



Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter
Volume XXX, Number Four, Fall 2013

It's Souper Time Again

By Kathy Riley, Executive Director

There is a slight change in the temperatures and my mind immediately goes to "Souper" time. The event will be 34 years old this November and as many of our supporters know this is the major fundraiser for The Women's Shelter.

The character of the event is still the same: simple. The no-frills evening is meant to be a time for laughter and sharing. For me it is the one time of year I get to see faithful supporters and long time friends. However, I am reminded once again that this event is NOT about me. So many benefit from this evening.

Chick-fil-A has been our corporate sponsor since 1995. After a long day of work these owner/operators spend another 5 hours helping to make the "Souper" a successful event. They serve with such a spirit of generosity and compassion. I have never felt that they were inconvenienced or regretted having to work extra hours. Maybe that is the point; it is not work to them but rather a time to serve others. My hope is that they benefit as much from the experience as they give.

I am also reminded how this event impacts the residents of the Shelter. After reading the article in this newsletter by one of our women I realized how special the evening is to them. For years I have watched them dress up for the evening. I've often remarked that they look so much better than me! What I didn't realize is how important it is to our residents to be representing The Women's Shelter. The staff has always pressed upon the women that their actions at meetings or at work is a reflection of the Shelter. Somehow I didn't make the connection to the "Souper". I have always enjoyed having the residents being served their meal. They work

so hard every day and like most of us not to cook and clean-up is a great reprieve.

As I said, the "Souper" is a time for me to connect with good friends I don't get to see very



often. However, I realize it is also a time for our supporters to meet friends they haven't seen since last year's "Souper". It has become a tradition for so many to mark the beginning of the holiday season. It is also an event that is very personal to our donors. For some inexplicable reason that night we all feel a connection to something bigger than ourselves. For a short period of time on this evening we are reminded that others in need depend upon our participation. It is simply a good feeling to be connected with such a worthwhile event.

Please come and experience first hand the beauty of this event. Bring your children, your friends, and start or continue this holiday tradition. We look forward to seeing you, Thursday, November 21st, at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 3200 Trenholm Road, Columbia or The Manor at Doko Meadows, 171 Langford Road, Blythwood. Both events will run from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm.

My Year At The Women's Shelter: Part II

By A Shelter Resident

On July 20, 2012, she arrived for her 10:30 AM interview with the House Director of The Women's Shelter and was thrilled and so thank-full to be accepted. She was presented with a small pile of papers regarding the rules and regulations clarifying the structure of The Women's Shelter program and her responsibilities as a participant. All appeared reasonable and reassuring; she was in the right place. She signed where needed, thus initiating her personal life. Then the House Director instructed her to collect her personal belongings, money from her bank account for minimal rent, and be back by 2:00 PM to claim her bed in the main house.

Upon her return she was offered every personal amenity she needed, provided a nice set of sheets, and was shown upstairs to her room which she would share with one other resident. After making her bed and stowing away her belongings she settled on the porch. Within a short while, she was joined by the other residents. Around 4:30 PM there was a "changing of the guard" as the House Director was replaced by the staff member who would be staying with them over the weekend.

In the following weeks she would watch a parade of women enter and sometimes leave the main house. The Women's Shelter program was indeed so structured one had to truly need to succeed to be able to stay. She met and interacted with all the wonder-full regular staff members as well as the women who volunteered their time and energy to create menus and roster for household chores and teach about the Bible, yoga, nutrition, exercise, com-

puter skills, journaling, resume and interview skills, recovery, and even line dancing.

What a marvelous program!

It took five weeks, but she finally secured a work position with a well known arts and crafts company store at the end of August. While she was so grateful just to have a job the realities were that it was only part-time and involved walking one half mile from the nearest bus stop in triple digit temperatures. The job required standing on her feet three to four hours and then walking the one half mile back to the bus stop for just slightly more than minimum wage. It was taxing and ultimately did not satisfy the requirements to be able to progress in the program so she had to continue to seek other employment during her days off.

In mid October she obtained a new work position as an seamstress for a major dry cleaning chain in Columbia. She received full time hours at a pay increase. Furthermore, she was sewing which she truly enjoyed. The fact that she only needed to walk a short distance to and from the bus stop to attend this position was a definite plus.

Having now fully satisfied the requirement of the first phase of the program, she was offered the opportunity to enter the second phase and "transition" out of the main house into one of the houses owned by The Women's Shelter within the local neighborhood. She could not stop crying as she and another resident were shown around the beautiful fully furnished house they would share.

Early November excitement escalated among the residents in anticipation of attending their first

formal outing. Fully aware they would be representing The Women's Shelter, they took great care assisting each other and finessing their appearances. The event was the 33rd Annual Thanksgiving Souper: the major fundraiser for The Women's Shelter. It was so named because—as opposed to the opulence associated with Thanksgiving dinner—this meal consisted simply of a bowl of soup, a package of crackers, and a cup of tea; to keep in mind those less fortunate. She didn't know the countless many who had contributed to this event. She could only be grateful that there are those who cared enough to create it. She knew that the majority of people contributing their time and energy serving this meal were connected with the sponsor of the Souper, Chick-fil-A; the same organization that so generously provides the regular Monday evening meal at The Women's Shelter each week. For this event they also supplied their miniature signature stuffed cows, calendars with coupons, and their larger-than-life cow for wonder-fully fun photo ops!

The evening included a fine presentation including a streaming video about the history and current status of The Women's Shelter. There were well produced items offered in raffles; one being a brightly colored quilt for which she bought a ticket. Throughout the evening there had been beautiful music in the background provided by a gentleman playing a piano as people moved from table to table and milled around in conversation. When it came time to leave they all agreed it had been an awesome affair all around!

To be continued...

THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SOUPER
Thursday, November 21, 2013, 5:30-7:30 P.M.
Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 3200 Trenholm Road, Columbia
The Manor at Doko Meadows, 171 Langford Road, Blythewood
\$2 per person

Sponsored by *Chick-Fil-A* of Columbia

HOW TO SUPPORT THE SOUPER:

SELL TICKETS: For more information, call (803) 779-4706.

BUY A BUNCH OF TICKETS: Treat some friends to dinner at the Souper.

CAN'T MAKE IT? Join us in spirit. Use the enclosed envelope to support the Shelter with a Souper donation.

SPONSOR A TABLE: Sponsor a table in honor of a special woman. For a donation of \$150.00, send a special message about your wife, mom, daughter, mother-in-law, friend, mentor or role model. Your honoree's name will grace a lovely table, and she will receive special mention in the Souper program. Complete the following information and return the form with your contribution in the enclosed envelope by November 14, 2013.

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Circle one: In honor of or In memory of

(Please print names as you want them to appear on the table and program.)

Honoree's Name: _____

By (*your name or group's name*): _____

Circle one (which location for table sign?): Eastminster Presbyterian The Manor at Blythewood

Return to: The Women's Shelter
 3425 N. Main St.
 Columbia, SC 29203

*The Women's Shelter
3425 North Main Street
Columbia, SC 29203*

*Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #1018
Columbia, SC*

Address Service Requested

Wish List

The Women's Shelter greatly appreciates and strongly depends on the generous donations of individuals, churches and other civic groups. We do not have a lot of storage space, but the items listed below are needed and used continuously. Feel free to donate the items listed at your convenience. If you have any other items you would like to donate, please contact us. Thank you for your continued generosity! (803) 779-4706

SEASONAL WISHES

- ◆ Holiday baked goods/desserts
- ◆ Fresh fruits/vegetables
- ◆ Soft drinks
- ◆ Bedroom slippers-all sizes
- ◆ Gift cards for haircuts
- ◆ Phone cards
- ◆ Zoo/movie/entertainment tickets
- ◆ Basic alarm clocks
- ◆ Answering machines
- ◆ Umbrellas
- ◆ Small day planners

ONGOING NEEDS LIST

- ◆ Gently used black pants/tennis shoes
- ◆ Black, "no-show" socks
- ◆ Coffee/tea
- ◆ Creamer
- ◆ Sugar
- ◆ Sugar free items
- ◆ Toilet paper/paper towels
- ◆ Paper plates
- ◆ Tall kitchen bags
- ◆ Tin Foil/cling wrap/zip lock bags
- ◆ Laundry detergent/Regular & HE
- ◆ Dryer sheets/ liquid softener
- ◆ Cleaning supplies