



# Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter  
Volume XXXIV Number Two, Fall 2015

## The Thanksgiving Souper – Food for Thought

*By Angie Whitehead and Cynthia Ellis*

It seemed like a simple idea for a fund raiser: offer people soup and crackers while local entertainers provide background music, and ask for a small donation for the simple “meal.” This simple fund raising idea, The Thanksgiving Souper, has been held during Homeless Awareness Week for the past 35 years and number 36 is quickly approaching! Why has this simple event sponsored by Chick-fil-A been successful year after year? We think the answer is that those who attend and support the Souper recognize that while the lives of many of us are exceedingly comfortable, many others in our society are struggling to have the basic things they need for survival: food and shelter.

For many of us life simply seemed to fall into place. We grew up watching our parents work hard, pay bills, and provide for our needs and often our wants. This instilled in us the belief that we, too, could successfully support ourselves if we worked hard and made responsible decisions. However, this has not been a reality for many others. The cycle of poverty, domestic abuse, drug addiction and many other negative factors made its devastating impact on generations of families. What once was or should have been a natural progression from childhood to responsible, successful adult life has now become a skill that must be learned.

The Thanksgiving Souper is a way to remember those who can't afford to enjoy a

bountiful feast with golden brown turkey and all the trimmings on Thanksgiving Day. For many years our guests have kicked off their holiday season by attending the Souper and remembering the less fortunate -- a compassionate tradition that their children have continued into adulthood. It is also a great way for communities to come together to support The Women's Shelter in its efforts to help women overcome homelessness.

**The cost is not prohibitive. It's only \$5 and takes as little as a half-hour of your time. Whether it will be your first Souper or your 36th, please join us by dropping in between 5:30 – 7:30 PM on Thursday, November 19th, at one of our two event locations: Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 3200 Trenholm Road, Columbia, or The Manor at Doko Meadows, 171 Langford Road, Blythewood.**



# A Journey to Recovery

By Heather H.

Drugs came into my life at a young age. When I was three years old, I was abused which caused me to block out a lot of my childhood. I always felt different from other people. I thought no one could understand my need to numb the pain that consumed my life. My parents did everything they could to help me get through this, but they did not succeed. In the course of my addiction I had a beautiful little girl; she was taken into DSS custody at two weeks old. That sent me further into my addiction. She would end up back into DSS custody two more times. As I got further in my addiction I had another child who passed away from SIDS at one month old. Two weeks after my son passed I was on my way to prison for manufacturing drugs. Thank God I went to prison, because it truly saved my life. As soon as I hit the compound I was pulled for the Addictions Treatment Unit (ATU), a seven month drug rehabilitation program.

During the seven months in ATU I got my GED, and completed parenting classes and sexual trauma classes. I slowly started to get my life back, and after I completed the program I was set on making parole and going to The Women's Shelter. During the last year of my prison sentence I went to court and fought hard for my parental rights. I felt like I needed to pay child support. I made parole in March of 2015, and I came to The Women's Shelter. The counselors here believed in me when I wasn't sure I believed in myself. I got a job and started working 40 hours a week. I started going to meetings and I found an awesome sponsor. They truly helped me become a productive part of society. I was able to payoff all my back child support. Also I successfully completed parole. Who would have thought I could accomplish this in such a short amount of time? I spent 15 years of my life in active addiction. Now almost 3 years clean, I've completed every goal I set for myself and more. It feels so good to be in recovery.

# House of Angels

By Roxie H.

It has been almost 18 years ago since I walked into The Women's Shelter, a broken and lost soul. At that time in my life, fresh out of drug and alcohol treatment, I trusted no one. All I knew and understood was that I needed to change everything in my life if I wanted to stay sober. What a better place to start than with a week or so at the Shelter, or so I thought — I stayed almost two years.

As I walked onto the porch of the Shelter on my first day, little did I know that I would feel the omnipotence of this place. I had never felt this kind of peace, and I knew at this very moment that I was where I needed to be to start my journey. The porch was empty, and the house was very quiet. All I could hear was the noise from the street. In the quietness I could sense that this porch had helped many women put their shattered lives back together. I could feel the angels all around me, and for the first time in a very long time I felt a presence of peace and of God. What a welcome feeling it was and still is.

I had met Ms. Joanne Kernahan on my interview with the Shelter. Little did I know how much I would love and respect the little petite woman who wore small framed glasses and silly hats. Although she was petite, her presence was that of an angel. Her smile and words are still with me today. Even though I can't see her in the physical form, I know Ms. Joanne is now among the unseen angels that greet everyone who visits The Women's Shelter. My first introduction to Ms. Kathy Riley is also one I will never forget. I was scared to death of her. I knew she was the boss of all the angels. If I was told I had to talk with Ms. Kathy, I always thought I was in trouble. That was not the case, she was and still is an angel on earth. My next encounter with Ms. Kathy was my second day at the Shelter. I came home early because it was really cold and raining. She asked why I was home so early. I answered that it was cold and raining. She handed me an umbrella and a coat and told me to go out and find a job. I have to say that I have been working ever since. I learned to follow rules (they have not changed in 18 years). I experienced what it felt like to sit down as a family, have dinner promptly at 5:00 pm, and share our stories of the day. I learned to get along with others no matter what. We were all on the same journey and by the grace of God we were to walk together. Some women decided to leave and travel a different path. It is sad to say they never made it back. I feel that they are a few of the unseen angels who came back to help other women to stay and grow.

Many years have passed, but I keep with me all the lessons I learned from the angels of The Women's Shelter. If you do not believe in miracles, just come sit on the porch and you will know that they are real. If you are a new resident, please stay. The miracles will happen, just let *The House of Angels* guide you. Still today I practice the lessons I learned from all the women at the Shelter and my miracles continue to happen every day.

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## Revente's Second Chances

3050-A Millwood Avenue, Columbia

All net profits benefit The Women's Shelter.

**Name brand current handbags needed.**

**THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SOUPER**

Thursday, November 19, 2015, 5:30-7:30 P.M.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 3200 Trenholm Road, Columbia &  
The Manor at Doko Meadows, 171 Langford Road, Blythewood

\$5 minimum donation per person

Sponsored by **Chick-Fil-A** of Columbia

**HOW TO SUPPORT THE SOUPER:**

**SELL TICKETS:** For more information, call (803) 779-4706.

**BUY A BUNCH OF TICKETS:** Treat some friends to dinner at the Souper.

**CAN'T MAKE IT?** Join us in spirit. Use the enclosed envelope to support the Shelter with a Souper donation.

**SPONSOR A TABLE:** Sponsor a table in honor of a special woman. For a donation of \$150.00, send a special message about your wife, mom, daughter, mother-in-law, friend, mentor or role model. Your honoree's name will grace a lovely table, and she will receive special mention in the Souper program. Complete the following information and return the form with your contribution in the enclosed envelope by November 12, 2015.

Your Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Circle one:**      **In honor of**      or      **In memory of**

*(Please print names as you want them to appear on the table and program.)*

Honoree's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

By (*your name or group's name*): \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle one (which location for table sign?):** Eastminster Presbyterian    or  
The Manor at Blythewood

*The Women's Shelter  
3425 North Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29203*

*Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit #1018  
Columbia, SC*

*Address Service Requested*

## *Wish List*

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The Women's Shelter greatly appreciates and strongly depends on donations from individuals, churches and other civic groups. We do not have a lot of storage space, but the items listed below are frequently needed. If you have any other items you would like to donate, please contact us. Thank you for your continued generosity!  
(803) 779-4706

### **SEASONAL:**

- ◆ Holiday baked goods/desserts
- ◆ Soft drinks
- ◆ Fresh fruits/vegetables
- ◆ Watches
- ◆ Bedroom slippers
- ◆ Gift cards for haircuts
- ◆ Phone cards
- ◆ Zoo/movie/entertainment tickets
- ◆ Basic alarm clocks
- ◆ Answering machines
- ◆ Umbrellas
- ◆ Small Day Planners

### **ONGOING:**

- ◆ Gently used or new black pants/tennis shoes/black no-show socks
- ◆ Shower caddies
- ◆ Creamer/sugar
- ◆ Coffee/tea
- ◆ Sugar free items
- ◆ Toilet paper/paper towels
- ◆ Paper plates
- ◆ Tall kitchen bags
- ◆ Tin Foil/cling wrap/zip lock bags
- ◆ Laundry detergent/Regular & HE
- ◆ Dryer sheets/liquid softener
- ◆ Cleaning supplies