

Amy Gess

ANEW: BUILDING BEYOND
VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Time at Agency: 21 Years

Position: Court Advocate

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Commitment to advocacy on behalf of those affected by DV: *Amy is the longest-standing Court Advocate throughout the history of Anew and the Markham Courthouse. Her dedication has allowed her to prevail as an advocate over the years. This included several changes to leadership within the program and agency, with her outlasting and then helping train at least 3 managers. Amy has witnessed colleagues come and go but has maintained her dedication to servicing victims of domestic violence while providing support through the legal process. As a direct result of Amy's commitment, Anew acknowledges Amy as the senior Court advocate due to her vast experience, knowledge of court processes, understanding of the rights of*

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domestic violence victims, and the intricacies of how the courthouses interpret these real-life situations.

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Personal qualities that reflect in their ongoing commitment to ethical, peaceful and respectful work with others: *Amy is recognized as an expert legal advocate by her agency, her colleagues across the DV community, and within the courthouses that she serves. She has taken on the role as educator and mentor to not only new advocates, but also new staff to the DV court processes within the courthouse, not because she seeks this, but because she is approachable, knowledgeable, and has a genuine caring nature.*

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Ways in which they instill a spirit of advocacy in others: *Amy has a tenacity that translates into not wanting to turn away anyone seeking support no matter how busy she may be. On average, she has helped 150 individuals per month within the past fiscal year alone.*

Experience that demonstrates a broad commitment to social justice: *Amy does not shy away from speaking up within the court system regarding the rights of victims. She sees her role as a collaboration that includes all individuals and agencies working with and on behalf of an individual. Additionally, Amy participates in stakeholder meetings at the Markham courthouse as they pertain to processes and law changes in the misdemeanor and civil domestic violence courtrooms.*

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Creativity in building the domestic violence movement within a social framework: *Amy goes above and beyond to ensure her presence and support for both victims and court staff, especially Judges presiding over domestic violence cases and the Assistant State's Attorney's assigned to the misdemeanor domestic violence courtroom. Because Amy is present, knowledgeable, and trustworthy she is highly respected and relied on, thus directly helping to build the domestic violence movement for social change.*