

## **Blue Corn Mothers Alliance Albuquerque, New Mexico**

I have been working in various capacities to end violence against women for the past thirty years and am at this time trying to start another program in the same field.

As Executive Director of the Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence in Albuquerque, I worked with a multitude of women (and some men) of all different backgrounds and traditions. The third highest population was always Native American Women and their children. It was true in 1984 and remains true today that this is a population with the fewest resources and limited access to existing programs and services. We also worked with immigrant women from Asian Countries and others who spoke languages other than English. We soon realized that in order to truly meet their needs and provide good service, we needed to become more culturally aware and sensitive to their needs. This meant that we needed to hire advocates who spoke their languages. We needed to provide foods that they were accustomed to eating and listen to their stories so we could understand how they experienced violence.

By becoming more aware and wanting to truly meet the needs of the people, we needed to know more about them. We needed to be able to ask questions as to how best to serve their needs in ways most comfortable for them because, "One Size Does Not Fit All!"

We must learn as much as we can so as not to recreate a violent situation or atmosphere in a program or shelter setting. If we do not, we may inadvertently use language or treatment methods that recreate trauma of past experiences such as Boarding Schools for Native Women or trauma from war in countries where some have recently experienced losing entire families.

We cannot say that a program developed in a large urban area in the East is one that will be effective in Tribal communities. Know as much as you can, and if you don't know... Ask!

We are in the process of developing a new Advocacy Center for Native American women and their children called Blue Corn Mothers Alliance. If funded, this program will fill a long unmet need in Albuquerque. While there are several programs designed specifically for Asian women, Latina women, and Anglo women, there are currently no programs specifically for Native Women, even though statistics tell us that Native

women experience violence nearly twice that of other groups. We are currently seeing those women referred by the Indian Health Clinic and other groups on a voluntary basis. We would like to open a center where we could truly meet the need. La Mesa Presbyterian Church has graciously allowed us to use an Office at the Church one day a week to see women.

We look forward to expanding our program so that true healing can take place physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

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