

“People—even more than things—have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.”

~Audrey Hepburn

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Christos H peline

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...

As I sit here waiting for the first snow to come, I find myself reflecting on both positive and negative events of the past year. Starting with the Chocolate Festival—where my staff convinced me that we could raise \$10k for new mattresses and couches and we in fact raised \$10,716 and purchased 36 new mattresses along with covers, pillows, and two new couches...My staff was right! We celebrated our 30th year of helping families in crisis and trying to better help communities understand that violence is wrong on the streets, in the schools, and at home.

I'm very proud to say that our Prevention Specialists spoke to more than 2,000 school age children in our eight county region last year—with that being said, they are expected to double that this year. Our outreach numbers continued to grow not only in Howell county, but also in Texas, Wright, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Douglas, and Carter counties. We are getting the word out that we are here, we are here to help, and here to stay.

We held a very successful Christos Cares for Children event in April with many families enjoying food, sodas, and various games and give-a-ways.

Summer was very hot and very busy. Our adopt-a-room was in full swing and I can now say, with Caterpillar adopting the final two bedrooms, the bedrooms are all complete. Thanks to First United Methodist Church in West Plains, Dennis and Sue Willard, Clint and Dillon Walker, and Caterpillar this dream became a reality.

In October we really celebrated our 30th anniversary with a wonderful banquet at the Civic Center catered by Colton's and handed out awards to Meaghan Peacock (Couch High School), Anna Castleberry (Cabool Middle School), and Zane Rosener (Lutie Elementary) for winning the art contest. We also gave awards for friends of ours who have helped this past year including First United Methodist Church in Raymondville, First United Methodist Church in West Plains, K-Kountry 95, Westside Family Life Center Youth Group, and one long overdue award in memory of Margaret "Peg" Shaw (1911-1995) who was instrumental in forming Christos House thirty years ago. Her son Bill, a current Board of Directors member, accepted the award that has been placed in the foyer of the shelter.

That brings us to now, and we are looking forward to the holidays with our adopt-a-family underway. In closing, the negative that we face is space. For every one in our state that gets into shelter—two are turned away. We must turn away at least one or two a week—some families, some single women, but each needing us and the tragedy is we must say no. My dream is to build a bigger, more cost-effective shelter. We have the land, now we must raise the money. I believe we can do it...I know we can do it with your help!

Here's wishing each of you the brightest of holiday seasons and a joyful New Year.

In Peace,

Sherry Foley
Director of Operations



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LIKE SANTA, WE'RE CHECKIN' IT TWICE

Each year, thanks to the generosity of our community, Christos House is able to provide gifts for women and children who reside in shelter as well as previous residents for Christmas. These families seek refuge from abuse and many flee without anything but the clothes on their backs. Christmas is a special time for everyone, our families in shelter included. This holiday season, we are again asking for your support.

We love to watch the children's reaction on Christmas morning, as well as their mothers'—this may be the first time they've been safe for the holidays. We make sure that each woman and child, with the help of our communities, have presents to open Christmas morning. However, there are items that we can always use and seem to run out of frequently. We ask for your support this holiday season and as always we appreciate your generosity! Our holiday wish list includes, but is not limited to:

Educational Toys for babies & older	Art Supplies & Craft Kits	Non-violent Xbox Kinect Games
Family Games/Puzzles	Walmart Gift Cards	Disposable Cameras
Women's/Children's Coats	Women's/Children's Pajamas, Socks, & Underwear	
Bath Gift Sets	Alarm Clocks	Towels
Personal Hygiene Items for boys, girls, & women (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, feminine products, etc.)		

"Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves."

—Eric Sevareid

UPCOMING EVENTS

OUT OF THE STRONG...

Came Forth Chocolate! Christos House will be hosting our 10th Annual Chocolate Festival on February 9, 2013. All proceeds will be used to purchase a new, 12-passenger van for shelter transportation. Keep your eyes and ears open as details will be given closer to February. Remember, all you need is chocolate and a dream... For more information or to download the registration form to enter our baking contest when available, please continue to visit our website at www.christoshouse.com and check us out on Facebook.

February is also National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Once again this year, we will be sponsoring an essay contest for high school students promoting healthy relationships.

If you would like to help with any activities or would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Kelli Neel at 800-611-5853.

HOLIDAY PEACE

—JAN SHIELDS, OREGON COUNTY OUTREACH ADVOCATE

As another year comes to an end, I see many individuals in need of peace. Peace is something the majority of us take for granted. There are homes with children and women that do not know peace. Most times families make do with what they have, but during the holidays many mothers want more for their children.

We think of gifts...these mothers think of silence, safety, staple provisions, provisions of warmth, food, and no harm coming to them and their children. There may be a tree in the corner of the living room with simple, quaint trimmings. There may be a donated food basket delivered. But, nerves are always uneasy while silently wondering when he will walk through the door taking their peace and turning it into turmoil. Mom will hurry the children to another room for protection and to keep them silent so harm can be diverted.

Christos House has assisted the ones that have stepped out and found peace in shelter or in their new homes. They are safe, warm, and have the provisions needed to care for their families. With the donations provided to Christos House, we can share the wealth with others.

As I sit down at my family table with our traditions this holiday season, we pray for peace for the women and children that are still in need and haven't found the strength yet to step out.

May God bless you this holiday season and give each one peace!

Happy Holidays,

Jan



HOLIDAY TENSION — PREVENTION EDUCATORS

As many of us have discussed, there is a lot of tension around the holidays for various reasons. We would like to share some ways that family and friends can help those situations:

- ~ Be there and support the victims—even if they go back to their abuser. Remember, victims—on average—leave their abuser a minimum of seven times before they leave for good. It is a difficult decision, especially since they truly love their abuser. They don't necessarily want the relationship to end; they want the abuse to end. It is an even more difficult decision when there are children involved.
- ~ Try to limit alcohol at gatherings. Although not a cause, alcohol can trigger abuse and/or make it worse.
- ~ When you see a potentially violent situation about to occur, try to create a distraction. The sooner it is interrupted, the less likely it will be violent or dangerous.
- ~ Try to keep your loved one within eye sight and try not to leave them alone if at all possible. Remember, abuse almost always occurs behind closed doors.
- ~ Encourage the victim when possible.
- ~ Be knowledgeable about local resources and hotlines in your area. Hotlines are available 24/7 to answer questions and offer support.

If you know someone who might be in an abusive relationship, please call us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember to show the people you love how much you care and let them know you are there for them. Letting victims know they are not alone and have someone to turn to can make all the difference! If your loved one is an abuser, we can talk with you about ways to help as well!

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday!

Sunshine & Ember

THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE—SURVIVOR

This is a letter from a survivor who had originally started writing this in her journal. She decided she wanted to share it with everyone to remind us that there's always hope.

Just arrived at Christos House. This is the second time I have been here in just a few short months. It is amazing all that can happen in a short time. I am happy to be here and glad I have made the decision to return. I believe it is what is best for me and the kids. While it may seem to many an easy task to leave an abusive situation and not return, it goes much deeper than that. It is not so simple to see the light in the midst of such darkness. Christos House is that lighthouse, safe house, for me and my children. We may have lost everything we own, but with the Christos House's help we can begin to gain our lives back. The material things we lost through domestic violence are replaceable. The people dedicated to Christos House and it's vision help us regain what is priceless.

FOUR CANDLES

the four candles burned slowly. their
ambiance was so soft you could hear
them speak...

the first candle said, "i am peace, but
these days nobody wants to keep me
lit." then, peace's flame slowly dimin-
ishes and goes out completely.

the second candle says, "i am faith, but
these days i am no longer indispensa-
ble." then, faith's flame slowly diminish-
es and goes out completely.

sadly, the third candle spoke, "i am love
and i haven't the strength to stay lit
any longer. people put me aside and
don't understand my importance. they
even forget to love those who are near-
est to them." and, waiting no longer,
love goes out completely.

suddenly, a child enters the room and
sees the three candles no longer burn-
ing. the child begins to cry, "why are
you not burning? you are supposed to
stay lit until the end."

then, the fourth candle spoke gently to
the little boy, "don't be afraid, for i am
hope. while i still burn, we can relight
the other candles."

with shining eyes, the child took the
candle of hope and lit the other three
candles—peace, faith, and love.

with the candle of hope, we can bring
peace, faith, and love back in our lives.

~ author unknown

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www.christoshouse.com

CHILDREN & CHRISTMAS —LEAH MYERS, CHILD ADVOCATE

Holidays are very important and special times, especially for children. Thanksgiving is more than just a big dinner where the family all comes to eat, it is about being thankful. Children have the opportunity to express their feelings about what they are thankful for. Christmas is also a time to be thankful and rejoice. Thanks to our Savior giving us mercy and grace, we are able to help and be there for one another. Children love Christmas—the reindeer and Santa give them something to be excited about and look forward to. It is also a great time to teach them the meaning of Christmas other than the yummy food, stockings, and the presents under the tree.

During these wonderful holidays, share what and why you are thankful and get the children involved in the holiday spirits. Celebrate and rejoice with them. This is a great opportunity to come closer together. Holidays are about family, love and care, and just being together. Make these holidays memorable for your children and create traditions that will last generations!

Leah

"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace."

~Agnes M. Pabro

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS—KELLI NEEL, CRISIS COUNSELOR

It is that time of year, Thanksgiving has passed and Christmas is looming ever closer!

Many are enjoying all the wonder the season has to offer—they are eager to give, ever thankful, and full of joy, peace, and goodwill toward others.

Yet, there is also an element to the holidays where some feel a great deal of stress, tremendous sorrow, and significant levels of agitation. Tempers may flare. Tears may fall. Grief may cloud the cheer and gratitude of the season.

So, as dinner tables are shared with family and friends and holiday traditions are once again being conducted, offer a thought and some prayers for others who are trying to simply survive yet one more day of adversity in their homes or are living in shelters across the nation because adversity has displaced them from their homes. This is not how anyone envisions the holidays to be—violence in the home is not what anyone grows up seeking to have and it is certainly not what anyone asks Santa to bring them. All anyone truly wants is to have peace and quiet from turmoil, sanity in a seemingly ever-abusive world, calmness that ebbs the tides of raging storms, and solitude from which to build one's life. We are not that different from each other...we all desire a sense of wellness this time of year and always!!

Therefore, I give prayers that the time comes soon for the despondent to find peace, the weary to find rest, and the broken to find healing and for all to have a holiday season that is full of gratitude with joy and peace in their lives and to share goodwill, first with themselves, and then onto others year around!!

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to all!! We'll see you next year!!

Kelli

CHRISTMAS CAN BE STRESSFUL—RITA FOSTER, OUTREACH ADVOCATE

As the holiday season approaches, advocates at Christos House Shelter and Outreach programs handle an increased influx of clients.

The holidays are about festivities and family gatherings. But for families already dealing with domestic violence, the holidays may trigger abuse.

There's more financial stress during the holidays, which can increase violence. In particular, for male batterers it's a particular type of stress that's really difficult because men are under a lot of pressure to be the breadwinner of the family. It increases a general sense of powerlessness and we know that men who abuse often do so because they feel powerless. In fact, they'll report right before they engage in some kind of domestic violence that it was a feeling of powerlessness or being out of control that led to that particular incident of violence. In addition to that, tough economic times make it less likely that the partner is going to seek help or try to get out of the relationship. It's also stressful for single parents who have experienced domestic violence to make it through.

Literally, every risk factor for domestic violence, every situation thing that could be going on that could increase domestic violence is increasing right now. Unemployment is a risk factor. Low self-esteem is a risk factor. There are all of these things coming together that are definitely going to increase the rates of violence.

Domestic violence causes tremendous long-term physical, emotional, and spiritual damage to children and families. It is jarring to consider the long-range impact on our communities as the cycle of abuse continues unchecked.

As the advocate for Texas and Wright counties beginning my tenth year, I provide support groups and parenting classes. As the stresses of poverty can contribute to abuse, I work with local crisis programs to access housing, counseling, medical services, and life skills information that will help families in times of crisis. As we work together, we can do even more.

Rita



"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?" ~Bob Hope

SAFETY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

—MELISSA LITTLESFIELD, SEXUAL ASSAULT ADVOCATE

Do you remember when a Wal-Mart employee was trampled to death on Black Friday in New York? Yet, we have not heard about the sexual assaults that take place over the holidays. These assaults are just as, or more so, life altering.

During the holiday season, there is a rise in sexual assaults. One reason being the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. Alcohol is often used at parties and get-togethers and can trigger and escalate assaults. To ensure that everyone has a safe and happy holiday season, here are a few tips to remember:

- ~ Carry a cell phone
- ~ Yell "FIRE" to alert people you need help
- ~ Avoid walking alone at night
- ~ Be watchful, aware, and confident
- ~ Be aware of your surroundings and stay in well-lit and populated areas
- ~ Don't let anyone violate your space

Above all else, TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!

Melissa



OUT OF THE STRONG CAME FORTH CHOCOLATE

-TASHA COLLINS, MARKETING/PR

CHRISTOS HOUSE, INC.

Our mission is to provide a safe place for victims of domestic and sexual violence to escape the abuse and make positive change in a supportive atmosphere.

Christos House is a non-profit shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence. It is located in Southwest Missouri and serves 8 counties including: Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Texas, and Wright. All services are confidential and provided at no cost.

Wow! 2012 is at an end already and we here at Christos House are busier than Santa's elves. Our stockings are hung and the presents wrapped. So what's keeping us so busy? We are gearing up to embark on what will be one of the best years for Christos House! 2013 holds numerous activities for Christos House and wonderful opportunities for our strong community members to get involved with.

We will kick off 2013 by celebrating our 10th Annual Chocolate Festival! Exciting, we know! For those of you not familiar with our chocolate festival, let me explain. If you have a great chocolate recipe, you can enter our contest for a chance to win fabulous prizes! Not a chef? That's okay. Come and sample the best locally made sweets, bid on your favorite dishes in our auction, and bid on baskets full of goodies (edible and non-edible). Admission is free; however, if you'd like to sample the yummy stuff, \$5 gets you 10 tasting tickets with additional tickets costing 50 cents each. Some items cost more than one tasting ticket though. Every dollar goes to purchase much needed items for the shelter.

Last year we raised \$10,716! This allowed us to purchase 36 brand new mattresses and pads, new pillows, towels, wash cloths, and two full-size couches. This year, our dream is to raise enough funds to purchase a much needed 12-passenger van for transportation. We know with the support of our community that this dream can be made a reality! All you need is chocolate and a dream...so our goal this year...\$15,000!

We look forward to all 2013 has to offer and to your continued and appreciated support. Now grab that 2013 calendar and save the date!!

Christos House 10th Annual Chocolate Festival

Saturday, February 9th at the Armory!

For more information, contact Christos House at 417-469-1190 and visit us on Facebook and christoshouse.com!

Tasha

Christos House was founded in 1982 by a group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to provide services for victims of domestic violence. It is a 36-bed facility. The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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Find us on Facebook!
www.christoshouse.com

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PLACE
STAMP
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