

SHARED BLESSINGS

“Children are a blessing and a gift from the LORD.” Psalm 127:3



WINTER 2007 NEWS from SHELTERING WINGS

They Helped My Mom

He was only 9 years old but he was about to embark on the most painful experience of his life. Andy was sleepy, but he sensed that this was a turning point. He knew on some level that the fighting, screaming and hitting weren't right, but because it was the only reality he'd known he could not pinpoint why it was wrong.

Snuggled up next to him was his younger brother Max. Through half shut eyes, Max looked to his big brother for an explanation. Andy wasn't sure what to tell his little brother.

Their mom was across the room filling out paperwork. She was upset, but he also felt a sense of relief from her that Andy wasn't sure he had seen before.

“Are you OK?” asked a nice lady who smiled a lot. “Would you like to read a book or find some toys to play with?”

She told them not to worry, that they were safe, but Andy wasn't sure. It had been a long time since he felt safe. His dad would hurt his mom. He would make her cry. He always felt like he had to tiptoe around his dad to keep from getting in trouble.

Soon, the three were shown into a room where they each crawled into their own beds. Eventually, Andy would come to call this home.

Andy and Max are just two of an average of 25 children that will sleep safely at Sheltering Wings on any given night. Sadly, in 2007, more than 140 children will

“The shelter has changed my life so much! Before I came to the shelter, my father hit me and hollered at me all the time. I didn't think it was anything at all. I was used to it. But, one day my mom brought me to the shelter. I was terrified at first, but then I met the people that work here. They were very loving and caring. The mentors helped me and I go to groups here, to learn about abuse. I knew nothing about abuse before I came here, but the groups have helped me to see it is not ok if someone abuses you. I am 15 years old and had to make a lot of changes. But, I am going to make it with the help of the mentors and my family. I was abused, but now I am FREE!”

“Beth”

call the shelter their home. Across the nation, between 3 and 10 million children this year alone will be exposed to domestic violence. Many, like Andy, will be unaware that they are living a nightmare. For that reason, they will unknowingly go on to repeat the cycle of violence in their own lives. Young girls who witness abuse often mistakenly assume it is a normal part of a relationship and they frequently perpetuate the cycle. Education of our youth is critical because studies have shown that the greatest risk factor for future violence is a child witnessing a father abuse a mother.

The Children's Program at Sheltering Wings offers a comprehensive plan to help the youngest victims of domestic violence. Counseling helps *continued on page 3*

A Look at the Numbers... Five Years of Hope

Children Served Since Opening	1,585	Children Provided Onsite Therapy Sessions	126
School-age Children Educated Since Opening	361	(onsite therapy began in August 2006)	
Children's Groups Since Opening	714		

Chief Thoughts: *Ann Grayson*



This is an incredibly joyous time of year. Whether one has a little or a lot, it is nearly impossible not to reflect on the many blessings we all have in our lives as we celebrate the season of Christ's birth. My minister describes the themes of Christmas with a few "p" words:

Providence, Proclamation and Participation. As I read his description of these themes, I could not help but think of Sheltering Wings.

For the staff and residents, this is a particularly humbling time of year as we receive a truly overwhelming outpouring of community love and support in the form of gifts, time and services. The timely care and foresight of those who work to make Christmas a special time for women and children who are hurting is Providence. It is a reflection of all the preparation that took place in the time before Christ was born and of the preparation we make each year to celebrate His birth. Christmas is also a time of Proclamation – when the world hears the news that Jesus came for all people regardless of the circumstances. By sharing with those in need, you reflect Jesus' unconditional love. Your very acts of giving are a Proclamation! Finally, all those involved in The Greatest Story – Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, everyone

involved – responded by choosing to Participate obediently in God's plan.

As we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth, we pause to thank you for all the planning you do and sacrifices you make to share your blessings with the shelter. We are grateful that you proclaim Jesus' love in your generosity. We pray that if you feel that God's plan for your life is to participate in the ministry of the shelter that you give freely of your gifts – whatever they may be. For while God continues to bless the shelter abundantly, the needs remain great. Domestic violence knows no season and takes no vacation. We are committed to providing year round, 24-hour care to those suffering from abuse as well as to work to prevent domestic violence through education. We are also committed to working tirelessly to garner the support needed to continue our mission for as long as the shelter's services are needed.

Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for all you do for the shelter at Christmas time and year round. Your collective efforts make a tremendous difference in the lives of women and children in need. We pray that you will be lead to Participate in the shelter's ministry! Merry Christmas and May God bless you!

"I like it here.

It makes me feel safe."

– 8-year-old girl

Sidebar: *Children's Coordinator Andrea Crozier*

The Children's Program at Sheltering Wings strives to provide critical support, service and education to children during their stay. During this stressful and scary time, children need comfort and structure. Sheltering Wings' staff, interns, childcare volunteers, and volunteer children's mentors work together to provide a host of services to our youngest residents. The primary goal is to meet the immediate needs of the children. We also strive to educate the children about domestic violence and what constitutes healthy relationships. This will enable them to live violence-free lives.

Childcare volunteers give tirelessly of their time, love and talents. This support allows moms to work on job applications, go to medical or legal appointments, or to go to work or school. Childcare volunteers may also be with the children while their mothers attend specific shelter training or programming sessions. The children get excited knowing the volunteers are coming to spend time with them.

Our volunteer children's mentor group is a separate one-on-one program. Mothers of children 5 and older

may request a children's mentor. This program is similar to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program in that each mentor is carefully selected and assigned to a particular child. The pair spends special one-on-one time together at least two times a month (sometimes more). The children know that the mentor is someone who cares about them. Other residents see this special bond and frequently request their own children's mentor. One mentor stated "The best part of the program is the look in the child's and the mother's eyes and the joy that is mutual among us all."

It is not unusual for Sheltering Wings to shelter in excess of 20 children at a time. I am the only full-time Children's Program employee, so we have a substantial need for volunteer help. If you have a special place in your heart for children, please contact me to discuss how we might connect you to the Children's Program at Sheltering Wings. Your life will be blessed by engaging in the lives of these precious children!

Andrea Crozier 718-5454 ext. 215 or acrozier@shelteringwings.org.

Domestic Violence 101

On average, each day 1,000 children are living in a domestic violence shelter in Indiana.

One in 11 teens will experience physical violence in a dating relationship.

The majority of children served by Sheltering Wings have witnessed their mother's abuse.

One any given day, between 20 and 30 children may be living at Sheltering Wings.

Children at Sheltering Wings report a variety of issues including trouble sleeping, night terrors, and poor conflict resolution skills as a result of the abuse in their home.

Volunteer Voice: *Danielle Huff*

The Christmas Season is always a time to be thankful for the blessings of Sheltering Wings' volunteer program. Volunteers continue to be the foundation of the shelter. In 2007, we continued to recruit and retain quality volunteers who provided essential services to women and children fleeing domestic violence. With 210 volunteers and 6,000 hours of service this year alone, our residents received even more thorough hands-on care. We are blessed to have this incredible support.

However, the need for quality services continues to grow and grow. In an effort to meet this need this year we introduced three new volunteer programs.

Our Angel Team pairs volunteers with residents to serve as one-on-one mentors. The Angels provide loving support for residents healing from abuse.

We also introduced our Crisis Line Operator program to help staff our 24-hour-a-day crisis referral line. Trained volunteers are now assisting the shelter by answering crisis calls and referring resources to families in need.

The final program is called Time Out. It is a teen council trained to educate their peers about the prevention of dating violence. Teens from the community have come together to learn more about this growing problem and how to inform their peers.

Sheltering Wings is extremely blessed by the support of our community. We would love to speak with you about how to match your areas of skills and interest with the shelter's needs. If you would like to explore how you can become a part of a growing volunteer program or would like to receive our volunteer e-newsletter, please contact Danielle at 718-0735 ext. 304 or Maria at 718-5454 ext. 202.

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children talk through their experiences; field trips and parties help brighten their day; and clothing, school supplies and food help meet their basic needs. All are designed to help build up the children's self-esteem and to help break the cycle of violence.

The next day, Andy and his brother sit and talk with nice people. One is called a mentor and she helps mom enroll in school and find a job. Many other people, called volunteers, come and play with Max. They help Andy with his homework and his adjustment to a new life.

"They taught me to be good in relationships and be good to my mom," Andy said of his stay at the shelter. "They were friendly and helped me with my

homework and get focused on school."

While he was there, he joined Boy Scouts, took field trips, and celebrated holidays with gifts and goodies. He made friends with other children who understood better than anyone what he was going through. He was getting regular meals. His sleep was uninterrupted by screaming and yelling. He felt better.

During his stay at Sheltering Wings, Andy learns that what his dad did was not normal or okay. He misses his dad, but he sees his mom getting better. She is happier.

"The shelter made us feel like we were home," Andy said. "They helped my mom."

The names 'Andy' and 'Max' were used to protect the children's identity.



Church Connection Council Meets Monthly:

The Church Connection Council is a group of volunteers made up of church members from approximately 50 local churches. The volunteers act as liaisons between their individual churches and the shelter. They provide tremendous support to the shelter. They also keep their fellow church members informed of the ways God is working at Sheltering Wings to change the lives of abused women and their children. Meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Hendricks County Senior Services. If you would like to become involved, talk to your pastor or lead clergy, and contact us at 317-718-0735 ext. 301.

SHELTERING WINGS

† HAVEN • HOME • HOPE

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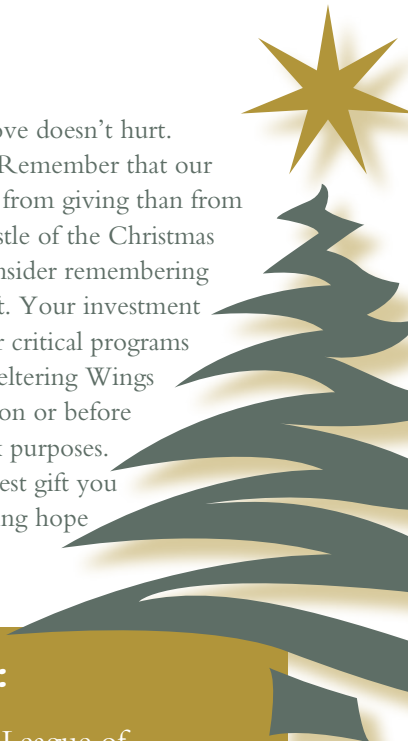
Children need help being guided out of the dark tunnel of domestic violence. Children have a great need to understand and learn. They need professional help. The Children's Program at Sheltering Wings is designed to help children make sense of their situation and to help them recognize and deal with conflict in a rational, healthy way. It also offers fun activities and comfort to children who have suffered great emotional and even physical pain.

Due to a lack of resources, there are several things the Children's Program is not currently able to offer these children. Additional funding would help us add critical staff and programming to meet children's needs. With your financial support, you could help to break the cycle of violence and to

teach children about a world where love doesn't hurt.

We are reminded in Acts 20:35, "Remember that our Lord Jesus said, 'More blessings come from giving than from receiving.'" During the hustle and bustle of the Christmas Season, please take time to stop to consider remembering Sheltering Wings with a monetary gift. Your investment would provide year-round support for critical programs and services. All such donations to Sheltering Wings are tax deductible; but must be made on or before December 31, 2007, for this year's tax purposes.

Your investment may be the greatest gift you can give this holiday season -- providing hope to children! Thank you.



SAVE THE DATE!

Brownsburg Sertoma presents the 9th annual St. Valentine's Dinner Dance benefiting Sheltering Wings. The event will be held on Saturday, February 16, 2008, at Primo West banquet facility in Plainfield. The evening will include silent and live auctions as well as dancing with music by the Wright Brothers. The event offers many opportunities for involvement, including sponsorship packages, auction donations, and event attendance. Tickets are \$170/couple. Single tickets are also available. For more information or to purchase tickets please contact the shelter at 317.718.0735, ext. 301.

SPECIAL THANKS:

We'd like to thank the Junior League of Indianapolis, the Verizon Wireless Foundation, and Target stores for supporting the Children's Program.

Thank you to all who participated this fall in Sheltering Wings' first annual Pair Up seminar to prevent dating abuse.

Thank you to the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation for their generous support of shelter operations.

Thank you to The REALTOR™ Foundation for providing critical support for Sheltering Wings' Transitional housing program.

PLEASE NOTE: We are updating our existing mailing list and developing an electronic version of our 'Shared Blessings' quarterly newsletter which we hope to have available in early 2008. Please help us update our records by sending any address corrections or changes to Linda at lwithner@shelteringwings.org or 317-718-5454 ext. 201 and provide your e-mail address if you would like to receive future 'Shared Blessings' electronically.