



**For Immediate Release**

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YWCA York Announces the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ACCESS York  
*Presentation of the Dorrie Leader Advocacy Award to Jane Tucker*

(YORK, PA) Aug. 6, 2020 — For many decades it was controversial to acknowledge that battery by a spouse or partner was anything more than a private issue between the two parties. It wasn't considered a crime and law enforcement, faith leaders, and the medical community often looked the other way or encouraged the woman to remain in the relationship. By 1975 most states allowed wives to bring criminal action against their husbands for inflicting injury, and in Pennsylvania a grassroots organization, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, was formed and began to have an impact on legislation.

It was determined in the late 1970s that there was a need in York County to provide critical emergency services for victims of violence, or what was then labeled "battered women." This charge was taken up by the United Way of York County and a meeting was convened of local churches, organizations, and community leaders to determine the best course of action. A plan began to take shape.

The York County Commissioners agreed to support the acquisition and renovation of a building and committed to provide ongoing support. There were many positive steps along the way, but also a number of financial and facility challenges. The perseverance of the staff and board may it possible for ACCESS York to open its doors in the summer of 2020 to serve victims of domestic violence in the York community. The goal was to provide shelter for up to ten women and their children where they would also be offered counseling and referral services for their medical and legal needs. The name ACCESS was chosen to signify access to shelter, hope and a new life.

ACCESS York was a shoestring operation for the first several years. Without the generous support of people committed to the cause, it would not have thrived. In 2009 conversations took place for the first time with YWCA York about the merger of the two organizations. It was believed that ACCESS York would continue to thrive with the resources of a larger organization. YWCA York, chartered in 1891, is one of the largest YWs in the United States with a mission to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Both boards of directors reached an agreement to make the joining of the organizations a reality in 2009.

Jane Tucker, the first board president of ACCESS York, is herself a survivor of domestic violence. Her own journey as a young wife and mother, able to leave her first marriage and begin a new



life, gave her the courage to help others. Jane was one of the primary forces behind the establishment of a shelter in York and she remained on the board for many years.

YWCA York is honoring Jane Tucker as the 2020 recipient of the Dorrie Leader Advocacy Award. This annual award is typically given at a spring luncheon which was not held due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Jane will receive the award in July when she is presented by former staff with a framed copy of a favorite poem of Dorrie Leader's.

Tucker says, "I am deeply honored to be chosen to receive this distinguished award for my years of working with ACCESS York. I am living proof there can be life and happiness after domestic violence. My everlasting love and thanks go to my late second husband, Jack Tucker, for making my statement of this living proof true and possible."

Today YWCA York offers free and confidential victim services for over 4,000 survivors of violence each year, including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking. Over 12,000 people participate in violence prevention programs in K-12 schools, colleges, health care, law enforcement, government, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations.

#### **ABOUT YWCA York**

*YWCA York is a nonprofit organization with the mission of eliminating racism and empowering women. Chartered in 1891, YWCA York has a long and rich history of creating opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power through a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Over 28,000 people are served each year through the programs and services offered throughout York County. Worldwide, the YWCA impacts more than 25 million people in over 120 countries. For information about the YWCA York, visit [www.ywcayork.org](http://www.ywcayork.org)*