



# OREGON

## COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

MARCH 2010

## OCFW WELCOMES RUSSIAN DELEGATION

The OCFW was proud to host a delegation of Russia's finest female leaders for a morning of discussions that ranged from union membership to women prisoners to running for elected office. Every year, visitors from around the world are invited to the United States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

Over 400 International Visitors come to Portland every year to look, listen, and return home to

hopefully utilize what they've learned. Quite honestly, I think Nena Cook, Sunny Petit, and I, the representatives from the OCFW, learned as much if not more than our guests.

We were told there are about 16 political parties running at any given time for any particular office in Russia. While many in America believe it's difficult for women to run for office - with non-stop derogatory comments about their parenting skills and wardrobe - one of our guests,

was actually lucky to have survived assassination attempt during her candidacy.

While there are vast differences between our countries and our cultures, our gathering discussed similar disparities and injustices. Domestic violence, pay equity, needed childcare, health care, and educational opportunities are all critical issues in Russia.

One thing we ALL agreed upon? More women in positions of power would definitely change things for the better!



Pictured left to right: Vitaliy Anatolyevich Drozhzhakov, *Chairman, Krasnoyarsk Kray Trade Union of Agriculture Workers*, Ms. Vera Ivanovna Kabalina, *Chief, Social Policy Department, Norilsk Nickel*, Ms. Maria Aleksandrovna Kanevskaya, *Director, Resource Human Rights Protection Center*, Zarema Mukharbekovna Chinkhoyeva, *Vice President, Chechen Republic Chamber of Industry and Commerce*, Sue Castner and Sunny Petit, *OCFW*, Svetlana Valentinovna Batishcheva, *Chairperson, Fakel NGO for the Handicapped, Samara Oblast Branch*.

**NEXT UP**...Join us for the next Public Meeting of the Oregon Commission for Women, May 21, 2010, in downtown Portland. Time and place are posted on our website: <http://www.oregon.gov/Women/calendar.shtml>

*Hope to see you there!*

## *Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking*

by Joseph Tam, Program Coordinator, Technical Assistance for Employers

There have been a number of highly publicized incidents of domestic violence in the last several months. These tragic incidents illustrate the public policy behind the Oregon Legislature's recent move to require Oregon employers to play a role in combating domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Here is a brief summary of Oregon Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking, ORS 659A.270 (the Act), that provides workplace protections for victims:

If your company has six or more employees, please take a moment to educate yourself on the basics of the Act. This is prudent not only for your safety and your employees' well-being, but also in order to avoid liability. An employee who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking and has worked for your company an average of more than 25 hours per week for at least 180 calendar days immediately preceding the need for leave time is entitled to take protected time off to deal with the issues arising from one of the specified crimes. This may include needs such as seeking medical treatment, recovering from injury, seeking legal or law enforcement assistance, obtaining counseling, relocating, securing an existing home or obtaining services from a victim services provider. "Victim" is broadly defined. It includes family members and roommates, among others. The Act does not mandate a specific duration for leave. It says an employer must provide a victim, upon request, a reasonable amount of protected time

off as long as the duration does not create an undue hardship on the employer's business.

An eligible employee is expected to give the employer as much advance notice as practicable unless advance notice is not feasible. In an emergency situation, an oral or a written notice from the employee or a third party is sufficient. Upon request in writing from the employer, the employee must provide the employer proper documentation justifying the leave. Examples of proper certification are: police report, protective order, documentation from a health care professional, court, attorney, law enforcement agency, clergy, etc.

Leave under the Act is unpaid unless there is a written agreement or an employer policy that states otherwise. Upon conclusion of the leave, the employee is entitled to reinstatement. The employee is protected from discrimination and retaliation for using the Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking. Economic security is one of the primary indicators of whether a victim will be able to escape abuse and achieve safety. Victims should not have to choose between economic security and physical safety.

For an employer who is large enough to have to follow the requirements of the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) or the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the employer may run leave under the Act concurrently with OFLA and FMLA if the employee's need for leave meets

any one of the definitions of a serious health condition.

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature enacted SB 928 which further required all employers to provide reasonable safety accommodations for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This requirement applies to all employers, not just those with six or more employees. This legislation also prohibits employers from refusing to hire or retaliate against an individual who is a victim. Reasonable safety accommodation may include a transfer, reassignment, modified schedule, unpaid leave from employment, changed work telephone number, changed workstation, installed locks, implemented safety procedures or any other adjustment to job structure, workplace facility or work requirement in response to actual or threatened domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. All records and information kept by an employer regarding a reasonable safety accommodation made for an employee are confidential and may not be released without the express permission of the employee, unless required by law.

For more detailed information please contact the Technical Assistance for Employers Program at 971-673-0824 or simply visit **BOLI's** website <http://egov.oregon.gov/BOLI/>. There are a number of agencies that provide services in each of the 36 counties in Oregon. For additional information from the National Domestic Violence Hot Line, call 1-800-799-7233.

Nothing on this website is intended as legal advice. Any responses to specific questions are based on the facts as we understand them, and not intended to apply to any other situations. This communication is not an agency order. If you need legal advice, please consult an attorney. We attempt to update the information on this website as soon as practicable following changes or developments in the laws and rules affecting Oregon employers, but we make no warranties or representations, express or implied, about whether the information provided is current. We urge you to check the applicable statutes and administrative rules yourself and to consult with legal counsel prior to taking action that may invoke employee rights or employer responsibilities or omitting to act when required by law to act.

## WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

by **Mariahm Stephenson, Vice Chair, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs**

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another through emotional attack, fear, and intimidation. Domestic violence can affect anyone. Domestic violence or battering, often, includes the threat or use of violence; this violence is a crime. Battering occurs when one person believes that he or she is entitled to control another. Domestic violence affects people in all social, economic, racial, religious, and ethnic groups; whether the couple is married, divorced, or living together.

Violence develops from verbal, physical, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse. Most domestic violence victims are women abused by men, but that doesn't suggest that others cannot be battered or are perpetrators of abuse - such as women on men. Disagreements arise occasionally in all relationships, but battering involves every aspect of a relationship. While physical violence is the "enforcer" or the criminal act, other behaviors erode the partner or victim's sense of self, self-determination, and free will; this is ultimately lethal for many women.

Often batterers possess a low self-esteem and gain a sense of power by means of humiliating and controlling their partner. Control techniques can include verbal insults intended to bring down the partner's self-esteem, threats meant to scare the partner into obedience, or mind games aimed at making the victim feel unsure and weak. Batterer's who use physical abuse push, slap, pinch, grab, or use other demonstrations of physical strength to show that they have power in the relationship and to keep the

partner from exercising control over their own life. Abusers often show extreme possessiveness of their partner, wanting their partner to account for time spent away from home or on the phone. Furthermore, sexual abuse further serves to weaken the spirit of the victim and to show that the abuser has total authority. These forms of abuse are but a fraction of the tactics used by batterers to dominate the partner.

Last January alone, Oregon and southwest Washington lost 18 people in the most horrible ways imaginable. Men killed women. Fathers shot children. Then, six times, the attackers turned the gun around and shot themselves. It is difficult to conceive the sheer number of tragedies caused by this string of domestic violence.

I personally commit that I will never stay silent if I think that, through my words or deeds, I can do something to make a difference, whether that means offering personal help to friends or family or assisting community groups with education and awareness efforts to increase positive attitudes toward nonviolence and encourage individuals to report family violence. I will also work with advocates against domestic violence to support policies and laws that protect women and children, prevent violence and stop these tragedies.

**If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available. Visit the online resources at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/abuse/domestic/index.shtml> to learn more.**

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## PRIMARY CANDIDATE FORUMS APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup> AND MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>

**Mark your calendars - City, County, Metro & Governor's races to be covered**

An amazing coalition of groups working for racial and gender equity will be hosting two candidate forums that promise to raise vital issues near and dear to our hearts. Gubernatorial and Metro president forums will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup> on the PSU campus. The forum for city and county races will be held on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Emanuel Temple Church in Northeast Portland, 1033 North Sumner Street. Details are still being worked out and will be posted to the OCFW website when finalized.

Sponsoring organizations include: African Women's Coalition, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Asian Education Foundation of Oregon, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Asian Reporter Foundation, Center for Intercultural Organizing, Delta Sigma Theta, Iraqi Society of Oregon, Just Portland, Latino Network, Oregon Commission for Hispanic Affairs, Oregon Commission on Asian Affairs, Oregon Commission for Women, Oregon Commission for Black Affairs, Oregon Women Lawyers, PSU Multicultural Center, and Urban League of Portland.

## 2010 WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Since 1985, the Oregon Commission for Women has recognized and honored 66 women who, through their works and lives, have significantly improved the lives of women in Oregon. Nominating a colleague for this award demonstrates your appreciation for her endeavors and recognizes her accomplishments across the state.

### THOUGHTS ON NOMINEES

When choosing someone to nominate, please consider the following questions:

- ☆ Is the community and/or state better for the contributions and accomplishments of the nominee?
- ☆ Are women in Oregon, the region, and/or the United States better, has their status improved, or have opportunities increased for women because of the life and contributions of the nominee?
- ☆ Is the nation, world, or particular discipline, profession, or field better because of the contributions of the nominee?

### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

#### I. The following criteria will be used to determine honorees:

**CRITERION 1.** How has the candidate been recognized for leadership and success in her area of expertise (profession, vocation, or volunteer work) and by whom she has been recognized?

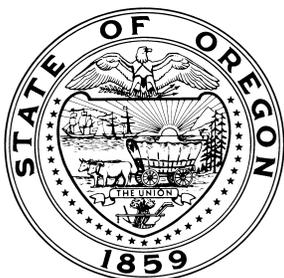
**CRITERION 2.** How does the candidate promote the status of women in society?

**CRITERION 3.** How has the candidate has demonstrated a specific commitment to equity and diversity?

**CRITERION 4.** How does the community view your nominee? Why she is an exemplary role model for women?

The 2010 Women of Achievement Awards celebration will take place in July.

**THE DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS APRIL 30, 2010.**



Go to the OCFW website for details and to download the nomination form: <http://www.oregon.gov/Women/index.shtml>

Call or email the OFCW at:

**Oregon Commission for Women**

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SHE FLIES  
WITH HER  
**OWN  
WINGS**