



# Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter  
Volume XXXIV Number Four, Fall 2014

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

*By Kathy Riley and Michael Tucker*

This year The Women's Shelter Annual Thanksgiv- ing "Souper" will celebrate its 35th anniversary of serving a meal of soup and crackers to several hun- dred faithful supporters. This joyful and simple event has brought together folks who believe in the mission and work of the Shelter since the '80's. That's a long time!

Organizations like the Shelter struggle to define themselves in the realm of fundraising. Each one of us tries to separate out from the others, trying to show our unique characteristics. The "Souper" was never meant to be our primary fundraiser but rather a way to educate the wider community to the issues of hun- ger and homelessness. Through no "strategic plan- ning" session did I ever see this event celebrating 35 years of existence. Much like the spirit of The Women's Shelter, it just evolved.

What has changed over the years? Really, not much. The venue has changed several times, but we have called Eastminster Presbyterian Church home since 1982 and The Manor in Blythewood since 2013. The menu has been soup and crackers since the initial event. We have had a variety of groups and individu- als entertain at the "Souper", each one freely giving their time and talents. The biggest addition to the eve- ning was the adoption of Chick-fil-A as our corporate sponsor in 1995. I asked Michael Tucker, owner/ operator of Chick-fil-A in the heart of Lexington, to offer some reflections.....

My involvement with the "Souper" began over 30 years ago when I heard Kathy speak at my Rotary Club. Her passion for serving others drew me to be- come involved with the Shelter. Chick-fil-A is

known for being involved in and giving back to the community. When the opportunity came up to be the corporate sponsor of The Women's Shelter Thanksgiv- ing Souper, we were delighted to be part of this wonderful event that matches the giving spirit of Chick-fil-A. The Columbia area Chick-fil-A owners look forward each year to this warm, simple, uncomplicated evening that reflects the true meaning of the season and the purpose of The Women's Shelter. It is a great evening of fellowship not only for the partici- pants of the "Souper" but also for the Columbia area Chick-fil-A owners who willingly give of their time and resources for this wonderful organization.

**Help us to bring out the true spirit of the holi- day season by dropping in at either Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia or The Manor at Doko Meadows in Blythewood between 5:30 and 7:30 PM on November 20th.** Chick-fil-A is proud to have helped the Shelter raise approximately \$30,000 a year and \$600,000 over the past 20 years that we have sponsored this event.



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# Learning to Love Lynn Again

*By Lynn S.*

I am an addict. Addicts come from all walks of life. We all have different beginnings, but the endings are always the same: jails, institutions or death. Addiction robs us of our lives spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Because of The Women's Shelter I was given an opportunity at a new life. Their program helps teach you how to live a life controlling the disease of addiction through guidance, love, and prayer.

Allow me to share a little on how I got here. At a very young age I realized I never fit in. I was shy, withdrawn, very smart, and manipulative. I read a lot and lived in a fantasy world through my lies to myself and others. I had a good family, but I always felt that nothing I did was good enough for my mother. I felt that I was different from everyone else.

I started having sex and abusing drugs and alcohol at the age of thirteen. This made me feel loved and liked by others, but I didn't love myself. I couldn't change reality, but with drugs I could escape to my fantasy world. The drugs numbed the pain and hurt that I felt. By the age of nineteen I had my first child and another at the age of twenty-seven. I managed to give up drugs and alcohol for the next 14 years.

Tragedy struck when my husband died in a car wreck. I started drinking and using pills to escape the pain. Then someone introduced me to crack, and the race was on. It was a wonder drug for me. For three years I disappeared into this high, thinking I was maintaining life just fine. I stopped using for a while and met my second husband. Life was great for a little while until I began to feel neglected and alone. I started using again, and it took only three months for me to hit rock bottom. My husband left me. I ended up in jail for a short time because I was writing checks on my deceased husband's account. While I was locked up, I got saved. My life turned around, and my marriage was restored. For the next 14 years life was awesome.

A series of difficult circumstances caused my world to fall apart. I went through treatments for Hepatitis C for a year; both of my parents died; I had two neck surgeries; and both of my sons got divorced. I felt like I was hanging on by a thread. I felt so isolated, and my relationship with God was broken.

I turned back to the only thing I thought would bring relief; my drug use was extreme. I had to have more and more, and before I knew it three years had gone by. I had lost everything. I degraded myself in every possible way just for another hit. I cashed fake payroll checks and ended up spending three months in jail. I went right back to using when I was released. I moved to another state thinking the move would fix things, but I continued to use in the new location. I was eventually arrested again for violation of probation and spent another 90 days in jail. However, this time it was different. I realized that if I didn't stop using I was going to die. I told God that He could have my life and do whatever it took to turn me around.

By the time I went to court I was three months clean. I had no place to live, no money, and no one who would have anything to do with me. I begged the judge to send me to prison, because I knew I would die if I went back out on the streets. The judge sent me to The Women's Shelter instead.

I came to the interview at The Women's Shelter in cuffs and an orange jumpsuit. When I was told I could move into the Shelter, I cried. I felt I was accepted just as I was—broken and unloved. Living in the Shelter was a blessing. There were other women there just like me. The Shelter staff taught me how to love myself again. Sometimes it was through a hug, and other times it was through counsel that I learned respect and acceptance. I worked hard to do what was expected of me in the Shelter program and at my new job.

At the Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings I learned I had a disease. I began to work with a sponsor in a 12-step program. For the first time in my life I felt true peace and hope. I successfully completed The Women's Shelter 90-day Emergency Shelter Program and was invited into their Transitional Housing Program. In this part of the program I am renting an apartment and paying my own bills. With the counsel and wisdom of the Shelter staff I'm learning to adapt to a world I never knew before. I will be forever changed because of this program and the staff who work here. They give completely of themselves to help addicts like me, and I love them all.

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**Revente's Second Chances**  
**3050-A Millwood Avenue, Columbia**  
**All net profits benefit The Women's Shelter.**

**THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SOUPER**

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 5:30-7:30 P.M.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 3200 Trenholm Road, Columbia

The Manor at Doko Meadows, 171 Langford Road, Blythewood

\$2 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 13, 2014.

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

Return to:            The Women's Shelter  
3425 N. Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29203

*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