

Thank
You



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The Refuge is so thankful for all of our donors and volunteers. We truly could not serve victims of domestic violence 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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January-March
2020

The Refuge

Domestic Violence Shelter

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From the Executive Director's Desk

Betty Dell Williams

When we published our last newsletter, I never could have imagined how much life was about to change for us all. It has been an adjustment for everyone as we all go about our days trying to adjust to this strange season in our lives. Here at The Refuge, our work continues, as not even a pandemic can slow the force of domestic violence. We have made arrangements which help to keep our staff and residents safe from the virus as we continue to offer a safe and nurturing environment for those who suffer from domestic abuse. Unfortunately, whenever stress increases, incidents of violence also increase. So, that means in many cases, victims and their children are now forced to be quarantined with their abusers as stress from job loss, homeschooling children and economic uncertainty continues to grow. This makes for a very volatile situation as normal interactions with the outside world are significantly decreased. We want victims to know that help is still available and we encourage

anyone who needs help or has questions to please call us at 912-538-9936. We will continue to be here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to serve those who need help. I also want to remind you that April is designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We normally have community events in April to spread awareness, but due to the quarantine, we were not able to do that this year. However, sexual assault continues to be a huge problem in our society, and we will continue to offer help to victims at our Refuge Sexual Assault Center. We offer many resources, including a support group for victims and their families. Currently, we are unable to offer our weekly support group due to social distancing, but we have staff available to talk with you at any time of the day or night, so please do not hesitate to call. I encourage everyone to continue to work together to follow CDC guidelines and to stay safe. As always, thank you for your support and God bless you all.

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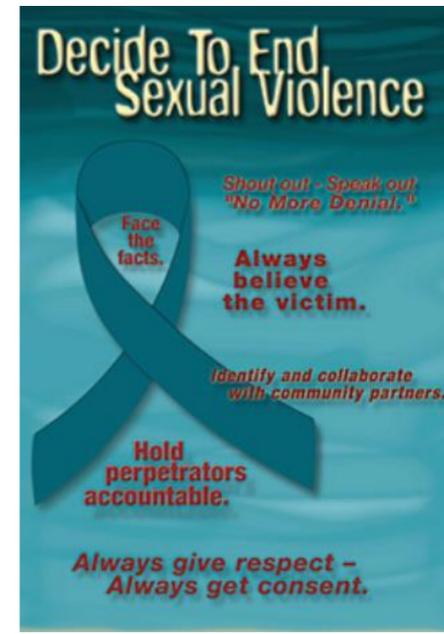
Monetary Donors January - March

- Bob Smith
- Calvary on Aimwell
- Cedar Crossing Baptist Church
- Juanita Boatwright
- Lyons First Baptist Church
- McGregor Presbyterian Church
- Millie Perry
- MRMC Auxiliary
- Mt. Moriah Methodist Church
- Network for Good
- Open Arms Academy
- Pearson's Chapel Church
- Toombs Victims Assistance
- Vidalia Church of God
- Vidalia First United Methodist Church



A SURVIVOR'S STORY

When Jennifer first met her abuser, she thought he was a wonderful man and he treated her very well. She believed he would make an excellent husband and eventually, a wonderful father. Unfortunately, this was not the case. After they were married, Jennifer discovered that her husband had served ten years in prison for aggravated assault against numerous victims. This greatly disturbed her, but she believed he was a better man and that their love had truly changed him. For a while, they were happy, but her happiness slowly turned to horror. Jennifer had been sexually abused from her earliest memory, so she was familiar with being treated badly and began to think it was just a part of life. Her husband first began to isolate her from her family and friends. He did not want her to leave the house to even go to the grocery store. She had a good job and he allowed her to keep it but constantly harassed her at work, wanting to know what she was doing every second of every day. When she got home, he would check her phone to see if she had talked to anyone and he would stalk her, showing up to check on her and see where she went. He constantly accused her of cheating on him and told her she was trash and he was the only person who would ever love someone like her. Over the years, they had three daughters and the abuse worsened. One night, he knocked her to the floor in their kitchen. She was stunned and devastated, but he told her he was sorry and would never do it again and she believed him. He became addicted to meth and almost choked her to death while admitting to having numerous affairs. The stalking and physical abuse escalated along with the drug abuse. He would punch her in the face repeatedly, giving her black eyes that she had to explain to her co-workers by coming up with stories and telling them she was just clumsy. He continued to call her at work and come to her place of employment so often that she was finally forced to quit her job. This caused more problems, as she was now unable to bring in a paycheck and her husband blamed her for their lack of funds. He was angry about this and he elbowed her in the head until she blacked out. He was constantly encouraging her to try meth and she always refused. He repeatedly beat her in the head until she could no longer see for a time. This terrified her and she finally tried the drug. She immediately became addicted to it and this took a terrible toll on her and her three girls. Finally, she could no longer take the abuse and believed if she didn't get help, her husband would kill her. She was terrified to leave but felt she had no choice. She could no longer bear to bring her children up in a household full of rage, physical and mental torture and drug abuse. She heard about The Refuge and called us for help. We encouraged her to come into shelter so she and the girls would be safe and well cared for. When Jennifer entered the shelter, she was highly addicted to meth. She knew she could not stay at the shelter and do drugs and she also knew she could lose custody of her children. She decided to never use drugs again. As you can imagine, this was extremely difficult. Not only was she suffering withdrawal from drug addiction, but she was living in a strange place and raising three children on her own. We supported and encouraged her and helped her every way we could. She worked very hard and was determined to get her life in order with our help. As she went through all the new adjustments, she was very emotional and cried a lot and suffered greatly with the symptoms that came from her decision to stop using drugs. When she would feel like giving up, she would talk to our advocates who encouraged her and gave her time to heal. Jennifer is now out of our shelter and is living on her own with her three girls. She moved to another city to make a fresh start and now has a great job, and a three-bedroom home that she loves. She visited a doctor recently who told her it was impossible for her to come off meth on her own without medical intervention, but she was determined to do it and she did. Her girls love their new school and they have all made new friends and have found a wonderful church family who has embraced them. Jennifer is no longer a victim. She is a survivor!



APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Sometimes when people hear about preventing sexual assault, harassment, and abuse, they think about ways they can keep themselves safe. Prevention means much more than protecting ourselves, not to mention many factors that impact our safety are beyond our individual control. Stopping these types of violence before they happen requires us to work together to support healthy, safe, and respectful behaviors and environments.

What You Can Do

Improve skills around asking for consent and respecting the answer, challenge jokes that demean others, and maintain and model healthy relationships. • Encourage children to respect others' boundaries and bodies, challenge unfair gender stereotypes, and treat others with respect. • Improve policies and practices within faith communities, community organizations, workplaces, and schools to ensure everyone is treated fairly. We can take these steps and more to work towards a safer and more equal world for future generations.

Donors of Goods and Services January-March 2020

Affinis Hospice-Ashley Richardson
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Alyso Alligood
Ameris Bank-Vidalia
Anna Claxton
Bailey Brooks
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Beverly Cherry
Breanne Morris
Caritia Birkheimer
Dale Edwards
Dawn Owens-The Family of Gina Encinias
Deanna Weeks
Elaine and Charles Mercer
Summer Behar
Supreme Beauty Supply
Tiffany Gibbs
Toombs County Family Connection
VHS National Honor Society

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Ruth Hochstetler
Smith's Fried Chicken
Southern Fields-Shirley McCord
Wrella Purser
Thriftway Galaxy Food Store of Lyons
Vance Rhodes
David Conner

Refuge Needs List

Dishwashing Detergent
 Aluminum Foil, Plastic Wrap, Plastic Bags
 Paper Towels
 Toilet Tissue
 Hand Soap
 Cleaning Supplies
 Clothes Detergent
 Fabric Softener
 White Towels
 Twin White Sheet Sets
 Diapers
 Pull-Ups
 Baby Wipes
 Baby Shampoo
 Baby Lotion
 Baby Powder
 New Ladies and Children's Underclothes
 Socks (all sizes-children and adults)
 Brushes and Combs
 Baby Monitors
 Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
 Shampoo and Conditioner
 Feminine Products
 Bath Soap
 Deodorant
 First Aid Supplies (Band-Aids, Neosporin, Aspirin, Alcohol, Q-Tips, Gloves, etc.)
 Alarm Clocks
 Ladies and Children's Sleepwear and Robes
 Lysol and Lysol Wipes
 Port-a-Cribs
 Wal-Mart Gift Cards (for specific client needs)