



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Secures \$10,000 to Address Domestic Violence in Lewis County

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO October 20, 2014

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, CRIME, VICTIMS, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



LOWVILLE - Sen. Joseph A. Griffo today announced that he has secured \$10,000 for Lewis County Opportunities to use toward services that directly help victims of domestic violence.

"During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, it's important that we recognize agencies that are helping victims by giving them the tools they need to regain control of their lives," said Griffo, R-Rome. "Lewis County Opportunities provides confidential help free of charge and,

in doing so, have become an indispensable community resource."

The funds, which come from the 2014-15 state budget, will be used to support individuals suffering from physical and sexual violence and their families. This includes providing assistance with the court system, from accompanying victims to hearings to helping draft court petitions, such as custody and orders of protection.

Employees also begin goal planning to empower the victim and help him or her with a variety of life issues, such as finding a job, securing an apartment and sheltering their pet. The agency also runs its own safe dwelling, which houses up to eight individuals. Other services include counseling, education and advocacy for victims.

"Serving a rural area, we have unique challenges in identifying victims of domestic and sexual violence and helping them get the services they need to free themselves from their abuser," said Scott Mathys, chief executive officer of Lewis County Opportunities. "It requires a lot of time, effort and patience to help a victim regain control of their lives and begin to heal. We're thankful that Senator Griffo has recognized the importance of our program to this county and has stepped up and secured the money necessary to keep it available to those in need."

In 2013, Lewis County Opportunities:

- Provided 69 "protected" nights at its safe dwelling
- Provided 6,632 hours of coverage for the 24 hour hotline, providing an outlet for 114 victims
- Served 46 new victims
- Provided 915 counseling units
- And successfully completely 51 orders of protection through the local court system.

For more information, call Lewis County Opportunities at 376-8202 during business hours or call the 24-hour crisis hotline at 376-HELP (4357).