



Newsletter

www.shelterhousenwfl.org
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Spring 2011

The WAM! Program is Changing Financial Lives

It has been more than a year since the WAM! (Women and Money) economic empowerment program, made possible by The Allstate Foundation, has become an integral piece of Shelter House's services. The program reaches not only victims of domestic violence, but members of the community as well.

Many of the participants that come to Shelter House and participate in the WAM! workshops are not the sole income earner for their household or their income may not come from a typical source such as a job. Shelter House is teaching our participants financial skills and tips about budgeting and saving income. In some cases, Shelter House is helping individuals move from being unbanked or under banked to opening up a savings account.

We want to share the experiences of some of our past WAM! participants. Please read their stories and see how going through the WAM! program has changed their financial life and in turn improved their quality of life. (The names have been changed to protect the participants).

Mary: "I thought I knew all I needed to know about money, but I was really surprised when I learned about budgeting and savings. I thought I didn't need a budget, but when I learned that I could save money I was very interested. As we went through creating a budget and savings plan, I realized that if I put a few dollars from my paycheck into a Christmas Club savings account I would have money to buy Christmas gifts for my family without the stress of finding the money to spend.

Then I thought I could put a few more dollars into a saving account in case I had something unexpected come up, and wouldn't you know it—we had something come up and I was able to take care of it without worrying about when my next dollar would come in or what bill I would have to skip that month.

When we covered coupons I was ready to pay attention and once again it paid off. I was able to buy more groceries (or some of the things that I would not normally buy) and had food on the table for me and my family.

These things have made a huge difference in my life and I tell everyone that I meet to go to the WAM! workshops. It really will make a difference in your life. I guarantee that you will learn something valuable using the resources provided to make your life better."

Erin: "The WAM! program came at the perfect time for me. I had just graduated college and wasn't making a lot of money but had the bills and responsibilities of an adult. I felt like I was drowning in my debt, but the lessons I learned from the WAM! workshops gave me the strength to organize my finances and make the best out of my situation.

Today, I am not behind on any of my bills. Everything I had in collections is paid off. I stick to a strict budget and am finally able to put money into savings with every paycheck. Budgeting and couponing are my friends. Soon, I will begin an IRA and have a goal to purchase my first home in a year. My motto right now is that as long as my bills are paid and I continue to move forward, I am alright!"

Jane: "My finances are something that keep me up at night and make me sick to my stomach. When I first heard about Shelter House's WAM! program I figured that because I am not a battered woman, these classes aren't for me, or so I thought. The classes were free so I decided to call the office and ask what they were teaching.

I had good habits that the class helped me expand upon like making a shopping list and collecting coupons. I have been saving \$50 on my grocery bills! I had bad habits too that I have ended, like not opening my bills when they arrived. I have a schedule and open my bills once a week. I have a pay down schedule for my credit cards and have successfully paid off two cards. One of them had a 22% interest rate! Right now, I am tracking my expenses so that I can set up a realistic budget rather than a pie in the sky budget that I will never be able to keep.

The biggest tip I learned is that I am in control of my finances. I feel more empowered about my money skills. Some of the tips have become habits and I am working on including more of them into my spending and saving habits."

Here are quotes from two victims of financial abuse who have gone through the WAM! program:

"The class couldn't have come at a better time for me. I am working towards transitioning out of transitional housing and this class gave me information to help me financially plan for the future."

"In class it was said that when you fail to plan, you plan to fail. That was so eye opening for me."

WAM! Conference

Want to have your own WAM! success story? Attend the WAM! Conference! Shelter House is presenting an economic empowerment conference this Spring at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. Participants will have the opportunity to attend three money breakout workshops on topics such as: organizing your finances, budgeting, cooking on a budget, credit, investing and mortgages. Lunch will be provided while the keynote speaker, Susan Samtur, the one and only Coupon Queen shares her secrets on how to save 50% every time you go grocery shopping!

When: Saturday, May 7, 2011

Time: 8:30 am—2:00 pm

Where: Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Camellia Room

Price: \$15/person

For sponsorship opportunities or to register for this event, call Shelter House at 243-1201 or register online at www.shelterhousenwfl.org. You may also fill out the registration form enclosed.

For more information on the Coupon Queen, visit her website at www.couponqueen.com.

Check out our Cooking on a Budget workshop hosted by Kitchenique's Cooking School Director, Vicki McCain!
Sat., April 9, 11:00 am—1:00 pm.
Call 243-1021 to RSVP for this free class!



Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

Spring has arrived with a wave of activity at Shelter House. We launched our new website, held our first Princess and Pirate Ball, started our YES! (Youth Economic Strategies) workshops at Youth Village, finished our children's room, launched our new intern program and are knee-deep in planning our WAM! Conference. Our hotline has been busy with an increase in calls and many people are coming in for one-on-one counseling sessions.

Even though our offices are busy, I can't help but think of all the individuals we have yet to help and so many stories we still haven't heard. I cannot tell you the number of women and men who tell me their story after they find out what I do. Sometimes there isn't the message of hope or happily ever after. Nonetheless, they are the faces of domestic violence in our community. We need to talk about it. We need to share what happens so that as a community we can continue to address the issues of violence in our homes. Here are some of the stories that have been shared with me over the past few weeks.

After a presentation at a local church a woman in her 80's told me she will never forget the night her father hit her mother in front of her. She said she regretted not telling her siblings until after her father had passed because once she told them, they all shared stories about

the violence they witnessed in their home. She said she is still ashamed of keeping the instance to herself and thanked me for the work that we do in the community. It is her hope that other little girls tell their mommy that daddy isn't supposed to be mean and there are people who can help.

Several weeks ago I sat next to a woman on a plane who told me her story of dating violence. The relationship lasted a year, but she got so caught up in the drama and yelling that she said it felt like a lifetime. At first she thought all the dinners and gifts were because he loved her, and she loved the attention. But the attention got to be too much; too many calls, too many gifts. He would offer to pay for everything so she felt like she had this great gift. She was a college freshman with a new car, an amazing apartment, dinner and dancing whenever she wanted. She said, "I became so reliant on the financial support I felt trapped. My girlfriends told me to put up with the yelling and hitting because I was getting a great deal." She was able to get out of the relationship because of a school counselor that looked her in the eyes and told her, "You are a battered woman. You don't deserve to have someone tracking your every move. You are a young woman free to make your own choices. You can hang out with your friends, your family and someone should add to that, not take

you from it." She lost friends, left school, sold her car and moved home. She is in the process of applying to a school closer to home so she can get out of debt and rebuild her life.

I also met an airman that told me about his shock and anger when he found out that his sister had been abused for two years and had kept it from the family. She is still in the relationship because of his nieces and nephews. He set up a bank account for his sister and makes monthly deposits. He is hoping that one day she will use the money to get a divorce and leave. He said the hard part is knowing that she needs to make the choice. He said, "I want to shake her and tell her that it doesn't need to be like this but all I can do is live my life and tell her I love her no matter what. I think she will leave someday. And when she does, I'll have her back."

These are the stories of the people you help. They are stories that need to be shared. We can't just talk about domestic violence once a quarter or once a year we need to talk about it everyday! If you are a participant who has used our services or a survivor of domestic violence who wants to share your story, email me your story at info@shelterhousenwfl.org or please attend the FCADV Listening Project on April 7 from 1—3 pm call 243-1201 for more information.

Mothers Day Drive

This Mothers Day, Shelter House wants to honor and recognize the mothers who have been victims of domestic violence by showing our outreach participants and shelter residents with Mothers Day gift bags choc full of pampering goodies!

You can help us celebrate these women by donating the following items for the Mothers Day bags: nail polish, make up, manicure/ pedicure gift certificates, massage gift certificates, hair salon gift certificates, chocolate, bubble bath, gently used paper back books, blank diaries, manicure kit, lotions, perfumes, magazines, bags, tissue paper, etc.

All donations should be made no later than Monday, May 2. To volunteer for the assembly of the bags, contact us at 243-1201 or email info@shelterhousenwfl.org. Bags will be distributed on Friday, May 6.

Donations can be made at the following locations:

102 Buck Drive—Fort Walton Beach

78 Lynn Drive—Santa Rosa Beach

290 Martin Luther King Blvd. —Crestview

Purses with a Purpose

The 2011 season of Purses with a Purpose is coming up quickly! We are excited to announce our two upcoming dates of our Purses with a Purpose fundraisers!

The Spring Purses with a Purpose will be **6 pm—8 pm, Friday, June 17** and the Fall Purses with a Purpose will be **6 pm—8 pm, Saturday, October 8**. Both events will be held at Silver Sands Factory Stores.

We will be throwing a Preview Party the day before each event. Purchase tickets for \$5 to the preview party and enjoy first bid on purses with food and wine provided by Carrabba's Italian Grill!

Purse donations are now being accepted for this new and gently used purse auction and sale.

For more information about the event, to help volunteer or to purchase tickets for the preview party, please contact our office at 243-1201 or info@shelterhousenwfl.org.

The Princess & Pirate Ball

The Princess & Pirate Ball was a first-time event held at the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort in March. This evening full of family fun featured a costume contest, dancing, a DJ, a princess carriage, silent auction, treasure hunt, the Krewe of Bowlegs and more!

If you attended the Princess & Pirate Ball, we want to hear from you! Email your feedback to info@shelterhousenwfl.org. We want to ensure next year's ball is bigger and better than this one!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success! Visit our website to see pictures of all the princesses and pirates from that evening's festivities: www.shelterhousenwfl.org.

Thank you to our sponsors: The Krewe of Bowlegs; Dixielectricar of Destin; Michles and Booth, PA; Affordable Home Insurance; Beadmarks; White-Wilson Medical Center; Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce; Panache Events; Rowland Publishing; Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort; Perfect Moments Photography; Cleveland Photography; Airmen, Marines and Sailors of 33rd Maintenance Group; John and Wendy Clines; Democratic Women of Fort Walton Beach; Keller Williams Realty; Pleat and Perry, PA; Carol Purdy; Synovus Mortgage Corp; and the Fairy Tale Princesses.



Getting to Know You—Volunteer of the Quarter

No matter the project, no matter the request, Shelter House has some of the most amazing volunteers. There is one in particular very dedicated volunteer that deserves recognition.

Bonnie has been volunteering faithfully with Shelter House since November. She has transformed our donation closet into an organized and efficient space for all of our food, toiletries and cleaning supply donations. We asked Bonnie a few questions about her volunteer efforts.

Q. How do you feel your role as a volunteer directly helps the Shelter House participants?

A. I have gained a sense of worth, and of being needed, and a lot of joy by just knowing the girls.

Q. How did you begin volunteering with Shelter House?

A. I took some things in when I saw an article in the paper asking for donations. I hope to be around for a long time. I have a very deep respect for all of the women at Shelter House as they have a very demanding and stressful job, and I like to put things in order so it works out great for us all.

Q. What has been your experience volunteering at Shelter House thus far?

A. The sympathy card that all of the girls signed and sent when my sister died; their words were a great comfort.

If you are interested in volunteering for Shelter House, call Cindy at (850) 243-1201 or

email info@shelterhousenwfl.org. Sign up to receive our monthly volunteer e-newsletters to stay up-to-date on volunteer opportunities from organizing donations to working community awareness events.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Wine and Dine in Paradise: Sat. 4/30

Mothers Day Bag Assembly: Wed., 5/4

WAM! Conference: Sat., 5/7

Little Black Dress Party: Sat., 5/21

Purses with a Purpose: 6/16 & 6/17

The Kids Room is Complete!

Kids are an important entity around the Shelter. This past year, more than 85 children have taken refuge at Shelter House and have been able to play, eat and sleep in a home free of domestic violence. This has been possible because of the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) and donors like you.

Shelter House was honored to be chosen two years in a row to be a benefiting charity of the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation. DCWAF has raised nearly \$3,000,000 and impacted the lives of countless needy children along the Emerald Coast.

Last year, Shelter House received \$40,000 from DCWAF and funds went towards renovating our Kids Room at the Shelter, child therapy and children's advocacy. This room is now able to be a sanctuary where the kids will be able to relax, watch TV and play games together.

A child therapist that has spent 58 hours healing the wounds of children who have witnessed domestic violence in their homes. These children have spent 1,625 nights worry-free and safe in a confidential domestic violence shelter. All of this is made possible by the support of the DCWAF and proud supporters of Shelter House.



Kids Room Before Renovation



Kids Room After Renovation



Kids Room During Renovation



Kids Room After Renovation

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation



This year's DCWAF event season

is coming to a close, but not without a bang! The Wine and Dine in Paradise event is coming to Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort in the Linkside Center on Saturday, April 30. This Walkabout and Auction will feature distinctive wines paired with authentic cuisine created by a selection of the area's finest chefs. Following the walkabout, there will be a silent auction, live music and the evening will end with an exciting live auction. For more information, visit www.dcwaf.org.

You can also support Shelter House's Children's Program by volunteering for this event. If you are interested, please call 243-1201.

The Little Black Dress Party

Shelter House is a benefiting charity of the 2011 Little Black Dress Party for Women's Health put on by White-Wilson Medical Center. You can support Shelter House by attending this year's Little Black Dress Party on **Saturday, May 21 at 6:00 pm at the Emerald Coast Conference Center.**

Tickets are \$60. All live auction and raffle proceeds go towards Shelter House and the other benefiting women's charities. For more information and to register, visit www.fwblittleblackdressparty.com.



What We've Been Up To



Above: Fall 2010 Purses with a Purpose event at Silver Sands Factory Stores.



Above: Shelter House created holiday meal baskets for the holiday season of 2010 for our participants. Thank you to all of our donors and volunteers!



Above: Michelle Sperzel with Board of Directors President, Wendy Clines, at Shelter House's Holiday party. Wendy received the Volunteer of the Year award for her dedication to Shelter House.



Our 2nd annual Carrabba's Cooking Class on 1-21-11 with more than 75 people in attendance!



Left: Karen Lauer, Wendy Clines, Cindy Launch and Cynthia Hopper at our 25th Anniversary Community BBQ on our Founder's Day, December 15, 2010.



Right: Some of the Princesses with the Krewe of Bowlegs at the Princess & Pirate Ball in March.

Shelter House Wish List

Immediate Needs:

- Dirt Devil "U" Vacuum Bags**
- Clorox Wipes**
- Magic Erasers**
- Trash bags**
- Universal Remote Control**
- Storage Shelves**
- Ziplock Storage Bags (Sandwich & Gallon)**

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.

Have you seen our new website? Take a look at our newly designed website with easy access to event calendars and registration, contact information, service explanations and more! www.shelterhousenwfl.org

Upcoming Events

April:

WAM! (Crestview Wachovia): Tues., 4/5—5/10, 5:30—7:00 pm

Cooking on a Budget Workshop (Kitchenique): Sat., 4/9, 11:00 am—1:00 pm

Core Competency Training (Troy University): 4/25—4/28, 8:00 am—5:00 pm

Wine and Dine in Paradise (Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort— Linkside Center): Sat., 4/30

May:

Mothers Day Drive: Fri., 5/6

WAM! Conference (Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort): Sat., 5/7, 8:30 am—2:00 pm

Little Black Dress Party (Emerald Coast Conference Center): Sat., 5/21

June:

Purses with a Purpose Preview Party (Silver Sands Factory Stores): Thursday., 6/16

Purses with a Purpose (Silver Sands Factory Stores): Friday., 6/17

Board of Directors

- Wendy Clines, *President*
- Karen Lauer, *Vice President & Fundraising Chair*
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- Cindy Launch, *Secretary*
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- Aimee Shaffer
- Sheila Wachsman

Executive Director

Michelle Sperzel

Editor

Gili Halperin

Looking for a speaker? A Shelter House representative will come out to your event and speak about our agency, domestic violence and how you can get involved! For more information, call the office at (850) 243-1201.