

safety  
strength  
& hope  
for victims of domestic violence

Spring 2014

## Exciting Times! A New Year, A New Home, A New Direction

Shelter Our Sisters is on the move in 2014, a year to be marked by several memorable milestones. For the first time in our 38-year history, we are gathering all non-emergency services under one roof. (The emergency shelter and transitional housing will not be moved.)

And, we have embarked on a Capital Campaign, *Building for the Future: Safety, Strength and Hope*, to help us respond to the growing number of people who need our help. “Quite simply, the demand for our services has outgrown the capacity of our facilities,” said Executive Director Elaine K. Meyerson.

Our new Community Program Center at 12 Overlook Avenue in Rochelle Park, was purchased last year. The Center will serve as a critically needed hub for community outreach, multicultural services, transitional housing office, and Project CHILD, our creative arts therapy program for children. In addition, our administrative offices will be headquartered there, as will community education activities, services for abused elderly and disabled persons, and the follow-up program for former clients.

The renovation/reconstruction crews started hammering away last Fall. As of early March, the move into our new quarters will begin, with the goal of getting all settled in by the end of April. Previously, non-emergency programs were scattered among 4 communities in Bergen County, with some of them housed inside the emergency shelter because there was no room elsewhere.

“We need to consolidate all of our non-emergency programs at an independent location,” said Meyerson, “not only to ensure confidentiality and security at the shelter but also to serve the broader community more effectively—and more visibly. We will now have a centralized, community-facing focal point reaching out to all of Bergen County. And we’ll be strategically positioned to help more women, children, and others affected by domestic violence, not only those who need immediate shelter.”

The new building is a direct reflection of SOS’ evolution over the past four decades, from a place that offered safe haven in the moment of crisis to a comprehensive social services agency—providing a spectrum of services to help victims of domestic violence not only find safety and security but also gain the confidence and build the skills to begin a new, independent life free of abuse.

### *Capital Campaign Under Way*

Raising the funds needed to buy the building and do all the interior renovations is the challenge facing our *Building for the Future* Capital Campaign.

The campaign went public in October 2013 with a “groundbreaking” ceremony on site in the thoroughly gutted ground floor. Our goal is \$2 million, and by mid-January we had raised more than \$1.4 million, or more than 73% of the total, including over \$900,000 in individual donations and pledges and \$550,000 in grants, including a \$400,000 grant from the

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### **We have a New Address!**

In April our new address will be:

12 Overlook Dr.  
Rochelle Park, NJ

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## A Letter from the President of the Board

### *Some Day, No More Violence, No More Vigils*

Just a few short months ago, we gathered at the Shelter Our Sisters “Pathway to Self-Sufficiency” in Van Saun County Park to honor and remember three women and one little girl whose lives were taken in their own homes. Murdered by someone they once loved . . . the most extreme act of domestic violence.

Relatives and friends attending the candlelight vigil spoke with sadness and remorse. “If only I had said . . .” “If only we did . . .” *Indeed*, if only. If only the victims had known to call Shelter Our Sisters for help.

As more than a hundred hopeful candles flickered in a cold December night, the vigil offered a somber reminder that domestic violence happens here in Bergen County, to people of any age who could be living anywhere among us. Indeed, one of the victims we honored at the vigil was a young woman who lived just a few blocks from my home.

As I move into a new role as President of the SOS Board of Trustees, after seven years as a board member, I recognize that the need for our services has never been greater. At the same time, it has become abundantly clear that we need to raise awareness throughout the community that we provide so much more than emergency shelter.

In 2014, Shelter Our Sisters provides a wide range of services for people suffering from domestic violence, many of whom don’t need immediate shelter but do need help— legal advocacy, assistance with housing options, a helping hand financially, educational guidance and

tutoring. Our new Community Program Center in Rochelle Park, supported by our *Building for the Future* Capital Campaign, will enable us to showcase the services that previously were scattered among several communities in Bergen County, some of them in confidential locations. It is my hope that having a visible presence in the community will make it easier for victims, their friends and relatives, to reach out to us sooner rather than later.



Over the past 38 years, SOS has “saved” thousands of women and children who are no longer victims but survivors. They are educated, empowered, and self-sufficient. We have been able to save lives and empower lives because of friends in the community who generously support our efforts. We will be thanking and honoring many of those friends at our Annual Gala on Monday, April 7 at the Venetian in Garfield, NJ. I hope to see you there and to thank you in person.

Our ultimate goal is no more victims, no more need for candlelight vigils. Until then, we work tirelessly to offer help and hope in equal measure. Come. Find us.

**SUSAN O'DWYER, President, Board of Trustees**

## Honoring Two Advocates, True Advocates

Elaine and Larry Meyerson were among those honored in late 2013 with the coveted Ann Klein Advocate Award given annually by the Community Health Law Project (CHLP), a statewide nonprofit advocacy and legal services organization for individuals with special needs. The awards are named for Ann Klein, a former New Jersey Commissioner of Human Services, who created a system that emphasized community-based care and client dignity for people with physical and mental disabilities.

Recognized for their individual achievements and contributions, Elaine and Larry are the first couple ever honored by the CHLP. Larry, an attorney in Montvale, NJ and a borough councilman in Hillsdale, was lauded for his expert work with vulnerable adults in the field of elder law and for the strength of his public voice on behalf of special needs individuals. Elaine was honored for her long-time commitment to people with developmental disabilities and her more than 27 years as Executive Director of Shelter Our Sisters, where she has pioneered, expanded, and strengthened programs and services for families affected by domestic violence. Elaine is active on many state and local human services committees and coalitions, having served as President and board member of the NJ State Coalition of

Battered Women and former Chairperson and member of Bergen County’s Human Services Advisory Committee.



Richard Trenk, Board President, Community Health Law Project, presented Larry and Elaine Meyerson with the Ann Klein Advocate Award.

“Exciting Times! ... Continued from page 1

Bergen County Division of Community Development.

“We are embarking on the most significant journey of growth since SOS was founded,” noted the Capital Campaign Co-Chairs, Bill and Maryrose McNerney and Anita Allen, Past President of the SOS Board of Trustees. “We cannot carry out our vital mission of saving lives and rebuilding lives while facing a critical shortage of space and facilities. The Community Program Center is essential to meeting the needs of domestic violence victims and will provide an environment that is inviting, safe, and efficient for delivery of services.”

*Why a New Building Is Needed*

The need for more space has become increasingly more urgent in recent years. For example, Project CHILD—which offers therapy to children who have witnessed or directly experienced domestic violence—has a waiting list, and the size of adult therapy groups is limited. In addition, using the emergency shelter for some counseling

programs has made it a challenge to ensure privacy; for example, staff members have to vacate their offices when an officemate is conducting confidential conversations. In addition, managing services in four different towns is burdensome and inefficient and doesn't present a unified presence to the community.

***Making Your Donation to the Capital Campaign***

Contributions to the Capital Campaign, *Building for the Future: Safety, Strength and Hope* are tax-deductible, as allowable by law. We invite donors to make pledges payable over 1 to 3 years.

Acceptable contributions include cash, check, or credit card payments; publicly traded securities; gifts of insurance; and corporate matching gifts. Please consider naming opportunities, which are available for specific areas, counseling rooms, and offices. For tours and further information contact Jean Kirch, Director of Development, at 201-498-9247, extension 301.

The new building will enable us to:

- Create additional space for Project CHILD's therapy programs.
- Expand our outreach services—legal advocacy, financial assistance, help with housing and educational needs—to women and children who don't require

emergency shelter but do need help.

- Provide sufficient space for counseling rooms to ensure privacy and confidentiality for clients.
- Allow for larger group therapy sessions.
- Provide appropriate settings for women's and parent's support groups.
- Establish a computer hub for client job readiness initiatives.
- Increase the overall efficiency of service delivery.

In addition to the co-chairs, members of the *Building for the Future* Campaign Committee include Honorable Rose M. Heck, Jean Kirch, Elaine K. Meyerson, Flora Perskie, Ruth Seitelman, Denise Spell, Gail Steinel, and Roberta Stern.

Denise Spell, a former client and now a long-time SOS Trustee, summed it up well: “The opening of this new Center will give women a safe and supportive space to come for counseling, training, or just for quietude, as they take positive steps toward their personal goals and growth.”



Ruth Seitelman, Immediate Past President, SOS Board, Elaine K. Meyerson, Anita L. Allen, Capital Campaign Co-Chair, Kathleen Donovan, County Executive and Senator Gerald Cardinale attended groundbreaking and the “kick off” of the public phase of the Capital Campaign at the new building.



Pictured above (left) is a small conference room and a kitchenette (right) for staff and clients. Additionally on the first floor of the new building, will be housed Project CHILD, Community Outreach and Transitional Housing Programs. Besides the staffs' offices there will be private counseling offices, a computer hub for clients to do research, resumes, etc., art/music therapy rooms, waiting rooms and a small storage area which will also house the kiln used by Project CHILD. At the administrative offices will be on the second floor of the building.

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# Shelter ourSisters

## Raising Awareness

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On December 4th, members of Shelter Our Sisters, local officials, and families and friends of victims of domestic violence gathered together for a candlelight vigil to remember the three women and a young girl killed this past year in Bergen County. The evening of remembrance was held at Shelter Our Sisters "Pathway to Self-Sufficiency" in Van Saun Park. The group mourned those who had died from domestic violence, and reaffirmed their commitment to end abuse and violence. After the lighting of the candles, listening to speeches and singing songs, the participants walked the SOS Pathway, reading the inscriptions on the bricks.

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SOS hosted "cottage parties" this past year at the homes of Maryrose and William McInerney, Patti and Amin Jalal, and Katherine and Jim Dronzek to raise awareness about Shelter Our Sisters Capital Campaign. Christoph Grieder, Project CHILD Music Therapist/Clinical Supervisor, (on the left) explained to family and friends how art and music helps children heal from their experience of domestic violence. Denise Spell, SOS Trustee, (on the right) explains to one of the guests the various programs that Shelter Our Sisters offers. If you would like to host a "cottage party," please contact Jean Kirch, Director of Development, at 201-498-9247

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This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Bergen County Clothesline Project. This project of T-shirts was held on the "green" across from the Bergen County Courthouse in Hackensack (pictured on left). Victims of abuse make T-shirts which gives them a medium to speak up and speak out about violence. This year 1,800 T-shirts were on display.

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During Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October), Shelter Our Sisters (SOS) "Baring Our Soles" art-exhibit was on display at 13 local libraries and the County office in Hackensack (Pictured on right). This exhibit showcases ornately designed footwear created by clients in the SOS Art-Therapy program. They are an expression of the journey that survivors take as they work through their trauma toward a more optimistic future.

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## Acknowledging Our Community Partners



Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Teaneck collected holiday gifts for our clients. Pictured are: H. Mehta, B. Preziosi, M. Bryant, Dr. L. Small, Principal; R. Kiem, Asst Principal, B. Ball, J. Johnson and C. Hollis.



Girl Scout Troop 111, River Edge area, collected toiletries. Making the delivery are (l to r) Kyra Mackesy, Danielle Venino, Olivia Pohl, Allison Lee and Morgan Kennedy.



Jaguar Land Rover North America, LLC sold raffle tickets and donated some of the proceeds to SOS. Pictured (l to r) Steph Stephenson, Iman Mak and Jean Kirch, SOS Director of Development.



You're So Invited! LLC, Westwood held a shopping night to benefit SOS. Pictured (l to r) Linda Del Santo, Elaine K. Meyerson and Sharon Aach.



Jane Cosmetics provided the SOS residents with a head to toe makeover including clothes from Spiegel. Lynn Tilton, owner of these companies, provided this very special treat to the women.



Barry Wilkes, Paul Cobelli, and Rebecca Vella, employees of TD Bank N.A., Rutherford, helped paint the admin offices at the new office building in Rochelle Park.



The Fair Lawn Old Library Theater group presented The Vagina Monologues in February to benefit SOS.



Westwood Schools held a "heART" fundraiser to benefit SOS by selling students' artwork. Jeff Forster, SOS Trustee learns about the artists from Pamela Duffus, Art Teacher/Project Coordinator.



Ilene Kim of Princess Nails, Ho-Ho-Kus, presented Elaine K. Meyerson with a check from their fundraiser held during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October).

## Acknowledging Our Community Partners

In addition to government support and individual donations, Shelter Our Sisters depends on private grant funding to sustain our many life-saving programs and services. SOS is pleased to announce the following corporate grant funding that we have received since August 1, 2013:

- Avon Foundation awarded \$4,000 for the Transitional Housing Program;
- BJ's Charitable Foundation awarded \$5,000 for the Project Self-Sufficiency Program;
- Church of Atonement awarded \$1,100 for the Transitional Housing Program;
- CME Group Community Foundation awarded \$5,000 for the the Children's Program;
- Lillian P. Schenck Fund awarded \$10,000 for the Transitional Housing Program;
- Ms. Molly Foundation awarded \$475 for the Emergency Shelter Program;
- Nordstrom Inc. awarded \$8,500 for the Children's Program;
- PNC Foundation awarded \$6,000 for the Project CHILD Program;
- Wells Fargo Foundation awarded \$1,000 for the Emergency Shelter Program.

OritaniBank Charitable Foundation awarded SOS with a grant for its Children's Program in November. Oritani Bank established the OritaniBank Charitable Foundation in 2007 to assist not-for-profit organizations that help to improve the quality of life for area residents. "We have supported Shelter Our Sisters for many years now because we believe the organization performs an invaluable service by protecting vulnerable children," said Kevin J. Lynch, President of the OritaniBank Charitable Foundation and Chairman, President, and CEO of Oritani Bank. "More than 150 children a year are involved in the program, and with the help of SOS they can begin to repair their lives after the impact of domestic violence." Pictured below are: Kevin J. Lynch, Elaine K. Meyerson and William McInerney, SOS Trustee.



**Helping Hands** *Thank you!* SOS receives many generous donations from local and corporate businesses, organizations and individuals. Although we cannot list each important donor, in addition to the grantors listed on this page, the following are significant contributions from August 1, 2013 through February 1, 2014.

### \$10,000 and above

Anita Allen  
Anonymous  
Inserra Shop-Rite Supermarkets  
Maryrose and Bill McInerney  
Susan and John O'Dwyer  
Flora and David Perskie  
Gail Steinel  
Lori Stratton  
The American Gift Fund  
United Way of Bergen Cty.

Carmela and Jim Lawrence  
Carol and Thomas Martin  
Cathy Martinson and Susan Tobin  
Linda Mohr  
Moms In Motion Bergen County  
Montclair High School  
Stefanie and Mohan Nair  
Old Paramus Reformed Church  
Pascack Valley High School  
Laurie and John Plunkett  
RealSource Association of Realtors

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous  
Judy and Mark Buono  
Central Unitarian Church,  
Women's Alliance  
Nancy Corcoran-Davidoff & Barry Davidoff  
Fran and Mike Grabow  
Gail Keppler  
Phyllis and Mark Kessler  
Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC  
NJ Coalition for Battered Women  
Ruth and Paul Seitelman  
Ann Marie Snyder

Ridgewood Moving Services  
Marilyn Sandler  
Amy Schmidt  
Denise Spell  
Paula and Alvin Star  
Barbara and Robert Stillwell  
Sunovion  
Elissa and Constantino Suriano  
Waldwick Chamber of Commerce

### \$500-999

Lisbi & Karen Abraham  
Anonymous  
Anne and William Baretz  
Janet Blaustein  
Jessica and Brian Carlin  
William and Lesley Collins  
Richard and Lynn Elinson  
Julie and Eric Epstein  
First Presbyterian Church, Ramsey  
First Presbyterian Church of Englewood  
Sandra and Allen Fleisig  
Carol Susan and Kenneth Forester  
Kathy and David Grubb  
Patricia Jensen  
Robert & Helen Joerger  
Lois & Raymond Kohan  
Bernadette and Jack McCarthy  
Brigid and Kevin O'Brien  
Princess Nails

### \$1,000-\$4,999

Beneflex, Inc.  
Benzel-Busch Motor Car Corp  
Csols, Inc  
Dwight-Englewood School  
Empire Beauty School  
First Presbyterian Church, Rutherford  
Jeffrey and Cynthia Forster  
Eva and Leo Gans  
Darlene and Tom Gesell  
Hackensack University Medical Center  
Leigh Hallingby  
Atina Harley-Boyce  
Karen and Gary Hediger  
Randy and Samuel Kettle  
Keystone Realty  
Jean and Chris Kirch  
Klaus Kretschmer  
Barbara and Michael Kurman

## Abuse and Neglect in Childhood Have Long-Lasting Impact on Health and Well-Being

People who experience abuse, neglect, and traumatic family dysfunction in childhood are at high risk for major illnesses, dangerous health behaviors, and poor quality of life when they become adolescents and adults. That's one of the central conclusions of the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente.

The ACE study, begun nearly 20 years ago and including more than 17,000 individuals, is one of the largest medical investigations ever to explore the links between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. Nearly two-thirds of the study participants reported at least one ACE, and more than 1 in 5 reported three or more ACE. The short- and long-term outcomes of these childhood exposures include a multitude of health and social problems.

Exposure to physical, emotional, sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; and household dysfunction (including domestic violence) resulted in higher rates of social, emotional, and cognitive impairment; alcoholism, depression, and suicide attempts; early onset of sexual activity and adoption of other health-risk behaviors; heart disease, lung disease, disability, and premature

death.

The study dramatically demonstrates how a child's exposure to domestic violence and other forms of abuse or neglect is a public health issue that lingers throughout life and calls for a public health response. For more information on the CDC's report, please go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/ace/>



### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*January 17, 2014 the Governor signed:*

**A2899/S1152** - Directs the Division on Women to conduct community safety and accountability audits of the coordination of community responses to domestic violence by law enforcement agencies and the court system.

**A3692/S2513** - Expands notification when an offender is released from custody or transferred within the criminal justice system to witnesses and other appropriate persons, upon registration with the automatic notification system.

**A735/S1438** - Change of School District due to Family Crisis - This law provides that if a child moves out of a school district as a result of domestic violence, sexual abuse or other family crisis, the child must have the option of remaining enrolled in that district until the end of the school year. The school district will be responsible for providing transportation services to the child. The State will be responsible for paying the cost of the transportation services.

Also effective on January 17, 2014, a joint Senate and Assembly Resolution designated February of each year as "Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month" in NJ.

*Are you an Amazon shopper? Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and sign in with your Amazon account information and select Shelter Our Sisters. When you make purchases, Amazon makes a donation to SOS. Please pass this on to family and friends. It's an easy way to give back.*



### Make Every Penny Count for SOS

Shelter Our Sisters is now a member of Boiling Springs Savings Bank's Community Alliance Program. The program gives our organization the opportunity to earn money based on the number of our supporters who bank with Boiling Springs and designate their account as a Shelter Our Sisters supporter. We will receive quarterly donations based upon the average balance of our supporter's designated accounts.

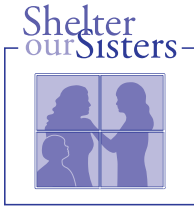
You can help us earn money by opening a new account or by designating an existing account as a Community Alliance participant. Rewards are based on the Average Daily Balance maintained by the members at the Annual Rate of 1/4% on Certificates of Deposit, including IRA CDs, Premium and Money Market Checking, and all Business Accounts or 1/2% on other Checking, Savings, and Money Market Savings Accounts. No monies are withdrawn from the donor's accounts and all donation dollars come directly from Boiling Springs. Boiling Springs will never divulge the identity of the account holder and participating in this program will never affect balance, interest rate or any other factor concerning your account.

Signing up is easy! For new and existing accounts you must complete the Community Alliance Banking Program Member Account form which you can get at the bank or online at <https://www.bssbank.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CAP-Supporter-Account-Form.pdf>.

**Save the Date: 17th Annual R.A.V.E. Walk**

**April 26, 2014**

Pascack Brook County Park,  
Westwood, New Jersey.



405 STATE STREET  
HACKENSACK, NJ 07601

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**Director of Development**

Jean Kirch

**Newsletter**

**Editors and Writers**

Jeffrey Forster

Jean Kirch

Elaine K. Meyerson

**HOW TO REACH US:**

**Administrative Office:** 201-498-9247 ▪ 405 State Street ▪ Hackensack, NJ 07601

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

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

**email:** [sos@shelteroursisters.org](mailto:sos@shelteroursisters.org) ▪ **Website:** [www.shelteroursisters.org](http://www.shelteroursisters.org)

*PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL GALA ON APRIL 7, 2014*



**Building for the Future**  
Safety, Strength and Hope

*You Are Cordially Invited to Our*

*Annual Gala*

*Monday, April 7, 2014*

The Venetian 546 River Street Garfield, NJ

Please Join Us and Our 2014 Distinguished Honorees

Bogota Savings Bank  
Judy and Mark Buono  
Teterboro Airport Community  
Jack Weldin  
Nina Wood



Kindly RSVP by April 1, 2014

6:00 pm Cocktails and Silent Auction 7:30 pm Dinner

\$160/person or *Introduce a Friend\** \$250 for you and your friend

\*Friend must not be on our mailing list and may not be your spouse. Call the Development Office at 201-498-9247 x301 to make this reservation.

