



Shelter House Newsletter

www.shelterhousenwfl.org

24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-44-ABUSE

February 2009

Holiday Outreach By Kevin Cherry, Victim Advocate

Pack up the car, drive over 500 miles, and arrive in a place you have never been to; for most people, it might seem like I am talking about a vacation. To Jessica* and her three children, however, this was no vacation. The reality was that she and her children had to flee a batterer and leave the state they had called home for over sixteen years.

It was the beginning of December and the start of a new life for this family. But just because Florida is still beautiful in December did not mean this was an easy, flawless time for Jessica and her family. Most of their belongings were left behind with the batterer and were likely to never be seen again. Jessica did not know how she would survive financially, and there was always the nagging fear of "what if he finds us?"

What initially seemed like an overwhelming situation with few solutions quickly began looking more hopeful. With the assistance of numerous community organizations, churches, and individuals, things for Jessica's family were looking up: an apartment was secured, food provided, bills paid, and her car even repaired. I began working with Jessica as her Outreach Advocate in the beginning of December. Together we worked on enrolling her children in school, filing for a restraining order against the batterer, securing legal representation, and connecting with a local agency that could provide her with a part-time job. In such a short period of time things were finally coming together!

Having spent the last sixteen years of Christmas with her friends and family in other states, Jessica and her children were about to face their first holiday season alone. After realizing how I spend every Christmas with my family and a plethora of gifts, I was struck with empathy as I tried to understand what Jessica was going through. She not only had to worry about safety and economic security for her family, but also explaining to the children that there would not be much of a Christmas celebration this year.

Thanks to the generous giving of our community, Jessica and many families like hers were able to have a peaceful, gift-filled Christmas in the midst of an otherwise troubling time. I had the pleasure of giving Jessica gift

cards for Payless Shoe Source and Wal-Mart so that she could purchase the items her family needed and wanted the most. Because of an overabundance of toys in Shelter House's possession I was also able to give Jessica some toys, art supplies, and games for her family. And what Christmas is complete without a turkey? A generous donation of over a dozen turkeys allowed me to give Jessica two turkeys in addition to several bags of other canned and boxed foods. All in all it was certain that their Christmas would be spent with plenty of food, gifts, and holiday cheer.

As an advocate who works with Jessica on a regular basis it is encouraging to know that many so many other people are supporting her as well. Each person who donates food or toiletries or money makes my job easier and a participant's life a little better. This year's gift card program was especially important to me as giving a gift card allowed the women choice in the gifts they purchased for their family. Small efforts of empowerment such as these are vital to the women we serve and to the notion that the survivor knows what is best for her and her family. I am so thankful that Jessica and many other survivors allow me into their lives and to advocate on their behalf when possible. Only recently have I begun to understand and to see what a positive impact Shelter House has on so many individuals and families. It is especially easy to receive that feedback when I ask a participant how things are going, or if they feel safer now that they have an injunction, or even how their Christmas was.

Jessica's answer to the latter: "It was great!"

*Participant's name has been changed for her safety.

Kevin Cherry is the new Victim Services Provider in the Fort Walton Beach Outreach office. He studied Social Work at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, and graduated with his Bachelor's degree in July of 2008. He is Shelter House's first male advocate and has been with the organization since September.

New Logo New Year

A new year and a new look for Shelter House. Two of the biggest changes you will see with Shelter House will be the logo and the gala. The name change of the Sweetheart Gala to the Purple Passion Gala will allow the agency to carry its domestic violence message through everything it does. Purple is the color of domestic violence and the message conveyed is that one is passionate about stopping domestic violence. The logo change is something that came out of the five year strategic plan. The board wanted the logo to better reflect who Shelter House serves and what it does. The board also wanted a logo that reflects the seriousness of what Shelter House does. You will continue to see subtle changes as the year progresses. Stay tuned.

Board of Directors

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Executive Director's Report

February 2009...already? I can hardly believe that I have been at Shelter House for a year. Time has really flown by. It seems like yesterday when I met the board and staff for the first time and we started writing the strategic plan. We have accomplished so much in a short amount of time. Thank you to our community partners, donors, staff and board members. Without you and your commitment to the organization, we would not be where we are.

I know we will have amazing triumphs in 2009; however, we need to look at the reality of our situation as well. Shelter House is no different from any other business or non-profit: we are feeling the economic strain. We are feeling it with grant cuts and donations being less than in the past. We are also feeling it within the community we serve.

As I write this, our shelter is full. We have 17 children and 6 women in the house. Many of them spent their holidays with us. If 2009 is economically worse than 2008 we will continue to feel it from both fronts.

People have been asking me what they can do to us help during this time. My answer is simple; volunteer your time and help us with one of our fundraisers, join a board subcommittee, share your talents, donate something listed on our wish list, tell other people about Shelter House, or attend the Gala in the spring. We have been working together for the past 17 years towards the goal of a healthier community, the next year will be no different.

In 2009, our goals are simple. We will improve our existing partnerships,

enhance our community programs and develop new partnerships. I look forward to working with you to make them happen.

Now to my favorite part of my message --the thank you! I want to extend a huge thank you to Geoff Layne our immediate past Board President. Geoff has served on our board for the last six years. With his help, the agency has begun to change and grow. Geoff believes that we are on the right path to making this the best domestic violence shelter in the state. I agree and it is because of our board, staff and community partners that we will be able to achieve this goal. Geoff has turned the helm over to Wendy Clines who will lead the board into the next level of growth. Thank you Geoff for all the time you spent with Shelter House. We will miss you as our "El Presidente."

Thank You to our



Holiday check from the Simeon and Ann group Grace Lutheran Church. Pictured here; Joann Hailey & Michelle

Shelter House was FPRA Holiday charity. Members donated shampoo, soap, diapers, and much more!



Thank you to the Women's Council of Realtors for their ongoing support of Shelter House. Pictured here; Michelle and Debbie Lewis



Michelle & Traci Stokes Silver Sands Marketing Director and Evening of Giving Hostess.



Check and plaque presentation with the FWB Beach Brawl S8er Dolls!

Donations made this quarter in memory or in honor of:
Kaye Cain Meredith
Judy Thomas
Mrs. Pauline G. Skirvin

Shelter House Holiday Drive

This November and December Shelter House hosted its annual Holiday drive. The outpouring of support from the community was amazing. Shelter House wants to take this time to thank and acknowledge the community partners that contributed to the Holiday Drive. Santa Rosa Community Church, Fort Walton Police Department, FPRA, Grace Lutheran Church, Women's Council of Realtors, Realtor Outreach Committee, Victoria Secret in Mary Esther, Banana Republic at Silver Sands, Michael Kors at Silver Sands,

Gap at Silver Sands, Good, Sheppard Lutheran Church, Order sons of Italy in America, Shalimar United Methodist church, First United Methodist Church, Seagrove Garden Club, Blackhawk Management Corp., First Assembly Christian Church, Mich-les & Booth, Thursday Topplers Bowling League and many more.

Also, a big "thank you" to all of the generous individuals who supported the holiday drive.



Evening of Giving Tropical Tree at Cheesebuger in Paradise, Silver Sands

Upcoming Events

The 6th Annual Purple Passion Gala and Auction

SAVE THE DATE - The 6th Annual Purple Passion Gala and Auction (formally known as The Sweetheart Auction) will take place on Saturday, March 28, 2009 from 7:00 – 11:00 pm at Linkside Center, Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort. The event will consist of having Hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment by Jones & Company, a no-host bar, silent and live auctions. Last year over 170 people participated and the goal of \$35,000 was surpassed

Sponsorships are available at the following levels are \$250, \$500, \$1,000, and \$2,500. Sponsorships can include tickets to the event, VIP check-in and marketing opportunities. Individual tickets are \$50.00 and can be purchased at the administrative office located 102 Buck Drive in Fort Walton Beach. For additional information contact the office at 850-243-1201 or visit the website at www.shelterhousenwfl.org.

Vol

March 28 - Annual Gala
September 19 - Yard Sale. Volunteers will be needed to collect, pick up, sort and price donations. Volunteers will also be needed to work the day of the yard sale.

Anytime - Office work, donation sorting, landscaping, painting, Board sub-committees.

For more information about volunteering please contact :

Melissa Espinoza at 243-1201 or Mespinoza@shelterhousenwfl.org

About us



Shelter House would like to introduce its new board president Mrs. Wendy Clines. Wendy has been on the board at Shelter House for almost two years. She has served as a board member, nominations chair and this year's Pur-

ple Passion event chair.

When asked what her favorite part of being a board member of Shelter House, she responds, *"I am fortunate to have the time to give back to my community through volunteering. I chose Shelter House because domestic violence touches everyone's life in one way or another. Wonderful people make up this board which is a true working board, raising money while letting the community know about the services we provide. We are stewards of the money we raise to help improve lives of those in need, while having fun together. All relationships should be violence free."*

Wendy spent the majority of her life in the military. She traveled the world spending time in places such as Ger-

many, Spain, and Japan as well as the USA. Wendy has her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. She taught kindergarten, 1st and 3rd grade for over 20 years. Wendy was the director of several childcare centers both military and private. Wendy's husband John Clines is retired military. Wendy has two children, Dana and Scott, a daughter-in-law, Melissa, and a granddaughter, Maddie.

Wendy's goals for Shelter House are to see the agency grow in the public eye and to provide more programs within Okaloosa & Walton Counties.



P.O. Box 220
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549

Non-Profit

U.S. Postage Paid

Permit #268

OUR WISH LIST

VOLUNTEERS

Yard Sale
Gala
Office Work
Board Subcommittees
Sorting Donations

MONETARY

Monetary gifts
Gift Cards
Gas Cards
Phone Cards

FOOD

Non-perishable
Frozen foods
Cold food items (meat, milk, eggs, etc.)
Fresh Vegetables

PAPER SUPPLIES

Paper towels
Toilet paper
Zip-lock/Trash bags

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

Shampoo/Conditioner (family size)
Women's deodorant
Feminine Hygiene Products

Toothbrushes/Toothpaste
Mouthwash (family size)
Hair care Products
Hairbrushes (New)

BABY ITEMS

Diapers (especially Lg. Sizes)
Pull-ups / Training pants
Wipes

CLEANING PRODUCTS

Laundry soap
Dryer sheets
Disinfectants (e.g. Lysol)
Dishwashing soap
Sponges
Bleach

LINENS

Bath Mats
Bath Towels
Twin and Queen Size Sheets
Pillow Cases

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Band-Aids
Thermometers
Cotton Balls and Q-tips
Latex/Non Latex Gloves

CELL PHONES

Donate old, broken or unwanted cell phones to Shelter House, Inc. Phones can be converted into a 911 emergency phone for victims of domestic violence or recycled.

For information on donating please contact Melissa Espinoza at 243-1201 or Mespinoza@shelterhousenwfl.org

To see the complete wish list please visit the website at www.shelterhousenwfl.org

One man's trash is another man's treasure.

Don't forget the annual yard sale. Please hold on to items that are yard sale sellable.

Collection of items will begin in late August and early September.

Save the date! September 19, 2009!