is important to know not only when these occur and what practical ramifications they have – such as whether someone can eat on a given day or not – but also what the cultural and emotional implications are. An incident of abuse that occurs during a holiday can have a very different impact on both victim and perpetrator from one that occurs before, after, or completely independent of the holiday. More concretely, a woman who is observing strict dietary laws, for instance, has a significant barrier to overcome in making use of the shelter system.

Another legal and emotional issue that is unique to this population revolves around modesty and privacy. Many Orthodox communities maintain strict gender separation from an early age; boys and girls go to separate schools; adult men and women may not have physical contact with each other; it is even forbidden for a man and a woman who are not immediate relatives to be alone in a room together. Our agency can meet the needs and preferences of clients regarding these strict gender preferences.

These laws and cultural values can also lead to the phenomenon of “spiritual abuse.” Perpetrators sometimes force victims to violate Jewish law as a way of causing them further distress. This can be especially devastating when it regards rules of sexual purity, which devolve largely on the woman and can cause her feelings of guilt and self-hatred.

Finally, the Orthodox Jewish community needs its own resources because often its members simply will not access any other ones. Orthodox communities are generally insular by nature, having to live within walking distance of the local synagogue due to restrictions on driving on the Sabbath. Frequently members of the Orthodox community can meet all of their needs within the community itself, from groceries to haircuts to emergency health services; going outside the community is often a last thought or a last resort. In addition, in some communities there is a sense of mistrust of the outside world. Thus, reaching out for help to outside resources, and even more so admitting that problems like domestic violence exist in the Orthodox Jewish world, are inconceivable to many.

4. How do you determine that the population you serve qualifies as “underserved”?

As an agency that serves the target community, we have extensive knowledge of the community based on personal experience, including many therapists who live in the immediate vicinity of the agency and others in nearby Jewish communities. Furthermore, reports from key leadership such as Rabbis and school principals indicate that victims tell commonly them that they don’t know where to go for help and they’ve suffered for years without hope of relief.

5. Describe your program’s implementation. What barriers did your organization have to overcome? How did you marshal the necessary resources for implementation?

Project S.A.R.A.H. was created in 1996 to address the growing need of the Jewish community for culturally-specific services as a result of a state grant from VAWA. Operating out the Jewish
Family Service of Clifton, Project S.A.R.A.H. was essentially a one-woman operation, providing trainings and victim services to the extent possible. In 2008, seeing yet another community need, the Project began offering services and education about child sexual abuse as well. In 2009, Project S.A.R.A.H. was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Violence Against Women to expand its capacity. This allowed us to hire a full-time outreach coordinator, who has spearheaded a number of important programs and coordinated the culturally-specific abuse prevention program for schools, which was also purchased with grant funds. In 2010, a grant from federal stimulus money helped the Project to bring on board a trauma specialist to provide counseling for victims. The outreach coordinator, along with the trauma counselor and the director of domestic violence and sexual assault services, continue to train hundreds of people a year and provide services to dozens of victims.

One of the major barriers that Project S.A.R.A.H. faced in its early days was the widespread denial of domestic violence as a problem in the Jewish community. Although this has changed significantly in the past decade – in part due to the indefatigable efforts of Project S.A.R.A.H. – denial and silence continue to dominate the issue of sexual abuse. The strategy is the same: keep sending the same message tirelessly to community leaders and members – the problem exists, and its victims are suffering. Disseminating this message in a way that is culturally appropriate and that can be heard by the relevant parties continues to motivate Project S.A.R.A.H. and push it forward.

6. How do you know your program works? Please site two examples. Although anecdotal examples are helpful, at least one example must include quantitative data.

Quantitative data is hard to produce when the work revolves largely around prevention; we will never know how many people were spared from abusive situations because they viewed our dating violence videos, or how many victims were better served because of our training of community partners like the police and child protective services. Nonetheless, here is some data reflecting the kind of effects we have had:

- In our first year of running our annual Many Voices, One Message publicity campaign, approximately 30 rabbis signed on to speak out against domestic violence. This year we had 180.
- After years of trying to gain entrée to the notoriously insular Lakewood Jewish community, in 2010 we ran our first program in the area, a training for ritual bath attendants, which brought in 40 attendees, far more than we had expected.
- At the very beginning of Project S.A.R.A.H., the problem was completely underground, and we were receiving no calls and no reported cases. Currently we deal with over 60 reported cases a year, as well as hundreds of hotline calls, and programs in four other Jewish Family Service agencies in New Jersey who were trained by us.

One of our former clients, now an abuse survivor, often speaks for us at our events. She likes to tell audiences that, “like many other women out there, I don’t know where I would be without Project S.A.R.A.H.”
7. Who are your key partners? What are their roles? Are there any other domestic violence resources available for your clients in your community? If so, are they your partners?

Project S.A.R.A.H. works seamlessly with the Jewish Family Service of Clifton in which it is housed. This collaboration provides innumerable benefits to victims we serve: child victims and child witnesses of domestic violence can be seen by our trauma workers and art therapists—sometimes at the same time as the mother is seeing her own therapist, providing an added convenience. A psychiatric nurse practitioner on staff helps with prescriptions and medication management (indeed, mentally ill victims of domestic violence is a specialized target group we aim to serve). On staff there is also an employment specialist who has helped numerous DV victims to find meaningful and gainful employment.

In addition, Project S.A.R.A.H. maintains a relationship with Jewish Family Service agencies across the state so as to better serve victims who call from areas farther away from Clifton. These agencies receive trainings from us as well as regular referrals for help and information.

Project S.A.R.A.H. also partners with the Passaic County Women’s Center (PCWC) in this work. Project S.A.R.A.H. is regularly called up to provide cultural competence training to local domestic violence response teams; our latest joint project is to develop volunteers from different Orthodox Jewish communities around the state who will be trained to work on sexual assault response teams and who can thus provide culturally sensitive services to women who have suffered a sexual assault. Lastly, Project S.A.R.A.H. and PCWC jointly run a program called PALS (Peace: A Learned Solution), which provides free group and individual counseling for children who have witnessed domestic violence in the home.

Project S.A.R.A.H. has also begun a relationship with Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey, a coalition on whose advisory team we sit in an effort to eradicate the problem of child sexual abuse in the state. Other partners we work with include Shelter Our Sisters, a nearby women’s shelter with whom we have worked closely to facilitate their sheltering of Jewish clients, most recently an Orthodox woman and her eight children; the Rachel Coalition, which provides DV services to Jewish women in the MetroWest area of the state; and the Shalom Task Force, which provides a host of domestic violence services in New York and whose hotline service we participate in. We are further looking to build relationships with YUCOnnects and Teach Our Children, other New York-based agencies whose work in the Orthodox Jewish community dovetails with our own.

In the immediate vicinity of Project S.A.R.A.H., there are other resources that clients could theoretically go to, such as the PCWC; but to date this has never happened, for reasons discussed above in question 3.

8. Could/should your program be replicated in other areas of the country? Why?
Project S.A.R.A.H. is certainly something that could and should be replicated in other areas. Domestic violence affects everyone, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. While there are many Jewish victims out there, there are not enough domestic violence programs which can serve Jewish communities in a culturally sensitive way and get the word out them that help is available – help that they would feel secure and comfortable seeking out. Bringing the kind of service we provide elsewhere is very realistic. Our school prevention program was in fact created by a similar program in Los Angeles, and we are franchising it from them. This is a program that can definitely be shared with other communities. And while there are other Jewish domestic violence agencies in existence, few of them offer a holistic approach as we do, with the backing and resources of the entire Jewish Family Service agency, as described above. As we know, the difficulties faced by victims can be numerous and varied, and a multipronged approach is usually needed to help them extricate themselves from the situation they are in. Thus, such agencies can partner up with local mental health agencies to provide a more well-rounded set of services. Furthermore, training community gatekeepers beyond the school, such as rabbis, physicians, and others, is an important way of making sure that victims have an access point to reach out for help and that these gatekeepers are working together with the rest of the system.

Finally, using members of the underserved community as part of the expert team in an important element that helps give credibility and authority to the agency.

9. Does your agency have a workplace policy that addresses domestic violence? If so, please include a copy.

See attached.

10. Has the agency and/or nominated program received VAWA funding?

Project S.A.R.A.H. was the recipient of the OVW Grant to Enhance Culturally and Linguistically Specific Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking in 2009-2010. The agency receives VAWA funding each year from the State of New Jersey as part of services to underserved populations.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKPLACE POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Jewish Family Service of Clifton (JFS) is committed to promoting the health and safety of its employees. This commitment includes the prevention and reduction of the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

While the JFS recognizes that both men and women are victims of domestic violence, the overwhelming majority of victims of domestic violence are women. In fact, domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in the United States.

The JFS recognizes that domestic violence is a workplace issue. Domestic violence does not stay at home when victims and perpetrators go to work. Victims may be especially vulnerable while they are at work. Domestic violence can compromise the safety of employees and directly interfere with the mission of the JFS by decreasing morale and productivity, as well as by increasing absenteeism and health costs.

For these reasons, the JFS has established this workplace domestic violence policy. The specific purposes of the policy are to:

- Create a supportive workplace environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing domestic violence issues and seeking assistance for domestic violence situations;
- Develop responsive policies and procedures to assist employees who are affected by domestic violence;
- Provide immediate assistance to victims;
- Provide assistance and/or disciplinary action to employees who are perpetrators of abuse; and
- Offer training on recognizing and responding to domestic violence.

This policy recognizes that an employer must grant reasonable and necessary leave from work, with or without pay, to an employee who is a victim to prepare for and attend court proceedings; receive medical treatment; attend to the medical treatment of a child, parent or spouse who is a victim; or obtain necessary services to remedy a crisis caused by domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. The necessity of the leave must be based upon the employee or the employee’s daughter, son, parent or spouse being a victim of violence, assault, sexual assault, stalking or any act that would support an order for protection from abuse.

II. DEFINITIONS

- Domestic Violence: A pattern of coercive behavior that is used by a person against family or household members to gain power and control over the other party in the relationship. This behavior may include any of the following: physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse and threats, stalking, isolation from friends and family, economic control, and destruction of personal property. Domestic violence occurs between people of all racial, economic, educational, and religious backgrounds. It occurs in heterosexual and same-sex relationships, between married and unmarried partners, between current and former partners, and between other family and household members.
• Batterer, Perpetrator, or Abuser: An individual who commits domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
• Sexual assault: An act of sexual violence whereby a party forces, coerces, or manipulates another to participate in unwanted sexual activity. This behavior may include stranger rape, date and acquaintance rape, marital or partner rape, incest, child sexual abuse, sexual contact, sexual harassment, ritual abuse, exposure, and voyeurism.
• Stalking: An unwanted course of conduct by one person directed toward another specific person that is intended to cause that person fear of harm, emotional distress or substantial inconvenience. Stalking may involve direct or indirect contact and may occur between intimate partners, acquaintances, or strangers. Stalking behaviors include but are not limited to: following a person; appearing at a person's home or workplace; making harassing phone calls; sending letters or e-mails; leaving written messages or objects; or vandalizing a person's property.
• Survivor or Victim: An individual subjected to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
• Workplace: An employee is considered to be in the workplace when the employee is conducting agency business, is in agency-owned or leased workspace, is using the facilities or services of the agency, is using agency resources or equipment, is using a vehicle that is owned or leased by the agency, is attending a work-related conference, or is traveling on behalf of the agency.
• Workplace Safety Plan: A strategy developed in collaboration with a victim to implement workplace safety options, including, but not limited to: setting up procedures for alerting security or police; temporary relocation of the victim to a secure area; voluntary temporary transfer or permanent relocation to a new work site; reassignment of parking space; escort for entry to and exit from the work site; responding to telephone, fax, e-mail, or mail harassment; and, keeping a photograph of the abuser or a copy of an existing court order in a confidential on-site location and providing copies to designated personnel.

III. PERSONS COVERED BY THIS POLICY

Persons covered by this policy include JFS employees, interns, contractors, volunteers, or temporary workers, in any workplace location.

IV. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The JFS recognizes and respects an employee’s right to privacy and need for confidentiality and autonomy. To the extent permitted by law and unless the substance of the employee’s disclosure demands otherwise, the JFS will maintain the confidentiality of an employee’s disclosure. Responders will share disclosures with the designated worker. However, unless necessary, the information will not be shared with other employees in the JFS. Whenever possible, the employee will be given notice of necessary further disclosures. Further disclosure may be necessary if, in the opinion of the person to whom the initial disclosure is made, an abuser presents a threat to the safety of any person, the employee has expressed homicidal or suicidal intentions, or there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of children or incapacitated or dependent adults.

V. RESPONSE AND ASSISTANCE
A. Disclosure; Requests for Information, Referral, and Assistance

The JFS will offer support and referrals for assistance to those employees who disclose concerns or request help. The JFS will designate trained persons to whom disclosures may be made. All employees wishing to discuss domestic violence issues are encouraged to speak with whomever they are most comfortable.

B. Response to Victims

1. Any person who is concerned about his or her safety at work should speak to a designated person or the executive director.
2. If domestic violence is occurring in the workplace, is affecting the performance of the victim or the victim's co-workers, or if the victim otherwise requests, the JFS will assist the victim. The JFS recognizes all persons' rights to privacy, autonomy, and safety, and the corresponding need to control the process following any disclosure. To the extent that disclosures do not implicate issues of workplace safety and performance, and to the extent permitted by law and this policy, the JFS's response will be guided by the expressed wishes of the victim, and may include the following:
   a. Referring individuals to appropriate agencies and services, including EAP, local domestic violence projects and sexual assault centers, legal services, law enforcement, medical and counseling services;
   b. Assessment of the victim's need to be absent from work;
   c. Providing information regarding employment benefits, including processes for changing insurance benefits, requesting paid and unpaid leave, and changing pay arrangements (such as direct deposit of paychecks)
   d. Developing an individualized workplace safety plan in conjunction with appropriate agencies and services.
3. If any person is at immediate risk in the workplace, the JFS will follow protocols for notifying law enforcement and follow applicable emergency or safety procedures.
4. Victims are encouraged to disclose the existence of Temporary and Permanent Orders for Protection from Abuse or Harassment to the designated persons, especially when the order includes a provision that the perpetrator is not to have contact with the victim at the victim's place of employment. The responder will follow the provisions of this policy with respect to response and assistance to the victim, and address the issue of workplace safety plans with the victim as appropriate.

C. Response to Employees Concerned about Domestic Violence

1. If an employee has a concern that a co-worker is a victim of domestic violence, the employee is encouraged to contact the designated person to discuss the concern. The responder will work with the concerned employee to determine the appropriate response. In addition, the responder may discuss the matter with the executive director if there is an immediate safety risk to anyone in the workplace, or if the perceived problem has an effect on the workplace, including but not limited to safety, job performance, and morale. The responder will maintain the confidentiality of the disclosing employee to the extent permitted by law and this policy.
2. If an employee experiences or witnesses violence or threats of violence in the workplace, the employee should report the incident to a supervisor or the Chief of Operations immediately.

3. Employees may wish to seek assistance and information from a responder before speaking with a perceived victim, but this approach is not required. If an employee discusses concerns about safety with a victim, the employee should only offer help, not judgment. The employee should also:
   a. Refer the victim to appropriate agencies and services, including EAP, local domestic violence projects and sexual assault centers, legal services, law enforcement, medical and counseling services; and
   b. Remind the employee about this policy; and
   c. Encourage the victim to seek assistance when addressing personal and workplace safety issues.

D. Documentation

The executive director will maintain copies of orders for protection from abuse and other documents that demonstrate workplace domestic violence in a confidential file. The JFS will develop necessary protocols related to maintaining records of domestic violence disclosures.

VI. WORK PERFORMANCE

In instances where the JFS is aware that a victim has performance or conduct problems as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, the JFS will offer support and an opportunity to correct the problems. Supervisors may develop a work plan with the employee to assist and support the employee in meeting performance expectations.

The supervisor, in collaboration with the employee and any other appropriate agencies, should allow a reasonable amount of time away from work for the employee to obtain assistance regarding domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. This time may be drawn from sick or vacation leave, unpaid leave, or a leave bank, as determined appropriate and available.

Nothing in this policy alters the authority of this JFS to establish performance expectations, counsel employees, impose discipline, reassign duties, place an employee on leave, or take other action as it deems appropriate.

Information or documents pertaining to a victim's involvement in a domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking situation will be kept in a separate confidential file and will not be considered for purposes of hiring, transfer or promotion.

VII. PERPETRATORS

A. The JFS encourages employees who are perpetrators to voluntarily seek assistance from any of the community resources.

B. If an employee discloses that he or she is or has been a perpetrator of domestic violence, the responder should refer the employee to a local state-certified Batterers' Intervention Project. In
every situation where an employee makes this disclosure, the executive director or other appropriate individual will immediately be included in the discussion related to the disclosure.

C. If an employee is concerned that a co-worker is a perpetrator of domestic violence, the employee should notify the designated person. The employee shall not confront the co-worker directly. Instead, the designated person will discuss the issue with the executive director who will decide how best to address the situation.

D. Employees who, while on-duty, engage in behaviors that constitute domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. In some cases, where there is a connection between off-duty conduct of this nature and one's employment with the agency, that off-duty conduct may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

1. On-Duty: Any employee who commits domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking in the workplace (see definitions) will be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
   The use of agency resources or equipment in connection with domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking is prohibited. Any employee who misuses any agency resources such as work time, work place telephones, a firearm, facsimile machines, mail, electronic mail, a state vehicle, state credit card or other means to commit domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking at any time or place, will be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2. Off-Duty: Any employee who is: (i) found by the JFS to have engaged in domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking; or (ii) arrested, convicted, or named as a defendant in a protective order as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination when such action has a nexus/connection to their employment with the agency.

E. Criminal charges and protective orders: Any employee who is a named defendant in a civil or criminal action involving domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking must disclose any order regarding protection from abuse or harassment, or any condition of bail or probation applicable to the employee that includes:

1. Conditions that may interfere in any way with the employee's ability to perform job duties;
2. Conditions prohibiting or limiting contact with other employees of this JFS; or
3. Conditions prohibiting or limiting contact with agency employees with whom there is a work relationship.

The employee must disclose the above information to the executive director at the beginning of the employee's next scheduled work day after entry of the order or imposition of applicable condition of bail or probation. Failure to provide the above information may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VII. NON-RETIATION

No supervisor shall take any retaliatory action against an employee for making a complaint or observation of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking or otherwise asserting rights or responsibilities under this policy or relevant laws. Any manager or supervisor who is found to have taken retaliatory action against an employee in violation of this section may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
VIII. CONCLUSION

The JFS is committed to providing a supportive workplace environment free of domestic violence. The JFS will work to respond and provide immediate assistance to employees affected by abuse.

Employees with questions about this policy or ideas to improve this policy should contact the designated person.

Appendix
Designated Domestic Violence Responder: Elke Stein – ext. 154
PROJECT S.A.R.A.H.

SEMI-FINALIST

2\textsuperscript{ND} ROUND INFORMATION
August 1, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Passaic County Women’s Center, the state supported lead domestic violence/sexual assault agency in Passaic County, is pleased to recommend that Project S.A.R.A.H. be awarded the Roth award for services to an underserved population.

Project S.A.R.A.H. has been a partner to the Passaic County Women’s Center (PCWC) since its inception when we sat together at the New Jersey Jewish Women’s Consortium on Domestic Violence and decided to apply as partners for the VAWA funding for services to underserved populations. That partnership has flourished and developed into an ongoing relationship with constant improvement in the levels of services that Project S.A.R.A.H. has made available to members of the target community.

Project SARAH has expanded the work of domestic violence to include victims of sexual abuse and have begun a school based abuse prevention program that has already had an impact on over 3,000 children. Their staff has made themselves available to train our domestic violence response teams in the needs of Jewish women and they have always been responsive to any request for cooperative programming.

They have cultivated a climate of mutual respect between being a trusted provider for the members of a community that had long denied the existence of the problem of intimate partner abuse and those of us who have been leaders in the general arena of service provision for victims. They always deliver twice as much service as they are paid for and would benefit greatly from receipt of the Roth award to allow them to continue the high quality, transformational work they have undertaken in New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Susan Fleisch, MSW, LCSW
Director, Passaic County Women’s Center
August 2, 2012

Mary Byron Celebrating Solutions Roth Award

To whom it may concern:

The New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women is pleased to recommend that Project S.A.R.A.H. be awarded the Roth award for services to an underserved population. Project S.A.R.A.H. has as one of its missions, integration of the services available to the general community of domestic violence victims with the services that are needed by the members of the orthodox Jewish community, a group that requires intensive outreach and education to enable them to access needed services. In order to facilitate that work the leadership of Project S.A.R.A.H. has sought and obtained inclusion in the New Jersey Coalition, the statewide organization representing shelters and community based agencies dedicated to serving victims throughout New Jersey. This collaborative involvement has enabled Project S.A.R.A.H. to access the public shelters through relationships with every director. The staff has trained the staff at every shelter in understanding the needs of the target population and has been available whenever a Jewish woman needed shelter to facilitate her entry into the system.

Project S.A.R.A.H. has also provided “Kosher Kits,” non-perishable foods and supplies for any victim and her family to every shelter in New Jersey. Their staff are always available to arrange for ongoing supports and for training and problem solving. The project S.A.R.A.H. staff have participated in numerous statewide training programs sponsored by the coalition as both trainers to support the access needs of their target group and as learners to insure that their skills are state of the art and that their clients are receiving the best services available in the state. They have been consistent in their service provision and have made a difference for the clients they serve and for the state-wide understanding of the needs of Jewish victims and their families.

The New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women strongly supports Project S.A.R.A.H. being given the Roth award.

If you require any additional information please feel free to contact me at (609) 584-8107 or walker@njcbw.org.

Warmest professional regards,

Tay Walker, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women
1670 Whitehorse-Hamilton Square Road
Trenton • New Jersey 08690
609-584-8107 • Fax: 609-584-9750
Website: www.njcbw.org
August 2, 2012

Re: Mary Byron Celebrating Solutions Roth Award

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Project S.A.R.A.H for the Mary Byron Celebrating Solutions Roth Award for the underserved populations. They are a domestic abuse project funded by the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Stop the Violence Against Women Grants Program in conjunction with Passaic County Women’s Center, the Jewish Family Service and Children’s Center of Greater Clifton/Passaic as well as private donations and foundations.

Unfortunately, domestic violence continues to be a problem throughout our communities. Project S.A.R.A.H. addresses the unmet needs of women by offering counseling, shelter and healing from professionals within their community. This is a vital program for women who are often not even aware that they need a place to turn for support and help. They are truly in the forefront of serving underserved populations.

Project S.A.R.A.H. embodies the spirit of this award. I hope they will be given full consideration as this year’s honoree.

Sincerely,

Loretta Weinberg
Senator, District 37
E-Mail: senweinberg@NJLEG.Org
Mary Byron Project / Celebrating Solutions Roth Award

Respond to the following questions:

a) *What is the approximate number of individuals served annually by the applicant or nominee?*

Project S.A.R.A.H. began in 1996. At that time, denial that domestic violence and sexual abuse even existed in Orthodox families was widespread in the Orthodox community. As word spread that Orthodox victims of domestic violence could find a culturally competent source to address their unique concerns, rabbis became more comfortable knowing that they had one address where they would find victim services and providers who understood the religious and cultural needs of Orthodox families.

In 2010 Project S.A.R.A.H. added services for child and adult victims of sexual abuse since many victims of domestic violence also presented with a history of sexual abuse. Currently, direct services are provided annually to 60 women who have been victims of domestic violence. More than 100 families representing victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse receive services from Project S.A.R.A.H..

Project S.A.R.A.H.’s direct services include counseling, support groups, access to pro bono legal services and vocational services. Emergency services provided include psychiatric evaluations and accommodations for religious observance in shelters including “Kosher Kits” which contain food and religious items which are a source of comfort to a woman who must seek the support of a shelter – even on the Sabbath.

Since Project S.A.R.A.H. is recognized as the preeminent provider of services to Orthodox Jewish victims we receive calls for help from all parts of New Jersey. Shelter workers from all over New Jersey receive training from Project S.A.R.A.H. to help them understand the unique issues faced by Orthodox victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The Aleinu Program, Project S.A.R.A.H.’s prevention and education program, reaches 3,000 school-children in Jewish day-schools along with their teachers, school staff and parents.

The annual “Many Voices – One Message” community awareness campaign is supported by 200 New Jersey rabbis. They commit to speaking from the pulpit, providing education about our prevention services. They also learn how members of the clergy can best speak about, and serve, the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.
b) How many paid staff and volunteers are used to administer the nominated program?

There are 3 staff members and 30 volunteers. Volunteers help to provide training for our school education and abuse prevention programs.

c) Is the composition of your Board of Directors and staff reflective of your underserved population?

The board is composed of women from the Jewish community. Many of these women are Orthodox and a number of them are wives of Rabbis who are prominent in Jewish communal affairs. The staff of Project S.A.R.A.H. is comprised of women who are members of the Orthodox community. All staff members receive training which enables them understand religious and cultural issues that are important to the underserved population.

d) Are there past awards, accolades, and grants furnished upon the applicant or nominee that would further exemplify its success in combating domestic violence?

Project S.A.R.A.H. was awarded a grant from the US Department of Justice for Culturally Specific Services which mandated us to serve the Orthodox population of New Jersey. We have received VAWA funding for several years to support our programs for Orthodox victims. Videos which we have produced (for the Federal award) have been screened by groups from many states and we have allowed their use as a training tool for other agencies. Project S.A.R.A.H. received a grant from the National Council of Jewish Women (Bergen County) as well as a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Eileen (Elke) Stein, LCSW, the Director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, was honored with the “Wynona M. Lipman Empowerment Award” by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division on Women for “advocacy on behalf of Jewish victims of domestic violence”.

These awards have recognized Project S.A.R.A.H. for both victim services and for prevention and educational programs.

e) If funding were not an issue, what (if any) changes or additions would you make to your program in the future?

With greater funding Project S.A.R.A.H. would enhance prevention services and education in the target community. At every level, from sexual abuse awareness in schools to training for “Kallah” teachers (married women who teach young women who are about to be married and instruct them in laws of Family Purity which are a cornerstone of Jewish marriage), prevention is an asset that can always be strengthened. Project S.A.R.A.H. has to charge a fee to bring the abuse prevention program to schools. In this time of constrained budgets, we would be able to bring our message to more children if we could eliminate those fees.
In the area of direct services to victims, we would provide more legal services, in both civil and religious issues. Women who feel that they are trapped in a marriage where domestic violence is present would be free to explore options if they had access to legal counsel.

The Aleinu Child Safety Program currently reaches children from Pre-K through 4th grade. We have received numerous requests to bring this vital program to children in grades 5 through 8. Increased funding would allow us to develop this culturally appropriate curriculum and deliver it to schools throughout New Jersey. This would also serve as a replicable national model, since presently there are no child safety programs which meets the needs of the Orthodox community for children in these grades.

*What are the long term goals for your program?*

Our long term goals are to continue to work with rabbinic leadership to impart the message of the need to create and maintain healthy relationships for their congregants. We seek to develop funding streams that will enable us to continue this vital work without the concern about financial sustainability. Working with members of the legal community and the Jewish religious community we will work to develop a panel of resources that will be available to women beyond an initial pro bono consultation.

*We are interested in hearing both your practical goals in addition to any lofty dreams you might have for the future.*

The gatekeepers of the Orthodox community, including the rabbis, youth leaders, school personnel, social workers, doctors and others, need continuing support and training in order to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

We envision a time in the future when every young person receives meaningful training on healthy relationships. We would have people in every community to serve as resources to men and women who don’t know how to change behavior and don’t know that the relationships they are in are killing their souls. We see a network of wise advisors. They will be well trained, sensitive to both men and women, and supportive of a culture in which mutual respect is the norm - not the exception.

The work on these attitudinal shifts begins at such a young age that it becomes inconceivable to use power and control as a tactic of influence.
Project S.A.R.A.H.
925 Allwood Road
Clifton, NJ 07012

In addition to the questions and requirements listed in your letter, your responses to the questions below will help the final review committee to better understand the value of your program and services. Your answers to these questions should be as brief and focused as you think is needed. Any requested supplemental resources should be attached.

1. In the application you state that “no fees are charged for participation in the program”. Is there a specific “program” with a curriculum, certain number of sessions, etc., or are you referring to services in general?

We are referring to the service in general – to be a recipient of counseling, case management, referral to our vocational counselor, the pro-bono initial legal consultations, the training for community members and organizations – we charge no fee for any of these services.

2. The application speaks of the “phenomenon of spiritual abuse”. In what ways do you attempt to combat it? Have you developed any treatment procedures, prevention or education efforts specific to this problem? If so, please describe them.

Spiritual abuse is simply another method that an abusive spouse/partner can use to exert power and control – If it framed in the guise of “religious” practice it can become a more difficult force for the abused person to counter. For example, if the husband is a trained rabbinic scholar and says that a good wife is obedient and does not question her husband as it says in the text...what can she say? Our attempts to counter this are based on our work on developing collaborative relationships with rabbis throughout New Jersey. We train them annually as a group and individually and in small groups whenever possible. These trained rabbis are resources for the women whose husbands are giving them these messages. In addition, key members of the Project S.A.R.A.H. staff are from the religious community themselves. They can respond from positions of knowledge about the inappropriate use of the spiritual messages. Finally, in some cases the abusers humiliate the partners by forcing them to violate core spiritual beliefs. This is very difficult for the victims to publicly acknowledge. The groups for abused women provide safe environments in which there is mutual support from other women who may be subjected to the same power and control tactics.
3. Please provide information about the services a typical victim would receive from S.A.R.A.H. Do you offer information on legal remedies and options, safety planning, court advocacy, legal representation or victim/survivor counseling? What efforts are made to address the safety issues of victims?

A victim always receives safety planning as the first tier of service once they come to the program. Even those who only receive phone support will be given safety planning and referrals to legal options – restraining orders, etc. We have connections with all of the local battered women’s shelters and their court advocacy programs and refer clients to the court advocates if they need those services. Our clients are connected to a panel of pro-bono legal services for initial consultations regarding their rights. Project S.A.R.A.H. staff will provide court preparation, explanations about restraining orders – both temporary and permanent, and recommendations for legal counsel. Clients are also informed about the availability of confidential shelters and assisted in accessing them throughout the State of New Jersey. Each shelter has a Kosher Kit and training in dealing with the cultural needs of Jewish victims.

4. Please share more information on your prevention efforts. What efforts are made to address the abusive behavior of the men in the community?

Our prevention efforts are multi-pronged. The first level is having the Rabbis speak annually about abuse from the pulpit. This begins the opening up of dialogue and the awareness that abusive behaviors are unacceptable. The synagogue is the center of orthodox Jewish life and is the vehicle for reaching men. An indicator that this effort has been effective is the ever increasing numbers of referrals from Rabbis of men who they deem as abusers. Project S.A.R.A.H. runs a group for men that meets on a weekly basis and addresses their abusive behaviors. In addition, there has been an increased recognition of beginning the educational efforts at younger ages. We have introduced a personal safety program for elementary age children in Jewish schools. A key component of that program is training the parents and staff before introducing the material to the children. In these sessions patterns of abusive behaviors are identified, the need for open communication, and the availability of resources are identified. For those young people who are beginning the dating process a series of videos has been developed. These videos are made in culturally sensitive ways – depicting the participants in appropriate dress and without physical contact with the opposite gender. These videos introduce the ideas of emotional abuse, isolation, power and control, stalking and sexual abuse in 8 – 10 minute trigger films. These films are shown at community groups, mother daughter programs, to youth groups, on college campuses with Jewish student programs.
5. Does Project S.A.R.A.H. have a working relationship with local law enforcement and the court system?

*Project S.A.R.A.H. has provided training to judges, Domestic Violence Response Teams, police departments. We are members of the Passaic County Working group – the county domestic violence team that works with the courts, the crime victim unit and the local battered women’s shelter.*

6. Your application states that you are “disseminating this message (that the problem exists and victims are suffering) in a way that is culturally appropriate and that can be heard by the relevant parties.” Please share information on how the message is disseminated. What specific methods are employed to encourage victims to come forward, acknowledge the problem, speak openly and take necessary action?

*As stated previously, having the Rabbinic community speak openly about this topic from the pulpit has been an extremely powerful method of encouraging victims to come forward. Once the problem is publicly acknowledged the barriers to seeking help are lowered. In addition, many community “gatekeepers” are trained – mental health workers, rabbis wives, ritual bath attendants, school principals, hair dressers who provide wig services (hair covering is a requirement for many orthodox women) pediatricians and ob-gyn practices. These individuals are now sensitive to the unspoken signs that women are in abusive situations and can make referrals for service. There are cards disseminating the availability of hotline services in locations that Jewish women frequent – synagogue restrooms, ritual baths, kosher restaurants. Project S.A.R.A.H. has produced several videos on which Jewish women who are victims speak up about their life stories. They describe in eloquent detail the ways in which they lived as victims, the steps that they took to move towards a different life and the ways in which they now live. Rabbinic leaders appear on the videos, lending their support to the words of these victims now survivors. Project S.A.R.A.H. is constantly looking for new and creative ways to reach as many victims as possible. This year we began a facebook page.*
In reply refer to: 4077550279
Nov. 15, 2011 LTR 4168C 0
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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE & CHILDRENS
CENTER OF CLIFTON-PASSAIC INC
PASSAIC INC
% MARK RICKLIS
925 ALLWOOD ROAD
CLIFTON NJ 07012-1941

Employer Identification Number: 20-5928151
Person to Contact: Sophia Brown
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your Sep. 26, 2011, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in December 2007.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Cindy Thomas
Manager, EO Determinations
Jewish Family Service - Project S.A.R.A.H. Budget estimate 12/26/11

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