



## The Journey to Find a Place to Call HOME

**D**ay after day, Monica and her seven-year old son faced her abusive husband's roller coaster of behaviors. One night, he'd throw dinner on the floor because it was too cold. The next morning, he'd bring flowers to apologize. He promised that it wouldn't happen again. The pattern of outbursts continued for years. Monica and her son walked on eggshells in their own home. For a long time, home was no longer safe. Home no longer felt like home.

Monica reached her decision to leave her husband over time. She called SafeHouse Denver to walk through how to leave as safely as possible. Monica and her son stayed at SafeHouse Denver's emergency shelter for two months. In addition to processing and healing from the abuse the two of them had endured, Monica tirelessly looked for a decent apartment. For anything affordable, the wait lists were long. When they left our Shelter, Monica moved in with family until a spot opened up at a transitional housing program. One month later, they are still waiting.

Sadly, Monica's story and struggles are not uncommon. Lack of affordable housing has long been a challenge for victims of domestic violence, often forcing women to make the dangerous decision of staying with an abuser or becoming homeless. In fact, the National Law Center on Homelessness reports that domestic violence is the primary cause of homelessness for women.

Today, with housing prices on the rise and high competition for rentals, this barrier is particularly unyielding. Wait lists for affordable housing can sometimes run up to two years, leaving survivors of domestic violence unsure of where their next stable step will be. For victims of domestic violence, competition for housing is sometimes compounded by a history of evictions, unsteady employment and poor credit, situations that are often tied to an abuser's tactics to control and manipulate their partner.



SafeHouse Denver and other area emergency shelter facilities are an essential component of keeping women and children out of homelessness. In 2014, 170 women and 92 children called our emergency shelter home.

According to Natalie Hicks, Director of Shelter Services, one of the first questions Advocates explore with shelter residents is *"where do you see yourself going from here and what vision do you have for yourself?"* Residents often indicate that they would like to move into a place of their own. *"Part of our role,"* notes Hicks, *"is to provide information about housing options and to help women through the process. We encourage residents to get started as soon as possible. Finding a stable place to live can be exhausting and time-consuming."*

If finding a place of their own is a goal, our advocates connect residents to local agencies such as Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and The Gathering Place. Both of which, notes Hicks, *"have systems in place to specifically help women find housing."* During their stay at shelter, we continue to support residents through the process, encouraging and advocating for them to find short-term transitional housing options to bridge the gap to longer semi-permanent or permanent housing.

Deeply committed to helping families who need additional time to work toward self-sufficiency, SafeHouse Denver is moving forward with plans to open an Extended Stay Program (ESP) sometime in 2017. ESP would be a new, additional facility for shelter residents who require more time to pursue affordable housing, employment options, child care and other resources, reducing the potential of them becoming homeless. In addition to providing a more appropriate living situation for this group of residents, the creation of ESP would open up more beds at our emergency shelter, allowing us to meet the immediate needs of more women and children in crisis. We anticipate that we'll be able to serve, on average, an additional 128 more women and children each year and are excited to see our longtime vision begin to take shape.

For women and children like Monica and her son, our ESP will be an important addition to our existing programs and services. Victims and survivors will continue to be able to access safe shelter, non-residential counseling and advocacy services, and in the future, have one more resource to rebuild their lives free from domestic violence. ■

### Did You Know?

- For every 100 extremely low income renter households, there are just 30 affordable and available rental units.<sup>1</sup>
- The National Law Center on Homelessness reports that domestic violence is the primary cause of women's homelessness.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2014, we referred 3,156 requests for safe shelter to other resources because our shelter was full.

<sup>1</sup>National Low Income Housing Coalition. Housing spotlight 3(2). 2013. [www.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HS\\_3-1.pdf](http://www.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HS_3-1.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. 2014 State of Homelessness Report, Seven County Denver Metropolitan Region.

# Message from Our CEO

**D**

ear Friends,

I hope these early months of 2015 have been good to you and your family. Although 2014 may be just a memory, I'd like to thank all of our dedicated supporters for their investment in SafeHouse Denver last year. Together, we're meeting our mission of assisting adults, children and youth in reclaiming their right to a life free from domestic violence.

I'm very pleased to send you our first Journal of 2015, filled with summaries of past events and updates on creative ways you can continue to support our lifesaving work. Of particular note is our new spring event, Sampling for Hope, a casual small-plate "tasting" that will take place on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at RedLine Gallery. See the feature 'next door' for more details!

As it is for many, the turn of the New Year was a time of reflection at SafeHouse Denver. We're grateful that in 2014, with support from individuals like you, close to 1,500 individuals experiencing domestic violence accessed safe shelter and counseling services at SafeHouse Denver free of charge. In addition, advocates and trained volunteers responded to over 14,000 crisis line calls, an average of 38 calls per day.

In 2014, we also reached 979 individuals through 40 educational presentations on domestic violence. Our community education presentations are an opportune time to address a question we're so frequently asked... *"Why doesn't the victim just leave?"* While it often originates from an innocent place, the question reflects our cultural tendency to blame the victim for the abuse. It places the responsibility on her to stop the behavior. The question also represents a lack of understanding around the many barriers a victim faces when leaving an abusive relationship, should she choose to do so. Instead, we encourage reframing the question to *"Why does he choose to abuse?"* This places responsibility for abuse where it belongs, with the abuser.

Finding a safe and affordable place to live is just one piece of the puzzle to living a life free from domestic violence. As you'll read in our cover story, it's often a big hurdle. As the National Network to End Domestic Violence so clearly stated in a recent article, asking why doesn't the victim just leave *"assumes that there is a 'somewhere-else-to-be'."*

Creating connections with survivors of domestic violence and educating the broader community about the issue is only possible through the generous support of individuals like you. With our fiscal year ending March 31, we're still striving to reach our final revenue goals to end the year in a strong financial position. If you believe that everyone should have the right to live a life free from domestic violence, we urge you to make a financial contribution today using the enclosed donation envelope or online at [ColoradoGives.org/SafeHouse](http://ColoradoGives.org/SafeHouse).

From all of us at SafeHouse Denver, thank you for your generous support and belief in the work that we do.

With deepest gratitude,

**Victoria A. McVicker**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Sampling for Hope

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e're excited to announce the launch of our second signature fundraising event *Sampling for Hope*. All proceeds from the event will be directed toward operating our future Extended Stay Program.

Guests will be treated to small plates prepared by some of Denver's culinary elite. To add to the fun, "VIP Judges," including our Honorary Chair Belen De Leon of 9News, will select the best dish in each food category (Appetizer, Entrée, and Dessert). There will also be a small food-themed silent auction.

Sampling for Hope will take place on Thursday, June 4, 2015 from 6:30–9:30 pm at RedLine Gallery (2350 Arapahoe Street). Visit our website and social media pages for more information coming soon!

If you're interested in chef participation or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Shannon at [sboltz@safehouse-denver.org](mailto:sboltz@safehouse-denver.org) or 303-302-6126. ■

## Hope Gala

**O**

n October 18, 2014, 330 guests gathered at the Ritz-Carlton in Denver to celebrate and raise funds for our mission. This signature event raised more than \$290,000.

Carol and Paul Rose, longtime donors and friends of SafeHouse Denver, received the Susan Noble Community Impact Award. The Carolyn Hamil-Henderson Award was presented to Linda Johnston, Project Director, Ending Violence Against Women Project, Colorado District Attorneys' Council.

We'd like to thank Carrie Wernecke-Swenson, Devon Hayes, and Valerie Chilewski for their leadership in planning last year's event. We'd also like to recognize our generous sponsors, volunteers, auction donors, guests, staff and vendors for their incredible support.

*The 2015 SafeHouse Denver Hope Gala is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2015 at the Ritz-Carlton Denver. Please save the date for an elegant and fun evening! Sponsorship details coming soon!*

If you'd like to serve on our 2015 Gala Auction or Sponsorship committees, please contact Valerie at [vhilewski@safehouse-denver.org](mailto:vhilewski@safehouse-denver.org) or 303-302-6116. ■



# News & Notes

## Board of Directors

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Domestic Violence Advocate  
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## Shelter Relief Staff

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Stephanie Sessarego  
Lynne Watson  
Cecily Williams  
Veronika Walker

## Newsletter

Ashley Golder & Valerie Chilewski,  
Editors  
Steve Cruz, Graphic Design

## Honorary Giving

Are you planning a birthday party, wedding or other celebratory event? If your guests are expecting to bring a gift, consider suggesting they make a financial contribution to SafeHouse Denver instead. For additional information, contact Shannon at sboltz@safehouse-denver.org or 303-302-6126.

## In The Spirit

Our 2014 holiday *In the Spirit* program was a great success! 51 donors generously provided holiday gifts and food for 109 families receiving services at our non-residential Counseling and Advocacy Center. In addition, all of our shelter residents received holiday gifts.



Representatives from  
SLI Global Solutions drop off  
Thanksgiving baskets

Thank you to the individuals and businesses who took part in this annual initiative.

## Board Update

We're pleased to share that we recently elected the following individuals to our Board of Directors: **Nicole Adolphus** of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck; **Sharla Carlson** of Reed Group, Ltd; **Kelly Donovan** of Wells Fargo; **Ramona Gomoll** of MasTec Advanced Technologies; and **Ted Vanderveen** of Be Relevant Solutions. Longtime donors and friends, **Carol and Paul Rose**, as well as 7News' **Dayle Cedars**, were elected to the Honorary Board. We'd also like to recognize and

thank **Monica Denler** and **Brad Smith** for their commendable nine years of service on the board.

## Warren Miller Film Screening



Brenda and Christopher Volgenau with  
Board Chair-Elect, Joy Woller (R)

On January 14, 2015, 175 guests gathered at **Stoney's Bar & Grill** for a special screening of **Warren Miller Entertainment's No Turning Back**. Guests enjoyed the film and received great two-for-one deals to local ski resorts. We extend our sincere appreciation to **Brenda and Christopher Volgenau** for coordinating the event on our behalf again this year. We'd also like to recognize **Warren Miller Entertainment**, **Stoney's Bar & Grill**, **Oskar Blues Brewery**, and all attendees for their generous support of the event.

## Planned Giving

The Legacy of Hope Society was created as a special way to honor and thank people who remember us in their estate plans. If you're interested in learning about how to make



a lasting impact through a planned gift, please contact Valerie at vchilewski@safehouse-denver.org or 303-302-6116.

## Colorado Gives Day

We'd like to thank the 229 generous donors who contributed over \$45,000 to SafeHouse Denver on Colorado Gives Day.

The statewide day of giving, hosted by **Community First Foundation** and **FirstBank** on Tuesday, December 9, 2014, helped Colorado nonprofits raise a record \$26.2 million in just 24 hours.

## Enterprise Zone Reporting Change

Starting January 2015, we will only need the last four digits of your social security number to complete your Enterprise Zone form. Enterprise Zone is a 25% Colorado State Income Tax Credit on cash contributions of \$100 or more. Contact Sabrina at 303-302-6122 or shobart@safehouse-denver.org for more information.

## Thank You

We'd like to recognize and thank the following entities for hosting an event or initiative on our behalf through late January: **Beauty Brands**; **BolderLife Festival**; **Burgerfi**; **Denver City Attorney's Office Trivia Event**; **Denver Post Charity Sale and Silent Auction**; **DJ Bedz**; **Fortitude Foundation**; **Girls in Gis**; **Kroenke Sports – Colorado Avalanche & Denver Nuggets**; **Larson Financial, Inc.**; **LUPEC Denver**; **Odell Brewery**; **One Source Magazine Distribution**; **Shimmy Mob**; **Sill-Terhar Motors, Inc.**; **Sloane's Carpet Secret**; **Warrior Academy Yoga**; **Wellness Rhythms**.

Visit our website to learn more about upcoming events and initiatives including Shimmy Mob 2015 and the Plains End Golf Tournament. ■

## SafeHouse Denver

1649 Downing Street  
Denver, CO 80218

Admin: 303-318-9959

Crisis Line: 303-318-9989

[www.safehouse-denver.org](http://www.safehouse-denver.org)

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### Vehicle Donations

You can donate an old car to benefit SafeHouse Denver through *Cars Helping Charities*. It's easy, tax-deductible, and they accept any car in any condition. The net proceeds will come to SafeHouse Denver. Call 303-423-CARS (2277) or visit [carshelpingcharities.org](http://carshelpingcharities.org).

### Get Connected

Get our latest news and updates by subscribing to our electronic newsletter.

Visit our website — [www.safehouse-denver.org](http://www.safehouse-denver.org) — and follow the 'Subscribe to our Newsletter' link.

## Ways to Support SafeHouse Denver

The generosity of our donors, sponsors, funders and friends is essential to our work. Every gift is important, so please consider making a donation in one of these ways.

- Make a financial contribution: mail a check using the enclosed giving envelope; call 303-302-6126; or donate online at [coloradogives.org/safehouse](http://coloradogives.org/safehouse).
- Commit to a monthly gift and become a Sustainer of Hope by selecting the option on the enclosed giving envelope or online [coloradogives.org/safehouse](http://coloradogives.org/safehouse).
- Make a planned gift by naming SafeHouse Denver in your will or estate plans.
- Designate SafeHouse Denver as your charity of choice during your employer's workplace giving campaign. Simply note SafeHouse Denver on the pledge form.
- Ask your employer to match your contribution.
- Donate in-kind goods. Visit our website and click on 'Support Us' to view our current Wish List.
- Donate your used cell phone at any Verizon store. The company's recycling program generates grant funds for shelters like SafeHouse Denver.
- Earn even greater tax relief on a donation of \$100 or more. Write 'Enterprise Zone' on your check or make a note in the 'comments' field of your online donation.
- Volunteer! Learn more at [safehouse-denver.org/volunteering](http://safehouse-denver.org/volunteering)

## SafeHouse Denver Programs & Services

SafeHouse Denver offers comprehensive services, in English and Spanish, at both our Emergency Shelter and our non-residential Counseling and Advocacy Center.

### SERVICES INCLUDE:

- 24-Hour Crisis and Information Line 303-318-9989
- Secure Emergency Housing
- Individual Counseling and Advocacy
- Support Groups
- Safety Planning
- Referrals to Community Resources
- Teen Dating Violence Prevention Services
- Children and Youth Services
- Community Education and Outreach

24-Hour Crisis and Information Line ..... 303-318-9989  
Administration ..... 303-318-9959  
Community Education Program ..... 303-302-6125  
Development Department ..... 303-302-6126  
Volunteer Opportunities ..... 303-830-1276 x16  
Fax ..... 303-318-9979

Website: [www.safehouse-denver.org](http://www.safehouse-denver.org)

Helping adults, children and youth overcome domestic violence since 1977.  
[safehouse-denver.org](http://safehouse-denver.org)