Flying into the Future

In just a few short years, Sheltering Wings has touched thousands of lives and brought a much-needed place of refuge to our community. But as our area’s population and the overall incidence of domestic violence grow, the need for our services continues to increase, challenging our current resources.

During 2005, our Board of Directors developed and adopted a strategic plan to guide the shelter as we confront that growing need and other challenges. In the months to come, that plan will guide the Board and our staff in making critical, prayerful decisions about the future of Sheltering Wings and our role in the community.

Together, we will continue to replace the despair of domestic violence with the eternal hope of God’s promise. And together, we will help women and children take flight and experience the joyful lives for which they were created.
Our Mission

We 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

Sheltering Wings was formed in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. We extend the love and compassion of Christ to women and their children in the desperate circumstance of domestic violence. Christ was never coercive or offensive and neither are our services. Our assistance to any victim of any background will be offered in the name of Christ.

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From Our Chairman

This year’s theme for Sheltering Wings is “Learn to Fly” and it has broad implications for many facets within the operations of the shelter. “Learn to Fly” for our residents means the enhanced development of program content that serves to make each of our women and their children independent, capable, directed, productive, and free of the causes for which they entered the shelter. It’s about changing the lives of our residents in positive ways that they may have the hope and assured outlook that so many of us take for granted within our own lives. It’s happening every day at the shelter and it’s the reason we exist. “Learn to Fly” reaches to the staff of Sheltering Wings. While clearly “a labor of love” describes the dedication of our staff, you can probably imagine that their daily walk with our residents is sometimes a long one. The financial status of the shelter has permitted us to now offer health benefits to these very special people who guide, mentor, and care for our residents. Our commitment is to continue to seek ways to recognize and reward those employed by the shelter who have devoted not just their time, but also their emotional and spiritual energies to benefit those less fortunate. “Learn to Fly” has strategic implications. Sheltering Wings has been essentially filled to capacity since the day it opened its doors. It’s a sad commentary; it’s also true. I can remember discussions before the inception of the shelter when some of us asked, “Is such an initiative really needed in our county?” The four-year life of the shelter has answered that question in a rather convincing way and in a way that now begs the question, “Where do we go from here?” If the need for a domestic violence shelter’s services continues to increase at a rate commensurate with the growth of the county and surrounding areas, how do we step up and meet that need? It’s a question we are asking and intend to answer.

Finally, “Learn to Fly” speaks to our financial stability. The shelter exists totally because of the outpouring of goodwill from its support base. It has no sources of income of its own. The whole thing is still pretty amazing to view from my perspective. There seems to be no limit to the sources of funding, and the amazing generosity that is generated through them. We still operate at a budget level of about half of that of other domestic violence shelters of comparable size. So, our message is first to thank you for the bountiful and wonderful way in which you have supported Sheltering Wings. It has made all the difference. The second message is to consider whether you might be willing to participate financially in the establishment of an endowment for the shelter. An endowment needs to be funded above and beyond the giving for day-to-day operations, but it is a funding vehicle which has the potential to secure financial stability for Sheltering Wings for years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Staff of Sheltering Wings, we want to once again express our gratitude to a community that has opened its arms and poured out its generous spirit. You are very special people indeed.

Robert E. Leonard
Learn to Fly

Look deeply into her eyes and you can see the sadness, the uncertainty, and the terror through which she views every moment. But when you look even more deeply — searching for a glimpse of her soul — different emotions are evident. The joy and enthusiasm from her childhood flicker. The optimism and dreams of her teenage years reach forward. And the love she has to offer anticipates its opportunity to embrace other souls.

What you see is the woman that God intended her to become. No matter how sad or stark the reality of her daily life, no matter how oppressive the weight of her troubles, that woman waits inside, eager for the safety, the confidence, the faith and the encouragement to fly free.

Here, at a place called Sheltering Wings, a community of highly trained professionals, devoted volunteers, and other women in search of the freedom promised by their own wings walk with her in Christ’s love until she is ready to fly.

I have watched our God do His amazing, life-changing work. In March, I met a woman who was frightened, intimidated, disorganized, and disconnected from her Heavenly Father. That frightened woman has become a peaceful woman whose confidence has enabled her to make significant decisions for herself with few tears. She has the strength and the confidence now to look forward to living independently for the first time in her life.

- Staff Member

Sheltering Wings has been a miracle in my life. They have every resource needed to change things for the better. Everyone is very nice and understanding. I am so happy that we had a place to come to feel welcome and safe from the danger.

- Survivor

While the building itself is very impressive, the most important part of Sheltering Wings is the staff. I found each member of the staff to be very nurturing and helpful to the residents. They are available 24 hours a day and committed to do whatever it takes, be it answering a crisis call, providing transportation to appointments, caring for the children of a job seeking mother, leading prayer, and counseling groups, or just listening and handling out tissues while we cried. They are tireless and fearless. Their personification of Christian hospitality is an inspiration.

- Survivor

Thank you and bless you for everything you do.
Learn to Fly Independently

To most, “shelter” suggests a respite; a safe harbor from a storm. While Sheltering Wings does provide a refuge for women and children who are escaping the life-threatening realities of domestic violence, we would do them a disservice if our role was merely about ensuring their personal safety. After all, our ultimate goal is to return them to safe, violence-free lives outside the shelter. Achieving that demands that we help them develop lifelong emotional and economic stability, minimizing the likelihood that they will re-enter unhealthy situations.

Through comprehensive programs, we develop and strengthen the essential life skills required to successfully parent children, find financial freedom, cope with the daily stress of starting a new life, recognize signs of harm in future relationships, and find legal representation. From classes to counseling, to case management and job training, we provide the support each woman needs to fly.

Forgetting what is behind us, as the apostle Paul urges, is essential if we are to press on toward the goal. "Your reward will be great in heaven. And here on earth you will have pain." (Matthew 5:12) Forgetting those things which make us stumble helps us to see that if we are focused on what is ahead, we will be eternally rewarded for following Christ Jesus. --(Philippians 3:13-14)

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and striving toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize God has set before me. Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize God has set before me. (Philippians 3:13-14)"
Learn to Fly Effectively

In a moment of crisis, few interventions are as effective and meaningful as the strength of a heartfelt hug. But the emotional reassurance of a hug cannot provide the economic and economic stability that is at the center of a successful exit from domestic violence. That is why Sheltering Wings has developed a highly qualified, highly motivated team of people who bring both personal devotion and professional expertise to the needs of the women we serve. In addition to the background brought to the position, each employee undergoes extensive training that is specific to our approach and mission.

Finding and training well-qualified people who share our passion is only part of the challenge we face in an increasingly competitive workplace. Keeping them requires that we compensate them appropriately and create opportunities in which they can develop their leadership potential and strengthen their professional knowledge.

I was given training specifically related to crisis intervention, including one-on-one job shadowing during crisis calls where I was able to watch and listen as experienced staff members answered crisis calls. They then watched and counseled me while I answered the calls. I was also given training about the culture of Sheltering Wings, the chain of command, behavior expectations, and the importance of shelter policies. This was helpful because it set clear boundaries and opened communication between me and my supervisor.

We take great joy in our many blessings, and continue to be amazed at the many ways God helps us serve women and children. Thanks to those blessings, we achieve our successes with a budget that is about half that of most domestic violence shelters our size. In large part, that’s because of the many people who are so generous with their time. In 2005 alone, our volunteers contributed over 7,500 hours of their precious time to Sheltering Wings.

If you would like to become one of those volunteers, we welcome your help, and encourage you to call us at (317) 745-1496. Volunteers are required to complete a training orientation (four to eight hours, depending upon where they will serve). All volunteers who will have direct contact with women and children must also undergo drug screening and a background check. Opportunities for volunteers fall into four categories:

Administrative: Answering phones, doors and assisting in accepting donations, affixing mailing labels, sorting newsletters, and helping with other bulk mailings.

Maintenance: Everything from changing a light bulb, fixing a broken dishwasher, and cutting the grass to weeding the flower gardens.

Program: Crafts or activities with women and children, providing transportation for women without vehicles, running errands, and coordinating fun/ movie nights.

Special Events: Organizing, public relations and volunteering on the day of special events, and representing the shelter in booths at public functions like United Way fairs.

- Staff Member
Learn to Fly Securely

A shelter is much more than the structure in which it housed. Still, it is impossible to examine everything a shelter has done or can do without considering the resources and limitations of its physical home. Sheltering Wings is clean, comfortable and safe, providing the women and children we serve with a homelike environment offering safety from the dangers of domestic violence. It also houses our many programs, from private counseling rooms to a playroom to a computer lab in which women learn skills needed in today’s workplace.

While we have been blessed with a wonderful facility, we reached operational capacity shortly after we opened our doors, and have remained at that level for most of our existence. The incidence of domestic violence is so high – and other shelter facilities remained at that level for most of our existence. The incidence of everything. — Hebrews 3:4"

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Learn to Fly

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. -- Hebrews 3:4
Learn to Fly Steadily

Being good stewards of the many blessings we receive is one of the ways we honor God. Every day, Shelter Wings is the beneficiary of astounding generosity from the communities we serve. Our food pantry recalls the miracle of the loaves and fishes, as its abundance always seems to abound in every all times, having all that you need, you that in all things at make all grace good work. -- II Corinthians 9:8

To Fly greater than our needs. Volunteers selflessly donate thousands of hours of their precious time. Local businesses, churches and organizations respond to our every request. Evidence of such overwhelming generosity is that we meet our needs with such overwhelming generosity is that we meet our needs with and we are now able to fly to support us receive from our community. Recognizing the growing need for our services, we are now focused on developing sustainable sources of funding that will help us achieve our own economic stability. Financial strength will ensure our continued viability and maximize the funding that will help us achieve our own economic stability. Financial strength will ensure our continued viability and maximize the support that we receive from our community.

If I was asked to sum up my impression of Sheltering Wings, it would put it this way. Shelter Wings is not afraid: not afraid to reach out, not afraid to fail, not afraid to provide structure, and not afraid to care. -Survivor

Our 2005 Shelter Friends Group (donations from $1 to $100)

Financial Highlights For 2005

Income

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<tr>
<th>Investment Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number of Investors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
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<td>650</td>
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<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way Donor Designation</td>
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<td>Foundations</td>
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<td>Civic Groups</td>
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<td>Businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way Solutions Fund</td>
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Expenses

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<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
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<td>Life Skills &amp; Mentoring</td>
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<td>Children’s Programs</td>
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<td>Outreach Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
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These are preliminary, unaudited year-end figures and may differ slightly from the final figures we will report to the state and federal governments. Our finances are reviewed annually by an independent public accounting firm. For an appointment to review our most current financial statements and audit information, please contact the Executive Director at 745-1496.

Flight Support

Learning to fly demands significant behind-the-scenes support. We are deeply grateful for the collaboration and resources of our Church Connection Council. Its members channel and coordinate the ministries of local congregations to help us bring the light of Christ’s love to troubled women and children. Each participating church appoints liaisons who keep their fellow parishioners informed about the many ways in which they can help us meet our residents’ needs and change their lives.

In 2005, seven new congregations enlisted in this important effort: Calvary United Methodist Church, Hendricks Community Bible Church, North Salem Christian Church, Plainfield Friends Meeting, The Oasis Church, Westlake Community Church of God and the Westside Church of the Nazarene. If your church would like to help our women and children learn to fly, please ask your pastor to call us for information.

Knowing that oftentimes families must leave everything behind, our church women’s group provides an “activity bag” for each incoming child: a stuffed animal to cuddle, books, toys, coloring books, paper, and crayons, etc. We feel privileged to be council members and make a little difference.

- Church Connection Council Member

We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10