Annual Report

Providing Resources for Survivors of Domestic Violence

State Fiscal Year 2008
July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008
WomenSafe Inc., the Green House
Grand Opening Celebration
October 26, 2007
A Message From The Executive Director:
Dear Friends:

Fewer things in life are more satisfying than the transformation of a dream into reality. For WomenSafe, the Green House is the manifestation of just such a dream. In resident rooms and common areas, names engraved on donor plaques honor the individuals, foundations, corporations, local businesses and groups who believed that helping others is life’s highest ambition. Clients, volunteers and staff are reminded daily about the capabilities of people when they focus their efforts on a shared goal. When I pass by the plaques, I am appreciative, and more determined than ever that the Green House will continue to live up to the expectations of the community.

I hope you will take a few minutes to peruse this annual report, reflecting the successes of the inaugural year in our new home. It is prepared with you, the donor, in mind, because any accomplishments are the direct result of your gifts of time, talent, and funding. The report reflects how we utilized the funds you entrusted to us. As you will read, agency numbers are significantly up when compared to SFY 07: shelter days MORE THAN DOUBLED, and outpatient counseling NEARLY TRIPLED. The bigger shelter has had an immediate and marked effect in pro-actively addressing family violence in our community.

While we take a moment to celebrate our first year of expanded services, we also are acutely aware of the challenges ahead. Growing economic uncertainties have families all across the U.S. trying to do more with less. In our non-profit sphere, the inevitable downturn in charitable giving further complicates our ability to assist increasing numbers of those in need. While the economy tightens its grip on all of us, we want to tell you how greatly we appreciate your continued efforts to lighten the burdens of others through your donation of time, expertise, and money. As the next year unfolds, WomenSafe will continue to be prudent with the dollars you so generously donate. Using our resources wisely, we will maintain a clear focus on the agency mission:

*to provide emergency shelter and support services to survivors of domestic violence throughout northeast Ohio.*

Most sincerely,

Shayna L. Jackson, MSSA, LISW-S
Executive Director
WomenSafe Inc., the Green House
In order to serve our mission, WomenSafe Inc., the Green House is proud to offer the following services, *free of charge*:

**Emergency Shelter** – WomenSafe offers shelter to victims of domestic violence. The shelter is a safe and comforting environment where victims begin to heal, receive counseling, consider alternatives and develop goals for an abuse-free life. All basic necessities are provided to residents.

**COPEline (888-285-5665)** – By calling the 24-hour support and crisis management hotline, victims of domestic violence receive support, access to shelter and services, and information and referrals to community resources. The hotline is also recommended for friends and family who need more information about domestic violence, available services and how to help a person in need.

**Case Management** – Domestic violence professionals assist clients in developing and accomplishing personal goals and life skills. Clients are linked to community resources based on their individual goals and needs.

**Diagnostic Assessment** – Licensed mental health professionals complete assessments and use the information to determine the needs, strengths and services to be provided to each client.

**Outreach Counseling** – Clinical staff provide individual counseling to any person victimized by domestic violence. Counselors help survivors explore healthy living alternatives and deal with the effects the violence has had on them.

**Peer Support Group** – A 10-week support group, supervised by a licensed mental health professional, offers victims of domestic violence a safe place to gain strength and support from others in similar situations. The sessions are designed to recognize, express and accept feelings related to experiencing an abusive relationship and to provide information about the dynamics of domestic violence.
Art Therapy – Art therapy provides a non-threatening method to process feelings and issues surrounding family violence. Art allows survivors to express a range of emotions through creative self-expression. The art therapist offers this service to adults and children ages five and older.

Court Advocacy – Court advocates accompany survivors of domestic violence through the court process, explaining legal entitlements and implications of legal proceedings. Advocates provide crisis intervention and emotional support as victims seek assistance from the judicial system.

Hospital Advocacy – Face-to-face support and crisis intervention is available to hospital patients who have experienced domestic violence.

Reestabishment Services – After addressing the immediate needs of clients, WomenSafe staff continue to provide survivors with long-term support in living a life free from violence. Any client who uses WomenSafe services is offered household items and support services to assist in establishing and maintaining independent living.

Community Education – To build community awareness, WomenSafe offers presentations to the general public. Schools, businesses, agencies, churches, and senior and youth organizations learn about abuse-free dating, the dynamics of domestic violence, date rape, elder abuse, effects of domestic violence on children, how to recognize domestic violence and how to help someone who is being abused.

These leaves are hanging on the “worry tree” located in the Art Therapy Studio at the Green House. This is an activity supervised by Nancy Bruch, Art Therapist.
In State Fiscal Year 2008:

- WomenSafe provided over 3000 emergency shelter days to adults and children fleeing violence in their home. This is more than double the total night stays of SFY 07.
- Individual counseling services provided to adults and children nearly tripled when compared to SFY 07.
- Ninety five percent of WomenSafe clients felt that the shelter staff were effective in helping them to get what they needed from the community.
- 2400 WomenSafe related calls were received via COPEline. This is approximately 1000 more phone calls then in SFY 07.
- Over 2300 children, adults and elderly community members were educated on WomenSafe services, intimate partner violence, recognizing unhealthy relationships and how to help someone in need.
- Ninety two percent of clients felt they were able to contact WomenSafe when they needed to.
- Ninety six percent of WomenSafe clients felt that the counseling they received about their future plans and goals was beneficial.
- WomenSafe’s 140 volunteers committed to nearly 6200 hours of service. Tasks included: fundraising, staffing our 24-hour crisis hotline, assisting at shelter, and sorting donations. The amount of time volunteers give annually saves the agency over $60,000.
- Ninety eight percent of the students who received education on abuse-free dating showed a maintained or increased knowledge of intimate partner violence when compared to their prior knowledge of the topic.

Client comments:

“Thank you to all of the staff. You will never be forgotten.”
“You gave me enough support to stand on my own...
I can do what I have to do regardless of how scary it might be.”
“I thank God for WomenSafe.”
“It felt good knowing I was in a safe place and getting knowledge about abuse.”
A Domestic Violence Survivor and WomenSafe Client Shares Her Story:

Lisa called WomenSafe’s hotline after her live-in boyfriend beat her because she refused to go next door to the neighbor’s house to ask them for cigarettes. Lisa came into the emergency shelter with the clothes on her back and her most important possession, her son.

Shortly after arriving at shelter, a counselor met with Lisa to conduct an assessment to outline her current situation. It was quickly apparent that there were major barriers to Lisa achieving safety and independence. These barriers included: unemployment, a lack of transportation, no childcare, and a suspended driver’s license.

Lisa felt overwhelmed and paralyzed to do anything to change her situation. With the help of WomenSafe, she developed a plan that empowered her and provided her with the support and education that she so desperately needed. Most of all she was given hope during a time in which she felt hopeless.

With help, Lisa was able to focus and begin to work towards her goals. She attended interviews, applied for childcare assistance and financial assistance, all while taking care of an active toddler and adjusting to life in shelter.

Despite the obstacles that Lisa had to overcome, she found a new job, a new house, childcare, a driver’s license, and secured funds from a local social service agency to put a down payment on a car. In addition to these tremendous accomplishments, Lisa became educated about what her legal rights were. With the help of WomenSafe’s court advocate, she obtained a protection order against her abuser. This protection provided additional safety and security for not only herself, but also for her son.

While staying in the emergency shelter, Lisa took advantage of all of the services that WomenSafe offered her. She engaged in counseling, community psychiatric support services and art therapy. Also, she met on a regular basis with the child therapist to assist in developing her parenting skills so she could better care for her son. All of these services helped Lisa to increase her sense of hope, her ability to function, and her ability to make a better life for herself and her son, one free from violence.

After Lisa found a new apartment, WomenSafe provided furnishings for her new home and gave her first month’s rent and security deposit so that she could immediately move and begin her new life.

Lisa continues to meet with WomenSafe’s aftercare worker to focus on goals and plans for the future. The on-going support she receives plays a critical role in her ability to maintain an independent, abuse-free life for herself and her son. Lisa herself said it best, “I would never be here, happy and safe, without WomenSafe.”
WomenSafe, Inc. has contracts and/or service plan agreements in place with a number of funding sources and agencies. They include: Geauga County Board of Mental Health & Recovery Services, Title XX via the Geauga County Department of Job & Family Services, Family First Council, Emergency Food Management Agency, Medicaid, Marriage License and Divorce Fees, Victims of Crime Act via the Ohio Attorney General’s Office, Family Violence Prevention Services via the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, Violence Against Women Act via the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, Family Violence Prevention Fund via the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, Ohio Department of Development, The Friends of WomenSafe, and United Way Services. Additionally, WomenSafe receives referrals from local law enforcement offices, hospitals, churches, victim services providers, criminal justice systems, and other social service providers in the community.
Thank You Supporters

WomenSafe, Inc., the Green House would like to thank our fiscal year 2008 donors.
July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008
We value every gift (in-kind and monetary).
Contributions made to the capital campaign are also listed.
It is through your support that we are able provide resources and quality programming
to families in need throughout Northeast Ohio.

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