

# *shared.* blessings

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

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.  
1 Peter 4:10*

"Let me start by saying that without God and the staff, there wouldn't be Sheltering Wings. These wonderful ladies are loving, understanding, compassionate and very dedicated. When I look at the staff here, I see friends which have each played a part in our healing. There is a wonderful support system here from the staff to the residents. I don't know if the staff realizes what a huge impact they have made in my children's lives and mine. I could go on and on. They have been a blessing to my son, daughter and myself. So when I leave Sheltering Wings to stand on my own and make a life for my children and me, it will be bittersweet. I will be sad. The staff means so much to me and even though I plan to come to groups when I can, I will miss the everyday interaction. Though I am nervous to stand on my own, I feel they have helped me prepare to do so. I know I am ready because of God and the support I've received at Sheltering Wings."

*"Margie"*

So far this year:

- more than 350 women have called us in crisis
- we've housed more than 150 women and children
- thousands of people have learned about domestic violence and prevention

## *Instruments of Christ's love and mercy*

Women usually arrive at Sheltering Wings in the darkest hours of their lives. Many have lost all hope of ever feeling joy again. Within our doors, they gradually feel a light grow from within as they begin to remember that life is an amazing, joyful gift. While they're surrounded by people who help them rediscover that joy, they learn that the giver of hope is the One who gave them life in the first place.

Sheltering Wings meets a social need in a professional, effective manner, but the real force behind everything we do is the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. Our facility, our programs, our

hiring, and our training all center upon serving as instruments of His love and mercy, and doing His work on Earth. We have developed and retained a highly qualified, passionate team of caring employees and volunteers who keep Christ at the center of everything we do.

We believe that our grounding in and focus on Christ's words and works allows us to have an even greater impact in the lives of the women and communities we serve. Not only are we able to remove women and their children from dangerous situations, we're fortunate enough to walk with them as they experience God's love and rebuild lives of faith and strength. †



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

[www.shelteringwings.org](http://www.shelteringwings.org)

I'm very proud of the building that houses our shelter and provides the women and children we serve with a safe, home-like place to live. I enjoy taking visitors for tours, because they're always amazed at what our supporters have been able to accomplish.

But Sheltering Wings really isn't a building. It's people – a highly motivated team of skilled, caring individuals who share both a passion to serve women and children in need and a recognition that everything we do should be for God's glory. They're a very special group of people who blend their professional knowledge with deep compassion for others, allowing us to accomplish amazing things.

Our Board of Directors understands how fortunate we are to have this team, as well as how important it is for us to meet their own needs.

That's why we do everything we can to foster a supportive, encouraging work environment – from providing opportunities to strengthen their leadership potential, to giving them the training they need, to offering employee benefits that strengthen their personal security as they help the women and children we serve do the same.

Supporting our team may not seem as critical as helping women and children, but the two responsibilities are intertwined. By providing for our team, we ensure that they can focus more of their time and energy on serving those in need.

We invite you to visit us and meet these very special people who use the support you provide to transform women's lives. Perhaps you might like to become part of that team. Either way, please call us at 718-5454, ext. 207 to learn more. †

*Our Church Connection Council has grown to 43 churches and 62 members. The newest churches are Chapelwood Baptist (Helen Adkins) and Zionsville United Methodist Church (Marilyn Berry-Stamm). New members include Diane Gattone (Avon United Methodist), Travis Field and Verna Seger (Bethesda Baptist), Gary Dudley (Cornerstone), Mary Gregory (Northview Christian), and Sue Nadin. (Plainfield United Methodist) To learn more about CCC, call Mary at 317-902-7056.*

## Maintaining a Christ-centered environment

*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.*

When we opened our doors in 2002, we had five staff members – the minimum requirement for operating a 24-hour facility. This year, our staff has grown to 22. We handled 450 crisis calls that first year, and 1,300 during 2005.

To keep up with the challenge, we've established extremely high standards for staff interns and volunteers. For example, each employee must have a college degree, equivalent work experience, or complete 150 supervised volunteer hours at Sheltering Wings. All employees and volunteers must pass a drug test and a criminal background check. To help us recruit and retain high-quality employees, we now offer health insurance.

We fill the gap between book learning and the realities of our mission through an annual two-week training program that provides a thorough understanding of domestic violence issues,

crisis intervention training, shelter policies and procedures, community resources, program evaluation/documentation, and much more – all built around our services. Staff members have other opportunities to enhance their skills and improve the shelter's programs. Spiritual needs are addressed, too. Staff members participate in quarterly retreats as a way to refresh themselves, build team cohesion, and refocus on the reason we exist: to extend the love and compassion of Christ to women and children in need.

This year, our Board of Directors will review, evaluate, and modify our human resource policies and procedures to enhance employee satisfaction and strengthen teamwork. We have begun to focus on succession planning to ensure consistent approaches to shelter management over the long term.

All of these steps and many more ensure that we continue to hire people with the right skills and attitudes, so we'll be able to help women build stable, independent lives for themselves and their children. †

## Volunteer Voice

Danielle Mittman

It's hard to believe, but since the last issue of *Shared Blessings* arrived in your mailbox, we've added 50 new volunteers. So far this year, 193 different people – and 11 community service groups – have volunteered to help us serve our women and children. That's a total of more than 3,500 hours, and the year isn't quite half over.

But as I rejoice in that support, I'm reminded of all the additional help we need, and I hope many other people will join our current volunteers in meeting our day-to-day needs. In addition,

our women and children have some special needs right now.

If you have a strong back, you can help us move furniture for our women. We can also use handy folks who know their way around plumbing, electrical, air conditioning, and other repairs. If you're willing to watch children during the day or can be on call to help us in the office during the day, we need you, too! To offer your help or learn more about these opportunities, call Danielle at 317-718-5454 ext. 204. †

## Meet our staff: Joyce Robbins

*We offer a variety of programs to help the women we serve rebuild their lives. The way we do this is by assigning mentors to guide each woman along her path through Sheltering Wings. Joyce, one of our mentors, started working with us as an intern while earning a Human Resources degree from Ivy Tech.*

*Q: Were you prepared for this work when you began?*

*A: I knew there were things I had to learn to work at Sheltering Wings.*

*Q: What kinds of support help you to do your best?*

*A: Knowing that everyone I work with is called to the same purpose.*

*Q: What about the two-week training is most helpful?*

*A: Learning what we can do to help the women reach their goals and knowing we are listened to. For example, the mentors needed more help and Shelter Assistants were hired to take a burden from us.*

*Q: What do you see as the purpose for retreats?*

*A: Retreats are refreshing because we learn Biblically from others. It's like going for a spiritual filling; like when you go to church on Sunday. Retreats give us guidance to do our jobs. †*

## What is domestic violence?

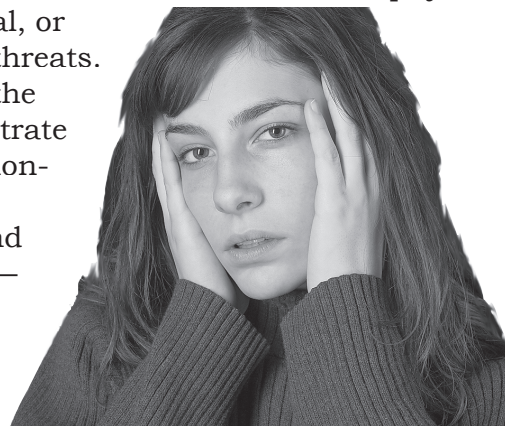
Domestic abuse (which is also known as intimate partner violence or domestic violence) involves the use of controlling or hurtful actions in a relationship. The abuser uses physical or sexual violence, emotional hurt, and/or threats to create fear and gain control.

While no two instances of domestic abuse are exactly alike, there are similar stages in the way abusive relationships proceed. While the early stages may seem harmless, the abuse can become dangerous quickly.

The earliest stages are where tension builds, with criticism, yelling, angry gestures, coercion, and/or threats. From there, abuse often escalates into physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual attacks and threats.

Between incidents, the abuser may demonstrate what is known as “honeymoon” behavior, offering apologies and promises to change—even gifts—in an effort to remain in the relationship.

Remember that even one threat or abusive act is wrong. Nobody deserves to be abused or threatened. If you're in a relationship and are scared or confused—even if you're not sure that you're being abused—please call us at 745-1496. We'll help you decide what to do. †



*Welcome new board members Susan Blandford of Carpenter Realtors and Deanna Sanders of Coatesville United Methodist Church.*





# sheltering wings center for women

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call 745-1496 immediately, day or night!*

Thanks to the Pacers Foundation and  
Lincoln Bank for sponsoring this edition  
of Shared Blessings!

## How we help the women and kids

**Danielle Mittman, Volunteer Coordinator** - I help the women and children by providing them with compassionate volunteers who want to see them live lives free of violence.

**Dave Wheelock, Facilities Manager** - I help the kids by providing a safe, secure, and comfortable environment to live in. This requires keeping all elements of the shelter in proper working order and always looking at areas to improve.

**Larry Bellville, Pastoral Care** - I help the women and kids by praying with them and counseling with them upon their request. I also help them by working to foster greater awareness and support among the churches in the community.

**Anonymous staff member** - I help the women and kids by showing them God's love and compassion. To assist them in any way that I can to bring security and stability to their lives.

## *Your business can help us, too!*

**Ongoing training and professional development** are critical to the success of Sheltering Wings, by ensuring that our staff members are current with best practices. Would your company be willing to sponsor some of those training sessions? Call April at 718-5454, ext. 207.

**If you're an attorney** who is able to donate or discount services to women living at Sheltering Wings, we could use your help! Many of the women we serve need legal counsel to guide them through divorce and custody hearings, and our staff lacks the expertise to help. To offer your services, call Maria at 718-5454, ext. 202. †

Save the date • June 29!

Golf with 100% of the proceeds to benefit Sheltering Wings. Call ReMax Unlimited at 892-4100 for details.

## *Training for churches*

Has your pastor or church participated in our church training? The next session is scheduled for Saturday, September 16 from 8 a.m. to noon. To reserve your place or learn more, call Larry at 718-5454, ext. 214. †

## *Special thanks to ...*

Thanks to the individuals and companies that sponsored our Dazzling Designs Fashion Show to benefit our Children's Program: *Clarian West Medical Center, Carpenter Realtors, Church Brothers Collision Repair, Claire E. Lewis, Indianapolis Power & Light*, and a family that asked to remain anonymous. †

Remember that donations to  
Sheltering Wings are tax-deductible!

See [www.shelteringwings.org](http://www.shelteringwings.org) for more  
ways you can help.