Like many immigrants that come to the United States, Milena wanted to live the story book American Dream. A house, car, kids.

But in 2008, soon after she left the Ukraine with her husband of two years, her dream became a nightmare. “He started abusing me soon after my son was born,” she said. “I was so scared. I was all alone and had no friends and I couldn’t tell my mom. I didn’t know how to leave or that there was anyone one to help with my situation.”

Now Milena’s dream was just wanting to live without fear, and violence at home. “One day, after he physically abused me, a friend gave me Interval House’s number and I called,” she said. “That’s when everything started to change.”

That call was Milena’s first step to changing her life and that of her son, Daniel.

But her road to safety and independence was not easy, Milena said. After her initial visit to Interval House’s shelter, she got a restraining order and began the legal separation process.

However, after a change of heart, she decided to give her husband a second chance.

“I never should have done that,” she admitted. “He promised me this, and that, and then it just was the same. Then I decided, no more.”

Milena’s story is not uncommon, says Cecile Enrico, Interval House’s executive director and longtime advocate in the cause against domestic violence. Enrico said most victims return to their abusers for a myriad of reasons, mainly fear.

Milena did not have any family or friends in this country. She managed to escape a violent relationship and make it on her own with very limited resources and the support of Interval House services. “I am so happy right now. I became a US citizen. I’m in school, I have a driver’s license and a car and my son is doing great,” she said. “But I wouldn’t be where I am without Interval House. I don’t know what I would have done if I didn’t have Interval House and Iris.”

Iris Ruiz, Interval House’s assistant director, said Milena’s a true role model for others to emulate. “She is a bright young woman and a great mom to her son,” Ruiz said. “She continues to work and study hard in order to meet her goal of becoming a nurse and although her husband tried, he couldn’t break her.”
Thank you to all our sponsors, donors and guests that made our 2015 Step Up and Step Out, a Heart and Soul Benefit for Interval House a great success. Because of you, we’re able to continue to keep Saving Lives, Giving a Voice and Changing the Future for so many.
Interval House’s Own Receive Special Accolades

Assistant Director Iris Ruiz and Development Director Rosemary Padin both received special recognitions and awards this summer highlighting their tireless dedication to Interval House and their work.

In June, Ruiz received the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance’s Neighborhood Service Award during its 9th annual REACH Awards held at Trinity College.

Ruiz has been an iconic advocate for battered women for more than 30 years, said Cecile Enrico, Interval House’s executive director.

“She has been an integral part in helping to build Interval House into the state’s largest domestic violence program. Her loyalty, hard work and dedication in helping victims of domestic violence of all ethnic groups make her a worthy recipient of this award,” Enrico said at the award ceremony. “Her knowledge of domestic violence and community resources has helped save the lives of many domestic violence victims and their children.”

Enrico praised Ruiz for her diligence and also starting the state’s first women’s support group for Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence. Enrico said Ruiz is also responsible for managing the program’s 24-hour, 20-bed crisis shelter and many other programs.

“Even though Iris is at a management level she continues to work directly with women in the shelter, most often getting involved with the very difficult cases,” Enrico said. “Interval House’s philosophies which Iris helped create of self-reliance and self-sufficiency has allowed her to be a role model to victims, showing they do not have to live in a horrible violent relationship.”

Enrico said Ruiz’s courage, feistiness and tenacity has ensured that Interval House runs well and provides a myriad of services to people in need.

“I believe in saving lives,” Ruiz said. “I don’t do this for awards...I do my work because I know I can make a difference.”

Padin received a special citation from US Senator Richard Blumenthal during the Step Up & Step Out gala in May for her more than 35 years of fundraising efforts in Connecticut, the last eight at Interval House.

While accepting the surprise citation in front of the standing and clapping gala audience, Padin told the crowd: “This recognition is for all of you, our generous community. I’m just a conduit for all that generosity.”

She said supporters should be proud each time they write a check, put a few dollars in a “Santa bucket” or bid on an auction item at a gala as those donations truly help save lives.

“Rosemary’s tireless efforts on behalf of Interval House and other charitable organizations during her career is truly extraordinary,” Blumenthal said.

"Her expertise and skill built a sound financial foundation, ensuring the non-profits’ continuation and expansion of their charitable works.”

GRANT AWARDS
For the period of:
09/25/2014 - 06/26/2015
By Darlene M. Demetri
Interval House Grant Writer

We extend our deepest appreciation to the following grant makers who generously supported Interval House:

- Ahearn Family Foundation
- Asylum Hill Congregational Church
- Berkshire Bank
- BJ’s Charitable Foundation
- Charles Nelson Robinson Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
- Ensworth Charitable Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
- Manchester Chapter of UNICO National - Manchester UNICO Foundation
- Ms. Molly Foundation
- Olga Sipolin Children’s Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Co-Trustee
- People’s United Community Foundation
- SBM Charitable Foundation
- Simsbury Junior Woman’s Club
- Stanley D. and Hindy N. Fisher Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- The Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.

WISH LIST: and Shelter Items Always Needed: Gift cards of any kind, paper goods, bath and bedding items, and cash donations. For an updated wish list, go to: intervalhousect.org/wish-list

Toll Free Statewide 24/7 Hotline: 1-888-774-2900
Thank you...

Donna Szarwak for continuing to go above and beyond the call of duty for Interval House. Donna has been the In-Kind Donations Coordinator for years and her tireless work as a volunteer continues to astound everyone.

XL Group volunteers. On the Global Day of Giving, Sept. 10, the 25-plus volunteers donated money for a new washer/dryer, and helped clean and refurbish an old office that will now serve as a new shelter bedroom.

Community Renewal Team for organizing its 6th annual Tee Off With Women golf tournament on July 31 to benefit Interval House and its domestic violence programs. More than 75 women played golf on a glorious day at the Lake of Isles golf club in North Stonington. Special thanks to all the players!

Events!


October 8, 2015: Cultivation event George & Diana Jepsen’s Hartford home.

April 2, 2016: Step Up & Step Out Gala

Leave a Legacy by making a bequest. Call 860-246-9146, Ext. 338.