

Reflections | Maria Larrison

This past quarter has been an eventful one.



Many women have obtained employment, reconnected to their faith, have found they are capable of so much more than they ever thought. Children are learning life skills. They have spent time with our children's therapist learning ways to cope with the effects of domestic violence they have witnessed in their homes.

Additionally we are writing more grants than ever before. The need for our services continues to climb. Thus we are in full swing in the silent phase of our \$3.5 million dollar expansion campaign. Bids are being awarded and things are progressing. You will hear more about this in a special edition newsletter in the next month.

We thank you for your continued support of Sheltering Wings. And, as always, please call for a tour if you have not been out in awhile.

Blessings to you, | Maria Larrison, CEO

Dates To Remember

Dinner Dance Results

The annual dinner dance event, hosted by Brownsburg Sertoma, was held on February 13 at Primo in Plainfield and was once again a success. Nearly 600 were in attendance, and Sertoma presented the shelter with a check for \$65,736. Many thanks to Brownsburg Sertoma Club for all of their hard work and efforts, and to Cherie Terry, chairperson of the auction committee. Cherie and her volunteers did a tremendous job this year in obtaining auction items. We're all looking forward to next year's event which will be held on February 12.

Sheltering Wings will be a part of the following fairs and booths in Hendricks County:

- May 11 Brownsburg Health & Safety Fair
- July 18-24 Hendricks County Fair



SHARED BLESSINGS

SPRING 2010 NEWS from SHELTERING WINGS

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To Our Donors, Volunteers, and Friends of Sheltering Wings:

1,097



132



151



These numbers alone on a piece of paper are just that: numbers. Sheltering Wings represents the faces, voices, hearts, minds, dreams, hopes, and fears of the women and children who sought our services in 2009.

1,097 represents the number of crisis calls the shelter received last year. This number is up over 200% from 2002 when the shelter first opened its doors.

132 is the number of women who were living at the shelter in 2009; an increase of 51% from 2002. Of those 132 women, 33% of them lived with us for more than 30 days.

151 signifies the number of children who lived at the shelter this past year. That number is a 50% increase from 2002. It is the children who will continue to live with the memories and scars of living in a domestic violence home. It is imperative that we continue to provide the services needed to help heal from their wounds.

At Sheltering Wings, it is through God's grace and the hard work of a dedicated staff and a legion of volunteers that we are able to help our women and children heal. To borrow from the saying "it takes a village to raise a child", the same can be said for the shelter. Without God's guidance, the generous donations of time and treasure from our volunteers and friends of the shelter, and each staff member selflessly dedicating themselves to the ministry of the shelter, we could not heal these women and children and offer them the kind of fresh start in life that they so desperately need and deserve.

On behalf of the board, the staff, and the women and children you are helping, thank you for being a part of our "village" and for helping us make a difference in the lives of so many women and children.

Greg Hylton, Chairman

Inside Story | Sheltering Wings receives grant.

Sheltering Wings has received a grant from The Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault. With these funds we were able to hire a temporary, part time employee to co-facilitate education in our community with our Director of Education and Outreach. Chloe McClellan has agreed to share her story in an effort to help end teen dating violence. She will be working with Brooke Couch, our Director of Education and Outreach in the community. She is also assisting with the development of our Youth Council. Chloe, along with Debra Norris, was instrumental in the passing of Senate Bill 316 (*Heather's Law*). This bill will encourage schools to effectively address issues of teen dating violence. She is a great asset to our team. She has agreed to share her story with you below.

"I have an interesting history with the shelter. My mom, Amy, began working with Sheltering Wings in 2001 so I naturally became a volunteer. I helped with various projects and events within and outside the shelter.

My freshman year of high school began like any other student's until I was introduced to my abuser. Although I knew all the signs of an abusive relationship, I ignored them because 'I am too well informed to be in a relationship like that.' I was wrong; things began to change so quickly I didn't even notice them. The abuse started with control, put-downs and threats which quickly turned into physical, financial and sexual abuse. This continued all through high school until I decided that my high school career was not what I wanted at all. With one semester left I gained the courage to end the relationship - on my 18th birthday (*a good gift to myself, I thought*).

With the help of a protective order (*second one, that is*) the next month was amazing. I was free and so happy to do what I wanted to without fear. Early January my world crashed down again, the day I found out I was pregnant with his child.

I knew instantly that I was going to be connected to my abuser for the rest of my life. Having decided I was going to let the pregnancy be and figure out what to do as time moved by, my abuser and I decided to enter in a relationship again. I was hoping he would change because of the baby (*typical for an abused woman to hope for change*), but things picked up right were they were left off and continued to worsen.

Two months before the baby was born I made the decision to move in with my abuser. The fights were worse, the pain was worse, nothing was better. Within a few days I was dying inside to move home, but I didn't dare say anything because I knew what would happen. I continued to put on a happy face when I was miserable. My abuser proposed and I accepted because I didn't want to fight. I wore the ring only when he was around and I hated every minute of it, but I couldn't say anything.

I was in labor and my abuser would not leave me alone because he knew I didn't want to be with him. He knew I would try to leave. I remember trying to take off the ring during labor but my fingers had swollen so it wouldn't come off. I turned it around so I didn't have to look at it.

I left the hospital with him and stayed at his dad's house, where we had been living for 16 days, the longest days of my life. The last day I was with him was the worst. I do not like to talk about this day - there are details no one knows and details no one will ever know - but I can say I had never been so happy to see my mom before in my life as the moment she walked in his bedroom. I knew she wasn't going to leave me and she knew I wanted to leave with her. After about 2 hours of fighting and having to call the police, my mom, my son and I left for good. We left with the clothes on our back and have not looked back since. After having some time to heal both emotionally and physically, I had the strength to begin speaking. I plan on continuing educating and preventing until I am dead because what I went through should NEVER happen to anyone."



Chloe at the governor's signing of "Heather's Law", mandating dating violence education for all Indiana students grades 6-12.

Brooke Couch | Director of Education & Outreach

Through a grant which Sheltering Wings received from Clarian West, I am pleased to announce I am the new Director of Education and Outreach. I began my journey with Sheltering Wings in January. I have been busy with speaking engagements in schools and youth organizations. I am also working on developing the Youth Council for Sheltering Wings. Another part of my responsibility will also be to oversee the Volunteer Program within the shelter.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord" and He sure does! Upon moving to Indiana in October of 2008, to support my husband as the Student Ministries Pastor at a church in Avon, I really felt that Sheltering Wings was the place where I was supposed to be working. I graduated from San Diego State University in 2005 with a degree in Communication and Women's Studies. My previous experience was Marketing and Business Development for a credit union in California, but I knew that was not where my heart was. I am so blessed to be able to use my knowledge and skills at such a wonderful organization.

I am married to a wonderful, supportive man of God and we have a daughter who is almost 2 and keeps me busy when I am not working. I love working with teens and am so excited to speak into the lives of teenagers about such an important topic. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you. You may contact me at bcouch@shelteringwings.org or at 317-718-0735 x304.

Serving Our Community | Mary Williams

Thank you to the following partners who are providing events that will support the families who call Sheltering Wings home.



• Ameriana Bank (all locations)

Open a checking account with a Visa Check Card and Ameriana Bank will make \$25 donation to Sheltering Wings on your behalf and also give you \$25 to express their thanks. This program runs from April 1 through July 31.

• Church Brothers Collision Repair (all locations)

Church Brothers is hosting their "Driving Down Hunger" program throughout the month of May. Signs and collection boxes will be in all six locations, as well as some of their partner businesses. All donations will be for the shelter.

• ReMax Centerstone 1st Annual Golf Outing Brownsburg

The golf outing will be held on June 10 at West Chase Golf Course in Brownsburg. Registration will be from 10:30-11:30am, with a tee off time of 12 noon. Sign-up forms and event sponsorship opportunities are on the shelter web site.

Coaching Boys Into Men.

Sheltering Wings was very fortunate recently to receive a grant awarded by INCASA, the Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault. A portion of the grant will fund local development of an important nationwide program called "Coaching Boys Into Men." The program engages school athletic coaches to teach their male athletes about the importance of respect for themselves, others, and especially the women and girls in their lives. Athletic coaches have a unique role in the lives of young men, and they often serve as mentors to the members of their teams. They actively influence how a player behaves both on and off the field.

CBIM equips coaches to talk with their athletes about character-building attributes, to convey that youth can consciously choose healthy relationships, respect, integrity, and non-violence as the foundation for their personal life as well as for their athletic endeavors. The CBIM program has met with great success in other parts of the country including major metropolitan areas, and represents a great opportunity for Hendricks County coaches to lead the county in anti-violence education and training. Start-up will be led initially by Pastor Larry Bellville, Sheltering Wings' Director of Pastoral Care and Brooke Couch, Director of Education and Outreach, assisted by volunteer Deb Wesolowski. If you would like more information about the CBIM program, contact Brooke Couch at 718-0735, ext. 304.

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Caring for people when they are sick or injured is at the heart of what we do at Clarian West, so supporting Sheltering Wings and its work to keep women safe is a natural fit. For several years, the hospital's support has been directed specifically towards programming for the children who accompany their mothers to the shelter and who have often witnessed abuse. Helping Sheltering Wings address their unique needs is a privilege.

Clarian West is proud to support the expansion of Sheltering Wings. Its ever-increasing demand for services and successful outcomes indicate that those of us who care about the health, wellness and safety of our community should be invested in making sure Sheltering Wings' services are available to all who need them. But supporting the facility expansion is just one piece of the puzzle. Clarian West is also proud to support the creation of a new leadership position at Sheltering Wings, Director of Education & Outreach. What impact might we have by being more proactive and engaged in abuse prevention, in addition to helping pick up the pieces after the violence has occurred? We'll find out now that Sheltering Wings is able to engage an expert full time in this important work.

In a very short span of time last year, the Clarian Health family and Clarian West's community lost two bright and promising young mothers to domestic violence. We had to ask ourselves: what can we do to help Sheltering Wings in its work to stop the next tragedy? Supporting the creation of the Director of Education & Outreach position seemed like the ideal way for Clarian West to make a difference. We'll never know if education and outreach could have prevented what happened last year, but we're confident there are headlines that won't be made in the years ahead.

Cathy Stoll
Marketing Communications and PR Director

