

# Benjamin to chair Women's Resource Center board

By **James Bessette** - March 15, 2019 1:00 am



**NICOLE J. BENJAMIN**, an attorney with Providence-based firm Adler Pollock & Sheehan PC, was recently named board president for the Women's Resource Center. Benjamin has served on the board since 2015, first as secretary and then as vice president. The Women's Resource Center is a nonprofit agency that offers domestic-violence-prevention services in Newport and Bristol counties.

## **What initially interested you in wanting to work with the Women's Resource Center?**

I became interested in joining the board of the Women's Resource Center after learning about its prevention work. In addition to the traditional services provided by domestic-violence-resource agencies such as shelter, emergency and crisis support, and counseling, a core focus of the

center's work is in the area of prevention. This work is driven by the belief that creating more-engaged and more-connected communities helps reduce instances of domestic violence. I am honored to support such innovative work through my service as president of the center's board.

**What are your plans as board president for the next year?** The center has grown tremendously during my time on the board and it would not have been able to do so without the generous support of so many in our community. This year, we are introducing the first annual Butterfly Ball, a fundraising gala and auction to benefit the center. The center empowers survivors and helps them break free from their cocoon, spread their wings and fly. Our inaugural gala is scheduled for April 27 at the Hotel Viking.

## **What programs have you helped establish at Women's Resource Center during your time on the board?**

When I joined the board, the center had four transitional housing apartments that were funded through a grant. When funding through that grant ended, we were able to keep one apartment open but recognizing the importance of transitional housing units, the board made it a priority to obtain funding for its transitional housing program. Today, the center has 10 transitional housing apartments where survivors of domestic violence and their children live independently while they receive critical supportive services. The apartments provide an alternative to emergency shelter clients, giving them stability and time to access long-term housing options, participate in job trainings, improve their financial situations and secure employment.

## **What do you feel are critical factors that will affect domestic violence in society?**

I often say that I wish that our work would put us out of business because that would mean that there is no longer a need to provide support services to survivors, but unfortunately that is not today's reality. One of the factors that I see affecting victims of domestic violence is ever-changing technology. While technology has tremendous benefits, because control is often a part of domestic violence, technology can enable an abuser to stalk, surveil and harass a victim. As technology continues to evolve, I anticipate that this issue will become more prevalent.



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