



“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”
-Mother Teresa

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Christos House peline

FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK...

A Chat with Sherry

WOW what a great beginning to 2012 we have had! Christos House turns thirty this year and I believe we are reaching our stride. The 9th Annual Chocolate Festival was held on February 11 and we raised over \$10,500—with this money we have purchased 30 new mattresses and waterproof covers along with new pillows for all and also purchased were two new couches for the residents' TV room. Many thanks go out to every person that had anything to do with this great success, this includes my staff at Christos House. I don't tell them often enough how much I appreciate all the hard work they have done and continue to do since I took the Director of Operations position. It was them that made me see that it was possible to raise the \$10,000 that was needed for what we wanted to do, and then they set out to do it and succeeded.

Spring makes us think of new beginnings, cleaning and brightening what we have and changing what needs changed. With the recent purchases this month, we are launching our "Adopt a Room" campaign. What this entails is a group or individuals adopting a bedroom or common area room and sprucing it up—now that might mean new paint and comforters, it can mean throw rugs, pictures, and curtains, and it could mean some new dressers or night stands. If interested in adopting a room, please give me a call!

In this newsletter you will meet Jan Shields, the new Outreach Advocate in Oregon County. She is doing awesome things there and she will tell you about some of them. Child Abuse Awareness month is in April and we will be having an afternoon in the park that Leah Myers, our Child Advocate, will give more details on. Kelli's Korner is once again enlightening and on target with our theme of change and new beginnings. The 2nd Annual Writing Contest winners are featured in this edition, and all I can say is we have some very talented young writers in our area, thanks to all that took the time to enter.

*I saw a quote from Whoopi Goldberg the other day that said "We're all here for a reason. I believe a bit of that reason is to throw little torches out to lead people through the dark." That is what I hope we are doing here at Christos House, adding a little illumination to the paths the brave and courageous women that we work with have chosen. They have stepped out of the darkness and we all need to lighten their loads and brighten their pathway with our light. Won't you join us and **Be the Difference?***

In Peace,

Sherry Fohey
Director of Operations



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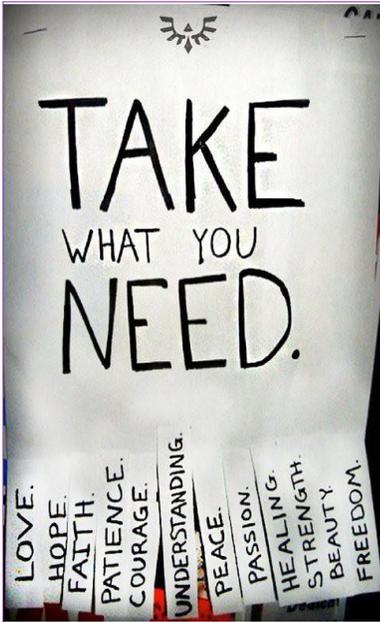
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If you would like to receive our newsletter via email instead or know of someone who would also be interested in what's happening with Christos House, please send us a message via our website at www.christoshouse.com providing us with a name and email address.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...



Christos House has always been so humbled by the generosity shown by our community members and businesses. We know that when there is a need, our communities step up and fill that need. Most of the time when women and children arrive at the shelter...they do so with the clothes on their back and, if they're lucky, a few personal belongings. Victims of domestic and sexual violence often times have to leave in the spur of the moment...their abuser has gone for a few hours leaving them a short window or they had to flee in the middle of a dangerous situation to get to safety. When they arrive at shelter, we want to make sure we can provide at least the basic necessities to help their transition be a little easier. During their stay, we want to provide them with whatever possible to help their healing process. The following is our list of items we are asking community members and businesses to help fill our need of; however, we appreciate anything that is donated:

Art supplies and craft kits	Gift Cards	Cameras	Journals
Alarm Clocks	Hair Styling Accessories	Nail Polish & Accessories	Bibles
Used Cell Phones	Family Games	Twin Size Blankets	Pillows
Baby Hygiene Products	Razors	Paper Products	Towels
Size 4 Diapers	Laundry Soap/Dryer Sheets	New Twin Sheet Sets	
Women's/Children's Pajamas, Socks, & Underwear			

"The best day of your life is the one on which you decide your life is your own. No apologies or excuses. No one to lean on, rely on, or blame. The gift is yours—it is an amazing journey—and you alone are responsible for the quality of it. This is the day your life really begins."
—Bob Moawad

UPCOMING EVENTS

April is another big month for us! On April 6th, please join us at the Alton Outreach for an Open House! Also, not only is it Sexual Assault Awareness Month—which includes Denim Day (on **April 26th**), but it is also Child Abuse Awareness Month.

On **April 28th**, join us at the West Plains Park from 3pm-5pm for food, games, and good ole' family fun! Help us raise awareness about Child Abuse and take a stand against it!

This June also brings about our 30th anniversary! Thirty years of providing support for a change and we aren't going anywhere! On **June 16th**, join us at People's Park in West Plains from 2-8pm for food, cake, games, door prizes, and swimming from 5-7pm! It may be our birthday, but the party's for you!!

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. As always, stay tuned to your local radio stations and newspapers for upcoming events and information!

CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

—LEAH MYERS, CHILD ADVOCATE

April is National Child Abuse Awareness Month—a time that we all can play a part in supporting the well-being of children in all communities. Child abuse frequently takes place in the home and is generally by somebody the child knows.

Neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse are four major types of child maltreatment. Long-term effects can be physical, psychological, and behavioral—Which results in lack of success in school, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, alcohol and other drug use, teen pregnancy, developmental disabilities, and learning problems. These are just a few of the many, many things that can affect a child.

The most recent year that statistics are available is 2010. That year, in Missouri, 55.5% of children were neglected, 27.8% were physically abused, and 24.5% were exposed to sexual abuse. These are only the ones that are KNOWN. When children speak up and tell someone, they often times are not believed or they are ignored because others don't know how to handle the situation and get the child help. As a community, we must speak up. If we don't...who will? The time has come to get involved and **be the difference**.

On April 28th, Christos House will be hosting a Kids' Fest at the West Plains Park from 3pm-5pm. We will have numerous fun games—including prizes—for the children to enjoy! Hot dogs will be served at no cost as well! Of course we will also have information available. Bring your kids...bring the whole family in fact...to not only have a great time together, but to also help us in raising awareness and letting our children know that we support them! We look forward to seeing you there!

2ND ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST —PREVENTION EDUCATORS



Focus on the Solution

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month—a time when advocates from all over the country work to raise awareness of teen dating violence. Teen dating violence is a serious and pervasive crime—approximately **1 in 3** high school students have been or will be involved in an abusive relationship, yet **81%** of parents either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it is an issue. In recognition of TDVAPM, Christos House held it's second annual writing contest entitled "Love What's Real" to raise awareness and get the teens in our communities involved. We received many amazing entries this year, and we are proud to share the placing entries with you.

THIRD PLACE
TRUSTING LOVE
BY TIFFANY JONES-
MANSFIELD HIGH

We trust love because we can't trust each other.
 Love is the most comforting object in life.
 Love can hurt or heal.
 Love can tear apart or sew together.
 Love can also be complicated and confusing.
 Love can also be joyful and give you butterflies.
 Love is there for us in anytime of need.
 Love can be the problem in many relationships.
 True love can wait for each other.
 Love can be binding.
 Love tries to prove that we need it.
 Love's complicated.
 We need love.
 Love is not hurt.
 Love is not pain.
 Love is not just lust.
 Love is not just about having someone.
 Love what's real to you.
 Love can't be desperate.
 Love has been disappointing.
 Love has been disappointed.
 We trust love for excitement.
 Love can be hidden.
 We can trust love.
 Love wants to be trusted.
 Love wants to prove to us it can be trusted.
 Trust love.

SECOND PLACE
LOVE WHAT'S REAL
BY KYLIE HOWELL-
LICKING HIGH

To show some respect,
 Don't talk down at all,
 It could make your partner
 Feel two inches tall.
 Love should not hurt,
 Especially not kill,
 If safety doesn't matter,
 It certainly will.
 Support is essential,
 To make it through life,
 For a boyfriend, girlfriend,
 Husband or wife.
 Sometimes it's okay,
 To stand up alone,
 Be who you are,
 Not someone's drone.
 Everyone is equal,
 Treat people with care,
 Don't be a bully,
 It's really not fair.
 If you're in it for love,
 Don't set a bar,
 Accept that person
 Just how they are.
 Be honest and true,
 Don't be a bust,
 A healthy relationship
 is based on trust.
 Holding hands, googly eyes,
 Or just take a walk,
 Communication is not limited,
 To text, tweet or talk.

FIRST PLACE
LOVE WHAT'S REAL
BY HALI LITRELL-
LICKING HIGH

The one thing that I've never wanted
 was an unhealthy relationship
 I want to be happy
 I want to be strong
 As each day passes from dusk till dawn
 I worry that one day he might be gone
 What could I have done wrong
 I know at times we fight
 And I always say it will be alright
 I've done things that are wrong
 And I wish I could make them right
 But we come to love not by finding a perfect person
 But by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly
 I want this relationship to last
 So we need to leave everything else in the past
 Let's take one more chance
 And make it last
 Unhealthy relationships sad but true
 Don't let it happen to you
 Get some help and raise your voice
 You might be glad you made that choice

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

BABY, I LOVE YOU

BY REBA HOPE CARSWELL
-ALTON HIGH SCHOOL

He hit me, I cried.
 "Baby, I love you,"
 The words of which I lied.

I thought it was over
 That the violence had died.
 That these beatings would stop
 Yet the bleeding would not subside.

He always says, "I'm sorry,"
 And I always take his side,
 When someone puts him down,
 Even though I don't know why.

The screaming and the beatings
 Are ringing in my ears.
 I hear him scream, "I hate you,"
 And I want to disappear.

I run into the bathroom,
 And slam the door behind.
 Wishing he would leave,
 Feeling like I could die.

I feel like I should leave him,
 But I just cannot see why.
 He tells me that he hates me,
 Then says, "Baby, please don't cry,"

He promises he will fix it,
 Swears that he will change.
 But when he comes home,
 It's always still the same.

Finally I snap, and knowing his rage,
 Even though I love him
 I find my strength,
 And walk away.

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Harley Crownover—Overnight Advocate
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Jewelina Owens—Cook/Housekeeper

www.christoshouse.com

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WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OREGON COUNTY?

—JAN SHIELDS, OREGON COUNTY OUTREACH ADVOCATE

Hello and Welcome! I'm Jan Shields, the Outreach Advocate for Oregon County. I am very excited to be a part of Christos House. The year has started with a wonderful explosion of excitement. With the Alton Schools' permission, I am currently working with the Alton Alternative school weekly. We are using weekly activities to open a door and talk about home and school life. We discuss present situations and what the future holds. This group is full of life, enthusiasm, and wanting to help make a difference! Too many times, we stereotype children who are obstinate or disruptive into the "bad child" category...when they are really right in the middle of domestic and sexual abuse. So we have stepped out of the box and began this group in hopes to make a change.

As always, individual assistance with women and children is available and many times successful. We continue to comfort and teach self-preservation, confidence, and life skills. The changes are extremely hard when entering new territory, but with assistance they realize it is necessary to step forward and become healthy and thrive.

I would like to thank the community and my co-workers for the super welcome into my current role. I look forward to continuing the efforts and support of encouragement in making a change in the Oregon County Area.

"The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."
-Unknown

KELLI'S KORNER--KELLI NEEL, CRISIS COUNSELOR

With every season there is change, there is a time for everything under the sun (Ecclesiastes 3). The only consistent elements in life are the inconsistencies of change and God's ever enduring Presence.

Yet, change is often difficult.

This call of freedom from violence can go unaddressed and unheard. It is lost in the din of the clanging noise of anxiety and doubts that change calls to mind. How can one face the trepidation and conquer the challenges of changing an old abused life for a new life of freedom?

In our self-thinking, we become our own worst enemy. We argue with ourselves and set up pretenses that excuse our decision to change, rationalize our means to remain where we are, and disallow Faith from taking root in our lives. We can conquer the challenges of changing from an old life riddled with bondage and embrace a new life brimming with freedom and peace. It simply comes into alignment with Christ. When our minds try to take us backward, away from change, we are advised to "demolish arguments and every pretense that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV).

Know that God can bring you peace if you turn your thoughts to Him. Trust Him to remove your doubts. Allow Him to bring you Solace. Follow Him onward to changes that will lead you to a life dependent on Him. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you or forsake you." That is His Promise—Step out and make the changes to have a better, more abundant life. It is worth every courageous step you take!

Have a Blessed life!

Your sister in Christ, By His Grace *Kelli*

FEINSTEIN'S ANNUAL \$1 MILLION GIVEAWAY TO FIGHT HUNGER

For the past 14 years, Alan Shawn Feinstein has divided \$1 million of his own money among hunger fighting agencies nationwide. This year, Christos House is included and we need YOUR help! Donations of cash, checks, and food items given to Christos House from March 1st through April 30th will be matched by Feinstein. This means that the more donated for this challenge to Christos House...the more of a share of the \$1 million Christos House will receive! Mr. Feinstein sends this message:

Please use MY money to help your neighbors in need! My name is Alan Shawn Feinstein. For the past 14 years, I have been giving away \$1 million each year to anti-hunger agencies throughout the country. This year, I am doing it again...WHATEVER YOU DONATE TO THIS AGENCY, I WILL ADD MONEY TO IT. THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE OF MY \$1 MILLION THEY'LL GET—THANKS TO YOU!

Why am I doing this? Because I believe each of us was put here on earth to do what we can to help those in need. You got this letter because we feel that YOU believe that, too. My money started this campaign but it is YOU who will help decide how many needy people in your city or town will be fed this year. All that will matter to us someday is what we did while we were here to help those who needed us. This has become the greatest grass roots campaign ever to fight hunger in our country. Your donation makes you a partner in it with me!

We Are Needed Now! Please give whatever you can—I will gladly add some of my money to yours. (My \$1 million will be divided proportionately in full among the agencies receiving donations toward my offer.) Thank you for sharing my heart, and the hope that—someday—no one will ever go hungry.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Shawn Feinstein

To contact Alan Shawn Feinstein with any questions, call 401-467-5155 or 401-941-5913. You can also write to Alan at 37 Alhambra Circle, Cranston, RI 02905. Also, visit www.feinsteinfoundation.org if you would like to verify credibility.



“Live your life from your heart. Share from your heart. And your story will touch and heal people's souls.”-Beattie

ADVOCACY DAY—FEBRUARY 28

A few of our staff had the fantastic opportunity to join advocates from across the state at the Capitol in Jefferson City to speak with our own representatives regarding domestic and sexual violence. Kelli Neel (Case Manager), Sherry Fohey (Director of Operations), Amber Brignole and Sunshine Gorskey (Prevention Specialists) are pictured to the right with Ward Franz, State Representative for District 151. Representative Franz has been a supporter of Christos House and we had a great discussion with him and enjoyed meeting his amazing secretary, Rachel Bauer.

On March 8th, our state coalition (MCADSV) was informed by Governor Jay Nixon's Budget Director that the Governor has ordered the immediate release of about \$350,000 in state funding for domestic violence services that had been withheld from current contracts due to state budget constraints. This is very good news for not only Christos House, but also to the other domestic violence service providers across the state.



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.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

We have available a tax credit program for those of our donors who would like to claim their donations. The sponsoring entity is the Missouri Department of Social Services, and the program name is the Domestic Violence Shelter Tax Credit Program. A 50% tax credit is available to all Missouri taxpayers who make an eligible contribution of at least \$100.00 to Christos House, a qualified shelter through this program.

Individuals, corporations, partnerships, S-corporations, express companies, and LLC's are all eligible donors. Eligible contributions include cash, stocks, bonds, marketable securities, buildings, and land.

Donors receive a credit in the amount of 50% of the value of their donation when they file their Missouri Income Tax return. This tax credit is in addition to the federal deduction for the donation. After making the donation, the donor completes a brief application and forwards it along with proof of the donation to: Christos House, P.O. Box 771, West Plains, MO 65775, where it will be signed and forwarded on. The donor then receives the necessary paperwork to take the tax credit within a few weeks. The donor may carry the tax credit forward for four successive years.

For more information, contact Kathy Barron, Director of Finances, at (417) 256-3408.

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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