



# Newsletter

[www.shelterhousenwfl.org](http://www.shelterhousenwfl.org)  
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Administrative Office  
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Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

## Fall 2010

### Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Effects on Shelter House

It didn't take long for the calls to start pouring in from women in our community reaching out for help because of the losses they have suffered due to the oil spill. At Shelter House, we have seen an increase in our crisis calls and a decrease in our monetary donations. We've had many first-time callers asking us about shelter, outreach services and legal aid. In the past 12 weeks, we have received crisis calls with many of the callers identifying that they had been impacted by the oil spill. We have gotten visits from women who are living on their own but because of the spill are having a difficult time making ends meet. Here are the stories of two women who have reached out to Shelter House because of the effects of the oil spill in their own lives.

Eight months ago, one of our survivors, Mary\*, moved out of our emergency shelter and into an apartment with her 17 year old. She was thrilled to be living on her own again and was working five days a week cleaning rooms at a local resort. After the spill, Mary's hours were cut to three days a week and eventually to just being on-call. She has been struggling with buying food, paying her utilities and putting gas in her car. We have been working with her to provide peer support, community referrals, food and even gas cards. We are working with Mary on career development, especially helping her find a job that isn't tied to the tourism industry.

Recently, Jane\* came into the shelter after police found her abandoned on the side of the road in the middle of the night. She and her husband of 19 years were traveling through our area looking for work cleaning up the oil spill. They were unable to find work because the spill was already capped and workers had been laid off. Jane and her husband had an argument. He assaulted her and kicked her out of their car.

He left her on the side of the highway with no phone, no money, no ID and none of her belongings. As her eye began to swell shut, Jane realized that she wasn't going to be able to see well enough to walk. She wasn't

sure how long she waited on the side of the road but eventually a police officer stopped and asked if she needed assistance.

The police called Shelter House's 24-hour hotline for help and we were able to bring Jane into our emergency shelter. Without her cell phone she had no way to contact her family and friends as all her phone numbers were stored in the phone. After several attempts to look up numbers, we resulted to creating a Facebook account for her and she was able to send messages to several loved ones. She was able to connect with her brother who sent her money and a bus ticket home. During her stay with us, Jane shared that her husband had been physically abusive for their entire marriage. She had left several times but always went back, because if she loved him enough he would change. Jane said she realized as she watched him drive away that he didn't love *her* enough. One of the last things Jane said as she boarded the bus home was that she didn't know what she would have done if we hadn't helped her.

Each week we are interviewing women, men and children who have been touched by the technological disaster in the gulf. Our fear is that there are more women and children that have been touched by the spill but don't know who to call for help. We hate to imagine what would have happened to Jane had the officer not found her and called us for assistance.

#### **Oil Spill Economic Results:**

(as of September 8, 2010)

**50,000 interim claims submitted**

**44,000 claims for lost income**

**10,000 claims have been paid**

**\$80,000 in total claims paid**

- The Sun News

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of our participants.

### Clothesline Project

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and as an act of honoring those whose lives have been touched by domestic violence, Shelter House will have a Clothesline Project on display at the Northwest Florida Regional Airport throughout the month of October.



Stop by the airport to see a variety of adult, child and baby t-shirts of various colors and designs that serve as a reflection of people's experiences with domestic violence. The project allows each victim to tell her story in a unique way with words or artwork.

This national project began with 31 shirts in 1990 and has since grown to a national and international social change project comprised of approximately 25,000 shirts.

For more information about the Clothesline Project visit [www.clotheslineproject.org](http://www.clotheslineproject.org).



## Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

Recently, I had dinner with some lovely people and the conversation turned, as it so often does these days, to politics, the oil spill and economics. I mentioned the importance of funding, and one of my companions said something along the lines of, "I care about women and children too, but right now I feel like I can't do anything to help that will make a difference. Right now, I need to take care of my own family and this feels so much bigger than me."

My head started spinning with thoughts of understanding her perspective but at the same time defending the battered women, men and children we serve. When a woman comes into our shelter, she is taking care of her own and often-times she has given up enormous pieces of herself to keep her children safe. She comes to us for options, guidance, safety and understanding. She is in a way coming into her own.

The past few months have been busy at our agency. We have seen an increase in our crisis calls and a decrease in our donations and funding. We have seen women with six children come in and stay at our shelter. We have witnessed women who have experienced horrible acts of violence against them, some leaving permanent physical scars, and even one woman bleeding and abandoned on the side of the road. The need for our advocacy services to Okaloosa and Walton counties is ongoing and we need everyone's help to take care of our community.

Everyone can make a difference when it comes to a social change issue like Domestic Violence. Everyone can be an advocate. You can help spread the word about our much needed services, people like Jane\* (see cover story), our hotline number (850-863-4777), support groups, wish list, volunteer opportunities, and

fundraising and awareness events, primary prevention services, or make a donation to the agency. These are just a few places you can get involved.

As we move into the fall season, we will be celebrating Domestic Violence Awareness Month with our Clothesline Project at the Northwest Florida Regional Airport. We will also be hosting our third Purses with a Purpose on Oct. 9 at Silver Sands and our Carrabba's Wine Dinner on Oct. 21. In November, we will prepare for the Holiday Drive, Howl at the Moon and Taste of the Beach.

As a community we can, and will be able to, take care of our own. I want to thank our donors, community partners, funders, staff, volunteers and board members. You are an amazing group and you make an enormous difference in the lives of the battered men, women and children in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

### Domestic Violence Support Groups

Join us for weekly Support Groups where participants can talk in a group setting with advocates about important topics involved with domestic violence. Topics include power and control, evaluating relationships, building self-esteem, safety planning, boundary setting, nurturing children and teens, handling the transition and self care.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining these groups, please have them call the program office at 243-1201.

#### Fort Walton Beach

(102 Buck Drive):  
Tues. mornings 10:30-12:00pm  
Tues. evenings 6:30-8:00pm

#### Crestview

(290 Martin Luther King Blvd.):  
Tues. afternoons 1:00-2:30pm  
Thurs. afternoons 2:00-3:30pm

#### DeFuniak Springs

(1<sup>st</sup> Assembly of God, 461 Van Buren Ave.):  
Tues. 12:30-2:00pm

#### Santa Rosa Beach

(78 Lynn Drive):  
Thurs. afternoons 12:30-2:00 pm

### Wine & Dine for Charity with DCWAF

Shelter House has been chosen to be a 2010-2011 Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation charity. In just five short years, this foundation has raised nearly \$3,000,000 and impacted the lives of countless children along the Emerald Coast. We are looking forward to working with this great organization for the second year in a row!



With Vine to Wine and Blind Wine Voyage already behind us, the year is already off to a great start. Join us for Taste of the Beach Nov. 4—7 at the Emerald Grande, Pier Park and Seaside for a weekend of events. Tasting of Champions, a walkabout and tasting, will be Jan. 21 at Baytowne. The year will close out with Wine and Dine in Paradise. This event is a weekend including Paton Dinners, a walkabout tasting and auction. The event will take place April 29—30 at Sandestin Linkside Center. For more details about the events, to purchase tickets or to learn more about the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, visit [www.dcwaf.org](http://www.dcwaf.org).

### Snag your bag at Purses With A Purpose

Shelter House and the Ronald McDonald House are partnering up again to bring Purses with a Purpose to the Silver Sands Factory Stores on **Sat., Oct. 9 from 4:30—7:00 pm**.

Join us for an evening of food and wine from Carrabba's Italian Grill. Come browse a whole new season of 300 purses just in time for holiday shopping and the fall and winter season.

Featured brands include Coach, Duney & Burke, Guess, Cole Hahn, Sacks, Vera Bradley, Brighton and much more!

Purses will be for sale and for auction, with an option to "buy it now". Purses will start as low as \$5! Don't miss this opportunity to get a jump-start on your holiday shopping, enjoy great food and wine and support two great organizations in your community.

For more information or to volunteer for this event, please call (850) 243-1201.



## Getting to Know Board Member, Bob Launch

Shelter House would like to introduce Bob Launch, the Shelter House Board of Directors Treasurer. Bob's wife, Cindy, has served on our Board for seven years and recruited her husband for Treasurer. He decided that he was perfect for the job—and we agree! Bob has now been serving on the Board of Directors for two years.

Bob has been in the Fort Walton Beach area for 30 years and has three sons: Kyle (20), Corey (18) and step-son, Logan (19).

Bob received his education from St. Louis University where he received a BSBA in Accounting. He was the Chief

Financial Officer at Sandestin Beach and Golf Resort where he just recently retired from.

In his spare time, Bob enjoys spending time with his wonderful wife, watching baseball and reading. Recently, he finished reading *War*.

He shares that the most influential person in his life is his father. From him, he learned that if you do what is right, then success will follow. With Bob's hard work and dedication, he has proven his father right.

"I have a much deeper understanding of domestic violence and its impact on so-

ciety," Bob shares about how working with Shelter House has impacted his life.

He most enjoys working with the other Board members to accomplish their goals they have for Shelter House. His most memorable moment since working with the agency was when he went to the shelter for the first and only time and all but one of the rooms was occupied and each room had kids inside.

When asked what his goal is for Shelter House in the next five years, Bob shared his personal goal of seeing at least one more shelter in Okaloosa and/or Walton counties.

### Gear up for the holidays with Shelter House

This holiday season, in following with our empowerment-based philosophy, we are requesting that donors give gift cards. Gift cards alleviate some of the space challenges we face and allows us to better serve the women and children. Department store cards make women feel empowered by the fact that they can go shopping for their children's presents themselves and get exactly what they want. Grocery store cards give the women the chance to buy food for their family so they may have a holiday dinner together, and gas cards give them the option to travel to spend the holiday season with their families.

We would also like to extend the opportunity to our donors to help the women and children in our community enjoy a nice holiday meal, so we are now accepting donations to create a traditional meal for Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, in addition to laundry baskets to put the items in.

If you would like an opportunity to volunteer your time or donate to Shelter House during this holiday season, this is your chance!

The Thanksgiving donation deadline and assembly is Mon., Nov., 22. The winter holiday donation deadline and assembly is Tues., Dec. 21.

Call (850) 243-1201 or email [info@shelterhousenwfl.org](mailto:info@shelterhousenwfl.org) to volunteer for the assembly of the baskets.

### Start your holiday shopping at Evening of Giving

Evening of Giving is a shopping and entertainment event at Silver Sands Factory Stores benefiting a wide variety of local and regional charities, including Shelter House.

This year's event will be held on Sun., Nov. 21 from 3:00—8:00 pm. Tickets for this event are just \$5 and can be purchased through the Shelter House office or one of our Board Members after Nov. 1. Call (850) 243-1201 or stop by the office to get your ticket.

Ticket holders receive exclusive discounts at Silver Sands Factory Stores as well as enjoying live entertainment, in-store fundraising events, refreshments, a chance to win a shopping spree and much more.

Silver Sands Factory Stores will have extended hours for ticket holders to take advantage of special discounts, giveaways, in-store events and other incentives for that evening only.

Visit [www.silversandsoutlet.com](http://www.silversandsoutlet.com) or the Silver Sands Shopper Services for more information.



### A community partnership: Shelter House & Carrabba's

Shelter House deeply appreciates the community partnerships we have created since our birth 25 years ago. One emerging and consistent community partner in the last few years has been Paul Schreiner of Carrabba's Italian Grill in Sandestin. Carrabba's has provided food and wine at many of our fundraisers, in addition to hosting events at their restaurant located in Silver Sands Factory Stores.

In October, Shelter House will host two fundraisers that are partnered with Paul and his great crew of Italian food and wine aficionados. Shelter House and the Ronald McDonald House are holding the third Purses With A Purpose event where Carrabba's will provide food and wine. Later in the month, Shelter House will host a wine dinner fundraiser at Carrabba's where attendees will enjoy a four-course Italian meal with an accompanying wine for each course (tickets \$55).

It is not a recent development that Paul has supported domestic violence awareness. In years prior, Paul worked with CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse), another domestic violence center in Florida.

Shelter House and Carrabba's will join forces again to bring the Carrabba's Cooking Class in January 2011.



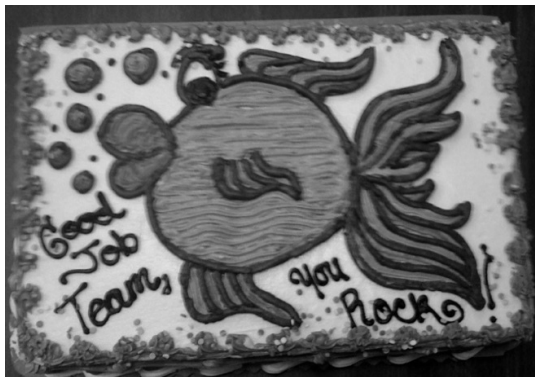
## What We've Been Up To



Nick Iovieno, a Shelter House Volunteer and Kameryn Sunday, Miss Heart of America's Queen of Hearts, load up all of the donated canned goods after the DeFuniak Springs pageant.



Andi Mahoney, Karen Lauer, Amanda Short, Wendy Clines and Sue Shea with the check from the Little Black Dress Party presented by White Wilson Medical Center.



We held our annual Staff Retreat at the end of July at the FWB Chamber. We've now adopted the Fish Philosophy. (Left)

The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation awarded Shelter House with a \$1,500 check to show their support for the WAM! Economic Empowerment program. Pictured: Larisa Perry, Michelle Sperzel & Debbie Prather. (right)



### Shelter House Wish List

#### Immediate Needs:

Macaroni and Cheese  
New Pillows  
Laundry Detergent  
2 Vacuum cleaners  
Toilet paper  
Paper towels  
Trash bags

#### Monetary:

Gift cards for gas and grocery stores (WalMart, Kmart, Target, Publix)

#### Food:

Non-perishable/Canned food & fruits  
Frozen Foods  
Cold food items (meat, milk, eggs, etc.)

#### Cleaning Supplies:

Laundry & disinfectant soap  
Dryer sheets  
Disinfectants (e.g. Lysol)

If your organization or place of work would like a cell phone drop off box, call the office at 243-1201 or email [info@shelterhousenwfl.org](mailto:info@shelterhousenwfl.org).

### Upcoming Events

#### October:

##### Domestic Violence Awareness Month

**Purses With A Purpose:** 10/9, 4:30—7:00 pm at Silver Sands Factory Stores

**Carrabba's Wine Dinner:** 10/21, 6—8 pm at Carrabba's Italian Grill (Tickets \$55)

##### DVCC Promote Peace Luncheon:

10/22, 11:30—1:00 pm at UWF Fort Walton Beach campus

#### November:

**Taste of the Beach:** 11/4—11/7

**Howl at the Moon Party:** 11/5, 7:00 pm at Howl at the Moon (Tickets \$10)

**Evening of Giving:** 11/21, 3—8 pm at Silver Sands Factory Stores (Tickets \$5)

**Thanksgiving Meal Basket Assembly:** 11/22, 5:00 pm (Shelter House Office)

#### December:

##### Volunteer Appreciation Happy Hour:

12/2, 5:30 pm at The Crab Trap Okaloosa Island

**Shelter House 25th Birthday:** 12/15

**Winter Holiday Meal Basket Assembly:** 12/21, 5:30 pm (Shelter House office)

### Board of Directors

Wendy Clines, *President*

Bob Launch, *Treasurer*

Cindy Launch, *Secretary*

Karen Lauer, *Fundraising Chair*

Mike Anderson

Jean Floyd

Andy Hetzel

Balenda Hetzel

Roberta Holloway

Cari Lewis

Larisa Perry

#### Executive Director

Michelle Sperzel

#### Editor

Gili Halperin

The Shelter House Primary Prevention program is now on Facebook! Parents and teens can "like" our page to find tips, statistics, talking points and more on how to prevent domestic violence.

