



Newsletter

www.shelterhousenwfl.org
24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-44-ABUSE
Administrative Office
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Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Fall 2012

Shelter House Adding Kennel to Emergency Shelter

Did you know that 68% of battered women report violence toward their pets? Women in domestic violence shelters are 11 times more likely than women not in abusive relationships to report that their partner hurt or killed a pet. Some studies show that close to 50% of abused women stayed in relationships because they could not take their pet with them to a shelter. At Shelter House alone, we receive two to three calls each month on our hotline from victims who decline safe shelter in order to stay home and protect their pets.

With these alarming statistics in mind, Shelter House is proud to announce the Purple Paws Kennel, an on-site pet kennel in our emergency shelter. Domestic violence victims in Okaloosa and Walton counties will no longer have to choose between their own safety and the safety of their pet.

The Purple Paws Kennel will be the first of its kind in Northwest Florida. There are only three other domestic violence shelters in Florida that accept pets, and pet-friendly shelters are difficult to find throughout the U.S.

Dogs, cats and other small animals, such as pocket pets and fish, will be accepted in the shelter. Shelter House has partnered with Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and Alaqua Animal Refuge on this program to foster animals we cannot accommodate in shelter such as exotic animals and livestock. Furry Fanatics in Santa Rosa Beach and Three Dogs and a Chick in Fort Walton Beach have also come on board as sponsors, donating pet products.

"I'm overjoyed that there will be a place where women can get out of the home and bring their pets. I'm so proud we were able to help with something like this," said Laurie Hood, Alaqua's executive director.

Opening our emergency shelter to animals includes the designation of a pet-friendly room, a dog kennel, dog run and cat room. The pet-friendly room will have a HEPA filter installed and will house families with fish or pocket pets like gerbils, guinea pigs and hamsters. The cat room will entertain frisky felines with climbing trees and scratching posts. Having a dog run on the grounds of the shelter is particularly important since victims cannot walk their dogs around the neighborhood in order to guarantee their own safety and maintain the confidentiality of the shelter's location.



The kennel is a critical addition to our emergency shelter because batterers who abuse pets tend to use more forms of violence and demonstrate greater use of controlling behaviors than abusers who do not harm pets. Staying at home to protect a pet puts a woman at even greater danger for future violence and possibly even death. Abusers also use beloved pets, like children, as leverage to keep victims quiet or retaliate against the victim by harming pets.

One positive side effect of adding the kennel to our shelter is the emotional support victims receive from animals. Pets can be a tremendous source of comfort during stressful times for victims and their children. When so much in their lives is scary and unstable, the love of a faithful, furry companion is priceless.

While supplies will be provided as needed and Shelter House staff will support the women and animals, the victims are required to take care of the animals themselves. The simple act of looking after a pet can empower victims, give them a sense of normalcy and help them heal while their lives are in a state of flux.

(continued on Page 2)

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Throughout the month, we mourn those who have died because of domestic violence, celebrate those who have survived and work together to raise awareness and break the cycle.

Although it is still a taboo subject in many communities, domestic violence is still a widespread problem. One in four women in the U.S. will experience domestic violence, yet only about 25% of victims ever report their abuse to the police.



To honor those whose lives have been touched by domestic violence, Shelter House will display our Clothesline Project at 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 more than 50,000 shirts.



Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

It is a busy and exciting time at Shelter House. We have been extremely active the past few months helping women, children and men get to safety; and in many instances, literally rebuild pieces of their lives. We closed out the fiscal year knowing that we had touched more lives in the community than in years past. As we move into the fall, we are embarking on a plan that will enable Shelter House to help even more people and our newest group of domestic violence victims, their pets.

When we first decided to pursue the idea of adding the kennel to our emergency shelter, many of us thought it was a good idea but didn't know if there was a need for it in our area. We asked the women that were living in shelter what they thought of the idea and if they would have come to our shelter sooner if we had the program.

The stories that we heard that day were enough to convince us that we had to do something about the issue of abusers using

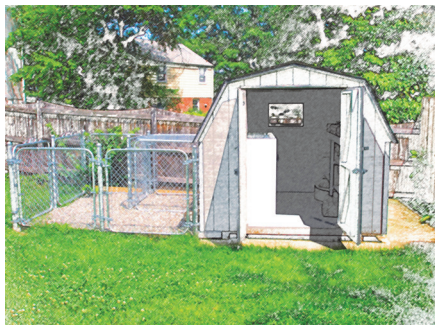
family pets to control the women and children in the family. Here are some of the stories we were told. One woman's husband held her cat down and held a hot hair dryer to it until the cat's skin and fur started to burn. Another abuser beat the family dog with a pipe until he had broken several ribs. We also helped a woman who came into shelter for just one night. She called home that evening to check on her animals. While she was on the phone with her abuser, she heard him fire several shots and heard her dogs yelp and cry. She left our shelter the next day with plans to pick up her animals and flee to a friend's home. These stories convinced us that we needed to figure out a way to allow pets in our program and help the families that cannot leave their loved ones behind.

We are so grateful that we have the initial funding for the kennel from the Dugas Family Foundation, and we will be looking to you to help build and support this much needed program. We need to establish

partnerships with veterinarians so we can provide medical assistance to the injured animals that come into the kennel program and groomers who will offer their services to pets during their stay in shelter. We will also need help with gathering kennel supplies and funding to sustain the program. Most importantly, we will need your help spreading the word that Shelter House is now pet friendly. Women in our community no longer have to make a choice between their safety and the safety of their pets. I am proud to say that next spring we will not only be saving the lives of people but their pets as well.

We are now one of four domestic violence centers in the state of Florida that have a kennel program. We are one of a handful across the United States. Thank you for being a part of this milestone in the history of Shelter House. We wouldn't be here without the support of donors and supporters like you.

Kennel (continued from Page 1)



Artist rendering of dog kennel

In preparation for these changes, shelter staff are receiving training on pet safety planning, pet grief counseling, the functions of animal control and PAWS, animals as property rights/injunctions and the correlation between domestic violence and animal abuse.

The pet-friendly room will be operational this month with the kennel groundbreaking slated for January. The kennel will start accepting pets beginning spring 2013.

Funding for the initial build has been generously donated by the Dugas Family Foundation, but we need your help too. Please check out the list to the right to see what we need. For more information or to arrange for a donation drop-off, please call 850-243-1201.

Purple Paws Kennel Donation Needs

Veterinary services
Grooming services
Pet food
Food and water bowls
Treats
Food bins
Kitty litter
Litter boxes
Litter scoops
Leashes/harnesses/leads
Collars
ID tags
Bedding
Toys
Cat climbers and scratch posts
Pet medication and vitamins
Flea and tick medication
Shampoo
Brushes and combs
Nail clippers
Washing machine
Dryer
Mini refrigerator for medication
Bench for the dog run

Be Kinder Campaign

"Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness."

~Seneca

Be on the lookout for our annual *Be Kinder* campaign arriving in your mailbox in just a couple of weeks.

Joining in this campaign is your opportunity to stand with Shelter House as we work toward a violence free community. Your support enables us to offer critical services in Okaloosa and Walton counties, including the 24-7 crisis hotline, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, child counseling, support groups, primary prevention classes for youth and economic empowerment workshops.

You will have the option this year to designate your donation for the support of the Purple Paws Kennel. Stand up for families and say "no more" to domestic violence and animal abuse.

Allstate Foundation Renews Economic Empowerment Grant

In the midst of this economic crunch, learning how to save and wisely spend your dollars and cents is more important than ever. With that in mind, Shelter House is proud to announce the continuation of our financial education and economic empowerment workshops thanks to a grant for \$36,000 from The Allstate Foundation. Shelter House first received this grant in 2009 and has earned recognition from other domestic violence centers for our innovative programs with victims and the community.

These programs are vitally important because domestic violence survivors are often the victims of financial abuse as well. The abuser might have restricted access to money, ruined credit, forbidden the victim to work or even harassed the victim on the job causing a spotty work history.

The grant funds allow us, along with our community partners like Wells Fargo, to work with victims on learning how to budget, save and build credit scores through economic

empowerment courses. We also work with the children of abuse survivors so they learn early in life how to handle their own money and avoid the pitfalls of financial abuse.

While the programs for domestic violence victims are a major focus, Shelter House offers workshops that are free and open to the public as well. Previous topics under the WAM! (Woman and Money) banner have included Investing 101, Organizing Your Finances, Cooking on a Budget and Car Basics. YES! (Youth Economic Strategies) workshops teach teens how to set financial goals, budget and save. We have already kicked off the new grant period with an Eating Healthy on a Budget workshop at Kitchenique in Destin in September.

As part of the Allstate grant, Shelter House also presents the WAM! Economic Empowerment Conference each year, bringing together local experts and nationally-renowned speakers for a full day of workshops. More than 110 people

attended the 2012 conference. The third annual conference will take place on February 23, 2013.

About The Allstate Foundation

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation (NYSE: ALL). Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations across the country, The Allstate Foundation brings the relationships, reputation and resources of Allstate to support innovative and lasting solutions that enhance people's well-being and prosperity. With a focus on teen safe driving and building financial independence for domestic violence survivors, The Allstate Foundation also promotes safe and vital communities; tolerance, inclusion and diversity; and economic empowerment. Over the last 60 years, the Foundation has contributed nearly \$300 million to organizations and projects in communities throughout the nation. For more information, visit www.allstatefoundation.org.

Luminaria Run to Return for Second Year



Shelter House and Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort are once again teaming up for the 2nd Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic Violence. This 5K/9K twilight race will take place on Saturday, December 8, starting from Sandestin's Baytowne Marina at 5pm.

The course will be lined with more than 2,000 luminarias, lighting the path for walkers and runners and representing how Shelter House and its community partners light the way to a safer place for victims of domestic violence in Okaloosa and Walton counties. The 9K distance serves as a reminder that a woman is assaulted or beaten every nine seconds in the U.S. The public is encouraged to purchase a luminaria bag for \$10 to be placed along the course in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Registration for the 5K is \$25 for adults in advance or \$35 on site and \$10 for children in advance or \$15 on site. The 9K race costs \$40 in advance or \$50 on race day for adults and \$15 in advance and \$20 on race day for children.

Last year's inaugural race drew more than

260 runners and raised over \$7,000 for Shelter House.

Visit www.shelterhousenwfl.org or www.imathlete.com to register or call 850-243-1201 for more information on the race and sponsorship opportunities.

Sunday Brunch at Hibiscus Guesthouse



Shelter House volunteers will be pouring mimosas for tips at Hibiscus Coffee and Guesthouse on Sunday, October 7. Enjoy live music, beautiful gardens and delicious food in the Backyard of Love from 10am to 1pm.

In observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we will have our Clothesline Project on display during brunch. Supplies will also be available for anyone who would like to decorate their own t-shirt for themselves or in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Hibiscus is located at 85 DeFuniak Street in Grayton Beach. You can reach them at 850-231-2733.

Holiday Drive

The holidays are almost upon us, and we need your help to make



Thanksgiving and Christmas special for the families we serve. Shelter House holds a holiday food drive every year to gather items for complete holiday meal baskets that are then delivered to our outreach and transitional housing participants. Your donations also help us bring a bit of the holiday spirit to the women and children in our emergency shelter.

Please drop off Thanksgiving items by November 19 and Christmas items by December 19. Non-perishable items are accepted at our administrative office located at 102 Buck Drive in Fort Walton Beach Monday through Friday between 8am and 5pm.

Items needed include: stuffing, boxed mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberries, rolls, pie crusts, pumpkin puree, condensed milk, fried onions, soups for casseroles, pie filling, laundry baskets and gift cards. We ask that you bring turkeys, hams and fresh fruits and vegetables on November 19 and December 19 only due to limited storage capacity.

Thanks to your generosity, Shelter House delivered 23 Thanksgiving baskets and 30 Christmas baskets last year.

What We've Been Up To



(Left): Vicki McCain of Kitchenique demonstrates delicious, nutritious meal preparation at the Eating Healthy on a Budget workshop.

(Right): Thanks to the generous people at Hurlburt who participated in the Feds Feed Families drive which was coordinated this year by Hurlburt Airman's Voice.



(Left): Shelter House Executive Director Michelle Sperzel picks up a donation of food and toys for the Purple Paws Kennel from Julie Brown, owner of Furry Fanatics at Gulf Place on 30A.

(Right): Employees from ThomCo Enterprises hard at work on the emergency shelter's playground as part of the United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties' Day of Caring.



Shelter House Shopping List

Immediate Needs:

Diapers (large sizes)
Baby wipes
Juice
Trash bags
Resealable plastic bags (quart & gallon)
Canned tuna & chicken
New bed pillows
Tampons
Deodorant

Monetary:

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

Food:

Non-perishable/canned food & fruits
Frozen foods
Cold food items (meat, milk, eggs, etc.)
Breakfast cereal
Mac & cheese

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 850.243.1201 or email info@shelterhousenwfl.org.

Upcoming Events

October:

Sunday Brunch (Hibiscus Coffee & Guest House): October 7

Resume Building Workshop (Location TBA): October 13

November:

Taste of the Beach (Various Locations): November 1—4

Eating Healthy on a Budget (Kitchenique): November 10

December:

2nd Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic Violence (Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort): December 8

Stay Connected

Stay up to date on Shelter House news and events by connecting with us online:

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