MARY BYRON FOUNDATION

Celebrating Solutions Award
Nomination Form

Legal Name of Organization: Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Inc.

Address: 1366 E. Thomas Road, Suite 108

City/State/Zip: Phoenix, AZ 85014

Contact Person: Mary Lynn Kasunic

Title: President and CEO

Phone number: (602) 264-2255    Fax number: (602) 230-9132

E-mail address: kasunic@aaahx.org

Description of organization: The Area Agency on Aging, established in 1974, plans, coordinates, develops, funds, administers and delivers services and programs for over 80,000 people in numerous client populations including:
- Victims of late-life domestic violence
- Adults, ages 18 to 59, with disabilities and long-term needs
- Persons of all ages who have a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS
- Older adults, 60 years of age and over
- Family caregivers of older adults

Geographical area served: Maricopa County and surrounding area

Is organization tax-exempt under IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines? Yes No

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government? Yes No

Signature of contact person: Mary Lynn Kasunic

Date: 9-10-03
1. Mission of organization.
The Area Agency on Aging’s mission is “to secure, promote, and provide essential services to enhance the quality of life in a diverse and changing society. We meet this challenge through advocacy, coordination, building alliances, and promoting public awareness, guided by integrity, vision, and sustained commitment.” The Area Agency plans, coordinates, develops, funds, administers and delivers services and programs for over 80,000 people in numerous client populations in Maricopa County including:
- Victims of late-life domestic violence
- Older adults, 60 years of age and over
- Adults, ages 18 to 59, with disabilities and long-term care needs
- Persons of all ages who have a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS
- Family caregivers of older adults

Our material, staff and programs are designed to serve a wide variety of ethnic, religious and racial cultures. The geographic area dictates a large Hispanic population but we also serve a large refugee population. In order to efficiently serve their diverse needs, we have staff fluent in many languages and customs including Hispanic, Bosnian, Russian, Vietnamese, and a number of Arabic dialects.

2. Most innovative aspects of the program.
The Area Agency on Aging’s experience in working with victims of late-life domestic violence has revealed a serious, yet largely hidden problem of family violence against elders. Many victims have silently endured abuse for decades. Not only are older victims less likely to come forward for help than younger victims, but they have specific needs that are not addressed by existing community shelters. Very often, older victims are turned away from traditional transitional housing programs because those programs are targeted to families with young children.

Unfortunately, mistreatment and family violence against older adults is a growing problem. National studies indicate that as many as one in three women will be a victim of domestic violence at some time in her life. In 2002, 15% of all reported domestic violence related deaths in Arizona were victims aged 50 and over; through April 1 of this year, 26% of all victims were over 50.

To address the unique needs of victims of late-life domestic violence, the Area Agency on Aging has initiated, developed, and implemented multiple programs. One such program established in conjunction with the Glendale Human Services Council is an innovative transitional housing program, entitled DOVES, which stands for Domestic Older Victims Empowerment and Safety.

The DOVES facility is the first permanent transitional housing program in Maricopa County, in Arizona, and possibly in the United States for victims of late-life domestic violence. While residing in the DOVES facility, older victims regain their well-being and independence by receiving safe, affordable housing, counseling, and services designed to help the older victim of abuse become self-sufficient and move on to a life free of violence.

Unique, award-winning videos were written and produced by the Area Agency and distributed throughout the country to PBS stations and domestic violence programs. The Dance and Nuestro
Baile, which is the Spanish version, dramatically depict the story of a victim of late-life domestic violence.

3a. Program implementation.
Since 1990, the Area Agency has created many innovative programs to serve the needs of older victims of abuse and collaborates with community partners to provide free emergency housing for up to two weeks. Unfortunately, when a victim’s two-week stay in emergency housing is over, almost half of them return home to the abuser because there is no other housing alternative available to them. Two weeks is not enough time to become self-sufficient.

What seemed the obvious solution was to provide a transitional housing program that would allow abuse victims to stay for a longer period of time and receive services that would allow them more opportunities to live violence-free; thus the DOVES program was born. DOVES began with a highly successful 18-month pilot transitional housing program, utilizing rental property. In order to serve more individuals in a cost-effective manner on an on-going basis, it was decided to acquire a suitable property rather than continue paying rent.

3b. Barriers the organization had to overcome.
In addition to the financial barriers inherent in providing shelter, food, counseling and support, there was the logistical barrier of where and how to locate a safe and suitable facility. Originally apartments were rented for program participants; it then became obvious the need was so great that more had to be done. Therefore, a 17-unit complex was located and purchased.

Another barrier is the basic belief that traditional shelters are adequate to address the needs of any battered individual. In truth, traditional shelters are often over-crowded and unable to cope with the unique problems that face older victims of domestic violence. For example, traditional shelters most often deal with individuals with younger children; whereas victims of late-life domestic violence have grown children who have separated themselves from the abused parent, resulting in an entirely different set of problems.

Learning to manage and operate the facility was another barrier that has been removed by utilizing board members and members of the community who are experienced in housing, property management and rental issues.

3c. How we marshaled the necessary resources for implementation.
In order to secure contributions, the Area Agency created a support organization called ELDERfriends: A Foundation for Older Adults. This foundation assists the Area Agency by developing philanthropic support from the private sector. To date, ELDERfriends has secured over $100,000 in donations and pledges from board members, staff and other personal contacts. Additional grant requests and personal solicitations are being made on an on-going basis.

A $1 Million forgivable loan was received from the City of Phoenix to purchase and renovate the property.

$291,500 was received from the Arizona Department of Housing for renovations.

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust awarded the DOVES project a total of $275,000 payable over three years for operations.
The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust gave the Area Agency $75,000 for DOVES operating expenses.

4. Proof the program works.
DOVES is a program that really works. It provides the means by which victims of late-life domestic violence can escape their abuser and achieve self-sufficiency, finally free of violence. The program’s effectiveness is best illustrated by the following stories of two DOVES clients. Once tormented by violence, these two individuals have now left the DOVES program and lead the lives they so richly deserve; safe, independent and violence-free.

Example One
Client One entered DOVES as a victim of serious physical, emotional and verbal abuse. She left her husband several times before, but returned when she could no longer make it on her own financially. Client One knew she needed to get away before she was more severely injured, or killed. Her family doctor referred her to the Area Agency on Aging’s local support group for victims of late-life domestic violence. There she learned about her options, one of which was the DOVES Transitional Housing Program.

Client One was fortunate to have her own vehicle and slowly began stashing some smaller personal belongings in her vehicle. One morning she left home for a ‘doctor appointment’ and never went back. She was extremely grateful that DOVES was able to provide a safe place for her to stay while attending support groups and receiving services that enabled her to move into her own place a year later.

This same woman, once shy and fearful, has become a DOVES spokesperson! She’s given potential funders interviews, she’s given tours of her DOVES apartment, and has done several media interviews. You can now find this happily transformed woman handing out DOVES program brochures, talking to people about the program, doing group presentations, and remaining involved with other DOVES clients.

Example Two
Client Two was with her abuser for 20 years. He had successfully estranged her from her family and did not allow her to have any friends. He purchased for her the basics that he thought she needed. He even had all the assets in his name in order to stop her from getting possession if she left him. He had convinced she couldn’t survive without him, particularly financially. Indeed, each of the many times she managed to flee his abuse, she returned because she had no source of income. His control was complete.

When the abuse escalated to life-threatening levels, she knew she had to somehow get help. The local police department gave her numerous referrals, one of which led her to the Area Agency on Aging’s domestic violence program.

After attending support groups, Client Two left her abusive partner and entered the DOVES housing facility. Her children were immediately supportive but wondered how long she would stay away from him this time. With the services provided in the DOVES program, she has been away for over a year. Client Two now receives Social Security and has moved into her own small home near her daughters.
An eloquent summary is this quote from a DOVES resident, “DOVES saved my life. If it weren’t for this program, I’d be dead...or homeless, living in my car.”

5. Key partners and their roles.
Under the leadership of the Area Agency on Aging, the Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (MEAPA) was formed and now boasts a membership of over 100. Prevention and public awareness of elder abuse has been the focus of MEAPA since its inception in 1993. MEAPA’s first campaign, “Elder Abuse Hurts Us All,” raised public awareness and led the alliance to address other elder abuse issues including late-life domestic violence, emergency housing for victims, financial exploitation, and guardianship.

City of Mesa Police Department develops strategies for prevention with outreach, education and support services for victims and families.

Foundation for Senior Living provides consultation and program development assistance, space for meetings and support groups, information and referral, and social services.

Senior Horizons provides mental health evaluations.

6. Could/should the program be replicated and why.
Yes, the program could definitely be replicated and it should be. The proven benefits are too significant to ignore. Women 50 and older are among the many victims of domestic violence. Many times, this population has silently endured abuse for 30, 40 or 50 years or more. When these victims were young, domestic violence was a dirty family secret that no one talked about. It is not possible to recover from decades of abuse in a few short weeks.

The victims of late-life domestic violence face unique challenges in attempting to protect themselves and leave their abusers. Frequently, these victims have no access to or control of family resources, have never worked outside the home, and lack marketable job skills. They often lack transportation options, have very little community or family support, and encounter cultural and religious obstacles to divorce. Victims of late-life domestic violence have distinct needs and require programs designed for them, including emergency housing, transitional housing, support groups and supportive services.

While traditional domestic violence shelters are effective for the younger victim, they’re not equipped to provide the services an older victim requires. An older victim takes more time to recover than a younger more resilient victim. The elder victim is less equipped to make it in today’s world and has far fewer opportunities than the younger victim. All of these problems can be overcome with programs designed for the older victim. Statistics show that wherever there are domestic violence victims, approximately 26% of them are over the age of 50.
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Item 4) –

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

Overall, the Area Agency on Aging, Region One serves more than 80,000 individuals annually through its more than 50 programs and services. The DOVES program currently serves more than 125 victims of late-life domestic violence or elder abuse annually through its combined components of support groups, emergency housing, and transitional housing. This number continues to grow each year as a result of our outreach efforts and by word-of-mouth among the victims themselves.

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

Awards

The Area Agency on Aging, Region One has written and produced two videos depicting the story of an older victim of domestic violence. *The Dance* and its Spanish version, *Nuestro Baile*, have received a total of 20 awards, including:

- U.S. International Film & Video Awards, Silver Screen Award – Social Issues Category, 2003
- New York Festivals, Finalist Award – Human Relations, 2003
- Videographer Awards, Awards of Excellence – Foreign Language, Creativity/Writing and other categories, 2003
- Communicator Awards, Crystal Awards of Excellence – Creativity/On-Camera Talent and Videos for Sale Categories, 2003
- MCA-1 Video Festival – Award of Excellence – External Communication; Special Achievement (awarded at judge’s discretion) - Scriptwriting
- Aurora Awards, Gold Award – Issue Awareness/Training Category, 2003
- AIME Awards, Silver Award – External Communication, 2003
- Omni Awards, Bronze Award – Writing Category, 2003
- Telly Awards, Bronze Award – Social Issues Category, 2003
- IABC Cactus Quills, Award of Merit, 2003
- Media Communications Association – International Award, 2002
- National Mature Media Awards, Gold Award, 1999
- Regional Award of Excellence, Maricopa Ass’n of Governments, 1999
- Silver Reel Award, International Television Association, 1999
- Telly Award, 1999
- Communicator Awards, Crystal Award of Excellence, 1999
Other printed materials created and published by the Area Agency on Aging, Region One addressing late-life domestic violence and elder abuse have also been recognized with the following awards:

- Domestic Violence Does Not Respect Age™ English/Spanish Brochure – Health Information Awards, Merit Award, 1998
- Domestic Violence Does Not Respect Age™ Poster – Health Information Awards, Merit Award, 1998
- Domestic Violence Does Not Respect Age™ Magazine/Newspaper Article – National Mature Media Awards, Merit Award, 1998

Accolades

The Area Agency on Aging, Region One Executive Director has been invited to make numerous presentations related to the issues of late-life domestic violence and elder abuse. Among them are:


Grants

- City of Phoenix – A $1,000,000 forgivable loan to purchase and renovate the DOVES transitional housing facility.
- Arizona Department of Housing – A forgivable loan of $291,500 for DOVES facility renovations.
- The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust – A grant of $275,000 over three years in support of the DOVES transitional housing program.

- Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust – A grant of $75,000 for a one-year period. The Area Agency has been invited to submit a proposal for an additional two-year grant period.

- Wells Fargo Bank – A $25,000 grant to support the DOVES program.

- The Area Agency has also received several grants of smaller amounts totaling more than $54,000 from banks, foundations and community organizations to support the on-going operations of the DOVES program.

c) How will the agency use the Celebrating Solutions Award funding?

An award of $10,000 from the Mary Byron Foundation will help support the DOVES transitional housing program for year 2004-2005. Costs of the program include not only the expenses related to providing older victims a safe place to live, but also the costs associated with providing critical case management and vital support services.
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Item 5) –

a) What percentage of your population of victims is male?

Because reporting agencies use different criteria and methods for compiling statistics on domestic violence and elder abuse, estimates based on gender are limited and vary widely. For example:

- The U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) reports that women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. The USDOJ also reports that in 92% of all domestic violence incidents, crimes are committed by men against women.

- A report by the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence indicates that of the 87 domestic violence related deaths in Arizona in 2003, at least 25% of victims were 50 years of age or older. Of those, roughly 14% were male. (The report does not indicate age and/or gender for several of the victims, so these figures are estimates.)

- Of the 4,989 cases of domestic violence or abuse (to anyone age 18 or older) reported to Adult Protective Services in Maricopa County for the year ending June 30, 2003, 86% were individuals age 50 or older. Of the total cases reported, 34.9% were male, but the report does not break that statistic down by age group.

The percentage of older male clients served in the DOVES program has varied between 5% and 10% throughout the program. The first client we placed in emergency housing and then into our DOVES transitional housing facility was male. A support group for men was formed early in the program, but did not sustain itself due to the low number of men in the program at any one time. Case management is provided to male victims on an individual basis. Indications are that men in general are more reluctant than women to come forward and report abuse. As outreach efforts continue and same-sex relationships become less hidden in our society, we may see an increase in the number of older male victims we serve in the DOVES program.

b) Do you offer legal assistance to enable victims to access criminal justice solutions, including civil protection?

The DOVES case managers provide assistance to emergency housing clients in obtaining Orders of Protection and conducting civil stand-bys. They also refer DOVES clients to the Arizona Senior Citizens Law Project for free legal assistance. The Legal Advocacy Hotline, run by the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, is another excellent resource to which DOVES clients are directed for help.
c) Do your services differ when you find a victim who is being abused/neglected by his or her children? Do you find a significant number of these victims?

It was initially expected that victims of abuse and neglect by a child would have different service needs than those abused by an intimate partner. Case management and support group interactions through the DOVES program have shown, however, that the dynamics of domestic violence are similar regardless of who is perpetrating the crime. Isolation, power and control issues, fear of retaliation and intimidation are factors that need to be addressed by all domestic violence victims. And yes, a significant number of the victims served in the DOVES program have been abused by their children. Between 25% and 30% of the victims served fall into this category.

d) What is your relationship with traditional domestic violence shelters in your area?

The Area Agency on Aging, through its DOVES program, has been very active in promoting the issues of late-life domestic violence and elder abuse among the traditional domestic violence shelters in Maricopa County. Area Agency program staff have provided training to shelter staff on the dynamics of late-life domestic violence, the aging process, and community resources for older adults. Several of the shelters in Maricopa County have provided referrals to the DOVES program, both for support group participation and transitional housing opportunities in the DOVES facility.
February 16, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

The Foundation For Senior Living is committed to assisting victims of elder abuse and late life domestic violence through the DOVES program. We support the efforts of the Area Agency on Aging and the DOVES program in their endeavors to provide safe transitional housing options for older victims. The Foundation For Senior Living pledges $5000 per year of support through in-kind donation of the following:

- Consultation and program development assistance
- Space for meetings, support groups and other gatherings as available.
- Information and referral, assistance with care management and resource development through the Foundation For Senior Living’s Pathways program
- Home Care and social services for individuals who qualify.
- Donations of home supplies (i.e. towels, sheets, pillows, kitchen utensils and bathroom supplies) as available through a donation program with Bed, Bath and Beyond.

We look forward to partnering with the DOVES Program in developing and providing transitional housing for older victims.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Guy Mikkelsen
Executive Director

1201 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85014
Phone (602) 265-1300
Fax (602) 265-1838
February 17, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

For the past 10 years, the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence has worked closely with the Area Agency on Aging, Region One to address and prevent domestic violence in our community.

The Area Agency’s commitment to meeting the needs of late-life domestic violence victims is unwavering. Through their DOVES transitional housing program, they have developed an innovative and unique approach to providing a continuum of care to older victims.

The Area Agency’s leadership efforts demonstrate a commitment to improve family health outcomes and reduce violence in our community. Their continued focus on the health and safety of older victims of domestic violence are to be encouraged and lauded. Their extensive work and community collaborations in violence prevention and treatment have had an impact on numerous lives. The Area Agency’s work extends the commitment and mission of the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence beyond those who come through our doors. The Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence supports and encourages the Area Agency on Aging in its important work on behalf of older victims.

Sincerely,

Becky Martin, MAOM
Director of Administration
Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence
To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my continued admiration and strong support for the contribution the Area Agency on Aging makes to improve the quality of life of our citizens.

The City of Phoenix has recognized domestic violence as a critical problem that affects individuals of all ages. An investment in transforming the daily lives of older victims from fear and abuse to safety and independence has been made in the form of a unique housing program in Central Phoenix called DOVES. As a member of the Phoenix City Council, I am proud that the City of Phoenix approved a $1,000,000 forgivable loan to the Area Agency on Aging to establish the first transitional housing complex for older victims of domestic violence and elder abuse.

Again, I extend my enthusiastic professional and personal support to the Area Agency for serving older victims of abuse through its DOVES transitional housing program.

Sincerely,

Peggy Bilsten
Vice Mayor
Phoenix City Council
MARY BYRON FOUNDATION
Celebrating Solutions Award

Item 3) - Operating Budget for Last Fiscal Year
for DOVES Transitional Housing Program

Fiscal Year 2002-2003

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