

Sheltervoice

Quarterly Newsletter of The Women's Shelter
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Repairing Mother-Child Relationships: Priceless!

By Kathy Riley

The word “mother” conjures up all sorts of emotions and memories. For most of us these thoughts are pleasant and warm or maybe humorous and sentimental. For the women we serve at the Shelter this is usually not the case. “Mother” is a term of pain, abandonment, loss, and heartache. For many residents their own mothers were absent from their lives; or if they were present, their parenting skills were almost non-existent. Yes, there have been those mothers who have stuck by their daughters through trying times and never gave up hope that life would get better for them. They are the lucky ones.

The flip side of the coin is what our women have done to their own children. They carry the shame and guilt of knowing that they could have been a better parent IF ONLY: they had never started using drugs; they never tasted that first drink; they had never picked the wrong man. Each one has a memory bank of IF ONLYS.

But, THIS Mother's Day is different. Today they are healthy. They are making sound choices about how they want to live their lives. It is a time of self-forgiveness and hope.

The most fun day at the Shelter is when our mothers have a visit from their little children. They delight in the hugs they receive, the kisses they give their little ones, and the spontaneous “I love you” they hear. No other day reflects how important the Shelter is to the many mothers we serve. To help our women repair their lives is important; however, to help a woman repair her relationship with her children is priceless.

Some relationships are beyond repair, and we realize the pain of these difficult situations. We as staff cannot undo the past, but we try very hard to provide the resources for our residents to come to terms with past failings. For this reason I believe the women who live at the Shelter are women of great courage and great faith. They stand tall with a vision of hope for tomorrow and gratitude for today. What a privilege to accompany them on this journey.

To all Mothers – our wishes for a day filled with many blessings and gratitude for all that has been given to you.

**Be sure to shop Revente's Second Chances
3050-A Millwood Avenue, Columbia, 29205**

**20% off your total purchase of any regular
priced items with this coupon!**

The Women's Shelter is participating in the Midlands Gives Campaign on May 3, 2016

You can support the programs and services of The Women's Shelter through the Midlands Gives campaign. Midlands Gives is a local 24-hour online donation giving challenge that takes place on **Tuesday, May 3rd, 2016**. All gifts must be given online; there are no mail-in donations for this campaign. In order to participate in this event you ...



1. Log on to MidlandsGives.org on May 3rd.
2. Complete the giving form found on the main page.
3. Select **The Women's Shelter**.
4. Make a donation using your credit or debit card.

For more information, please visit www.MidlandsGives.org

DISCOVERING A NEW ME

By Sarah B

My journey began...or maybe I should say that my hardships began after giving birth to my twin son and daughter. I was already the mother of a beautiful daughter who was almost three. I went from being the mother of one to the mother of three in a day.

While I had pretty much used drugs and alcohol recreationally since the age of twelve, I had never lost control of my use (or so I thought). After giving birth to my twins via C-section, I was prescribed narcotic pills for the pain. It seemed like an endless supply until the day they were gone. I had become dependent on them to help sustain my motherly duties such as making 24 bottles a day, changing the diapers of three children, cleaning, etc. When I could no longer get the pills prescribed to me, I started buying them from dealers at outrageous prices. This was a very expensive habit to keep.

I was desperate to maintain my daily drug use since I could not move or get out of bed without them. I was physically sick when I didn't have them and an emotional wreck. I had to get and keep my supply. This brings me to a pivotal part of my story. I started making my own prescriptions to obtain the pills I felt I so desperately needed.

From this point on things only got worse. I was a full blown addict so to speak. My life was about getting and using. I neglected my children and everything else. Eventually I was arrested for this illegal activity and was sentenced to nine years in prison. At this point I lost everything. I truly believed my life was over. After three years of incarceration I was granted parole by the grace of God. Prior to my release I made the decision that I would not go back to the same people, places, or things that led to my demise. I would have to start over. I heard about The Women's Shelter while I was in the Addiction Treatment Unit program in prison, and this sounded like a good place for me to start over.

Once I was interviewed and accepted into The Women's Shelter program a new journey began for me. I was now a resident at this recovery house and was forced to focus on myself and getting better so that I could be the mother and person I was meant to be. Participation in this program includes attending Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and finding a sponsor. I was now getting and using the tools I needed to maintain my sobriety outside of prison. Empowerment classes are also part of the curriculum and where I learned to search myself for passion and purpose.

After getting myself together in the Main Shelter, I transitioned into the second phase of the program. I began more adamantly setting and working on achieving my goals. My goals were centered around my children and bettering myself. I applied for and was granted unsupervised visitation with my children, and I spend as much time with them as I can. Also through a grant program offered here, I am job shadowing at a law firm where I am getting a chance to refresh my skills and learn new things.

I am achieving my goals and making a new life for myself with the help and support of The Women's Shelter. I am so grateful to be a part of this program.

Honor That Special Woman in Your Life

Mother's Day is soon approaching on May 8th. This is a particularly special day at The Women's Shelter.

Purchase a card to honor each special woman in your life; and you not only celebrate a loved one, but you help to support The Women's Shelter as well. We are using a beautiful photo by former employee, Paula Hines, for the front of our Mother's Day cards. Simply send us the names and addresses of your special women, along with a check for \$8 per card by **April 27th**, and we will address, scribe and mail each card in time for Mother's Day.

Mother's Day Card Gift Sheet

(please print clearly)

Your Name: _____ Your Phone: (_____) _____
(as you wish it to appear on the card)

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

Honoree's Name and Address: _____

Street City State Zip Code

***Please mail Card Gift Sheet, along with a check made out
to "The Women's Shelter" (\$8 for each card),
in the enclosed envelope by April 27th.
If you need more room, please use additional paper.***

*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

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

- ◆ Electric hand mixers
- ◆ Ice Cream
- ◆ Fresh fruits/vegetables
- ◆ Soft drinks
- ◆ Sunscreen/bug spray
- ◆ Gift cards for haircuts
- ◆ Phone cards
- ◆ Zoo/movie/entertainment tickets
- ◆ Basic alarm clocks
- ◆ Answering machines
- ◆ Umbrellas
- ◆ Shower caddies
- ◆ Gently used black pants/tennis shoes
- ◆ Coffee/tea
- ◆ Creamer
- ◆ Sugar
- ◆ 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