



Newsletter

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

Summer 2013

Shelter House to Take on Sexual Violence in Okaloosa and Walton Counties

In April, Shelter House leadership learned that the rape crisis services in Okaloosa and Walton counties were ending in May 2013. We could not stand by while sexual assault victims in our community were forced to travel to Pensacola or Panama City for services. Imagine a teenage girl on prom weekend calling a rape crisis hotline and no one answering.

After a unanimous vote, the Shelter House Board of Directors and Executive Director filed a letter of intent with the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) to become the Certified Rape Crisis Center for Okaloosa and Walton counties. As a result, Shelter House will begin offering 24/7 sexual assault advocacy and support to victims of sexual assault this month. An on-call team will be formed to respond to all hospitals and police departments to support victims in trauma situations that involve sexual assault and forensic rape examinations.

With the addition of these new services, Shelter House Domestic Violence Center will become Shelter House Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Center. Look for our new name and logo to roll out in the coming weeks.

The challenge in offering these services is not only in training staff but in paying for the new program. FCASV will not certify or fund Shelter House until we offer services for one year. Unfortunately, most other

funding sources require centers to be certified before they will award grants. The Shelter House staff and Board of Directors felt so strongly that this is the right thing to do that we are proceeding with adding these services and working diligently to find additional funding.

Sexual violence is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. It encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act (i.e. rape), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (i.e. unwanted touching) and non-contact sexual abuse (i.e. threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment). All types involve victims who do not consent or who are unable to consent or refuse to allow the act.

In Florida, 17% of women have been raped and more than 40% have been the victim of sexual violence other than rape. Among men in Florida, 20% have been victimized by sexual violence other than rape. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement 2011 Statewide Crime Report by county shows 1,667 cases of simple assault, 258 instances of aggravated assault, 37 threat/intimidation/stalking cases, 11 forcible rapes and two criminal homicide cases in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Victims who are seeking services should call the Shelter House hotline at 850-863-4777 or 1-800-44-ABUSE.

Kind Heart Kennel Slated to Open This Summer



Volunteers painting the inside of the dog kennel.

Shelter House announced last fall that we would be adding an on-site kennel to our emergency shelter. Thanks to the generous support of individuals like you and a grant from the Dugas Family Foundation, the Kind Heart Kennel will open this summer.

Our staff and volunteers are hard at work putting the finishing touches on every aspect of the kennel as we prepare to accept pets. Volunteers recently painted the inside of the dog kennel and the cat room. A large cat condo and dog kennels have been ordered, and we are anxiously

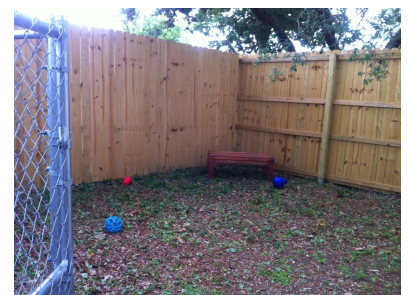
awaiting their arrival. The dog run, pictured to the right, is complete and will provide a safe place for families to interact with their beloved pets.

Restylers in Fort Walton Beach donated their product and services and have already installed the easy to clean flooring you see in the picture above in the dog kennel and the cat room.

Within the shelter, one bedroom was designated pet-friendly and a

HEPA filter was installed. That room is home to women or families that have pocket pets like hamsters or gerbils.

We are currently accepting donations of pet food and supplies in anticipation of the Kind Heart Kennel opening. There is also a need for in-kind veterinary and grooming services. If you would like to help keep people and pets safe and together, call Shelter House at 850-243-1201.



Dog run.

Kind Heart T-Shirts



Wear your support for the Kind Heart Kennel! Our new t-shirts feature the Kind Heart logo on the front and the words "Keeping People & Pets Safe" on the back. Tees are available in regular and fitted ladies styles. Shirts are \$20, and all proceeds benefit the Kind Heart Kennel. Call 850-243-1201 to purchase yours today.

Message from the Executive Director, Michelle Sperzel

A close friend sent me an email today that made me think about and define my thoughts on the power of purpose. As you read through this newsletter, the team and I are working exceptionally hard on creating new services, like the Kind Heart Kennel, for our women and children and taking on an entirely new program, rape crisis and sexual abuse.

The decision to become a dual center – domestic violence and sexual violence – was one that we did not enter into lightly. I spoke with the board of directors, staff, donors, volunteers, other dual centers around the state, community partners, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

The leadership of Shelter House discussed at length the purpose of Shelter House and why it was founded 28 years ago. We spoke about our main purpose of empowering women and children and enabling them to feel safe in their own homes. We talked about the community and how devastating it would be if there were no or limited adult

sexual assault services in Okaloosa and Walton counties. We shared our concerns about someone having to drive to Panama City or Pensacola to receive sexual violence services from a certified center. We also talked about someone calling a rape crisis hotline and not being able to reach someone. It was with all of these thoughts and heavy with emotion that the board of directors voted to file the letter of intent for Shelter House to become a Certified Sexual Violence Center.

We did it because it is the right thing to do – the purpose is the action that is driving Shelter House and its entire staff to learn about how we are going to serve more women, children and men. It is true, we are taking on a new program with no additional funding; but, again, it is the purpose that is driving us. It is moving us in a direction that we HAVE to go. Our community needs these services. Law enforcement, hospital emergency room nurses, doctor offices and other community partners need an agency to call that can help them serve victims in the community. Sexual assault victims need

someone to listen to them and help them not only heal but navigate the court system.

In the next few months, you will see the impact this new program will have on Shelter House and the community. I am extremely grateful for the community partners who are offering us assistance with training and the staff whose unwavering commitment to helping women and children will be the driving force behind building a strong foundation for the sexual assault program at Shelter House.

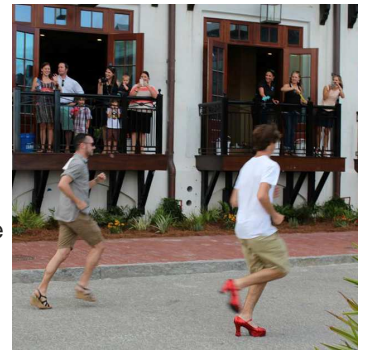
I have unshakeable faith that the community and our donors will help us create this foundation and that together we will continue to provide life-saving and life-changing services to women, children and men in our community. Even though we have a new mission statement, our vision for Okaloosa and Walton counties remains the same – *All relationships violence free*. There is amazing power in our purpose, and we are incredibly grateful you are a part of it.

2nd Annual Walk Her Way Draws a Crowd



Some vacationers were perplexed when they saw 173 men, women, children and dogs parading through the streets of Rosemary Beach in high heels and costumes on a Friday evening. The brightly colored procession was all part of the 2nd Annual Walk Her Way presented by Rosemary

Beach Foundation. “We could not be more pleased to partner with Shelter House on this fun and meaningful event,” said Zuma Banks, Rosemary Beach Foundation Board President. “It was great to see so many people come out and support us. Their generosity was overwhelming. The sore toes and blisters are just a small reminder of the pain that some are enduring.”



Beach Foundation.

Thanks to the 2013 sponsors, teams, walkers and volunteers, the annual Rosemary Beach Foundation event raised more than \$30,000 with a portion of proceeds benefiting Shelter House.

Unique shoe-themed awards designed by Nancy Williams were handed out at the after-party which also featured music from the Forrest Williams Band. The Team Spirit Award went to Peace, Love and Sole from Nest 30A. CORR Group's team Coterie won the Largest Team Award. Rosemary Beach Racquet Club held a tennis rally which raised the most money. Marcia Robbins from Fit Your Way won a special Effort Award. The all-male Pumps-N-Pearls team from The Pearl took home the Best Dressed Award, and the team's Kim Sallinger won the Perseverance Award for keeping his heels on throughout the entire walk and after-party.

Shelter House's Clothesline Project, a touching exhibit that allows adult and child victims of domestic violence to tell their story through words and art, was displayed in Rosemary Beach on the day of the walk.



“We are excited to see the event grow in its second year and know that so many people are taking action on behalf of domestic violence victims,” said Shelter House Executive Director Michelle Sperzel. “Reaching new audiences is important as we work to spread the word about our services.”

Walk Her Way organizers would like to thank our 2013 sponsors: Platform Level – The Merchants of Rosemary Beach, CORR Group and The Pearl; Stiletto Level – SoWal.com, Bamboo Bicycle Shop, Bombora Sun and Surf, Bud and Alley's Restaurants, The Hidden Lantern Bookstore, Rosemary Beach Realty, Rosemary Beach Cottage Rental, Rosemary Beach Trading Company and PerSpiCaslty; Wedge Level – Moonpize, The Beachcomber, SeaOats Beach Service, Davis Properties of NWFL, Henderson Barrett, LLC and Charles and Pat Green; Pumps Level – Gigi's Fabulous Kids & Toys, Phlaum/Londe Family, DeMars/Klotz New York Life, Banks & Stubbs, LLP, Team Stevens Real Estate and 30a.com; Kitten Heel Level – Leaven Marketing, Lisa Snuggs Real Estate, The Red Bar, H&S Title, Roger Johnson and lululemon.

Hurlburt Airman's Voice Wins Volunteer of the Year

Shelter House recently held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Party at Howl at the Moon. Shelter House volunteers turned out for a fun evening where we presented the award for Volunteer of the Year. Rather than recognizing an individual, this year's award went to Hurlburt Airman's Voice, an organization that provides airmen with opportunities and resources that exemplify the Air Force Core Values through community service, education, activities and leadership.

We first learned about Airman's Voice last year when SrA Joe McFadden called Shelter House and informed us the group had hosted a donation drive called Feds Feed Families and wanted to donate to our pantry. They showed up with a truck full of more than 1,000 canned foods, paper products and diapers!

Joe went on to attend the Shelter House volunteer orientation and made a commitment for the group to continue working with us. First under Joe's leadership, and now under A1C Rayna Yamamoto and A1C Emmett Unbenhagen, this group of airmen has collected countless food donations, performed general shelter maintenance,



Rayna Yamamoto (center) accepts the award on behalf of Hurlburt Airman's Voice from Shelter House Executive Director Michelle Sperzel (left) and Volunteer Coordinator Cindy Holmes (right).

installed air conditioners, built a new playground and worked numerous fundraising events. This energetic group recruited about 50 volunteers for Share the Shelter alone, and many of them stayed until 2am to assist with breaking down the event.

"We always have a good time volunteering with Shelter House," said Yamamoto. "We are happy to do whatever needs to be done. No one does this expecting an award, but it is such an honor."

The pride they show in the quality of their work and their dedication to seeing a job through to the end is unmatched. This group of military men and women are true heroes and we are proud to name them our Volunteers of the Year.

Shelter House recognized several other individuals who made great contributions throughout the year, including Naomi Alvarado for Share the Shelter, Cameron Janow for the Luminaria Run, Monica Talley for Purses with a Purpose, Barbara Roach for Indirect Service and Sharon Jacobs for Direct Service.

Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers!

Luminaria Run Moves to Destin



Now in its third year, the Luminaria Run to End Domestic and Sexual Violence is moving to the City of Destin, having outgrown its original location at Sandestin. One of the area's few night runs drew more than 250 runners its first year, 450 in the second year and is expected to exceed 600 this year.

The run will take place on Saturday, December 7 at 4:30pm. The race will start at the Destin City Hall Annex and includes 5k and 9k courses winding throughout 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 will be lined with more than 2,000 luminarias, lighting the path and representing how Shelter House and its community partners light the way to a safer place for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

New this year is a race expo on Friday evening at The Palms. Runners will be able to stop by to pick up their packets and peruse sponsor and vendor exhibits.

Registration is already open at www.imathlete.com. Team registrations are encouraged, and awards will be presented for the largest team and the team that raises the most money.

For more information or to inquire about sponsorships, call 850-243-1201.

Shelter House Veteran Promoted

Carrie Warf, who has worked at Shelter House since 2001, was recently promoted to Program Director. The new position was created in response to the agency's growth and addition of new programs, including the Kind Heart Kennel and sexual violence services.

The Program Director is responsible for the overall implementation of program services and activities associated with program deliverables. In this role, Warf will provide strategic leadership and ensure the advancement of Shelter House's mission and vision and all goals and outcomes.

"Over the years, I have come to view Shelter House as an entity unto herself," Warf said. "I think to a lot of people she represents hope, safety, second chances, stability and peace. I am very excited to have the opportunity to utilize my strengths and talents to support Shelter House's vision of making All Relationships Violence Free."

Warf started out as a Youth Advocate before rising to Youth Manager. She most recently served as the Shelter Manager for our confidential emergency shelter.

Backpack Drive

Shelter House is holding its annual Back-to-School Backpack Drive to set up the children of our participants for success in the new school year. You can help give these kids confidence as they head back to school by donating backpacks and school supplies. Donations can be dropped off at any Shelter House office before August 12. Call 850-243-1201 for more information.

What We've Been Up To



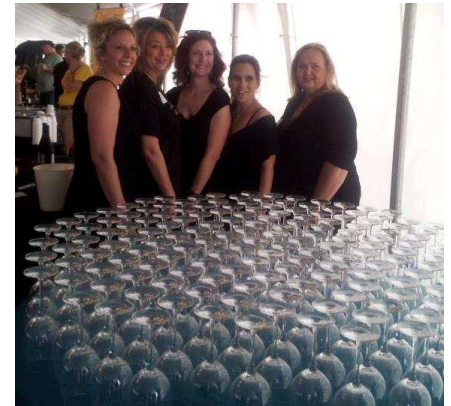
(Left): Shelter House Board Secretary Dawn Hoffman displays awareness signs along with coworkers at Beach Community Bank's Cookout for a Cause to benefit Shelter House.



(Right): Destin Woman's Club presents Shelter House Executive Director Michelle Sperzel with a check for \$12,000 raised at Hats for Hope.



(Left): Students from Northwest Florida State College Collegiate High School present Shelter House with a check for \$750 which they raised working concessions at baseball games.



(Right): Shelter House volunteers and staff at the Destin Charity Wine Auction.

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

August:

Cooking Class with Chef Dan Pettis (One 20 A Modern Bistro, Niceville): August 10

September:

Girls Night Out (Elephant Walk, Sandestin): September 26

December:

Luminaria Run to End Domestic Violence (Destin): December 7

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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Call Michelle at 850-243-1201 if you are interested in serving on the Board or Fundraising Committee.

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