



Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter
Volume XXXIV Number Two, Spring 2014

Expressions of Gratitude

By Kathy Riley

It's spring. It's Easter. It's a wonderful time of year to be a part of the Shelter. I've said many times that the women we serve are "Easter people". I have seen over the years so many women "rise" from the most devastating situations. Their faith and strength allow them to shake off situations and disappointments that would flatten others. They can and do rise from the depths of despair to become independent and strong women.

I have also seen the Shelter itself be raised from the depth of being condemned to what it is today, a place of safety and love. Our transformation did not happen overnight, rather the years of conversion happened in an unplanned way. The one staple in our growth has been the presence of volunteers.

Like most nonprofits money has always been scarce. Creativity and determination are qualities that most helping agencies have to possess. The Shelter has always attracted the most unique and dedicated men and women to serve.

The Shelter has many levels of involvement. Some volunteers rally their church or civic groups to collect needed items on a regular basis or to fund raise. Others gather a group together to do yard or other special projects. Many individuals come to the back door having read our newsletter wish list and just appear with goodies. These are usually very familiar faces to us, and it is like greeting family members. Years have come and gone with the same won-

derful folks caring about us. The only difference I see is that we have all aged a little. We may have started out with dark hair, but we all look alike with the varying shades of gray!

The Shelter employs four full-time people, hardly enough people power to do all the tasks necessary to make the Shelter run. Our "regular" volunteers are the ones we see daily, weekly, or monthly for on-site programs or shopping. Who are these folks? They all have names: Dr. John McGeary, Marguerite O'Brien, Michael Tucker, Susan Tokarski, Ann Addison, Denisa Gardner, Diane Higgins, Crystal Kruger, Amy Marion, Sr. Margie Verhoff, and Nicole Spain White. Our "as needed" volunteers with special technical skills include: Jay Wingard, Ann Lyness, Betsy Breen, Ann Maletic, Ray Waters, and Leah Mangus.

A special help category is reserved for Debbie McDaniel and Patti Rosenfeld. Revente's Second Chances is the charity store opened by Debbie and managed by Patti which gives 100% of the net profits to the Shelter. They have worked tirelessly to make the store a huge success.

The life of the Shelter is richer because of our many unnamed supporters. Please know that nobody is ever taken for granted by us. The people power, the monetary donations, the surprise visits...all contribute to the uniqueness of this place.

**Be sure to check out www.womenshelter.org
for information on how you can join us in May
for Midlands Gives and the South Carolina Book Festival.**

Unpacking the Past

By A Shelter Resident

I thought leaving my hometown would help stop the pain I carried in my heart for two years along with my addiction. There was a sense of excitement and fear as I closed the lid of my suitcase and slowly looked around the room. As my eyes met my reflection in the dresser mirror I said, "You're headed on a new adventure to meet new friends, find a new job, and have a new life."

I took one last look around the house that I had called home for the past ten years. In spite of the nerves, the fear of staying outweighed the fear of leaving. I grasped the surge of excitement and said good-bye to the cold and frigid city of Pittsburgh and headed south.

Things were just as I expected: great family connections and a new job working with teenagers as I had done up north. The transition from North to South seemed to be going smoothly and I was so happy. As I continued to unpack, I opened the lid of my suitcase and let out the things I thought I could handle in my new found happiness: myself, old pain, disillusionment, and addiction. However, in no time my new adventure had turned to a world of shattered dreams.

Thankfully I had met a co-worker named Pam who became my friend. She recognized the pain and problems that were inside of me. Pam suggested that I seek help. She found The Women's Shelter online and helped me schedule an interview to meet the staff. This interview was going to be my lifeline from destruction. I was overwhelmed when I walked up to the address on the paper. It was an amazing house with a screened-in porch that felt like a welcoming hug of encouragement. I sat down with Ms. Angie and took a chance at brutal honesty. I was received with love, compassion, and acceptance.

Every day wasn't a great day living in the main house of The Women's Shelter. Ms. Angie and Ms. Joanne broke me down mentally and helped me peel off all the masks I was wearing. They helped me become the beautiful, humble, grateful woman that I am today. I am learning to deal with my past and to live with life on life's terms again. It would not have been possible with-

out the experiences of living with other women overcoming similar issues, dealing with new rules and regulations, and the assistance of exceptional staff. Ms. Kathy Riley, "my angel from God," is the Executive Director of The Women's Shelter. She has shown me that trust can be restored and has given me hope in the possibilities the future holds. I struggled with finding a job and Ms. Kathy referred me to a job in retail. I had no experience in retail, but as always "my angel" saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. She knew the job would be perfect for me.

April 23, 2014, marks my one year anniversary in The Women's Shelter program. I'm grateful for the opportunity Ms. Kathy gave me in August 2013 to enter into the second phase of the program, transitional housing. Ms. Cynthia works with me in this phase and has provided the resources for me to get the help I need to change the direction of my life.

When I moved to the South I knew that I would be embarking on a new adventure, getting a new job, and gaining new friends. However, I never expected that this new adventure would include recovery or living in a rental house. The day I moved into my transitional house, I unpacked my suitcase. There was nothing left behind. It was empty for I had finally dealt with the secrets and shame. I looked around this new home, at my reflection in the mirror and smiled.

If you would like to meet this beautiful, grateful miracle that The Women's Shelter helped me become, come see me. I work at Revente's Second Chances, a charity resale shop that benefits The Women's Shelter. Debbie McDaniel is the owner. She is a successful business woman with a big heart that believes in giving back. Mrs. Patti Rosenfeld is my manager. She teaches me something new every day about life. I'm so grateful for these two women and everything they do for me.

I thank God for The Women's Shelter, Ms. Kathy and her helpers for giving me my life back. I will always be grateful and love you all.

Revente's Second Chances
3050-A Millwood Avenue, Columbia
All net profits benefit The Women's Shelter.

Honor That Special Woman in Your Life

Mother's Day is soon approaching on May 11th. This is a particularly special day here at The Women's Shelter. One of our well-known local artists, Ann Lyness, designed a beautiful greeting card with a heartfelt inscription.

Purchase a card to honor each special woman in your life and you not only celebrate a loved one, but you help to support The Women's Shelter as well. Simply send us the names and addresses of your special women, along with a check for \$8 per card, and we will address, scribe and mail each card in time for Mother's Day.

Mother's Day Card Gift Sheet

(please print clearly)

Your Name: _____ Your Phone: (____) _____
(as you wish it to appear on the card)

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

*Please mail Card Gift Sheet, along with a check made out to "The Women's Shelter" (\$8 for each card), in the enclosed envelope **by MAY 5th!** If you need more room, please use additional paper.*

*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 donations from individuals, churches and other civic groups. We do not have a lot of storage space, but the items listed below are frequently needed. If you have any other items you would like to donate, please contact us. Thank you for your continued generosity!

(803) 779-4706

- ◆ Electric hand mixers
- ◆ Ice Cream
- ◆ Fresh fruits/vegetables
- ◆ Soft drinks
- ◆ Sunscreen/bug spray
- ◆ Gift cards for haircuts
- ◆ Phone cards
- ◆ Zoo/movie/entertainment tickets
- ◆ Basic alarm clocks
- ◆ Answering machines
- ◆ Umbrellas
- ◆ Shower caddies
- ◆ Gently used black pants/tennis shoes
- ◆ Water bottles
- ◆ Creamer/sugar
- ◆ Coffee/tea
- ◆ 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