

1985

THE RECORD 2/23/85

She cares enough to save her sisters

Editor, The Record:

Thank you for your June 4 story about Sandy Ramos and Shelter Our Sisters. I am a "white professional" with an admitted preference for orderliness, policies, and structure. It is easy for me to identify with the concerns and rules of SOS trustees and clinical staff. Not long ago, however, I was one of three white professionals coping with a 19-year-old battered female runaway. That was not so easy.

She was too old for Division of Youth and Family Services, too bright for the Division of Mental Retardation, too sane for a hospital, too abused to stay home, and too dependent, frightened, and vulnerable to be on her own. Nobody — friends, relatives, community or religious group — was willing to help except Sandy Ramos.

This young runaway's stay with me did not produce miracles. Searching for more appropriate resources (including many missteps) followed. I provided ready respite where there would have

been none.

Ms. Ramos's understanding that human needs must come before those of a bureaucracy, her conviction that it's "crazy for a woman to come from a life of control" to a controlling "helping" situation, and her realization that helpers must be guided by the needs articulated by those seeking help must remain guiding principles at SOS — at least until you and I are willing to open our own doors to our battered neighbors.

SUZANNE SALDARINI
Mahwah

Editor, The Record:

Congratulations on your Sandra Ramos story "A firebrand for battered women." You have caught the essence of this very complex and compassionate crusader, who was championing the cause of battered women long before the media popularized this subject.

Sometimes her methods were a little unorthodox, but in the early



Sandy Ramos

days there wasn't much in the way of precedents to draw upon. She was a pioneer, blazing new trails. Her accomplishments are legendary and we are fortunate indeed to have this dynamic woman as an advocate for abused and desperate women and their families.

I urge that Ms. Ramos be permitted to continue the life-saving work she has begun. Much is yet to be done and no one is better equipped to tackle this task than Sandra Ramos.

MATTHEW FELDMAN
Senator, District 37
Teaneck

Feminist Counseling: What Is It?

According to Women Helping Women philosophy, the following principles are applied in our individual counseling program:

1. Encourage a woman to trust her own judgment and to arrive at her own decisions within the context of an egalitarian relationship.
2. Help her to become aware of society's restraints on her development and opportunities and to differentiate between obstacles present in social structure and those over which she has realistic personal control.
3. Encourage a woman to nurture herself as well as caring for others.
4. Help her explore how to use power constructively in personal and business relationships.
5. Help her to get in touch with unexpressed anger and to express anger in constructive ways.
6. Encourage skill development in order to increase a woman's competence and productivity, i.e., negotiation skills, assertiveness training, problem solving, etc.
7. Help her explore fears about potential role changes that may alienate spouse, children, co-workers and employer.