



Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter
Volume XXIII, Number One, Spring 2009

The Women's Shelter 30th Birthday Bash

**You are invited to join us in celebrating 30 years of service from our current location.
All You Can Eat BBQ, Music and Silent Auction**

When: Saturday, April 25 3:00pm—6:00pm **Cost:** \$10 Children under 6 are free

Where: The Women's Shelter 3425 N Main Street Columbia, SC 29203

In honor of the 30th Anniversary of The Women's Shelter's Main Street location, we are introducing a fun, Spring fundraiser that will have something for everyone. Below is a little history of how this event has come together over the past year.

Last January, Margaret Neville of The Mad Platter asked if we would be interested in creating a new fundraiser in the form of a silent auction. The Mad Platter has donated ceramic plates that have been signed by celebrities such as Rascal Flatts, Jesse Jackson, Sterling Sharpe, Serena Williams, Bill Clinton, Hootie And The Blowfish, Andy Roddick, and many more. The Mad Platter paints the plates with themes from each celebrity's career. These plates along with other exciting items will be sold at our silent auction. The items will be available for silent auction bids before the actual fundraiser (see our website for more information www.womenshelter.org). The silent auction will continue at the event and winners will be announced at 5:30PM, the day of the event (participants need not be present to win).

As we began planning, we decided that late April would be a great time for an outdoor event. After receiving in-kind commitments from local supporters, we expanded the schedule for April 25th to include All-You-Can-Eat pulled pork BBQ cooked and served on-site with Chick-Fil-A Sweet Tea and Cole Slaw. Several local guitarists will provide entertainment during the afternoon while our supporters eat, socialize and bid.

This fundraiser is our way to offset the impact of losing federal and state monies in 2009 with more local support. What better way than a heck of a deal for a meal? All pro-

ceeds benefit The Women's Shelter. We are always waiting on the next miracle at The Women's Shelter and, with your support, the 30th Anniversary Birthday Bash will be that Spring miracle.



NOTE: We are asking local, civic-minded businesses to support this effort in one of three ways:

The first way you can help is by becoming a Program Sponsor. A minimum donation of \$100 will have your business and its logo included in programs handed out at The Women's Shelter 30th Birthday Bash. Your business will also be recognized throughout the three hour event.

Another great way to help is to donate products or services for auctioning. In-kind items are tax deductible and a great way to reduce inventory. Multiple items that can be arranged in a basket work great but we can use almost anything with a retail value of \$25 or more.

Finally, your business can help support The Women's Shelter 30th Birthday Bash by buying one or more books of tickets to resell or give away to family, friends, and coworkers. This will be a nice way to celebrate Spring on a warm, Saturday afternoon while giving to your local community.

Please contact Shelter staff to purchase group tickets or to volunteer to sell tickets. Tell all your friends and family about this fun filled event!

Contact Scott at (803)322-0672 or scott@womenshelter.org

Remembering a Pillar of the Shelter

Written By Kathy Riley, Staff

I was all set to write about the wonders of spring and the meaning of Easter, and then I read the morning paper. I learned that Becky Strachan had died. For many in Columbia, Becky is a familiar name. She was an educator and principal of Forest Lake Elementary School for many years; to me she was one of the early supporters of the shelter.

I look around the shelter today and can hardly remember what the house looked like in 1979. What I do remember is not a pretty picture. The walls were crumbling, the heating system almost non-existent, a working toilet was a miracle, and peeling paint greeted a new resident. How could anyone believe that 3425 North Main Street could become what it is today? Becky did. I don't think she ever doubted it for a minute.

Her guidance as a board member was invaluable in those early days. We had so little money, a shell of a struc-

ture to work with and no existing models on how to run a shelter. Remember, this was 1979. Homeless men lived in missions; homeless women were a hidden population. We did have deeply committed volunteers who knew it was the time for Columbia to take care of homeless women.

Through the years Becky and her husband Dick would come by the shelter to drop things off or to just say hello. We remained close and often reminisced about those early difficult times and wondered at the power of God in creating such a healing place. Her determination and love for the shelter reminds me of how grateful I am to have known her and experience her guidance and wisdom.

So, here I am back at the beginning. Easter is almost here. For Becky it has arrived. For the rest of us, we continue to believe in new life and hope for better things to come. I often call our residents "Easter" people. They have all come through so much and continue to believe in a better life. Our women work hard and pray fervently. They live the Easter message daily, they hope.

Mother's Day Greeting Card

The Women's Shelter will be selling Mother's Day Greeting Cards again this spring. However, we will be conducting all sales from our website. Purchase a card to honor each special woman in your life and you are not only celebrating a loved one but helping to support The Women's Shelter. Visit www.womenshelter.org to view the card in color. All orders must be made on-line by April 24th. Your payment is secure with the PayPal system. Thank you for your continued support!

Transitional Happenings

Written By Christy Slocum, Staff

Excitement and energy are in the air as the renovations and decorating begun last summer continue. By mixing and matching donated items, many Transitional Houses are now homier than ever. The homes are becoming more welcoming spaces for the women as they continue their personal work that began in the main shelter. By having a place to call home, each woman starts and ends her day on her new path at The Women's Shelter.

There are updated curtains, rugs, and gently used and previously loved furniture. Pictures, knick-knacks, and pillows add an additional layer of feathering the nests. Grant monies bought new coffee pots, toasters, pots and pans, bake ware, and flatware. These transitional homes are evolving and changing just as the women who live in them are changing.

With spring just around the corner, our hope is to move from the inside of the houses to the outside. Ideas of neat and manicured yards, blooming flowers, and outside sitting areas are forming in our minds. The pure pleasure of dig-

ging in the dirt and nurturing plants can be therapeutic for many people and this is where we need your help. To beautify the exterior of the transitional houses, we are requesting donations of annuals, perennials, and flower seeds. Just imagine blue morning glory blooms and white moon flowers wrapping the columns of the apartments. The color and the fragrance will be magnificent! Maybe you will have extra perennials you will be cleaning out of your flower beds this spring and would love to see them have a new home. We would love to have them

In addition to sprucing up the outside of our houses, we also need to update the computer lab. Many women have expressed interest in learning and polishing computer skills to better help them complete employment applications. We are looking for volunteers who wish to teach computer skills as well as help maintain the hardware necessary for successful computer use. If you are interested, please give us a call for more information.

Becoming Baby Wise

Written By a Transitional Resident

I am the 5th born of 9 children, born in January of 1959 in Columbia, SC. I attended Waverly Elementary School, Hand Middle, and graduated from Spring Valley High. I then went on to receive a Masters in Science of Nursing from Hampton University.

Today, however, I find myself learning to be baby wise, because after all, we are all children in God's eyes. I have had to admit that my life has become unmanageable as a result of developing a dependency on alcohol. Therefore, I have surrendered to God's will to help me through recovery. I started this process with a loving and caring addiction treatment program at Morris Village.

The staff and program at Morris Village helped me to learn that I needed to re-nourish myself to become a mature woman. I stunted my personal growth by utilizing alcohol to cover up my inadequacy of self, low self-esteem, genetics, and a lack of self worth. I stunted my growth and suppressed my abilities to live a "normal" life.

After my treatment at Morris Village I decided to continue working on my growth by entering The Women's Shelter Program. At the Women's Shelter I am learning that by obtaining, maintaining and utilizing wisdom, it is ok to take baby steps back into living a healthy new way of life. I am beginning to understand that by admitting the need to allow God back into my life I am being helped beyond measure. The opportunities for me to return, as a productive member of society is now possible due to a spiritual awakening.

I am now able to soberly look at my own faults that led me here, but it's okay. I am very thankful and grateful to The Women's Shelter for opening up their loving arms. They have faith in me that I am capable of transforming into a better mother to my two lovely girls, ages 21 and 17, able to reenter my profession and to one day meet a healthy mate and develop a quality relationship. But first, I am learning as a babe that I can depend on God's loving grace and mercy to restore me to sanity and keep me on the right path to living a Godly life.

I am very thankful and grateful to The Women's Shelter for opening their loving arms.

The Women's Shelter 30th Birthday Bash

Saturday, April 25th, 3:00-6:00PM,

Only \$10

All You Can Eat BBQ

Music and

a Silent Auction

**LIVE LOCAL
GUITARISTS**

ALL YOU CAN EAT

PULLED PORK BBQ

**Silent Auction Items Include Celebrity
Autographed Plates Painted by**

The Mad Platter

**Activities
for Kids**

**PLUS: Sweet Tea
and Cole Slaw
by Chic-fil-A**

**Drive-Thru
BBQ Available Too!!**

**Other Auction Items include services and
products from local merchants**

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

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

WISH LIST

The Women's Shelter appreciates all that you do. We hope you know how much your time and donations help the families we work with. If you are interested in providing food, gifts, or other support, please contact The Women's Shelter at (803) 779-4706.

SPRING WISHES

- ♥ Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- ♥ Umbrellas
- ♥ Soda
- ♥ Certificates for hair cuts
- ♥ Phone Cards
- ♥ Alarm Clocks
- ♥ Disposable Cameras

ONGOING NEEDS LIST

- ♥ Paper Products (plates, cups, napkins)
- ♥ Paper Towels
- ♥ Cleaning Supplies
- ♥ Laundry Detergent
- ♥ Tall Kitchen Bags
- ♥ Salad Dressing
- ♥ Peanut Butter and Jelly

Easter and Passover Blessings

