The initial headlines were horrifying. A young mother, Victoria Glover, was shot to death while putting her three year old son into her car. Shortly after, the man who she was divorcing failed to show up for jury duty and a warrant was immediately issued for his arrest. Later that night, police found him, dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Police were easily able to connect the gun he used with the weapon that was used to kill Victoria. Police closed the case.

While a clear open and shut case for the police, what about others in this story? While services were immediately available for her son, what about the other people involved in Victoria’s life? Victoria was an employee at what is now known as the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center (UMSJMC). How did her coworkers, people who spent all day, every day with her, handle this?

“When a staff member died, it really rocked the staff. Everyone wanted to know if we missed something. We felt kind of helpless,” said Michelle McKee to Baltimore Sun reporter Meredith Cohn. While the hospital staff weren’t prepared for this, the House of Ruth Maryland has been working with area workplaces for several years to implement Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) policies in their workplaces.

“The reality is stunning – nearly all workplaces have policies on substance abuse and things like that, but only 4% of corporations have IPV policies in place.
Letter from Executive Director

Dear Friends,

**Gladys Tordil. Charlotta Barkley.**

Two women whose paths likely never crossed, but who shared a brutal death - both murdered at the hands of their intimate partner, within days of each other.

House of Ruth Maryland has worked rigorously since 1977 to address the systems that help victims of intimate partner violence. We’ve advocated for changes in how police answer domestic calls, how the courts react to cases in front of them, how social services handle matters of partner violence, how workplaces respond to employees who are victims, and we’ve fought for the passage of state laws that help victims and fought against those that would hurt them. But what happens when all of the mechanisms in place are working, and it still is not enough to protect a victim from the abuser?

We can’t, it seems, let go of the notion that the reason victims are killed is that some support system somewhere should have done something better. People around the victim agonize over what they could have, should have done. When the media’s attention is captured, as in Gladys’ case, their dogged questioning is to find the hole in what happened – investigating how the protective order was handled, how the police responded. How did the system fail Gladys?

The system did not fail Gladys. Our community failed Gladys. We failed, because we’re not asking the right questions. We should be turning to the source of the horror, and asking why this man believed it was his right to control Gladys to the point that he “walked right through” a protective order and shot her. What led him to think it was ok to abuse her? What did we do to hold him accountable? To influence and pressure him to change his belief? To change his behavior?

We must shift the focus and change the conversation. The message needs to clear, consistent and loud - there is never a situation where abuse of any kind can be justified, minimized or excused. Never. It needs to be talked about in every corner of our community, openly and persistently. Only when we confront the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that perpetuate violence against women, will every woman be able to live in her own home safely and free of fear.

Sincerely,

Sandi Timmins
Executive Director
Success in Annapolis

The House of Ruth Maryland was pleased with a very successful 2016 Maryland General Assembly session. Once again, we thank Sean Malone and Phil Cronin of the lobbying firm Harris Jones and Malone for their pro bono representation of the House of Ruth Maryland. They were amazingly helpful to our legislative effort during the 90-day session.

During the 2016 session, the following key pieces of legislation passed:
1. The stalking statute was expanded to include “serious emotional distress” to the list of acts that define stalking.
2. The acts of abuse which qualify a victim for a peace order now include telephone misuse, misuse of electronic communication, revenge porn and various forms of visual surveillance.
3. The Legislature repealed a law that prohibited a person who had a previous perjury conviction from testifying.
4. The sunset provision that would have ended victim notification of service of an interim or temporary protective order was removed. The notification process will continue.
5. The General Assembly passed a law to create a Task Force to study and make recommendations on how to protect the identity and address of a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program when recording deed transfers. Many victims use the ACP to keep abusers from getting their addresses.
6. Under current law, a person who wants a divorce must bring a witness to corroborate their testimony about the grounds for divorce. The Legislature removed this requirement this year.

If you’d like more information about the legislative agenda of the House of Ruth Maryland, please contact Dorothy Lennig at dlennig@hruthmd.org.

What Do You Do?

When Charlotta Barkley’s abuser started stabbing her in a Glen Burnie parking lot, a bystander stepped in to help and was injured. What do you do if you know someone is being abused? How can you help and keep yourself safe?

“There are three opportunities to respond to a violent situation,” said Lisa Nitsch, Director of Training and Education at the House of Ruth Maryland.

“You can intervene before, during or after the abuse,” Nitsch said.

Before: Talk about it: Talk with the victim and let her know you’re there for her, when and if she needs help. Talk with local resources, like the House of Ruth Maryland, to see what options are available for the victim. Talk with others you know to let them know that being abusive to their partner is wrong – whether it’s physical, emotional, financial abuse, etc.

During: Safety First: Intervention does not have to be an altercation. Create a non-threatening distraction for the abuser if you notice a situation getting heated like asking for the time or directions, recruit help from others in the area, be a witness and contact the authorities. During the incident is the most dangerous time for everyone, and physically intervening could increase the danger for the victim and yourself.

After: Be a Resource: Talk with the victim and let her know that you are concerned for her, and that it’s not her fault. Give her information about resources, like House of Ruth Maryland. Honor her privacy, although you want to help, she may not want everyone to know about the situation and may be embarrassed that you do. Let her know, whatever her choice is that day, even if she doesn’t feel safe enough to take action, you remain someone she can use as a resource.

To learn more about how you can help as a bystander, contact our 24-hour hotline at 410-889-7884.

2016 UPCOMING EVENTS

High Heels for Hope
June 18, 2016
Crabaret
July 14, 2016
Clearing House Sidewalk Sale
September 7, 2016
Man Up Fundraiser,
Adopt A Family
Fall 2016
B-More Bags Trunk Show and Sale
December 3, 2016

Epic Sidewalk Sale

Once a year, the Clearing House in Timonium clears out their storage units and has the ultimate sidewalk sale! This year the sale celebrates its 26th year and is set for September 7th. The ribbon will be cut at 10 a.m. and it promises to be yet another unforgettable event! From fine china to luxury linens to jewelry, a bounty of fantastic bargains awaits. Don’t forget to bring cash or checkbook, as they don’t accept credit cards for this sale. The best part, all proceeds from the sale benefit the House of Ruth Maryland.

“This year will be the biggest and best sale we’ve ever had and you really should come early for the best selection,” said Lisa Hudson, co-owner of the Clearing House and House of Ruth Maryland Board Member. “We even have shoppers who plan around this event each year – it’s not just our sale, it’s a community event!”

For more information on the Clearing House Sidewalk Sale, contact Faith Savill, Community Relations Specialist, at fsavill@hruthmd.org or contact the store directly at 410-561-4546.
Shameless

One of the House of Ruth Maryland’s long-time leaders, Terri Wurmser, will begin her retirement this summer. We recently took a walk down memory lane with Terri.

What originally brought you to the House of Ruth Maryland?

When I worked with NY State Division of Parole, I worked with incarcerated, battered women. This was my first experience with intimate partner violence. These were women who fought back against their abusers and were now in prison because of it. I attended a public hearing where women gave their testimony and it truly opened my eyes to the transformation of the women who began to see themselves as the victims they were.

What types of jobs did you have while at the House of Ruth Maryland?

I started as the Director of Programs 21 years ago. We were a much smaller organization then. I supervised the Coordinators of our Shelter, Children’s Program, Counseling Program, and abuse intervention program. My job was to help these programs and the staff who supported them grow. I take a measure of pride in how comprehensive our services are today and the fact that four of the program managers I brought on board are still with House of Ruth roughly 15 years later, in positions of significant responsibility, making a difference in the lives of victims and abusers every day.

In 2009, in the face of a very tight economic landscape, our Board of Directors decided to invest in developing a social enterprise to generate a revenue stream for HRM. My charge was to start a resale store with excess donations that our clients could not use. This was a fantastic opportunity. I named myself the Director of Social Enterprises, got my arms around our donation operation with the help of staff and volunteers, and in 2011 opened Ruth’s Closet, our upscale resale boutique. Today, Ruth’s Closet is a successful business, contributing significant revenue to HRM and increasing awareness about HRM and the issue of intimate partner violence. In 2013 I became the Director of Development and had the opportunity to use some of the skills that I’d honed through Social Enterprise to help the House of Ruth Maryland raise money needed to support our comprehensive programs and services. I think my self-imposed nickname of “shameless” might have had something to do with this, since I have always been eager to create the opportunity for people to support the important work of HRM.

What is the achievement you are most proud of?

The accomplishments of the people I’ve had the good fortune to work with and coach. HRM staff are exceptional. I have enormous respect for their efforts and passion. Our significant stature in the field is due to their good work.

What is something you wish people better understood about partner violence?

I wish people knew how courageous and strong victims are. Even with all of the challenges they face, whether they stay or go back, they are the ultimate survivors.

What are you looking forward to in your retirement?

Less stress! Travel, free time and looking forward to having time to reflect, to step back and look at where I’ve been and where I want to go in this next chapter of my life. A life pause.

I am so grateful to HRM for giving me the opportunity to be creative, especially with Ruth’s Closet and B-More Bags. I am so fortunate to have worked with so many amazing volunteers who give so much of themselves to this organization. I have made lifelong friends with many of these women. And like them, I will forever be a “Ruthette”.

We thank Terri for her many years of service and wish her the best in her future adventures.
In Control

When asked how she survived 10 years of captivity and speaks out now, House of Ruth Maryland’s Spring Luncheon speaker, Lily Rose Lee, had a message for all victims of violence. “Being in a traumatic situation, we do have memories, but we don’t have to let those memories control our lives.” Lee and Melissa Moore, who shared her perspective as the child of a serial killer and a victim of partner violence, were the keynote speakers at the House of Ruth Maryland’s 16th annual Spring Luncheon held on April 20th at the Baltimore Hilton.

In addition to Lee and Moore, over 600 guests also heard from T. J. Smith, Director of Public Relations for the Baltimore City Police Department. Smith shared some very personal stories of arriving at homes where horrible abuse had taken place and what it was like to help those families. He also spoke to the strong partnership between the Baltimore City Police Department and the House of Ruth Maryland to best serve the victims of intimate partner violence in our community.

We want to thank our event Co-Chairs Vicki Deyesu and Greta Engle and the Spring Luncheon Committee: Joyce Ann Burman, Betty Clark, Christy DiPietro, Nadine DiSpirito, Kim Gordon, Kim Hinton, Susan Hussey, Jessica Kartalija, Pam Malester and Laurie Wingate for their successful leadership of this event.

We also want to thank all of our guests for joining us for lunch and we want to especially thank our sponsors: Lead Sponsors: Baltimore Ravens, Brown Advisory, Constellation, Victoria & Carmen Deyesu, Christy & David DiPietro, Greater Baltimore Medical Center, The Hawthorne-Garcia Family, KPMG, Mary Miller & Charles S. Hirsch, M&T Bank, Charles & Amy Newhall, J.S. Plank and D.M. DiCarlo Family Foundation, Inc., Renaissance Fine Arts, Dorothy L. & Henry A. Rosenberg, Jr. Foundation, Stifel, University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center, University of Maryland Medical System Print Sponsor: Anne Tisdale Direct

Special Thanks

• To St. Mark’s on the Hill in Pikesville and KMCreative.biz for supporting Ruth’s Closet’s Gowns Galore event.

• To Erik Boring for donating fabric from the film “Jackie”, David E. Flower for donating fabric, Rock Rogers & Janet Indresano for donating shelving & installation and Joyce Rogers for donating sewing machines – all to support B-More Bags.

• To the Reisterstown, Owings Mills, Glyndon Chamber of Commerce and their Professional Women in Business group, for sponsoring a “Blooming Again” Shopping and Networking event at Ruth’s Closet.

• To Wee Chic Boutique in Green Spring Station, for donating children’s clothing.

• To Lingerie Lingerie for donating new bras for the women in our shelter.

• To the Women’s Civic League for inviting Ruth’s Closet staff and volunteers to model and sell fashions from Ruth’s Closet at their Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show at the Engineers Club.

• To Haute Blow Dry Bar, who is providing monthly blow-outs and stylings to the residents in our Emergency Shelter!

• To the staff, faculty, and students at Johns Hopkins University’s Schools of Public Health, Nursing, and Medicine, for performing the Vagina Monologues and choosing HRM as the beneficiary!

• To Murthy Law Firm, for spending their very first agency Day of Service with us, sorting donations in the Kidz Clothes Zone!

• To Beyond the Chair, Inc. for sharing their makeup and styling skills with our residents and providing makeovers!
Join us for an exquisite evening in an outdoor oasis at Crabaret, live in the BMA’s sculpture garden, to benefit House of Ruth Maryland. Feast on Chef John Shields’ crabby concoctions complemented by a bevy of beer from Heavy Seas, and show off your best dance moves as you get down to the beat of the Swingin’ Swamis. Buy your tickets today!