

shared. blessings

spring 2007 • news from **sheltering wings** center for women

The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the simple-hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.
Psalm 116:5-7

"I never thought I could get out of my marriage. I believe God gave people the idea to build this beautiful building for women and children to find safety, courage, counseling, clothes, food, and love. My best friend drove me to Sheltering Wings and I was so scared outside, but in my heart I knew God opened the door for me to leave. When I got to Sheltering Wings I felt love and courage. I knew what the mentors said was honest and positive. That made me feel sure that they cared for me and wanted to help me. I love everyone that works there and they will always be special people in my life and in my prayers. Sheltering Wings is a blessing to me and I will never forget that for the rest of my life."

- "Clarissa"

Five years ago, "Clarissa" arrived at Sheltering Wings, broken and hurt from the abuse she had suffered for over 20 years in her marriage, her body so weak she needed a wheelchair. Today, she works full-time, no longer needs a wheelchair, and has her own apartment. She frequently comes to the shelter to tell her story to women who are thinking of returning to abusive partners. She tells them about her own struggles and helps them see the promise and the hope of a future without abuse. Her words provide the encouragement and guidance they need to move from victim, to survivor, to thriver.

We've been a safe haven for five years

When the phone rang in January 2002, and we gave a frightened woman directions to the shelter, we prayed that all the work that had been invested in and decisions that had been made about this new place called Sheltering Wings would prove to be successful.

As we opened the door and led her to safety, dozens of plans and ideas became realities. And as she wept, the love and compassion of Jesus Christ flowed through our first employees; reassuring her and making her feel safe at last.

Five years later, hundreds of



women and children have followed her footsteps into the protection of our shelter. As the demand for our services has grown, we expanded our staff and brought in more volunteers to provide the support these women and children need.

Our growth and our experience make us even better at responding to those calls for help and at restoring hope for those who join us here. Thanks to your prayers and financial support, the dreams of our founders have been realized – and we can offer the families we serve much more than we did when we first opened! †

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

www.shelteringwings.org

From the time we're little, birthdays are among the most important events in our lives. More than annual milestones, they're celebrations that give us an opportunity to be the center of the world for a day. Even as adults, we react to others' birthdays with a bit of childlike glee. It's no longer just another day; it's your birthday!

When Sheltering Wings marked our fifth birthday in January, we felt a bit of that glee. Those of us who had been around at the beginning remembered the uncertainty of those first days. We created policies and procedures with each new day simply because they didn't exist. We couldn't refer to what had been done before because there wasn't a "before."

A five-year-old child feels like a big boy or girl, but we adults know better. Each coming year will bring bigger challenges – and the child will meet those challenges by taking what he or she has already learned and applying it in new ways.

I think that's an excellent metaphor for Sheltering Wings at age five. We're proud of what we've accomplished, but we know that

even bigger challenges are ahead. The demand for our services continues to grow, but our response is limited by our resources. Like everyone else, we face higher costs. And as much as we already do for the women and children we serve, we know we could do even more for them with more resources.

Children move ahead with the help of their parents. We have the guidance of an amazingly devoted board of directors; the knowledge of a skilled, professional staff; the labor and love of hundreds of volunteers; the faith and prayers of the 50 churches in the Church Connection Council; and the financial support of so many individuals, businesses and organizations.

With that help, we'll continue to grow and be even better with each year. And when we blow out many more candles on the cake, we'll look back at ourselves as five-year-olds with a little bit of nostalgia and a lot of affection.

Oh, and if you'd like to commemorate our birthday with a special gift, we'll be just as excited and appreciative as you'd expect a five-year-old to be! †

Emergency housing: a day at Sheltering Wings

While there have been many changes in the five years since Sheltering Wings opened its doors, the important things have stayed the same. Caring mentors meet our new arrivals and help them through their transition to new lives. We'll take a look at a mentor's typical day.

The sun is coming up as the morning shift arrives. A new mentor enters the shelter and gets to work, helping women and children who have fled violent and unhealthy homes. The mentor first checks to see if any new families arrived during the night, then she makes sure the building is secure before tending to the needs of the families who are getting ready to leave for work and school.

Throughout the day, she answers calls from families who need help finding their way to safety. She counsels women on how to safely leave an abusive husband or boyfriend. She helps women understand how domestic violence affects their children. She invites families to come to the safety of our shelter.

When a new family arrives, the mentor sits with them to learn their needs and assess their situation. This information is recorded so the

staff can help the woman in exactly the way she needs and wants to be helped. The children meet with our Children's Coordinator, who performs a similar assessment to help them recover and break the cycle of violence.

All day long, families come and go. You'll see them cooking meals, laughing, praying, and (sometimes) crying. Mentors walk beside them and teach them the skills they need so they can leave Sheltering Wings for safe, independent lives.

At night, children are helped to bed and moms begin winding down. They meet for prayer and find comfort in the mentor's presence. They cry about the past, and talk about the future. Long after the women fall asleep, the mentors are hard at work finishing up the day's tasks and getting ready for the promise of a new day. †

When Sheltering Wings first opened five years ago, some people thought that volunteers could run the entire facility – taking crisis calls, working directly with residents, and dealing with day-to-day crisis situations. However, the board realized that paid, well-trained staff would be best able to care for the needs of those suffering from domestic abuse.

Volunteers never left the picture, though. They were an integral part of our success even before we opened our doors. Volunteers were assembling furniture, planting flowers, writing thank-you letters, taking in donations, organizing fundraisers, answering the phone and more long before the first family walked through our doors – giving 4,100 hours of their time in 2002.

In five years, the shelter has gone from a handful of eager and excited volunteers

to well over 200 committed individuals and more than 25 groups. We have daily office volunteers, mentors, group leaders, event organizers, handymen, interpreters, and more! In 2006, we'll record over 8,000 hours of volunteer service, which is the equivalent of 4 full-time staff members.

We've needed the time and talents of our volunteers from day one and we will continue to need volunteers as long as God allows our doors to remain open. They help our staff and residents in more ways than could have been imagined. We're continuing to create volunteer opportunities. Right now, we have a special need for crisis line, child care, clerical, professional, and staff assistants. If you can help, or would like to know more, please call Danielle at 718-0735, ext. 304. †

5 years of great accomplishments

We asked staff members to identify the greatest accomplishments of our first five years:

- "Operating for five years, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with 100 percent safety for women and children."
- "Board members, staff members, residents, policies and procedures, supporters, volunteers, backers as well as detractors, and good times as well as bad have come and gone – and doubtless many more will come and many more will go – but the one overriding element that remains the same and is the singular source of our stability, strength, and success is clearly Jesus Christ. Without Him, how empty and futile this effort would be!"
- "Keeping to our original mission."
- "Women learning to live life without being mistreated by those they love."
- "That 44,000 people have been educated about the impact of domestic violence." †

Welcome to our newest Church Connection Council members, Kirsten Miles and Valerie Moore (Calvary United Methodist Church), Patti Henson (St. Augustine Episcopal Church), and Sandi Hobble (Pittsboro Christian Church).

The Church Connection Council has served Sheltering Wings since before we opened our doors. Today, 50 area churches are involved. If your church is interested in getting involved, contact Mary Williams at 317-718-0735, ext. 301.



"I just wanted to say thank you for always being there for me when I needed someone to talk to or a shoulder to cry on. No one has ever been there for me like all of you have. Just encouraging me to go that extra mile and letting me know that I do have the strength to get through whatever comes my way. It's always good to know that God is always on my side and will always be there for me to help me through thick and thin. So, I just wanted to say thank you to all of you from the bottom of my heart. I pray that God continues to bless you with seemingly endless patience. You guys are awesome."



sheltering wings center for women

P.O. Box 92 • Danville IN 46122
Phone (317) 745-1496
Fax (317) 745-1497
www.shelteringwings.org

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Danville, IN
Permit 12

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

Celebrating **5** years of service!

Please renew your commitment!

As Sheltering Wings celebrates five years of service, we are asking all of our supporters to renew their commitments to ensure that the services we provide will be available to women and children who need them. Please prayerfully consider making a multi-year pledge to support our efforts. For more information, contact April Bordeau at 317-718-5454, ext. 207. †

Who have we served since 2002?

Crisis calls	4,400
Women housed	430
Children housed	565
Educated through outreach programs	44,000

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Sheltering Wings is no longer able to accept donations of ink cartridges, cell phones, or clothing.

Thank you to everyone who has given us these items in the past!

Special thanks to the
title sponsors for
Brownsburg Sertoma's
St. Valentine's Day
Dinner Dance:



Dazzling Designs
Fashion Show

SAVE THE DATE

Sheltering Wings Presents
"Dazzling Designs" Fashion Show
April 26, 2007
6:30-9:00pm
Primo West Plainfield, IN

Proceeds to benefit the Children's Program
For more information call 317.745.1496 or log onto www.shelteringwings.org

All that Sparkles
and Glitters to
Change Children's Lives