

shared blessings

fall 2006 • news from **sheltering wings** center for women

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. Psalm 32:7

"If you're living in fear of doing wrong things, if you're living in fear of saying the wrong thing, if you walk on eggshells, praying they don't crack, you're living in abuse. If you have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or visit your family, you're living in abuse. If you can't seem to please or do anything right, if you're being put down or intimidated in any way, you're living in abuse.

Abuse comes in many forms and starts out slow. Through the years it becomes your way of life. But I'm here to tell you, regardless of what you think or feel now, there is hope and there is help, and if you truly want out of an abusive relationship you can do it.

Life is too precious to be put in the hands of an abuser. God created us to help our spouses, not to be beaten, put down, or made into their slaves. I'm witness to the fact that after 40 years of living with an abuser that enforced every form of abuse, you can be a survivor and you can make it own your own. All it takes is one tiny step of asking for help and wanting it. If I can do it at age 59, so can anyone else." *"Tina"*

So far this year:

- more than 800 families have called us in crisis
- 65 women and 110 children have been given refuge at Sheltering Wings
- the number of residents we've served has grown from 346 in our first year to an expected 1,300 through this year

Finding refuge from the terror

The phone rings just after 2 a.m. The fear in the caller's voice is obvious. She had wanted to call earlier, but waited until her husband fell asleep. She called the police last month, but didn't press charges because he promised to stop. But it's only become worse. Today, he even slapped their four-year-old daughter when she spilled her juice. What can she do?

The call is fictional, but it's typical of calls we receive at Sheltering Wings. We hear from all sorts of women – teenagers to seniors, married and single, from all walks of life. What they have in common is that they're scared and



looking for help. When they call, we ask questions to determine the level of danger, and guide them to the support they need.

No community is immune to domestic violence. It happens to women in every neighborhood, church, workplace, and economic group. It may be happening right now to someone you know.

We participate in Domestic Violence Awareness Month every October as part of our efforts to make our communities more aware of the realities of abuse and the resources that are available. The more people who understand domestic violence and what to do about it, the more lives we'll all be able to save. †

If you or someone you know needs help, call 745-1496 immediately, day or night!

www.shelteringwings.org

For most businesses, churches and organizations, growth is a good thing. It's a sign that they're meeting the needs of those they serve. But for a shelter like ours, growth is a mixed blessing. While we're gratified that more people know about us, growing numbers remind us of the amount of domestic violence in our area.

Growth also has physical effects on our shelter facility. We can house only a limited number of residents, and being fully occupied puts pressure on common spaces such as our kitchen and laundry room. Rooms vacated by one family are often immediately filled by another. Deferred maintenance begins to take a toll, just as it does with our own homes when busy schedules force us to delay projects.

Yet God helps us through those challenges with daily reminders of His love. We rejoice when women regain their confidence and sense

of purpose. We share happy tears when they move out to safe homes or apartments, ready to begin new lives free of fear. And the women and children we serve feel the blessings of the community's always-strong support.

We pray for the women and children who call our shelter home, but we also pray for the many others who suffer from domestic violence and cannot find a safe haven like Sheltering Wings. Through outreach programs, we help people in the community better understand the problems of domestic violence.

Just like growing businesses, churches, and organizations, we always keep one eye focused on the future. Today, we may not know exactly how we'll meet tomorrow's growing needs, but we do know that with the grace of God and the support of people like you, we will continue to do so. †

Providing safe emergency shelter

In each 2006 edition of *Shared Blessings*, we examine one area of our strategic plan to help you understand what we're doing about the challenges we face. One aspect is continuing to provide safe emergency shelter for women in need.

It begins when we answer cries for help. We remember the first time a lady called needing a safe place to stay – and 4,000 crisis calls later, we recognize the importance of these first few moments when a victim reaches out for help. Every situation is different and every caller has different needs. We are trained to ask the right questions and provide comfort and answers.

Our goal is to help find safe shelter for every woman in danger. Sometimes this means bringing women to Sheltering Wings or to other shelters. Sometimes it means helping them develop a safety plan. Every woman is in distress – worried how she will live, feed her children, pay for school clothes, find a job, and start over.

We alleviate those worries by providing basic necessities like toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, new pajamas, toys for her kids, and a Bible – all so she can sleep safely and without fear that first night.

One woman said, "I knew my home was going to turn into a bloodbath. So I prayed that God would open a door for us to get out. Thank God He did." We have been that open door for hundreds of families in need of support and safety, and our mentors have provided kind words, competent advice, and spiritual counseling 24 hours a day. A woman's first 30 days at Sheltering Wings is a time to find the answers to questions, get to know herself, and re-new her relationships with her children and with God. †

Our residents speak

"I am so happy that we had a place to come to feel welcome and safe from the danger."

"What I liked best was the love I felt as soon as I came through the door. I was received with open arms and they quickly provided all my needs."

"What a joy to be able to come and go anytime I want without fear. I feel like a woman who has just been released from prison. I want to shout, 'I'm free, I'm free!'"

"Without Sheltering Wings, seriously, I wouldn't be alive."

See www.shelteringwings.org for more ways you can help.

Volunteer Voice

Danielle Huff

Generous people continue to respond to the needs of our women and children by volunteering their time and talents. So far this year, a total of 200 people have given more than 5,500 hours, having a huge impact on the lives of our residents!

That's even more impressive when you consider what we expect from volunteers. Because the safety of our residents is our first concern, any volunteer who will work directly with residents must undergo a background check and drug screen, and must participate in one of our quarterly trainings before they can begin to help. Every one of our volunteers

wants to excel, so we do our part by ensuring that they are properly screened and trained to work in a domestic violence shelter.

Right now, we have a special need for "handyman" volunteers who can help with the upkeep of our 11-bedroom home, making sure it is comfortable, clean, and in working order. That includes maintenance volunteers who are skilled at fixing plumbing and electrical problems, as well as people who are able to work on landscaping by pulling weeds, and organizing flowers.

If you'd like to help, please call Danielle at 317-718-5454 ext. 204. †

Meet our staff: Ida Johnson

Sheltering Wings is a 24-hour facility, and while most of our work takes place during daylight hours, our overnight shift plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of women.

Q: What's most important when working overnight?

A: Being alert and aware. We ensure that the building is secure, everyone is inside, and that all is safe. I pay close attention to the cameras to detect anything such as unidentified people or vehicles. Sickness and other issues may intensify during the night, so we must be able to assess a situation and know what action to take.

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?

A: Seeing the women and children overcome their circumstances, regain their hope, and strive for a better future.

Q: Describe overnight crisis calls.

A: They are normally calling after their abusers have fallen asleep or passed out. They are trying to get an action plan together and weighing their options. We also get those who just need a listening ear. Some are depressed and suicidal.

Q: How do you help?

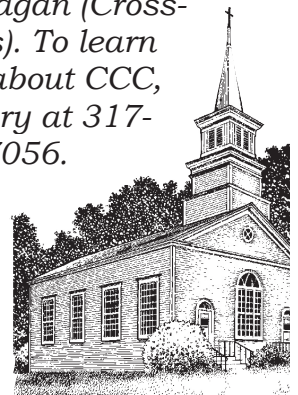
A: After assessing the severity of the situation, I try to get women to realize that they do not have to live with abuse and that domestic violence can escalate very quickly. I urge them to seek shelter for themselves and their children even if it is only for one night. I let them know about our facility, programs, and resources.

Q: What is special about the first 30 days?

A: The families are adjusting to a new environment, getting acquainted with other families, and learning a new way of living. Most are glad to be in a safe environment and relax when they find that they are among others who have suffered as they have. Other than safety, their greatest need is love and support. They need to be embraced and encouraged to take things one day at a time. †

Special thanks
to TJX for
their support of
Life Skills
programming!

Welcome to our newest Church Connection Council members, June Cash (Westlake Community Church of God) and Jan Reagan (Crossroads). To learn more about CCC, call Mary at 317-902-7056.





sheltering wings center for women

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*If you or someone you know needs help,
call 745-1496 immediately, day or night!*

Thanks to Lincoln Bank
for sponsoring
this edition of
Shared Blessings!

DV awareness is important to businesses

Why should local businesses participate in domestic violence awareness? We asked Plainfield Chamber of Commerce executive director Kent McPhail for his answer to that question.

Domestic violence destroys families and has a negative economic impact upon the community. It affects the work habits and productivity of the victims and the predators. Often, employers are not aware of the reasons for poor attendance and productivity.

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I encourage all businesses to participate by

placing information on their bulletin boards, in employee and public restrooms; by inviting Sheltering Wings to train and work with your employees to help them recognize the signs of violence; and by participating in fundraisers to support the shelter.

By supporting the shelter to help reduce domestic violence, you will also contribute to the economic vitality of your business and the economy of our community. Please use this awareness month to do your part. †

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month

- Join us on October 2 at 5:30 p.m., or on October 19 at 7:00 p.m., at the Avon Library for Friends and Family Night.
- See our T-Shirt display outside the Hendricks County Courthouse all month long.
- Participate in our next Clergy Training on September 16 at the Hendricks County Senior Center. To learn more, call Larry at 718-5454, ext. 214.

Calling all Runners & Walkers

4th Annual

Walk Me Home

5K Walk / 8K Run

to help prevent domestic abuse



**September 30, 2006
Hummel Park, Plainfield**

**Registration 8:00 am
Program 9:00 am
Walk/Run 9:30 am**

**For more information contact
Sheltering Wings Center for Women
at 317 745 1496 or www.shelteringwings.org**

