



# HopeLine

**Refuge House** *Saving Lives, Building Hope, Ending Violence!*

Winter 2007

## Celebrating 30 Years of Saving Lives

In February 1978, with only about \$900 in the bank, a group of courageous women opened the doors to a small house just off of Mahan Drive in Tallahassee to take in women who were seeking a new life away from violence and abuse.

Today, 30 years later, the Refuge House has grown to offer a safe haven and support for thousands of women and children in all eight counties of the Big Bend, with a budget approaching \$3 million.

A 30th Year

Anniversary celebration of the rich, giving history of the Refuge House is planned for February 15th, 2008 at The Retreat at Bradley's Pond.

"We want this celebration to be a reunion of all the people who have contributed time, money, and other support through the years," said Janet Stoner, the current President of the

Board of the Refuge House. "We also want to reach out to new friends and supporters and bring them into our Refuge House family."

The event is free and will kick off a series of events throughout the year.

In March, Executive Director Meg Baldwin and the Refuge House Board will present a report: "State of the Community: Domestic and Sexual Violence in the Big Bend."

In April, the Refuge

House will focus on our advocacy for rape survivors, with a luncheon and keynote speaker on the impact and prevention of sexual assault.

In October, a film and print

retrospective titled "30 Survivors, 30 Stories, 30 Years" will be unveiled.

**... for 30 years, Refuge House has made a difference in the lives of women like the one below. Fifteen years ago, a client wrote:**

**Refuge House**  
ANNIVERSARY

**30** 

*Years of Saving Lives*

**Mark Your Calendar**

**30th Anniversary Celebration**  
February 15, 2008 • 7 p.m.  
The Retreat at Bradley's Pond

To the Staff and Volunteers of Refuge House:

This year, I fled to Refuge House from a painfully, brutal, abusive marriage of over 20 years. I arrived in emotional agony, my heart shattered into a thousand pieces and when I looked into my future, I shuddered in fear, seeing nothing but loneliness and certain failure.

I had become so accustomed to being ridiculed and mistreated that I expected the people of Refuge House to be critical of me and thoroughly disgusted with the fact that I had not had the courage to end the relationship with my spouse sooner. Instead I was treated with warmth, understanding, and dignity. Some of you may remember that I burst into tears when you were being kind to me. I understand now why I cried so easily. Your love, gentleness, and kindness put me in touch with the deep sense of deprivation I had long experienced having been denied those beautiful human gifts.

I owe all of you my life. Even more important than that, I owe you my soul. You gave me the food and a much-needed, appreciated shelter for my body, but it was your ministrations of love, concern, respect, and human caring that kept my hurting soul from steadily weeping out and evaporating in the tears cried from my eyes. Because of you, I know that the lovely and the good are real, and know that I can find them. God bless all of you.

## Remember Refuge House for Year End Giving

A Message from **Janet Stoner**, President, Refuge House Board of Directors:

"We invite our friends and supporters to include a gift to Refuge House this holiday season! The community's continued

investment in the life-saving work of our Refuge House is essential. Be part of making history – saving lives, building hope, and

ending violence – for decades to come!" 100% of your gift is tax deductible. It's easy – use the enclosed envelope for your convenience!

## Sheriff's Golf Tournaments Raise Thousands

Leon County Sheriff Larry Campbell and Wakulla County Sheriff David Harvey hosted separate golf tournaments this fall to benefit the Refuge House raising a combined \$25,000.

"These two men not only are our partners in helping victims of sexual violence, they step up the plate and help us raise the money we need to keep the doors of the Refuge House open," said Cecile Reynaud, the Refuge House Board member to help organize the golf tournaments.

"We are so grateful to our many golfers and community businesses who donated door prizes," said Reynaud, "The money we raise at these tournaments helps us reach our annual fundraising goals."



## Refuge House Thrift Shop – Re-Opens in Shadow of Stadium

As we go to press, the very last renovations to our new store at 729 West Gaines are being completed. Our new staff is already accepting donations at the new store—and with any luck, we are open for business! "Thrift shop sales provide a boost to the Refuge House's operational budget, and women and children shop for clothing, sheets, and other items they need to make a fresh start in life," said Charlotte Jernigan, who supervises the shop.

The thrift shop depends on the community for donations to stock its shelves. Refuge House clients shop for free.

"We have a great inventory but always are in need of clothes, household items, small furniture and toys," Jernigan said.

### Thrift Shop Hours:

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday

Location: 729 West Gaines St.

If you would like to volunteer time at the Thrift Shop, please call Charlotte Jernigan at 487-8859.

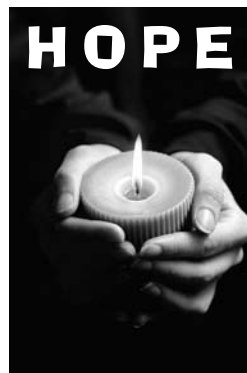
## Meg's Message

What a birthday we have to celebrate in 2008! Over the last several months, I've been up to my elbows peering at our old records, dusting off the news clips. I want to kiss Sharon Maxwell, Joy Parsons, Beth N. Rom-Rymer, James Crews, Peggy Post, Merry Ann Frisby – our first board, and Connie Salts, our first Executive Director, and ask if they really only had \$935.65 in the bank when our first shelter opened.

I want to cheer Pat Martin and Kent Spriggs who made it possible to bring our rape crisis services on board in 1980. I want to hug the whole Altrusa Club for signing that mortgage in 1983 so that we could buy the four-bedroom house and offer shelter to thousands

of women and children over the next 20 years. And the Tallahassee Junior League for funding our first-ever children's counselor. And is that a picture of Beck Dunn and Lynn Rosenthal?

I want to shout from the rooftops what it meant – and still means – to women and children in Gadsden County that Reverend Dyer and the First Presbyterian Church in Quincy stood with us to launch our Quincy Counseling Office in 1997. And the



Perry Women's Club and Vogue 13 who said "we must" and so we opened our second emergency shelter in Perry in 1999.

I've been reading the names of each and every friend who supported Kelly Otte's mission and Karen Wendland's plan for our new emergency shelter and child care center, opened in 2002. Today, we have the wonderful "Bass-Watts-Akinyemi" team who are working with such vision to build our new transitional living community.

I hope to see each and every one of you at our February 15th Celebration. Let's continue to make history, and save lives together for another 30 years and beyond!



Meg Baldwin  
Executive Director



**Refuge House**

*Saving Lives, Building Hope, Ending Violence!*

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**Apalachicola**  
850-653-3313

**Crawfordville**  
850-926-9005

**Tallahassee**  
850-922-6062

**Madison**  
850-973-4144

**Monticello**  
850-342-3518

**Perry**  
850-584-8808

**Quincy**  
850-627-9377

24 Hour Crisis Line 850-681-2111 Local or 800-500-1119 Toll Free



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