

Pathways

Issue 4, Spring 2005

Mission Statement

The mission of Stepping Stones, for women affected by domestic violence, N.F.P., a Christian-based organization, is to empower women who are victims of domestic violence to develop financial and emotional independence by providing them with a safe, nurturing environment.

Pebbles from the President

By Betty Wentland

We have all heard the phrase, "If life throws you lemons...make lemonade!" Stumbling and falling does not make you a failure. Failure is when you stay on the floor after you have fallen. Success comes from finding something while you are on the floor to pick up and carry away with you. The women who have sought assistance from Stepping Stones are by no means failures. Lemons have been thrown at them but they have selected to seek support during their tribulation. They are not sitting back and allowing Stepping Stones to carry them, but manage to pick up the pieces of their life and reconstruct a meaningful existence.

Our 2nd Annual Open Board Meeting was held in February. Preceding the meeting a Volunteer Dinner was held to thank all who give freely of their time and talents to help the families of Stepping Stones. Our new Vision Statement was presented at that time. It is as follows:

STEPPING STONES offers women and children of domestic violence the opportunity to grow towards independent living and self reliance by providing:

- trained mentors
- financial counseling and support
- a safe place to live
- spiritual care.

STEPPING STONES strives to achieve success in its program by:

- providing community awareness
- seeking financial support
- continuing partnership with Bridge Communities
- supporting Crisis Centers.

Our vision statement helps us to minister to our six families. By the end of 2005 we hope to serve a total of ten families. We need your help to provide rent and additional necessities for our ladies. Watch for news about our various fundraisers. Volunteer on one of our committees. Pray for women who are victims of domestic violence and suffer the indignities of abuse. Help us to be an integral step on the pathway to independence and empowerment for the women and children of Stepping Stones.

THE NEED

Stepping Stones suggests the following ways you can help. Donations of Walmart, Target, Jewel, Dominick's or gasoline gift cards. Please send these gifts to Stepping Stones, P.O. Box 721156, Roselle, IL 60172.

DONATION SITES

Should you have items that you wish to donate such as clothing, housewares or small furniture items that still help to indirectly benefit Stepping Stones, consider The Second Chance Resale Shop at 246 E. Geneva Road, Wheaton, IL 630/260-8855. Sharing Connection located at 5111 Chase Ave., Downers Grove, IL, 630/971-0565 is in need of furniture, appliances and mattresses.

A VOLUNTEER'S OBSERVATION

On February 15, 2005, Stepping Stones' Board of Directors held their second annual meeting. Volunteers were also invited and celebrated for their work. As a veteran of almost 30 years of Monday night Board meetings, it was a moving experience. I doubt that what I witnessed could be succinctly captured and effectively shared.

Be that as it may, there are three points I wish to share with all of you. Without question, divine intervention was at work, guiding in some fashion each

volunteer to this cause (and all are volunteers that support the mission of Stepping Stones). Every mentor spoke of how their lives have changed more so than the abused women and children they assist. The second point is how much this group has grown in one year and the vision they have for next year, almost all attributed to "networking".

The last is what astounded me most. There are literally hundreds of eligible clients in DuPage County to serve right now. Stepping Stones can handle a few more families but can't take them in. Not because of money, but because they have no mentors. If every one of

us took a few moments to "network" and reflect upon our friends and acquaintances, I bet we could come up with 50 potential candidates that fit the niche of having (or making) a little time and compassion for their "neighbor". Even if 90% decline, we'd have 5 to help. Jeanine Wartan is in charge of the mentors—give her a call at 630/417-0062. Or call, Rogene Lis at 630/894-3263, Ext. 218 or Diana Eckert at 630/235-3389. They are available to enlighten you! They, and you, will not be disappointed!

*Rob Burns, a Stepping Stones volunteer
Director of Public Works
Village of Roselle*

OUR HEARTFELT THANKS!

Stepping Stones thanks our many supporters for their generous monetary gifts. We also want to thank those who also provide services, supplies, personal time and energy to supporting our families. You are all truly a blessing!

DONATIONS

(October 2004–February 2005)

Individuals

Donna Becerra

Kay Cahill

David Catrone, O.D.

Daniel & Leora Compton

Virginia Condon

Karen Gallagher

Michael & Susan Greene

Daniel & Dorothy Hildebrandt

Raymond & Laurel Kaleda

Brinsley Lewis

Richard & Gwen Magner

Susan Mastny

Thomas & Joan O'Neill

Earl Roloff

Thomas & Jacqueline Romanello

Thomas & Pamela Ruble

Thomas & Cindy Schramm

John & Marlene Shales

Eleanor Smith

Trinity Parishoners

Paul Troyke

Rosalie R. Voryas

Corporate Donors

Chiro Healthcare

Harris Bank—Roselle

McGrath Lexus of Westmont

Pella Windows & Doors

Square D. Foundation

Thrivent Financial

UBS Foundation USA

Clubs and Organizations

Kiwanis Club of Addison

Windy City 56ers

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE—OUR SOCIAL PROBLEM

Domestic violence is a widespread and pervasive social problem involving millions of women in the United States each year and has serious and far-reaching physical and emotional consequences for the victims, their children and society.

What do you know about domestic violence?

Domestic violence incorporates a wide

spectrum of abusive family relationships, and there are many adverse ramifications stemming from the abuse. However, the broad term, Domestic Violence, is also used to refer to situations that involve intimate partner violence or abuse.

According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund, "Domestic violence involves a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and

psychological attacks as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners," thus the term *Intimate Partner Violence*.

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, is primarily violence against women. Statistics from the Bureau of Justice shows that in 2001, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence while men

accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims.

Don't think that domestic violence is just a personal matter and none of your business. Domestic violence is more than a personal matter; it is a crime.

What do you know about the perpetrators of domestic violence?

The perpetrators of domestic violence have as their agenda, purposeful behavior directed at achieving compliance from or control over the victim, with the belief that this is their entitlement. The abuse is accomplished by means of numerous overt or subtle attacks, which are physically, psychologically, and emotionally damaging and harmful. *Domestic violence is not caused by genetics or mental illness.* It is a learned behavior reinforced through repeated observation or experience, and not being

held responsible for the abusive behavior.

What do you know about the victims of domestic violence?

Domestic violence happens to women in every cultural, ethnic and professional realm. It happens to women of any economic, intellectual or educational level.

So please don't think that victims/survivors of domestic violence are weak, subservient, helpless, illiterate women. These women are strong, courageous women who have deep love in their hearts, and a caring concern for their children.

Don't forget, the children are also affected by the abuse. Besides suffering the affects of their mother's abuse, children may also be victims of abuse themselves. A national survey of more than 6,000 American families found that 50 percent of the men who frequently assaulted their wives

also frequently abused their children.

Can you even imagine the "torment," "torture," and "deception" described by victims of domestic violence? Deliberate and repeated physical aggression is typical of domestic violence. Women who are psychologically battered experience a continuous feeling of susceptibility to danger, entrapment, loss of power, control and self-esteem.

Domestic violence crisis shelters, while vital for immediate safety and the services they offer, do not necessarily prevent future violence. Women leaving the shelter may need to decide between going home to their batterer or becoming homeless.

That's where *Stepping Stones for Women of Domestic Violence* steps in and provides transitional care with financial and emotional assistance.

STEPPING AHEAD

The mother of our first family to step out on their own provides the following account:

It took somewhere between 10-15 times before I could leave my ex-husband for good. After almost 7 years of abuse, I was at a point where it didn't matter where my three girls and I went; we just needed some peace in our lives.

I was introduced to Stepping Stones through Bridge. Little did I know through my journey with Stepping Stones that these people are truly doing God's work.

Over these 15 months, my mentors and I have tackled many bumps and hurdles. I

was under the cloud of debt. I was going through a divorce. I needed to find a better job. I had a short stay in the hospital. I struggled to pay an exorbitant amount in daycare. But through it all, we were provided a safe and secure environment in which we were eventually able to thrive.

My three mentors provided an environment for me in which I felt I could succeed no matter what, and with independency; but of course there was the occasional reality check.

I am living proof that you can accomplish anything if you go into the trials of your life with determination and drive:

- A well paying job
- Wiped out \$9,000 in debt
- Got therapy to help me and my kids through our transition

- Learned to set long term goals
- Achieved my goal of home ownership

But I would not have been able to do any of this if it weren't for Stepping Stones in conjunction with Bridge Communities and for the caring hearts of my mentors who have certainly made a life altering change in my life. Success stories only come from people who have a drive and determination. They are also only as good as those who surround them with caring, love and support that I have gotten with my mentors. They are truly my angels and they will never be forgotten.

Our mentors continue to visit with this client as she is now a dear friend. Her strong faith and renewed spirit support her new life's journey.

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

Mentors organized a New Year's party in mid January at Chuckie Cheese in Arlington Heights.

Donors made this event an absolute success. Mentors, Board Members, moms and children enjoyed pizza and an inordinate amount of

coupons and prizes thanks to McGrath Lexus of Westmont and Joe, the Manager of Chuckie Cheese. Smiles abounded and new friendships were formed. Great party! Only one noticed the cold evening.

SAVE THE DATE

5/15 Stepping Stones Tea, Trinity Lutheran Church (Sheila 630/508-1647 or Suzie 630/307-3502)

10/21 Third Annual Steppin' Out Dinner Dance and Silent Auction, Medinah Country Club (Diana 630/235-3389 or Sheila 630/508-1647)

CARS

Excitement for families! Christmas came and went but shortly thereafter four of our six families were each given a car from Bridge Communities. Eyes sparkled and hearts fluttered . . .and mentors held their breath. Driving lessons, licenses and insurance: all steps toward independence. Thank you again, Bridge Communities. If you have a car to donate, call Bridge Communities at 630/545-0610.

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

Stepping Stones is available to speak to your group or organization. We will present information on domestic violence and its effect on our community, and how attendees can help make a difference in our community. Call Rogene at 630-259-8418 to sign up for a speaker or for more information.

STEPPING STONES OFFICERS

By acclamation, the officers for the coming year are:

Chairperson Betty Wentland
Vice Chair Deaconess Rogene Lis
Secretary Lois Maschio, RN, ND
Treasurer Sandy Theis

Remember to lead with your hearts and continue to use the gifts God has given you!

For immediate abuse care, call Family Shelter Service for victims of domestic violence. The hotline number is 630-469-5650.



P.O. Box 721156
Roselle, IL 60172
630-235-3389

The Board

Co-directors	Dorothy Wiese Diana Eckert
Chairperson	Betty Wentland
Vice-Chairperson	Deaconess Rogene Lis
Secretary	Lois Maschio, RN, ND
Treasurer	Sandra Theis
Members	Lynn Cieslewicz Sheila Andriola Linda McDermott Jeanine Wartan
Advisory Board	Pastor Thomas Kim Pastor Charles Mueller, Jr. Chief Thomas Roman Mayor Gayle Smolinski

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for women of domestic
violence N.F.P.**

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Roselle, IL 60172**