

Help for sexual-assault victims

TO THE EDITORS:

As YWCA Lancaster's chief program officer, I was most interested to read staff writer Cindy Stauffer's article, Feb. 24, about the task force Judge Dennis Reinaker has created to address sexual abuse within the Amish community. YWCA Lancaster is participating in the task force.

I think it's important to note that sexual abuse is not restricted to any one community, but is prevalent throughout society. The statistics are sobering. One in four girls

and one in six boys will be a victim of sexual violence by the age of 18.

My concern is for victims and survivors of sexual violence who may need someone to talk to or information on this harrowing topic.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape has designated YWCA Lancaster as the sexual assault prevention and counseling center for Lancaster County. We provide free confidential counseling and supportive services to victims of sexual assault and their loved ones. And we staff

a 24-hour sexual assault hotline (392-7273).

We also offer information on the prevention of sexual assault to any individual or group. And we provide PCAR training for those interested in becoming an advocate for sexual assault victims and survivors.

I have the highest regard for the Amish community and want to assure its members that we are here for you, just as we are for anyone in Lancaster County.

Cheryl Gahring
YWCA Lancaster