



# Newsletter

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## Fall 2013

### Grant Helps Grow Capacity at Emergency Shelter

Big changes are coming to Shelter House in the form of a huge construction project. Thanks to a capital grant for \$286,076 from the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), our confidential emergency shelter will receive an extreme makeover!

The greatest need that will be addressed by this project is increased bed space to accommodate more survivors and longer stays during busier times. By the end of construction, the shelter will grow from 24 to 32 beds, not including the addition of six new cribs.

This project entails more than simply adding space. Part of the existing shelter will be configured into a studio apartment with its own bathroom, kitchen, sitting room and sleeping area. This will serve as a safe place for survivors and their family members with unique situations such as a male victim, someone with a communicable disease or a mother whose child has an illness or special needs.

Another portion of the shelter will be converted into a large dorm room with an attached bath for single women. This room will not only create four more bed spaces, but will also accommodate single women so they are not displaced by a new incoming family. On occasion, this room could also be used to house large families so older children can stay in the same bedroom as their mother and younger siblings.

With the addition and remodel, two new bathtubs will be installed. Bathtubs are particularly important to mothers of small children.

In addition to adding more beds and bathrooms, the renovations will include a complete overhaul of the shelter security and telephone systems. A safety corridor requiring entrants to be buzzed through two doors will be added to the front entrance to keep staff and residents safe in the event an abuser learns the location of the shelter.

The office where staff will buzz residents through will be outfitted with bulletproof glass. Additionally, all of the fencing around the property will be replaced with an eight-foot security fence.

Another safety feature included in the new site plan is connecting the children's recreation room to the main house through the laundry room. Making this connection will bring the kids room onto the new security system, allowing parents and children to use that room after the nightly

alarm is set. This is an important benefit for moms in shelter with children who are still adjusting to a new environment.

The shelter telephone system, which includes the 24/7 crisis hotline, will be updated to allow more staff to be able to answer calls at once. New security cameras, monitors and wiring around all windows and doors will be put in place.



*The upgraded kitchen will include two workable spaces and more accommodating for residents with special needs.*

The kitchen in shelter is also due for a renovation. Universal access updates will be made by changing the countertop height and adding pull out cabinets. The remodel will address the increase in people living in shelter by splitting the kitchen into two workable spaces with two sinks, stoves and dishwashers. This will alleviate congestion at meal time.

Finally, the great room in the shelter currently has a sunken floor. Raising that floor to the level of the rest of the house will improve accessibility to every room in the shelter, the recreation room and the backyard.

This is a huge project that will begin by the end of this calendar year and be complete by June 2015. The shelter will remain fully operational during all of the construction.

Shelter House has been operating at or near capacity, and this renovation will enable us to increase the comfort, convenience and security of the shelter for all residents.

### 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 remains 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.

Here are a few simple ways you can join with Shelter House in our efforts to make this a violence free community:

- Volunteer –Shelter House has opportunities to fit any schedule. You can help out with one event or come into the office every week.
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and share the articles, information and events we post.
- Donate groceries, household supplies, gift cards or money to help the women and children Shelter House services.
- Contact us to display the Clothesline Project, a moving art installation of t-shirts created by domestic violence victims and child witnesses, at your business or community center.
- Wear a purple ribbon all month long to show your support.

With your help, we can paint the town purple in October!

## Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

Last month I was in a seminar for Shelter House with several of our community law enforcement partners. The guest speaker was domestic violence survivor Susan Still. She has appeared on "20/20" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show", and her mission is to tell her story and help break the cycle of domestic violence in our communities.

She answered the questions "Why did you stay?" and "How did you finally leave?". While praising prosecutors and victim advocates who helped her, Susan talked about how they have to be sensitive that many victims are less concerned with broken laws than how they will feed themselves and their children after leaving their abuser. Like many victims, she stayed with her husband for so long for emotional, familial and financial reasons.

Susan gave an example that drove the point home about taking risks regardless of fear. She said, "Imagine going through your

morning routine – getting up, working out, showering, getting the kids ready for school and leaving the house. Now imagine doing all those things knowing that when you walk out the front door you are never going to come back to the house. All the kids have are the items in their backpacks, and all you have are the items in your purse. Now imagine that fear you have and multiply that by 50, and that is a little bit of what I felt on the day I left my home."

Hearing her speak from the heart about her experiences and life after abuse inspired me to really look at our advocates, programs and services and ask the question "Is there more we can do to help victims?" What I keep coming back to is that we always need to look at what we are doing through the lens of someone who needs safety and advocacy.

We need to meet each woman, child and man where they are and adjust OUR way of

thinking, referrals and safety planning method to each individual person. When I think about the thousands of people we help every year, I think about the enormous amount of flexibility it takes to do this work, the need to approach each person and create a plan that is unique to them and their needs. There is no one size fits most or a cookie cutter response, and best practice sometimes means starting from scratch.

Susan's speech was a great reminder that even though our advocates and law enforcement respond to the same situations over and over again, they are not the same and each situation needs to be approached with an open mind and open heart. I will say it time and time again – the survivors we help are the bravest people I know. They are fearless to leave everything they know to seek out a different life. We are here to help and support them along the way. Thank you for trusting us to do this work and for making a difference in our community.

## Economic Empowerment Program Receives New and Renewed Support



Shelter House's economic empowerment and financial education program recently received a boost through grants from The Allstate Foundation and Boeing. The Allstate Foundation continued its support with a \$30,000 grant, and Boeing came on board as a supporter for the first time with a \$5,000 grant award.

Through the WAM! (Women and Money) and YES! (Youth Economic Strategies), Shelter House offers free workshops and an annual conference to the community as well as to our participants.

Economic literacy is important for everyone, but domestic violence victims face unique financial barriers that also affect their safety. Women leaving abusive relationships often have bad credit, liens, limited education, limited job skills and spotty job history. Learning how to manage money is vital as they move toward independence and safety.

Workshops for youth set them up for a lifetime of financial confidence and success. YES! workshops include topics such as money management, job readiness skills, budgeting, saving, credit, college admission and financial aid.

The next offering is a Day of WAM! on Saturday, October 26 from 10am to 3pm at the First Baptist Church of Crestview. Attendees will learn about important topics like loans, credit, identity theft, budgeting, retirement planning and more. There is no fee to attend, and lunch will be provided. Please call 850.243.1201 to RSVP.

In addition to the workshops and conference, the economic empowerment program allows Shelter House to offer individual development accounts (IDAs) to our participants whereby they can work toward financial goals. A participant deposits money into an

account, and Shelter House matches it two to one for goals such as debt reduction, housing, transportation, education and micro-enterprise.

Be on the lookout for information on upcoming workshops, including Job Search and Resume Building, Credit Repair, Taxes, Budgeting, Mortgages and more.

The 4th Annual WAM! Conference will return to the Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College on February 22. We will announce more details on the conference in the coming weeks.

### 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. For more information, visit [www.allstatefoundation.org](http://www.allstatefoundation.org).



## Carrabba's Cooking Class

Shelter House's popular Carrabba's Cooking Class will return this winter! We are working with Chef Paul to finalize the date for this fun event. Stay in touch with us on Facebook for the January class announcement.



## Luminaria Run Moves to Destin

### SHELTER HOUSE



Due to the community's tremendous support, our annual run has outgrown its original location. The 3rd Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic & Sexual Violence moves to the City of Destin this year.

This year's run will take place on Saturday, December 7 at 4:30pm. The start line is at the Destin City Hall Annex, and the 5k and 9k courses will take runners through the Indian Bayou neighborhood. The 9k distance serves as a reminder that a woman is assaulted or beaten every nine seconds in the U.S.

The course for this twilight run will be lit with more than 2,000 luminaria bags, representing how Shelter House and our community partners light the way to a safer place for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence in our community. Runners are encouraged to wear reflective gear for this twilight race, and an award will be given for the best lit runner. Get your **GLOW**

on! This is a family-friendly event. As always, the run ends with a "sweet finish" featuring s'mores, hot cocoa, cupcakes and more.

This year we are adding a run expo. Come out to The Palms of Destin on Friday, December 6 from 4pm to 8pm for packet pick up and to explore the expo.

Team registrations are encouraged, and prizes will be awarded for the largest team and the team that raises the most money. Register at [www.shelterhousewnfl.org](http://www.shelterhousewnfl.org) or [www.imathlete.com](http://www.imathlete.com), and follow us on Facebook for the latest updates!

Thank you to our 2013 sponsors: BE Events, Blueprint Health Studio, Destin Shines, Dixielectricar, Emerald Grande, Furry Fanatics, Kind Bar, Nike Factory Store, Proffitt PR, Run With It, Silver Sands Premium Outlets, SoWal, Think It Wear It Express and Wagley Creative. Sponsorships are still available. For more information, call 850.243.1201.

### 30A Charity Golf Classic



The inaugural 30A Charity Golf Classic will be held at Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club on Saturday, October 19 with a portion of the proceeds benefiting Shelter House.

This wild and crazy one-day tournament will be full of surprises, twists and turns. Complimentary snacks will be available on the course, and 30A carts will come around selling drinks, mulligans and special opportunities to give you and your team the winning edge.

Individual and team registrations are available as well as team sponsorships. Visit [www.30A.com](http://www.30A.com) for more information or to register.

### Halloween Derby



Join us on Saturday, October 26 in Seaside for the 4th Annual Halloween Derby! Dachshund races will be followed

by a pet costume contest and live music. The races are for Dachshunds only, but bring your other furry friends with you for the costume contest and a day of fun. Proceeds from this year's derby will benefit Shelter House's Kind Heart Kennel. Visit [www.halloween.org](http://www.halloween.org) for information.

### DCWAF Continues Support for Kids



Shelter House recently accepted a check for \$85,000 from Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation. The award came on the heels of the exciting news that DCWAF once again selected Shelter House as a benefiting charity for 2013-14.

Funding from DCWAF has allowed us to facilitate primary prevention groups for teens, advocate for children, offer child and youth support groups as well as child and mommy support groups and provide hundreds of hours of child therapy each year by a licensed child psychologist. Most recently, foundation funds were used to purchase new playground equipment for the shelter's backyard and take the kids on a dolphin cruise during spring break.

Thank you to DCWAF for helping heal the children in our community who have witnessed domestic violence.

Your next opportunity to support Shelter House's kids via DCWAF is at Taste of the Beach, a three-day food and wine extravaganza. For more information on all of the goings on, visit [www.tasteofthebeachfl.com](http://www.tasteofthebeachfl.com).



### Be Kinder Campaign

*"Kind people are the best kind of people."*

~Unknown

Be on the lookout for our annual Be Kinder campaign in your mailbox later this month.

Joining this campaign is your opportunity to stand with Shelter House as we work toward a violence free community. Your support enables us to provide critical services such as a 24/7 domestic violence and rape crisis hotline, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, child counseling, support groups, primary prevention education for youth and economic empowerment courses.

Make your pledge to Be Kinder!

### Holiday Meal Drive

It's hard to believe, but the holidays are just around the corner. When you shop for your family's feast, please keep in mind the women and children at Shelter House.

We deliver complete holiday meal baskets to families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you need it to prepare your meal, we need it for ours! The deadline for Thanksgiving donations is November 25, and the last day to drop off food for Christmas is December 18.

Thank you for helping make the season bright for our families!

## Shelter House's Camp Change for Children

For the second year, Shelter House's youth advocates held a day camp on the campus of Children in Crisis (CIC) for kids who have experienced or witnessed violence. Fifteen children from both organizations, ranging in age from 6 to 13, spent a week learning about healthy relationships, self-care, economic empowerment, safety planning, violence prevention and more.

Our youth advocates worked side by side with CIC's house parents to provide these important lessons in an interactive, entertaining format. While they noted some stress among the children when talking about healthy relationships, everyone knew they were in a safe space where they could experience their feelings and share them if they felt comfortable to do so.

Funding for Camp Change comes from Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, a generous supporter of both Shelter House and Children in Crisis.



(Top Right): Campers enjoyed getting out on the water for a cruise where they spotted sharks, stingrays and dolphins.



(Bottom Right): The kids were happy, happy, happy to jump in a Duck Dynasty-themed bounce house.



(Bottom Left): Camp Change kids showing off the banner and tie dye shirts they made.

### 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](mailto:info@shelterhousenwfl.org).

### Upcoming Events

#### October

**30A Charity Golf Classic (Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club):** October 19

**Halloween Derby (Seaside):** October 26

**Day of WAM! (First Baptist Church of Crestview):** October 26

#### November

**Taste of the Beach (Various Locations):** November 1-3

#### December

**Luminaria Run Expo (The Palms of Destin):** December 6

**3rd Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic & Sexual Violence (Destin City Hall Annex):** December 7

**Charity Gift Wrap with Sinfonia (Silver Sands Premium Outlets):** December 11-24

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