

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**MERCER COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND WOMANSPACE ARE
SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
VICTIM RESPONSE TEAM**

The training is open to the general public

Mercer County Police Departments in partnership with Womanspace, Inc., is currently accepting applications for volunteers to become members of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victim Response Teams.

The team members will work in conjunction with the police to provide support, information, and referral at the time of a domestic violence or sexual assault crisis. Team members will be contacted by Womanspace personnel and respond to various mercer county police headquarters to meet with victims. They will provide information and support in order to assist victims in making educated decisions that positively effect individual and family conditions.

In 2015, DVVRT volunteers responded 550 times to speak with Domestic Violence Victims, providing referral counseling and emotional support to 579 persons. In that same year, 85 persons were supported by the Sexual Assault Support Services Advocate Team (SASS).

Training for the Domestic Violence Victim Response Team and Sexual Assault Response Team is scheduled to begin in early **August 1, 2016**. Team members will receive extensive specialized training on such topics as the law, sensitivity to the needs of victims and their children, and how to provide swift, safe, appropriate responses at a very critical time for families.

The Fall 2016 training will take place at The College of New Jersey, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00-5:00 PM beginning August 31st. Each volunteer must complete 80 hours of training to become an advocate. The training will conclude in November 2016 with a graduation ceremony.

Womanspace will be accepting applications from prospective volunteers who meet the following minimum requirements.

- 18 years of age
- Possess a valid Driver's license & available transportation
- NO Criminal Record History
(Applicants must submit information for a background check & interview)
- Attend mandatory training and attend monthly meetings
- Ability to communicate well with others and be sensitive to victims' feelings
- **Bilingual individuals and persons fluent in American Sign Language are encouraged to participate**

Any person interested in applying as a volunteer should contact the Domestic Violence Response Team Coordinator Heidi Mueller as soon as possible, at (609) 394-0136. Applications must be received by **August 1ST 2016**. For further information contact Heidi Mueller of Womanspace at dvvrt@womanspace.org or Alison Daks sass@womanspace.org (609) 394-0136.