

Thank  
You

*The Refuge is so thankful for all of our donors and volunteers. We truly could not serve victims of domestic violence and sexual assault without your support. Thank you so much for making a difference in the lives of our clients.*



**The Refuge Domestic Violence Shelter**  
PO Box 853  
Vidalia, GA 30475  
912-538-9935



Serving Toombs, Montgomery, Emanuel, Treutlen and Wheeler counties  
Refuge Sexual Assault Center also serves Candler and Tattnall counties

ISSUE

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# The Refuge

Domestic Violence Shelter

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## From the Executive Director's Desk

Betty Dell Williams

I hope you all had a wonderful Easter and were able to spend some time with your friends and family. Last year, at this time, we were all still trying to adjust to life in a post Covid world and most of us did not have the opportunity to see our families and celebrate together. Our clients were blessed this year with a special visit from some very giving people who wanted to make Easter special for them, and they all had a wonderful time, as I hope each of you did. Oftentimes, I am reminded that it is easy to go about our daily lives without thinking about domestic violence. It is not something people readily talk about and the people who suffer from it are usually too afraid to tell anyone they need help. It is a hidden epidemic, and far more people are victims of abuse than you could imagine. As we always say, there are no social, racial, or financial barriers to domestic violence. It is an equal opportunity crime, and its victims suffer in silence. Our mission is to break the silence. The only way victims can get out of an abusive situation is to acknowledge the abuse and ask for help. That is why we spread awareness of domestic violence. That is why we ask you to let us come and speak at your workplace or to your church, club, or organization. We can even set up virtual meetings or trainings

can be so beneficial in helping spread our message. We want to let people know there is a way out and we have the staff, the support, and the information to help people get out of a violent situation. When you can, take a moment and look around your workplace, your church, your gym, or the places you shop. Chances are, you will see someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. It is all around us and its victim could be your next-door neighbor, a relative, coworker or even a close friend. Don't assume you would be able to tell someone needs help just by looking at them or even by spending time with them. Victims become very good at hiding the truth because they do it to survive. Oftentimes they know if they tell others about the abuse, it could mean death or a severe beating for them or a family member and it could lead to the loss of their children. Leaving an abusive relationship is exceedingly difficult and very dangerous. So, once again, I ask you to help us spread awareness of this terrible crime and to help us let victims know that we are here for them and we are waiting with open arms to help them navigate their way out of the mine fields of abuse. Please call us at 912-538-9936 to schedule a speaker or to ask questions. God bless you all.

**"When it comes to abuse, you believe there's no way out. There is always help. There is always a way out." — Rev. Donna Mulvey**

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## IN HER OWN WORDS

I can't sleep. You would think by now, after all this, things would be different. More holes, broken televisions, and a knot on the back of my head as usual. It has been so many times I wanted to just go out and buy a gun and shoot him. He knows I'm defenseless. I have gotten so used to just putting my head down and letting him beat me. I can't even find a way to look up and try to fight back. It's like a reaction. I wish I had someone to talk to, someone who would understand, but I'm so afraid that someone will say you don't deserve that, why are you still there, you know it isn't gonna stop, and me sit there and not give them an answer. It's crazy, but I have stayed in the kind of relationship that I said I would never settle for, but I'm one of those weak insecure girls who carry cause that's the only thing in her life she can control. I have prayed time and time again that God fixes this. I have followed my heart for years and never followed my mind. This time around it seems like it might have been different. Things were changing and looking up, but now only 7 months back into the relationship and the abuse is back in full effect. I've been hit twice this month alone and I know at this rate, it won't stop. I feel cornered, and at the sight of a raised hand I feel my knees buckle and my hands shake. "Here we go" is what my mind comes up with when I see him come my way with his fist balled and yet again, I put my head down and run away till I hear his footsteps. And I can hear every step when it's coming my way. It's like I'm in a silent room and each creak of a wood floor is letting me know to run. Sometimes it happens so slowly that it allows me time to say to myself, "fight, just fight back." But I shut down and I can't do it. Hurt takes over and rage just continues to have a back seat. 4 1/2 years of violence and we've only been together for 5, but I continue to stay. I never even told him about the short-term memory loss or how when my doctor read my CT scan, he said my brain was like I had been a running back. I never told him that I have early onset short term memory loss. Things like this are things I would never tell him. Why give him a reason to pity me.? It won't matter to him, anyway. He won't care. So many times I've called 911 in my head and dialed it on my phone, but I never hit send. Why would I do that to him? I tell myself that he would lose it all and that he has no one but me and every single time, I spare him. Now, when he raises his hand to me, he doesn't even know me anymore. He has permanently changed me. I called 911 once and they asked me to press charges. They told me if I didn't, that it would keep happening and they were right. Again, again and again. I guess I'm not allowed to be tired of getting beaten into migraines to where I can't sleep. I'm always considering what could happen to him even while I'm taking hit after hit. Is not being a statistic worth more than not being there to watch your child grow?

***The story above is a representation of what victims go through. People often wonder why a victim doesn't leave the relationship, thus ending the abuse. The truth is: it is much more complicated than that. There are so many factors at play and that is why the resources we provide are a necessity for victims of abuse. Please call us if you are a victim of domestic violence. We are always here for you and we can help.***

## Donors of Goods and Services January-March 2021

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Therese Standard from Toombs County High School is a longtime supporter of our shelter and she often encourages her students to get involved in our local community. She has brought her students to do special projects with our clients many times and this year was no exception. Therese brought three TCHS students to our shelter to bring some fun into the lives of our residents. They did an Easter egg hunt, made bracelets and necklaces, and colored with the kids. Everyone had such a great time, and all the children were gifted with an Easter basket filled with goodies. We are so grateful for our wonderful volunteers! If you would like to volunteer, please email us at [volunteer.refuge@gmail.com](mailto:volunteer.refuge@gmail.com).

We need to be asking:  
"WHY does he abuse her--  
why is he breaking the law?"

NOT:  
"Why doesn't she just leave?"

In 70-80% of  
**intimate partner  
homicides**, physical  
abuse occurred before  
the murder.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS  
THE FRONT LINE OF THE  
WAR AGAINST WOMEN

20  
people  
per minute are  
physically abused  
by an intimate  
partner

STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
CHOKING  
Hitting  
Slapping  
SPINNING  
KICKING  
SHOUTING  
Threatening  
ISOLATION  
STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
KICKING  
Abuse  
Denying Abuse  
BULLYING  
PARENTAL ALIENATION  
MENTAL ABUSE  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
SHOUTING  
Threatening  
TO "DESTROY YOU"