

# Message from the Chair

35 Years marks a tremendous milestone for West Lothian Women's Aid. That we are still here and stronger than ever is testament to the dedication of volunteers, staff and partners over the years. The Board are proud to be part of this wonderful organisation that has provided sanctuary over the years for a great many brave women and their children, supporting them to take the next step into a safer, brighter future.

None of this would be possible without the on-going support of West Lothian Council and we want to acknowledge their commitment to what we do. We also thank our partner organisations for working collaboratively with us over the years, including Scottish Women's Aid and the National Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline and, more recently, the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the Voluntary Action Fund.

Looking to the future, the Board have many plans for West Lothian Women's Aid. Growing funding and developing the service we offer are top of the list. Funding is so important - times are tough; in this economic climate costs have had to be cut, and more funding is needed to keep us secure and for necessary investment. Our refuges, for example, are in dire need of refurbishment in order to create a better standard of accommodation and a better environment for women and their children. Likewise, in the community the past 35 years have seen great progress in terms of understanding Domestic Abuse but there is still much to be done to continue to educate and build awareness; this is central to the Woman's Aid ethos, and we need to be doing much more of this. We also need to look at providing support to women who need our help to get to safety but for whom refuge is not the best escape route. Diverse funding is crucial to all of this.

Our AGM on 25th September starts a year-long '35th Years Strong' celebration. Over the next 12 months we have plans for a number of events including our anniversary ball - with the aim of both increasing awareness and our funding. We would love to hear from you if you would like to support us either as a volunteer or a board member as we go forward with our plans.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of WLWA - thank you for your support in helping us make a difference - together we're stronger.

Grace

History despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived but if faced with courage need not be lived again

~ Maya Angelou

# WE'RE HAVING A BALL!!! (Is that why they call it FUNdraising...??)

It's already been mentioned that we are, quite literally, intending to have a ball this year... But this is to be a year of celebration; of raising awareness of domestic abuse; of nurturing and developing old and new relationships; of having fun together... whilst raising funds to develop the service and work towards achieving those ambitions and aspirations already stated.

So...

Here are some suggestions we've already had for other ways to do this. If you fancy joining in, volunteering other suggestions or even volunteering to undertake these or other projects on our behalf, please let us know! Contact details below. x

- The 35 Challenge - sell 35 cakes; swim/skip/hop/dance/hula hoop 35miles/minutes whatever. Choose your personal challenge and get sponsored
- Charity dinner
- Choir concert
- Women completing running events in Scotland – team WLWA T-shirts etc provided
- Auction night
- Race Night
- Fire walk – 35 women walking over hot coals...
- Or Just Walk – walk 35 miles for all the women brave enough to walk away from domestic abuse, and to inspire others to do the same

**Go on - you know you want to! LET'S GET THAT BALL ROLLING!!!**

**Contact: the office on 0150 646 1938 or by email [elspethatwlwa@gmail.com](mailto:elspethatwlwa@gmail.com) (code word: BALL!)**

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**I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship.**

~ Louisa May Alcott

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