

“The phoenix hope can wing her way through the desert skies and still, defying fortune’s spite, revive from ashes and rise.”

~Miguel de Cervantes

May 2013
Volume 2, Issue 4

Christos H peline

THE AWARENESS FACTOR...

May is upon us and spring is quickly passing into summer. As we watch another season pass and begin spring cleaning our homes and preparing for summer-time events, mental health is likely not on the forefront of everyone’s mind. Yet, the month of May is in fact identified as Mental Health Awareness month. With this, it is important for us to take a moment to reflect on what this aspect of our services means to the clients we offer assistance to and how this affects the survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

In our efforts to make a difference in the lives of persons who have been affected by domestic violence and sexual assault, mental health recovery is often a critical aspect of healing from abuse that is misunderstood or overlooked. There are many mental health conditions that coincide with traumatic events including Acute Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorders and there are other pre-existing comorbid diagnoses like Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Psychosis Disorders that will sometimes exacerbate the mental well-being of abuse survivors.

One of the most common mental health concerns for persons who have been subject to abusiveness is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This is no longer a diagnosis that stigmatizes war veterans as persons who cannot cope effectively with trauma or are debilitated by astonishing levels of stress as the result of a wartime event. It is also no longer a disorder that can be contributed to a singular terroristic event such as Pearl Harbor, the Holocaust, or September 11, 2001. Today PTSD is known to be a specific anxiety disorder whose attributes apply to the symptoms and behaviors of persons spanning the globe who have endured combat zones in their homes, have experienced relational tragedies of abusiveness, and who have witnessed excessively violent ordeals at the hands of family members, intimate partners, and even criminals who have sought to make profits through oppression, slavery, and human trafficking.

In as much, our clients not only seek safety and recovery from the physical, financial, and spiritual harms they have endured, they seek support and healing from the emotional and psychological effects that have injured their mental health. Therefore, through the month of May we endeavor to remember how incredibly important mental health is toward a survivor’s overall well-being and remind everyone to offer consideration and understanding to the mental health disorders and traumas that disable victims emotionally as they strive to overcome and cope with the tragedies they have endured.

Kelli
Shelter Supervisor



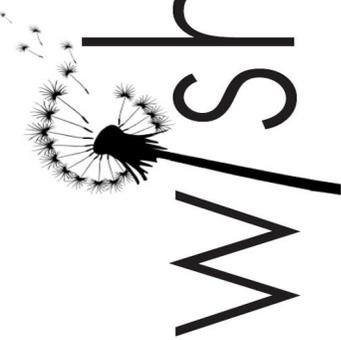
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wish List	2
Upcoming Events.....	2
Effects of Sexual Violence.....	2
It Isn't Just Physical.....	3
Psychological Abuse Examples.....	3
Kid's Fest & Child's Mental Health...	3
Self-Care is Vital.....	4
We Are The Village.....	5
A Resident's Thoughts.....	6

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Carol Ann Richardson, President
- Melissa Stewart, Vice President
- Josh Redfield, Secretary
- Bill Shaw, Treasurer
- Dr. Ray Brame
- Dr. Brent Easley
- Linda Szigety
- Julie Cook-Henney
- Reverend Maggie Kramer

wish list



WHERE'S THAT WELL?

With our house being full around the clock, we sure could use a wishing well to be able to fulfill the needs we have. From newborn babies to teenagers, expectant mothers to grandmothers—we provide safety, shelter, and support to them all. With that being said, our house is similar to yours—bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, play area, living room, laundry rooms...

What we are asking of you is...can you help fulfill some of the needs we have? Maybe you have extra of something and want to find a use for it? Maybe you aren't going to use that something anymore and don't want to throw it away? Maybe you have a few extra dollars (something hard to come by) and would like to help someone in need? Below is our list of items that we always are in need of. If you can help, we thank you! Also, items donated may be eligible for tax write-offs (call for more information).

Personal Hygiene Items for boys, girls, & women (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, feminine products, etc.)

Mattresses	Box Springs	Furniture	Bath Towels	Non-violent Toys
Cleaning Supplies	Appliances	Toilet Paper	Paper Towels	Pillows
Yarn & Craft Products				

*"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet, how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."
—Fred (Mr.) Rogers*

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Saturday, July 13th, it's time to tee up in a Benefit Golf Tournament at the Willow Springs Golf Course to benefit Christos House and the PBF Backpack Program. Tee times are 8am and 1p. Team entry fee is \$75 with more than a 50% payout. For more information, contact Jeff Conger at 417-547-3773.

Back-to-School Fairs have been scheduled and we will be there! So far we have: Shannon County's fair is scheduled to be held at the Winona Elementary on July 30th from 10am-2pm, one will be held at the Mountain View Youth Center on August 1st from 10am-1pm, and one will be held at Thayer Elementary on August 6th from 9am-3:30pm.

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.

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

—MELISSA LITTLESIELD, SEXUAL ASSAULT ADVOCATE

Sexual violence is a horrible crime—no matter the age of the victim. 93% of victims under the age of 18 know their attackers. Only 3% of these perpetrators will ever do jail time. So, what are the effects of sexual assault on the victims and their lives?

The effects are long lasting and can be devastating. The effects sexual violence has on a victim depend on the personal resilience, life experiences, and emotional support the individual has. Some of the physiological effects seen in victims include: hyper-vigilance (always on guard), insomnia, panic attacks, eating disorders, self-mutilation (cutting, burning, or hurting oneself), exaggerated startle response (jumpiness), substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, suicide, and more. It's important to remember that a majority of these assaults do not leave any physical injuries that are easily seen. The physical effects previously mentioned are what can be seen and have a devastating effect on the victim and their family and friends.

The psychological/emotional effects of sexual violence include: shock/denial, irritability/anger, depression, social withdrawal, detachment, nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty concentrating, little interest in activities or sex, loss of self-esteem, loss of trust in others, guilt, shame, embarrassment, loss of appetite, impaired memory, and more. Not all victims will experience these effects. Some may only experience a few of these—whether psychological or physiological—whereas others may experience all of these effects.

It's important for the victim to know she or he is not alone and has a strong support system. Most importantly, whether the victim is an adult or child, BELIEVE THEM! If you know someone exhibiting any of these behaviors or effects, talk to them and get help. It's never hopeless or too late to start treatment and healing. I hope that as a community we will keep a watchful eye for any signs of abuse and not to be silent. To all the survivors—know you are not alone and you do have support. Let's break the silence and the secrets, speak out and stand out against sexual violence.

Melissa

IT ISN'T JUST PHYSICAL...—SUNSHINE GORSKEY & AMBER BRIGNOLE, PREVENTION SPECIALISTS

Domestic violence can appear in many forms. When people think about abuse, what comes to mind most often is physical abuse. However, there are many types of abuse and some forms are more subtle than others. One of the more subtle types of abuse is psychological abuse. Sometimes it can be extremely hard for anyone outside the situation to recognize this type of abuse going on. Even though it's hard to recognize, this type of abuse has lasting effects. Physical scars and bruises heal and fade....it takes longer, if at all, for the psychological, verbal, and emotional scars and bruises to do the same.

When an abuser uses physical or sexual force or threats, it gives power to their psychologically abusive acts. Psychological abuse is present when physical or sexual abuse is; however, physical and sexual abuse is not always present when psychological abuse occurs. Psychological abuse becomes very effective in controlling a victim because she or he knows from experience that his/her abuser will at times back up the threats or taunts with physical violence. One of the examples we tell our students is this: A woman once told me that her husband got angry with her because dinner was not ready when he wanted it to be. He had been physically abusive in the past, and this time when he got angry he slammed his hand down on the kitchen table and then slapped her. The next time he gets angry and slams his hand or fist down, what do you believe she will think will happen next? She's going to get hit or assaulted. The abuser never has to hit her again—he has psychological control over her.

I can't even count the number of times that we have heard survivors and also students in our community describe this type of abuse. Some see it at home and don't know what to do about it, some think it's normal behavior, and some take it because "at least (s)he's not hitting me" and most don't know what to do about it. It is our job to educate and advocate for victims and survivors, as well as our youth who are unsure how to navigate the complexities of intimate relationships. Will you join us in helping make our communities safer?

KID'S FEST & A CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

—LEAH MYERS, CHILD ADVOCATE

Kid's Fest was held May 11th at the National Guard Armory in West Plains. Kid's Fest is for families to come out and have a good time enjoying games and prizes together. It also helps raise awareness of Child Abuse. Christos House would like to thank Chuck Brotherton and all of the supportive members involved in putting this event together and coming by to see us!

Child abuse includes mental abuse, as does domestic violence. No matter the age of the child, he or she is impacted by violence in the home even if he or she is not directly being abused. A child's mental health is affected by domestic and sexual violence. As a child advocate, I have seen many of these effects such as: fear, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, feeling lost, complaints of physical pain, anger, depression, and difficult behavior. Ensuring these children that none of the abuse was or is their fault and showing a child his or her value and self-worth is vital in not only the healing process, but also in his or her mental health stability. Children need to know that they matter and are important. Join me to extend our hands, and hearts, to all children and give them a sense of importance and to know that they are loved and not alone. Let's all be a part in being the difference.

Leah

psychological abuse examples

- * breaking promises, not following through with agreements or not taking a fair share of responsibility
- * verbally attacking or humiliating partners in private or public
- * attacking vulnerabilities such as language abilities, educational level, skills as a parent, religious or cultural beliefs, physical appearance, age
- * playing mind games
- * forcing partners to do degrading things
- * ignoring a partner's feelings
- * withholding approval or affection as punishment
- * regularly threatens to leave or tells partner to leave
- * accusing and harassing partner about affairs he/she believes partner is having
- * stalking
- * always claiming to be right
- * being unfaithful

Sunshine & Amber

SELF-CARE IS VITAL—JAN SHIELDS, OUTREACH ADVOCATE

CHRISTOS HOUSE STAFF

West Plains Outreach
P.O. Box 771
West Plains, MO 65775
Phone: 417-256-3408
Fax: 417-256-3428

Kathy Barron—Director of Finances
Carol Schmidt—Office Manager
Melissa Littleshield—Sexual Assault Advocate

Resale Shop
305 Washington Ave.
West Plains, MO 65775
Phone: 417-257-7729

Rilla Rothermich
M. J. Carroll
Nova Williams
Kelly Moncrief
Georgia Ellison
Michael Dance
Treva Tallman

Texas and Wright County Outreach
Houston, MO 65483
Phone: 417-252-0829

Rita Foster—Outreach Advocate

Oregon County Outreach
Alton, MO 65606
Phone: 417-778-1773

Jan Shields—Outreach Advocate

Resale Shop
Alton, MO 65606

Montana Briggs
Ashley Russell
Lizzie Roberts

Christos House Shelter
P.O. Box 771
West Plains, MO 65775
Phone: 417-469-1190
Fax: 417-469-1192
Hotline: 800-611-5853

Kelli Neel—Shelter Supervisor
Leah Myers—Child Advocate
Amber Brignole—Prevention Specialist
Sunshine Gorskey—Prevention Specialist
Tasha Collins—Marketing/PR/Advocate
AJ Clinton—Advocate
Harley Crownover—Advocate
Jewelina Owens—Case Manager
Shawna Talton—Advocate
Cindy Green—Housekeeping/Cook

www.christoshouse.com

GRANDFATHER, LOOK AT OUR BROKENNESS. WE KNOW THAT IN ALL CREATION ONLY THE HUMAN FAMILY HAS STRAYED FROM THE SACRED WAY. WE KNOW THAT WE ARE THE ONES WHO ARE DIVIDED AND WE ARE THE ONES WHO MUST COME BACK TOGETHER TO WALK IN THE SACRED WAY. GRANDFATHER, SACRED ONE, TEACH US LOVE, COMPASSION, AND HONOR THAT WE MAY HEAL THE EARTH AND HEAL EACH OTHER.

- *CJIPWA PRAYER*

One of the first things I see when speaking with women is the stress in their face and tension in their arms. That is where they are carrying all their burdens. We talk about it and then we practice relaxation. Self-care is vital to survival.

Relaxation training is a process of deliberately tensing and then relaxing oneself in order to learn to notice the difference between the two states. Here is a very brief example you can practice on your own.

Lay on the floor on your back. Inhale and hold your breath. Lift your feet about a foot off the ground. Raise your arms the same amount at your sides. Tense all of your muscles throughout your body. Hold for five seconds and then drop your arms and legs. Inhale slowly and become aware of the sense of relaxation coming over you. Exert no effort and imagine that you are melting into the floor. Do a mental inventory of your muscles. What do you feel? Which muscles feel noticeably different after relaxation? Breathe slowly and fully. Stretch. Think about how your muscles feel before and after relaxation. Repeat several times. Isolate individual muscles and practice them separately.

Meditation has been used for centuries to help calm the mind and body. Focusing on a sound, thought or image to the exclusion of all else tends to organize and integrate us and promote feelings of mastery control and unity. Prayer has been viewed as a form of meditation when individuals concentrate their attention on a thought or image.

Cognitive therapy has introduced the technique of reframing. Thoughts that lead to anxiety and stress are examined and altered to reduce their anxiety producing potential. Often, one anxious thought leads to another more anxiety producing thought and the individual is off to the races in generating more and more stress producing thoughts.

"Nourishing yourself in a way that helps you blossom in the direction you want to go is attainable, and you are worth the effort." -Deborah Day

Massage can help stretch and relax tight muscles. Learn to practice self massage. Notice the difference between tense and relaxed muscles. Try to carry the feeling of relaxation and looseness with you throughout the day.

Breath control is a very effective stress management technique. It seems that when the breathing becomes slow and full other physical and cognitive changes occur that promote relaxation. Take some time to practice full relaxed breathing. A full breath begins with the diaphragm pushing downward so that the stomach pushes out. As the lungs fill the chest will expand. On the exhale the reverse occurs with the chest receding first and then the stomach. Concentrate on slow and deep breathing.

Heat promotes muscle relaxation. Hot baths, sauna, whirlpool and dry heat can be helpful parts of a relaxation program. Practice your other techniques such as meditation, stretching and breath control during and after using heat. Practice full relaxation of twenty or thirty minutes daily. Also, try to

practice a mini-relaxation response of a minute or so several times per day. Jan

WE ARE THE VILLAGE—RITA FOSTER, OUTREACH ADVOCATE

I am happy to report that I am receiving referrals for parenting classes from Division of Family Services in both Texas and Wright counties, Ozark Medical Center Behavioral Health, the probation office in Texas County. There are also a few individual families who call on their own to get help. At present, I am providing private parenting support classes for 14 families. Many who come either have no support network or have a network with varying degrees of dysfunction. The saying goes that “it takes a village to raise a family” but when your village has addiction and abuse problems, you are better off finding a new one. Creating new associations can be very difficult if you live and work in the same place unless you learn new skills on setting boundaries, breaking generational abuse cycles, recognizing the negative signs of control and having support needed for making wiser choices for you and your children.



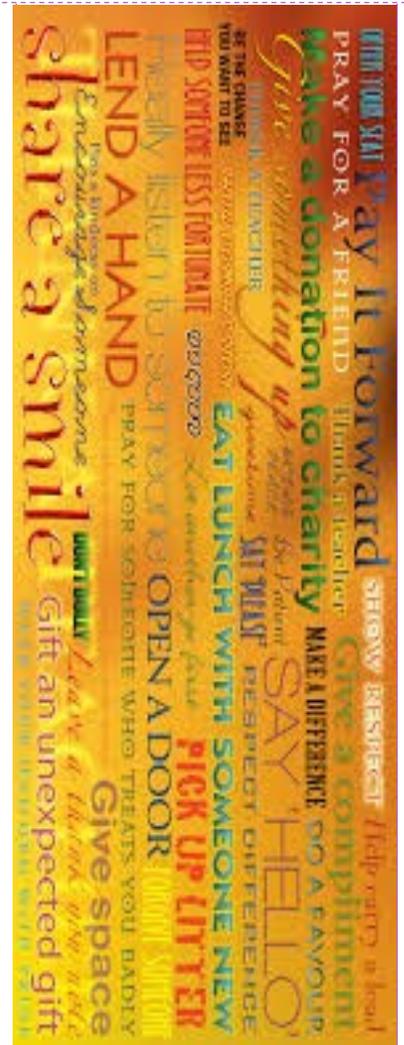
“One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.” —Jean Vanier

Christos House Shelter and Outreach programs become an intricate part of that village for the family who wants to make these changes. New skills are taught and support provided to help them stabilize their family. This can take months and years. I am still, on occasion, hearing from families that I started with nearly ten years ago. Yes, they are far too few in number, but each success story makes a difference in the communities where they live.

Sadly, much of the time it takes losing their children to state care to get their attention but I cannot count the times I have heard “This is the best thing that has ever happened to my family!”. This is the family who has endured weekly one-hour visitations for months supervised by a professional paid stranger watching their sacred moments together. I believe this is the family who sees through new eyes and has come through a very difficult and humbling crisis to transform their lives. Their village doesn't have to be a single neighborhood, it can be everywhere.

You most likely know someone who is trying to break away from toxic families and friends, whom even though you are not related to them could use a listening, non-judgmental ear, an invitation to your church or civic group, a job lead or even a financial hand-up.

We are their village – all of us – paying it forward, creating impact that we may never be able to measure but giving back from the wealth of the village that we are blessed to have. —*Rita*



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.

A RESIDENT'S THOUGHTS...

Thank you for all the support you have given to us. Our experience has been one I will never forget! I have learned a lot from each and everyone from all the girls I connected to and will carry it all with me throughout my life. I have been blessed to be here even if for a short time. Even though it was a short time I have learned a lifetime of information. All of you are great! May God bless you always!

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.

Christos House
P.O. Box 771
West Plains, Mo 65775

Shelter Phone: 417-469-1190
Shelter Hotline: 800-611-5853
Shelter Fax: 417-469-1192

West Plains Outreach
Phone: 417-256-3408
Fax: 417-256-3428

Find us on Facebook!
www.christoshouse.com

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

