

SHELTERING WINGS

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Domestic violence is a topic many people do not want to talk about. It is one of the most misunderstood crimes in our society. When victims of domestic violence are assisted with resources, given opportunities to thrive with love and compassion, they are able to heal from their wounds - wounds that can mean internal scars to their soul, or outside wounds on their physical body. Either way, they still make their mark on that person's life forever. Oftentimes these families have no where to turn. They leave everything behind seeking a place of refuge and safety.

Sheltering Wings Center for Women was formed in 1999 out of love and compassion. A volunteer at a food pantry at Cornerstone Christian Church kept seeing women coming through that were fleeing domestic violence situations, but had no where to turn. So the volunteer called around to see where Hendricks County's domestic violence shelter was. To her amazement there was no shelter for such a thing. Thus began the journey. A small group of dedicated Cornerstone Christian Church members decided to make a difference in their community. A study committee was formed, which then formed a board, which then snowballed into what we are today.

Over \$1.2 million dollars was raised within a couple of years. The land was donated – and our 11,500 sq. ft. of safety became a reality. We are entering our 9th year of existence. We have seen over 1700 women and children call Sheltering Wings home.

The shelter can house up to 44 women and children for up to two years. We are located in Hendricks County. Our mission is to provide emergency housing for women and children suffering from any form of domestic abuse. We build stable and independent lives through essential programs offered in a supportive and Christ-centered environment.

Our vision is to extend the love and compassion of Christ to women and children in the desperate circumstances of domestic violence. Christ was never coercive or offensive and neither are the services provided by the shelter. Our assistance to any victim of any background will be offered in the name of Christ.

During their stay we try to give them a sense of peace. We help them heal from the terror they have suffered.

Their abuser has always told them that if they leave, they will have nothing. So our goal is to equip them with the tools needed to become

self-sufficient. This is done through the many groups offered - such as computer class, resume writing, stress management, budgeting, parenting, and healthy relationships class. Our ultimate goal is to break the cycle of domestic violence. We exhibit unconditional love and compassion to each of our residents. We provide case management, mentoring, therapy, and connect them to community resources.

Our children's program also helps heal the wounds these little ones have suffered. Our on-site child therapist supplies much needed support through art therapy, and our child life specialist teaches through groups, role playing and teaching basic life skills, such as cooking, laundry, internet safety, and so much more.

Outreach and education are keys to breaking the generational cycle of violence. Thus we actively educate our community about domestic violence and sexual assault through speaking engagements at civic groups, churches, businesses and schools. Our emphasis is on educating our youth about healthy relationships, boundaries, date rape drugs, the signs of dating violence and resources to help them or their peers.

In order to sustain our operations, we actively seek financial donations, in-kind donations and volunteers. Our budget is \$1.2 million each year. We rely totally on donations – such as grants, foundations, United Way, private donors, civic groups, churches and other philanthropic endeavors.

The 11th Annual Brownsburg Sertoma Dinner Dance is our biggest fundraiser. It is on Saturday, February 13th from 6:00 to midnight, at Primo West in Plainfield. Tickets are \$150.00 per couple or \$75.00 per person. You may order tickets on our website at www.shelteringwings.org.

If you would like to become involved with our shelter or learn more about domestic violence prevention and education, please contact Brooke Couch at bcouch@shelteringwings.org or 745-1496.

We are on facebook and have blog on our website. Please feel free to check us out. ■

Best regards, Maria Larrison, CEO

For help or more information please contact the shelter at 317.745.1496, or log onto www.shelteringwings.org. Donations may also be made online at www.shelteringwings.org.