

# Transforming Lives

## The Shelter's Quarterly Program Update September 2015

### Did You Know?

The Shelter serves all of Collier County, FL, the second largest county in the State, providing services to children, women, men and their pets from Naples, Immokalee, Marco Island, Bonita Springs and all points in-between.

For the first quarter of fiscal year 2015-2016, your support has helped The Shelter:

- Assist 1,020 unduplicated children, women and men
- Provide 4,383 shelter bed-nights in our Beau Venturi Home residential shelter
- Offer 461 nights of safety for 16 pets in our on-site kennel
- Provide 8,646 hours of counseling to children and adults
- Answer 703 calls to our confidential 24-hour crisis line (239.775.1101/TTY 239.775.4265)
- Develop 7,769 safety plans
- Offer 2,538 bed-nights in our four Transitional Housing cottages

In an effort **to prevent** abuse before it begins, **to protect** victims of domestic violence and **to prevail** over violence in our homes, neighborhoods and community, The Shelter offers an array of life-transforming programs including:

### Emergency Shelter

Victims of family violence and their pets find safety in our progressive 60-bed residential shelter complete with on-site kennel. While residing in our highly-secure Beau Venturi Home, survivors work at establishing personal empowerment through an array of life-transforming programs and services, such as safety planning, service management, counseling and more. This quarter, 198 individuals were sheltered, including 112 adults and 86 children... and their 16 pets.

### Transitional Housing Program (THP)

The THP currently features six cottages that opened (with four cottages) in 2008. The program was designed to provide a more thorough evolutionary experience from victim to survivor for adults and children who meet the requirements for participating in this innovative program. By helping program participants develop real world skills (paying bills, driving the kids to school and taking care of a house) while having The Shelter's support close at hand, we help reduce the risk of victims returning to their abusers.

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2015 – 2016, 8 adults and 24 children were living in the seven cottages and transitioning back into lives of freedom from abuse.

### Allstate Financial Literacy Program (AFLP) & Economic Justice

Research reveals that economic dependency is the strongest predictor of a survivor's decision to remain, leave, or return to an abusive relationship. For this reason, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children is committed to providing economic empowerment services that aim to help survivors reach their financial goals.

This quarter, adult participants registering for service in Emergency Shelter, Naples Outreach, or Immokalee Outreach reviewed financial safety. Participants in the Allstate Financial Literacy program registered for upcoming AFLP classes. Previous participants continued to save in individualized development accounts created to help them meet personal financial goals.

Furthermore, an emergency shelter Advocate conducted financial abuse groups for adults and children residing in our safe-haven. Piggy banks were provided to the children in conjunction with presentations on how to establish financial goals. During this quarter, 12 groups were held for 39 children.

Partners for the Allstate program include: Allstate; Brooks Insurance Services; CCSO Financial Crimes Bureau; Junior Achievement of SW Florida, Inc.; Legal Aid Services; Iberia Bank; Empowerment Parties Inc.; Goodwill Industries of SWFL Inc – SWFL Micro Enterprise; Merrill Lynch; South Regional Library; and Raymond James.

## **C'MON**

Through a partnership with the Golisano Children's Museum of Naples (C'MON), children from both our emergency shelter and our Outreach programs enjoy interactive, educational programs hosted by C'MON staff.

This quarter, C'MON opened its doors to The Shelter's participants and provided a pizza party for those who attended in July, August, and September. C'MON facilitated two onsite activities at The Shelter with children in August and September.

## **Primary Prevention Hands Are for Helping**

This program, delivered to elementary school children in Collier County, teaches non-violence and conflict-resolution skills to youngsters through interactive 'play' with a Shelter Advocate (blowing bubbles, playing instruments, etc.).

The "Hands" program curriculum focuses on the positive things children can do with their hands and how to stay safe with each child creating their own individualized safety plan and pledging to use his or her hands for helping.

This quarter, Shelter Advocates provided 70 "Hands" classes with 2,048 children pledging to use their hands for helping, not hitting.

## **L.E.G.I.T. (Love, Education to Guide and Inform Teens) – Healthy Relationships**

Designed to help teens identify the characteristics of healthy relationships in an effort to prevent dating violence, this program reaches out to middle and high school students in Collier County. A similar Healthy Relationships educational series, available through our Speaker's Bureau, is offered to adults of all ages. For more information, please call 239.775.3862.

## **Expect Respect**

Based out of our Immokalee Outreach Office, this interactive program helps middle and high school students to change social norms about dating relationships to help create a respectful environment.

This quarter, Shelter Advocates offered 6 presentations to 87 students.

## **Raising Gentle'men**

This primary prevention initiative helps stop violence before it begins by offering boys and young men insight into their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors about what it means to be a 'man' in today's society.

Our Raising Gentle'men Advocate facilitated 39 events this quarter, reaching 458 attendees with the message of what it means to be a true gentle'man and how they can contribute to ending violence. The program continues to expand and staff offers services in new venues.

## **YAC**

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is a group of Collier County youth between the ages of 12-20 focused on targeting and engaging their peers in social change to end dating violence. The group's mission is: To inspire social

change by providing education, empowerment, advocacy and support to the community; to broaden and increase prevention of unhealthy relationships and break the cycle of violence. For the first quarter, the YAC held three meetings.

## **DV Taskforce**

The work of the Domestic Violence Taskforce heightens awareness and brings about the social change necessary to make sure that no one is ever a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence. The Task Force includes The Aesthetic Surgery Center, Children's Advocacy Center, Collier Clerk of Courts, Collier County EMS, Collier County Housing, Collier County Men of Character, Collier County Probation, Collier County School District, Collier County Sheriff's Office, The David Lawrence Center, The Department of Children & Families, Florida Gulf Coast School of Criminal Justice, Haitian Leadership Network, Legal Aid Services, Marco Island Police Department, Mother Perry Foundation, National Association for Coalition of Collier County, Naples Community Hospital, Naples Government, Naples Police Department, North Naples Fire Department, Physicians Regional Healthcare System, Planned Parenthood, Project Help, State Attorney's Office, The Youth Advisory Council and The Shelter for Abused Women & Children.

During the past quarter, the DV Taskforce met to continue to work toward ending domestic violence in Collier County.

## **Enhanced Service Programs**



### **Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST)**

Launched in the summer of 2009, The Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) is a unique program designed to provide intensive service management and assistance to individuals identified to be in potentially lethal situations.

InVEST's unique model allows CCSO, Naples Police Department, Marco Island Police Department, Department of Children & Families (DCF), State Attorney's Office and The Shelter to work together to identify victims at high risk for domestic violence homicide and to enhance their possibility of receiving safety from further victimization. Together, we work with the survivor to share information, provide safety planning and possible aid in relocation.

InVEST participants receive services and advocacy throughout civil and/or criminal processes until their situations become safe or they choose to exit the program. These services are provided free of charge.

For the first quarter of the fiscal year, the InVEST Team reviewed 554 police reports, referring the individuals most at risk for domestic violence homicide (murder by a current or former partner/spouse) to the program.

### **Legal Advocacy**

The objective of The Shelter's legal advocacy is to support victims of domestic violence in civil matters directly related to domestic violence. This program provides support through an onsite Attorney and Shelter Advocates. These services enable us to empower Shelter families, promote self-sufficiency and create a safer community by helping victims secure, modify and enforce protection orders; handle immigration issues; obtain a divorce or separation; obtain spousal and child support; and resolve custody and visitation issues.

During this quarter, our Advocates provided court assistance to 39 individuals. The onsite Attorney provided legal services to 56 individuals.

### **Violence Against Women Linguistically & Culturally Specific Victim Services**

An alliance with The Department of Children & Families, Pathways, Redlands Christian Migrant Association, The Shelter's Immokalee Outreach Office and other community partners, this initiative is designed to reduce the number of children being removed from the homes of survivors of domestic violence who are involved in child abuse

investigations based on the family history of domestic abuse. The ultimate goal is to keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent.

The Shelter maintained a full-time, bi-lingual domestic violence Advocate co-located onsite at the Immokalee DCF office and a full-time domestic violence Advocate co-located onsite at the Naples DCF office.

**T**he Shelter for Abused Women & Children is *leading the community to prevent, protect and prevail over domestic violence through advocacy, empowerment and social change.*

To learn more about these pioneering programs and services, please call The Shelter at 239.775.3862/TTY 239.775.4265. For more information on supporting the life-transforming work of The Shelter, please call 239.775.3862, ext. 205.