

— Celebrating 38 Years —



Rebuilding Lives

Beyond Domestic Violence

Special Edition, Winter 2015

A Thank You from the Center For Hope And Safety - Capital Campaign Reaches \$2 Million Goal!

Step inside the doors at 12 Overlook Avenue in Rochelle Park and discover the heartbeat of a newly named and newly re-energized agency. See what your contributions to the Capital Campaign – **Building for the Future: Safety, Strength and Hope** – have made possible.

launch of the Capital Campaign in 2013 ... a vision now realized.

We are thrilled to report that we closed out the year 2014 with another epic event—reaching and exceeding our Capital Campaign goal of \$2 million! Again, it is thanks to you, our friends and steadfast supporters (See the letter from Campaign Co-Chairs on page 2 and the donor list on page 3).

By any measure, 2014 proved to be an epic year for the agency founded in 1976 as Shelter Our Sisters. We changed our name; we are now the Center For Hope And Safety. And—thanks to your generosity—we have gathered all of our non-emergency programs and services together under one roof for the first time in our history.

Both the name change and the move into our Community Program Center reflect how the organization has evolved and grown over the years into a comprehensive social services agency, saving lives and rebuilding lives beset and besieged by domestic violence.

Once scattered in several locations throughout Bergen County, we're now settling into our new Rochelle Park headquarters while our emergency shelter continues to be a hub of vital activity in its confidential location. Finding a community building, buying it, renovating it, and moving in represent the realization of a vision articulated several years ago by the Board of Trustees in its strategic planning ... a vision brought to life with the



Today the building is realizing its potential in ways we wouldn't have anticipated. Last October, for example, we hosted a roundtable of top leaders in the New Jersey Legislature, who came to listen and learn about domestic violence issues from staff, volunteers, and clients (see the story on page 2).

We have invited local community and civic groups to tour the building and use our conference rooms for their own meetings, forging partnerships along the way. The Center also served as a focal point for an 8-week seminar-webinar series on parenting skills. In the near future are yoga classes, discussions on making healthier food choices, free legal consultations, and work-readiness training on agency "client" computers as well as meetings for immigrant

victims of domestic violence to share information on issues and options available.

Most important, the community center is doing what it was intended to do in its day-to-day operations —putting our programs in a position to draw upon their collective strengths, Continued on page 3



The new building has proved to be a focal point for activities we hadn't anticipated.

(l) Agency staff met with (l to r) Sen. Bob Gordon, Asw. Valerie Vanieri Huttle, State Sens. Loretta Weinberg and Stephen Sweeney to discuss issues DV survivors face.

(r) Holiday donation preparations took place in the new facility. (l to r) Leo McGuire, Hopes and Dreams Foundation, with Marta Levy and Lil Corcoran, agency resident elves.



A Letter from the Capital Campaign Co-Chairs

Thank you, friends, for helping turn a dream into a dream come true.

When we launched a Capital Campaign nearly 2 years ago, our theme was *Building for the Future: Safety, Strength and Hope*. Our goal: to raise enough money to fund the purchase and renovation of a building in Rochelle Park, desperately needed to bring together a wide variety of programs and services for families affected by domestic violence.

It was the first Capital Campaign in the 38-year history of the agency founded as Shelter Our Sisters, and it was—and is—about so much more than a building.

From our early days of literally offering a roof and a bed to women and children in crisis, the organization has grown, evolved, and expanded to include legal advocacy, housing assistance, job readiness training, personal mentoring, parent support groups, multicultural community outreach, and therapeutic interventions for children, among a host of other initiatives—all dedicated to saving lives and rebuilding lives beyond domestic violence.

Along the way, the need for our services clearly outgrew the capacity of our facilities. And so we came to you, our friends and supporters, and asked you to help us fulfill the vision of a strategic plan. And you responded, as you have time and time again over the years, with thoughtfulness and generosity.

At every milestone, you have been there to support us ... at the groundbreaking in the hollowed-out shell of a building in the Fall of

2013 ... at the “housewarming” event at the facility this past June shortly after we moved in... and at the formal dedication ceremony for the Community Program Center in October.

We began the year as Shelter Our Sisters and ended it as the Center For Hope And Safety, a name that reflects the broadening scope of our mission. And, thanks to your generosity, we began the year with momentum on the Capital Campaign and finished the year with a flourish, exceeding our goal of \$2 million in mid-December. A most generous gift from a local charitable foundation provided the final, powerful boost that put us up and over the top.

This special issue of the Center For Hope And Safety newsletter is dedicated to you, the donors. We hope you'll enjoy reading about the many ways in which your dollars are making a difference, in the day-to-day work of the professionals and volunteers who are the lifeblood of this agency and in the lives of the people they touch.

The urgency of the agency's work in the community is greater than ever. The need does not diminish. But we have made significant progress and achieved momentous changes. And we look to the future with renewed energy and strong resolve.

On behalf of the Center For Hope And Safety Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers—and most especially our clients—thank you.

Anita Allen *Bill & Maryon Meyerson*

Top State Legislators Visit Center For Hope And Safety —To Listen And Learn

It's not every day that victims of domestic violence get a chance to speak to lawmakers directly about the challenges they face in their struggle for independence.

But several of our clients got just that opportunity late in October, in large part because of the reputation of the Center For Hope And Safety.

“I got a call from State Senate President Stephen Sweeney's office asking us to host a roundtable discussion with clients, as well as agency staff, volunteers, and representatives of other county domestic violence services,” said Elaine K. Meyerson, Executive Director. “The goal was to better understand what may be needed from the state to help victims get back on their feet.”

The meeting, in Rochelle Park, attended by Senator Sweeney, Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel, and Senator Bob Gordon, was particularly timely. October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Center was celebrating its new name and headquarters. And the nation was in the grips of the abuse scandal that had erupted in the National Football League. It is also noteworthy that lawmakers were specifically concerned about Bergen County. Although it is a generally affluent area, domestic violence crosses all demographic categories. The 2012 NJ State Police

Uniform Crime Report documents over 4,000 domestic violence-related calls in Bergen County.

At the meeting, victims spoke of key challenges, including recurring homelessness, the need to find child care while looking for work, and the difficulties of dealing with government bureaucracies and the court system. “There's no quick band-aid to this enormous problem,” noted Meyerson. “But the roundtable discussion put human faces on domestic violence and raised a lot of awareness about what needs to be fixed.” The event drew coverage from a number of regional media outlets, including newspapers, television stations, and radio.

We would like to thank the following businesses for their help in making our move a reality:

Bilow Garrett Group, Architects & Planners, PC
Law firm of Rubenstein, Meyerson, Fox,
Mancinelli, Conte & Bern, P.A.
Ridgewood Moving Services
Ruotolo Associates, Inc., Philanthropic Counsel
TD Bank Employee Volunteers

A Thank You from the Center For Hope And Safety Continued from page 1

improve our efficiencies, and become more visible and accessible to people who need our help. All of this is provided in a setting that ensures privacy and confidentiality, encourages collaboration among programs, and provides ample room for a wide variety of individual and group therapy, counseling, or training sessions.

The impact of the new Community Program Center is best conveyed in the words of those who “live” there, day to day.

Susan Bertolotti, MA **Director of Project CHILD**

“The new building has provided Project CHILD with ample space to accommodate our clients. The waiting room is bigger, and the therapy offices are larger. We now have sufficient space for children’s therapy groups and parent groups as well as individual therapy appointments.”

Irena Dimitroski

Director, Follow-Up Services

“In November we provided 120 families with Thanksgiving holiday dinners. The clients were grateful to receive the turkey and a bag of food, and some of them were excited to see the new building since this was their first time visiting. In December we were able to use the community service room to provide holiday gifts for over 200 families.

Mary Ann Ploppert

Director, Transitional Housing Program

“I have had clients tell me that they feel more comfortable coming to this building which they have described as a professional and peaceful facility. They said that in the past, having to go to the emergency shelter to meet me made them sad because they remembered how bad they felt at the time they first came there for shelter.”

At Work In the Community

An immigrant woman obtained a restraining order against her abuser but lost custody of her two children due to a distorted account of an incident between her and the children’s father during a visitation. Distraught over losing custody and unable to secure an attorney, her life came to a screeching halt. She turned to the Center For Hope And Safety for help. “We were instrumental in offering her information on her legal options, providing an attorney, and supporting her throughout the process,” said Vidalia Acevedo, Director of Outreach and Multicultural Services. “She ultimately was able to regain custody of her children, continues to access support, and has resumed her studies in ESL and GED, which will help her to become self-sufficient.”

Acknowledging Our Capital Campaign Donors

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, staff, and clients, we would like to extend a **heartfelt thank you** to the following benefactors who helped make our Center a reality (Please note: there are many others who donated but did not wish to have their name published.)

\$100,000 and Up

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**12 OVERLOOK AVE, SUITE A
ROCHELLE PARK, NJ 07662**

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Jean Kirch

Newsletter

Editors and Writers

Cammy Bourcier

Jeffrey Forster

Jean Kirch

Elaine K. Meyerson

HOW TO REACH US:

Administrative Office: 201-498-9247 n 12 Overlook Ave., Ste. A n Rochelle Park, NJ 07662

Elaine K. Meyerson, Executive Director n **Jean Kirch**, Director of Development

Shelter Program Office: 201-836-1075 n **24-Hour Hotline:** 201-944-9600

email: info@hopeandsafetynj.org n **Website:** www.hopeandsafetynj.org

~~ ~~ **SAVE THESE DATES!** ~~ ~~

**Monday, April 13, 2015
Annual Gala**

**The Venetian
Garfield, NJ**

Our Annual Gala is our largest fundraiser and community relations event. We hope you will join us in making this year's Gala a tremendous success.

You can promote your business to the community by donating a gift or gift certificate to our Silent Auction, advertising in our Gala Journal, or being a Sponsor.

Attend the Gala to enjoy a cocktail hour, dinner, Silent Auction and great conversation. Know that the funds received from this event will help change the lives of women and children in our community.

**Friday, March 13, 2015
Empowering Yourself to
Create Your Ideal Career
Webinar**

12:30 - 1:30

Join Certified Life Purpose and Career Coach, **Maggie Mistal**, in a few exercises which will give you an introduction to the tools used in her Soul Search, Research and Job Search process. Participants will be enabled and empowered to change their lives through creating their ideal careers. CNN has dubbed Maggie as "one of the nation's best known career coaches."

If you're not doing work you love; if you're unsure of your next move—you don't want to miss this webinar.

**1st Tuesday of Each Month
Tours of Our New
Community Center**

12:30 - 1:30

You've read all about our new facility, but we would love for you to come and see it for yourself. The tours are informal and last approximately a half hour. You will be able to meet and talk with the staff and get a better understanding of our community service programs.

For more information and to register for the above events, visit our website www.hopeandsafetynj.org or contact Jean Kirch, Director of Development at 201-498-9247 or jean@hopeandsafetynj.org