



Shared Blessings

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. [Romans 8:28 \(NIV\)](#)

As we celebrate our 20th year at Sheltering Wings, stories like the one here from a resident who was willing to share her story with us, reiterate why we're here, and why we're so grateful for you, this loving community who makes our work possible.

I was the youngest of the family, and my brother and sister were very abusive toward me both physically and emotionally. I often thought about running away.

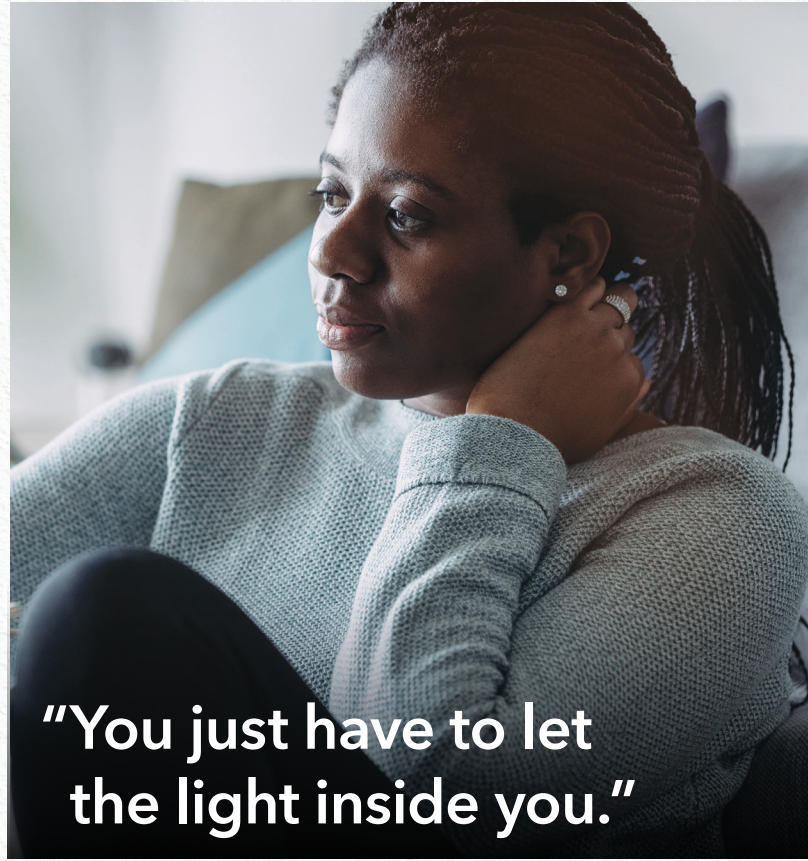
My father was an alcoholic and was always at work, and my mother was a stay at home mom who took extra good care of me and filled me with so much love. My father would emotionally and verbally abuse my mother, and I was always there to comfort her, just like she comforted me from the abuse I received from my siblings.

My mother was the only true love I had in my life. I was 17 years old when she passed away from breast cancer. After she died, I was confused, broken, lonely, and constantly living in fear.

I started drinking heavily, and smoking marijuana. I dated abusive men that were similar to my father. I tried to make my relationships work in the best way I knew how – by sitting still and looking pretty. I thought if I was pretty enough and did what I was told, I would make my fairy tale dreams come true.

I would constantly work out and go on crazy diets but it was never enough.

I met a man at a friend's house and I told myself that no matter what, this was the one. I remember feeling like this was the man that



"You just have to let the light inside you."

could end this madness. I became a stay at home mom and housewife, but then, I found out that this man I planned on spending the rest of my life with was addicted to meth. We were homeless for five years because he kept choosing drugs over me and my children.

The abuse got to the point where I had to escape.

I called Sheltering Wings – a place where I could work on a future for me and my children. **I know now that no matter how bad things have been, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.** You just have to let the light inside you.

Names in survivor stories may be changed for their protection.

Thank you for 20 years of safety

It's hard to find the words to fully express my gratitude for you, our friends and supporters. Who have educated yourself and others, volunteered or donated over the years.

On January 12th, Sheltering Wings celebrated our 20th anniversary. That's 20 years of safety, 20 years of life-skills classes, and 20 years of showing Christ's love to survivors of domestic violence.

Sheltering Wings was formed in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, to provide emergency housing for survivors escaping domestic abuse. We build stable and independent lives through programs offered in a caring and Christ-centered environment. Thanks to you and your constant advocacy and support, more than 4,500 men, women, and children have left domestic abuse behind for safe, bright futures.

It's also important for us to give back to you, who've been so good to our clients. It would

be our honor to provide your church or workplace with resource cards, trainings or help creating a domestic abuse policy—all free of charge.

For those of you who may know someone in an abusive relationship, please know that we are here to help.

Anyone can call our helpline 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and we also invite you to learn more at freedomideserve.com.

Above all, Thank you for caring. Thank you for being there for our families and helping them build stable, independent lives over the past 20 years.

Cassie Mecklenburg



"That's 20 years of safety, 20 years of life-skills classes, and 20 years of showing Christ's love to survivors of domestic violence."

You might be surprised to hear that "Planned Giving" is a phrase I don't love. It's just that I wish it had a better name. The name makes this thing that is **so transformational and loving** feel out of reach for many—because it sounds frankly like extra work and because it seems to imply wealth. Neither has to be true. **Planned gifts – a gift in your Will, life insurance, or others – are for everyone.**

If you'd like to know more about how a planned gift of any size can help survivors of abuse, or would like to know how to join the 2002 society (new in 2022!) please contact me – always without obligation.

Paige Vanzo, Development Director
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Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention

Every year, our Youth Council, made up of students from all over Hendricks County, works to bring awareness to that fact that **1 in 3 teenagers will experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse in their dating relationships.** They also work to share what a healthy relationship is and that everyone is deserving of a healthy, loving relationship.

You can help. As an adult you have the knowledge and wisdom from past experiences to gage the success of future relationships, teenagers are still learning what it even means to be dating and how it all works. **Our jobs as the caring adults in their lives is to equip and teach them to navigate the relationships and friendships.** It isn't always easy to start a conversation with a young person, they think and act differently than adults do and we have a very different perspective of hindsight that they don't have yet. So how do we walk this part of their life with them?

Young people need you to remain deeply connected to and invested in them. Keep lines of communication open because this conversation can't happen in one sitting. Melissa, Sheltering Wings' Prevention and Education coordinator says, "One thing I have learned in talking with teenagers is they actually do want to learn what we have to teach them but we have to be willing to listen to **THEIR** perspectives.

Things to remember before you begin:

- **Assess your values.** How do you expect couples to behave, to handle disagreements and make decisions? It's important for you to model respect, honor and integrity.



- **Your kids' relationships are important to them.** As teenagers, they are laying the groundwork for the relationships they'll have in the future. Become familiar with their world and what they enjoy. Showing genuine interest sets the stage for honest and consistent communication.
- **Beware of how you talk about violence.** Parents tend to either be vague, causing confusion, or to be overprotective, preventing their kids from truly learning. Neither approach is helpful. Seize opportunities to talk around the dinner table, hanging out or during your commute to and from activities.

Take the time this month to start talk to the kids in your life about this. [Get a list of age appropriate questions to get the conversation going at shelteringwings.org.](https://shelteringwings.org)

Healthy Me. Stronger Us. Throughout 2021, we answered **1,347 HELPLINE CALLS**, welcomed **127 NEW RESIDENTS** and helped **57 RESIDENTS** move to safe housing.

I want to protect the families served by Sheltering Wings.

Continue 20 years of safety by returning this form with your gift today!

Your support protects families from a life of abuse and can do things like:

Feed all our residents for a year—\$240 (\$20/month)

Fund 2 weeks of children's activities—\$112 (<\$10/month)

Celebrate a survivor's birthday with cake & a gift—\$25



Please contact me about making a *monthly* tax-deductible donation and joining the new **Hope Monthly Giving Society!** By giving monthly, you can sustain hope for those fleeing abuse.

\$150 \$75 \$35 \$20 \$10 \$ _____

I would like to make a *one-time*, tax-deductible donation of:

\$240 \$112 \$50 \$25 \$ _____ I've enclosed my check # _____

Please charge my credit card \$ _____ Visa MC Discover Amex

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

Exp. Date (MM/YY) / CW

Signature _____ Print Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Please contact me to discuss:

- How to make a planned gift or join the 2002 Planned Gift Society
- Volunteering to help on the front desk at the Shelter
- Holding a donation drive or third party fundraiser
- Scheduling a training for my church or workplace
- Conducting children's activities at the shelter
- Inviting a shelter rep to speak, or conduct a training my church or group
- Other: _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Email _____ *We never share your email address with anyone.*

2022 PREMIER EVENT

Featuring Helio Castroneves!

Saturday, April 23

Learn more at shelteringwings.org/speed



Areta went from homeless to home owner in less than five years with the help of Sheltering Wings and folks like you who support our events, programs and mission!



Please Join us for a wonderful night to hear more stories like this.

This year we'll celebrate 20 years of safety at Sheltering Wings with our Premier Event – Full Speed Ahead! We hope you'll attend to spend time with us, and like-minded people who care about the intervention and prevention of domestic abuse. Featuring four-time Indianapolis 500 winner, Hélio Castroneves, FullSpeed Ahead will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

By attending this event, you can provide emergency housing and services for survivors and their children, and help them build stable and build independent lives—like Areta's!

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Men IN Action READ is coming back to the classrooms of Hendricks County on **March 17, 2022**. This year's book of choice is *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match* by Monica Brown, bringing to light assets that build Positive Family Communication, School Engagement, Cultural Competence and Self-Esteem. If you would like to purchase a book for a particular school or would like more details about this year's event please visit shelteringwings.org/men-in-action-read/

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Keep up with Melissa's #WednesdayWisdom, or learn how to be ready when a friend needs help:



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SIGN UP for our Executive Director's monthly **INSIDER** and other news at shelteringwings.org/news

We're Hiring!

Find details and requirements for all of our openings on our website:
shelteringwings.org/get-involved/careers