



Newsletter

www.shelterhousenwfl.org
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Fall 2014

Answering the Question: Why Does She Stay?

When domestic violence finds its way into the public eye, the question we most often hear is Why Does She Stay? This question rankles many advocates and victims who want to shout, "Why isn't anyone asking why he hit?!"

The release of a video showing NFL star Ray Rice punching and knocking out his then-fiancée Janay in an elevator brought domestic violence to the American public's attention and sparked discussion on the topic like we have never before seen. While most people were horrified by the violence Rice exhibited, the question started creeping into the conversations. Suddenly the talk was no longer about the blow and Rice dragging her limp, unconscious body out of the elevator but rather about why Janay stayed with him and went on to marry him. Speculation was that she was a gold digger, weak or stupid.

The answer, of course, is not that simple. There are many reasons why victims do not leave after the first time their abuser physically harms them. Domestic violence is insidious. It rarely starts with sudden physical violence. Control and isolation are important tools for abusers. Many people who have never been in an abusive relationship do not understand the impact of verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. The victim's confidence and sense of self are eroded to the point she might blame herself for the abuse or think she is a bad person.

While money sometimes plays a role, it is usually not in the "gold digger" way some allege of Janay

Rice. Some abusers isolate their victims, do not allow them to work and make them afraid to even speak or make eye contact with anyone. If that is the life you have lived, how do you strike out on your own, find a new place to live and go on job interviews?

I STAYED BECAUSE...

These responses are from local Shelter House participants.

He said he would kill me, the kids and himself.

He told me he would cut off my health insurance.

I hoped and honestly believed he would change.

When I left before, he found me and threatened my family.

He never let me work and I couldn't support the kids on my own.

He convinced me no one else would ever want me.

No one believed me.

My pastor told me I needed to pray harder.

My children wouldn't leave with me.

The judge denied my restraining order.

He said he would chop me up into tiny pieces.

He hurt my dog and said next time he would kill her.

I loved him.

Fear of further abuse and the safety of loved ones holds some victims back. The abuser might threaten to harm himself, the victim, her children, her family, her pets or anyone who agrees to help her. Leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time, and most victims who try to leave make seven attempts before they are finally successful in getting out.

At Shelter House, we not only offer emergency shelter but also counseling with outreach advocates. Many of the participants working with these advocates are still living with their abusers and working out how to leave. They talk about safety plans at home, like not getting cornered in a room with no exit. They make plans for gathering important documents and keepsakes for when they do get out. They receive referrals for legal services and assistance with filing injunctions. Making these careful plans increases their chances for getting out and staying safe.

The next time you hear about a high profile

domestic violence case or see something right here in our community, take the opportunity to educate your friends. Because now you know why she stays.

For simplicity this article refers to victims of domestic violence as "she". Shelter House can and does help male victims of domestic and sexual violence as well.

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.

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, children, men and pets 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.
- Buy a Shelter House t-shirt and wear it to show your support. Use it as a way to start conversations about domestic violence.
- Tell the NFL you want to see some purple on the field!

Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

The past month has been filled with Facebook posts, sports blogs, newscaster commentary and Twitter feeds about domestic violence. We are witnessing a county's reaction to violence against women in an age when we can readily gather information and instantly respond. Instead of passively watching O.J. Simpson's white Bronco rolling down the freeway, we can write a post sharing our own thoughts and feelings about the Ray Rice elevator video. Instead of seeing a domestic violence scene in a movie, people are witnessing raw video of a real life assault. I think it is the latter that has caused the strong reaction and the outrage. It is one thing to hear about domestic violence or to watch a fictional drama. It is quite another to see it play out between two real people.

The media coverage and all the responses have been great because domestic violence

has been brought out from behind closed doors. That's a positive outcome from a negative action. I often equate how people talk about domestic violence to how people talked about breast cancer in the 1980s. People knew it happened, but it wasn't proper to say "breast" in casual conversation. People know domestic violence happens, but it makes many uncomfortable to talk about it at dinner. But that is what is happening. People are talking about it. They are talking about it over morning coffee, at happy hours, during family dinners and even on football Saturday and Sunday. The NFL brand is very powerful. The fact that they are talking about it can only prove beneficial to shining the light on this issue.

Every now and then a situation such as this occurs to bring much needed attention to a bigger problem. Although we have made enormous changes in how we provide

services to victims of violence and more people talk about domestic violence, there is more to do! The quote "All it takes is a good man to do nothing" keeps coming to mind. If watching the Ray Rice video made you mad, stay mad! We need some outrage to move forward and hold batterers accountable. We need help from you, businesses, media, Hollywood and organizations like the NFL to do it. We all need to keep talking about what we are doing to help women, children and men. We need to take action and provide lifesaving and life changing services, but most of all, we need to advocate for victims and keep the conversations at the breakfast and dinner tables happening.

Thank you for trusting us to do this work and for making a difference in our community.

30A 10K & Fun Run

Shelter House is excited to announce that we are a benefiting charity of this year's 30A 10K and Fun Run! The 10K and one mile run take place in Rosemary Beach on Thanksgiving Day.

Tour scenic highway 30A and give yourself an excuse to go for that second slice of pumpkin pie! Hosted by Hammer

Down Multisport the region's largest cycling, triathlon and running club, the race both starts and finishes in the beautiful town of Rosemary Beach.

The out and back course winds along Scenic Highway 30-A offering breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico, Camp Creek Coastal Dune lake and takes runners past pristine beach communities filled with the most inspiring and exclusive properties



along the Gulf Coast. This fast and flat, out-and-back route is designed for running enthusiasts looking for a great race to reach a new personal record or just to enjoy the holidays with family and friends in a beautiful community.

The race begins at 7:30 am and features aid stations along the route.

Participants are asked to arrive at least one hour prior to the race start to allow ample time for parking and registration. An awards ceremony will conclude the festivities. All participants will receive a complimentary custom designed 30A 10K t-shirt and post-race refreshments.

Visit www.30A10K.com to register or call Shelter House at 850.243.1201 to volunteer.

Kennel Anniversary



This month we are celebrating the first anniversary of the Kind Heart Kennel! We held the ribbon cutting for the kennel on site at our emergency shelter last October and have since helped

more than a dozen animals stay with their families while transitioning from abusive environments to a safe, happy home.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in bringing this critical service to our community! Your continued support is needed to provide veterinary services and food for our furry residents. Monetary donations are needed or show your support by buying and wearing a Kind Heart Kennel t-shirt!

National Bullying Prevention Month



October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Nearly one in three students report being bullied during the school year. Bullied students are almost two and a half times as likely

to have had suicidal thoughts and more than three times as likely to have attempted suicide than their peers.

Shelter House is teaming up with the Boys

& Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast and Project Respect this month for Walk 4 Respect, an anti-bullying march, at B&GC in Fort Walton Beach and South Walton.

How will you celebrate this month and teach kids kindness is always the best choice? Here are a few options: Wear an orange ribbon or clothing. Talk to your kids about being an upstander, not a bystander. Share anti-bullying books, videos and websites with the young people in your life. Be a good example!

Halloween Derby

Join us on Saturday, October 25 in Seaside for the 5th 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 the derby will benefit Shelter House's Kind Heart Kennel. Visit www.halloween.org for information.



4th Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic & Sexual Violence

The 4th Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic & Sexual Violence will take place on Saturday, December 6 at 4:30pm. Runners will start at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. in Destin and follow a course lined with more than 2,000 luminarias lighting their path.

The race includes 5k and 9k courses winding throughout the Indian Bayou neighborhood. The 9k distance was chosen to represent that a woman is assaulted or beaten every nine seconds in the U.S. while the luminarias symbolize how Shelter House and our community partners light the way to a safer place for victims of abuse.

Children are encouraged to participate in the run and walkers are welcome. This family-friendly event will have a "sweet finish" at the after party featuring s'mores, hot cocoa, cupcakes and more. We'll even have music, a hot toddy bar and Bubba Gump's famous gumbo!

This is a twilight race starting at 4:30pm. Runners are encouraged to wear reflective gear, and a prize will be awarded for the best lit runner so get your **GLow** on! Glow packets are available for just \$5 during registration. You can also purchase a raffle ticket to win a YOLO board.

Packet pick up begins on Friday, December 5 at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. in Destin from 4pm to 7pm. On-site registration and packet pick up will be open on race day from 2pm to 4pm at Bubba Gump. Look for the raffle and silent auction tables during packet



pick up and at the after party for your chance to support Shelter House and win fun prizes!

Luminary bags will be labeled and placed along the course in honor or in memory of loved ones. Bags are available through a \$10 donation to Shelter House and can be purchased at the Shelter House office in Fort Walton Beach or on site the day of the race.

Shelter House would like to thank this year's run sponsors: Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., Dixielectricar, Silver Sands Premium Outlets, Trustmark Bank and Ramada Plaza Beach Resort.

Last year's Luminaria Run drew more than 350 runners and raised over \$15,000 to help keep abused women, children and men in

the local community safe.

To register, please go to www.shelterhousenwfl.org. For more information on the race, sponsorships or luminary bags, call Shelter House at 850.243.1201.

REGISTRATION PRICES

ADULTS

5K: \$30

9K: \$45

KIDS (3-12)

5K: \$10

9K: \$15

*+\$5 on December 5 & 6
Includes long sleeve t-shirt*

Seeing Red Wine Festival

Destin
Charity Wine
Auction
Foundation
presents the
Seeing Red
Wine Festival

in Seaside this November 7 through 9.



Attend one
event or all
three! Your
attendance at
the Seeing
Red Wine
Festival

supports local children in need, including those at Shelter House.

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation has been a generous supporter of Shelter House for many years, enabling us to employ youth advocates, provide play therapy, build a playground at the shelter, offer Camp Change and many more services for kids.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.seeingredwinefestival.com.

Volunteers are needed for the festival. If you are interested in serving that weekend, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Carrie Tabor, at 850.243.1201 or info@shelterhousenwfl.org.

Many thanks to the festival partners: Seaside, The Merchants of Seaside, Cottage Rental Agency, Visit South Walton and Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation.

The weekend kicks off on Friday evening with an Al Fresco Reserve Tasting on the Seaside Lyceum Lawn. Chef Jim Shirley will pair delectable hors d'oeuvres with rare, exclusive wines. The 24th Annual Seeing Red Wine Festival Grand Tasting in downtown Seaside is the main event on Saturday afternoon from 1pm to 4pm. Named by Fodor's Travel as a top 10 'Can't-Miss Fall Wine Festival', the Seeing Red Wine Festival promises an extensive array of tasting tents featuring highly sought after wines from around the globe, live music, food stations from top local restaurateurs and the opportunity to purchase any wine you sample on site for unbelievable prices. The weekend concludes with the Fall Walkabout and Charity Auction on Sunday at Hilton Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort's Sunset Deck from 2pm to 5pm. Wind down the weekend with wine, cocktails, music and food from top local restaurants.

Be Kinder Campaign

"Always be a little kinder than necessary."

~J.M. Barrie

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, on-site kennel, victim advocacy, hospital accompaniment, play therapy for children, support groups, court advocacy, primary prevention education for youth and economic empowerment courses.

Your contribution ensures there is always someone to answer the hotline. It provides safe shelter for families to heal and thrive. It makes our community a safer and kinder place to live.

Make your pledge to Be Kinder!

United Way Day of Caring



More than a dozen volunteers from Hurlburt Field's Special Operations Equipment Maintenance Squadron turned up at Shelter House for United Way's Day of Caring. These people came ready to work!

The eager team pitched in at the emergency shelter, helping with renovation projects like painting, landscaping and furniture assembly. They also stopped in the administrative office to assist with a large mailing and assembling bags for an event.

Thank you to everyone for showing that you care!



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

Halloween Derby Day (Seaside): October 25

November

Seeing Red Wine Festival (Seaside & Hilton Sandestin): November 7-9

30A 10K (Rosemary Beach): November 27

December

4th Annual Luminaria Run to End Domestic & Sexual Violence (Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., Destin): December 6

Shelter House, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, mental or physical disability/disability status, sex/gender, pregnancy, military status/status as a veteran, genetic information, citizenship, immigration status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender orientation, limited English proficiency, language spoken or other legally protected status.

Sponsored by Shelter House, the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families.



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