

HouseLine

House of Ruth Maryland Changing Attitudes. Saving Lives.

March 2014

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Still Coming After Her

Life was going well for Sarah. With her abuser behind bars for five years, she was moving on with her life. She was in a new home, working and had made peace with her past. She was no longer looking over her shoulder every day and was beginning to feel safe again. Then came the bullet sitting upright on the hood of her car. Unbeknownst to her, her abuser had been released from prison and was coming after her.

"The courts don't necessarily notify victims when their abusers are released from jail," said Deena Hausner, Managing Attorney at the House of Ruth Maryland. "However, victims can register for an automated notification, either via phone or email, through VINELink and they will receive a message when their abuser is released. Frequently, House of Ruth staff also register so we'll be notified and can make sure our clients know that their abusers have been released."

For Sarah, the pieces were coming together, and it was a deadly picture. "I was frantic," she said. "I started thinking about the dropped phone calls I had received recently." She immediately called the House of Ruth's 24-hour Contact Center and spoke with one of the counselors. Upon sharing her story and completing a lethality assessment, it became clear that Sarah needed to be placed in emergency shelter through our hotel program.

During the five days that Sarah spent in the hotel, she worked with a Client Services Coordinator to file a police report, change her phone number, *Continued on page 2*



HOUSE OF RUTH
MARYLAND

Cover, continued from page 1.

increase the security on her home, and obtain the name of her abuser's probation officer. With the help of her Client Services Coordinator, she then contacted the probation officer to make sure he was aware of what was going on.

"When a victim comes to us and is placed in the hotel program, she is assigned immediately to a Client Service Coordinator (CSC)," said Janice Miller, Director of Client Services. "The Client Service Coordinator will then work with her to figure out the things she needs to do quickly to maintain her safety. This can mean anything from applying for support through the Department of Social Services, to working with a landlord to get her locks changed. The CSC will also help with accessing other services at the House of Ruth Maryland, such as legal representation or counseling."

The Hotel Program provides a safe alternative for victims when the emergency shelter is at capacity. The program is currently funded in part by the United Way of Central Maryland and by Walmart. Each year, the program serves over 150 women and children.

In the end, despite the hard work she had done to maintain her safety, Sarah feared that she would never be safe from her abuser if she stayed in town. With the help of the House of Ruth, she was able to relocate out of state. Upon safely reaching her destination, Sarah called to let her counselor know that she arrived safely and thanked her counselor for supporting her as she started yet another new life.

To learn more about VINELink for victims, please contact Deena Hausner at dhausner@hruthmd.org and to learn more about the hotel program or any of our residential programs for victims, please contact Janice Miller at Janice@hruthmd.org.

Letter from Executive Director

"It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?" --Henry David Thoreau

Dear Friends,

What are we busy about?

As we serve clients and manage the day to day work that sustains our agency, we are carving out time to think very seriously about the future direction of the House of Ruth Maryland, based on the needs of our clients and the impact we want to have on the larger issue of intimate partner violence in Maryland. This effort will result in a new, five year strategic plan that will take us through the year 2019.

This is a momentous undertaking. It compels us to consider how we will further the mission of the House of Ruth Maryland in a rapidly changing environment of technology, public awareness and attitudes, new research findings, and available funding. Together, staff and board have examined the strengths of our programs and operations, and are creating a focus on what to improve and how to grow. We've learned some interesting things about ourselves and the conversations we are having are shaping our future.

What does this mean? We are unified in our commitments. We will be using new methods to raise awareness in our community, and to ensure that clients are offered every access possible to our services. We will continuously assess and evolve our programs, incorporating approaches that both experience and research demonstrate are most effective. We will be vigilant about shifting attitudes, reinforcing beliefs that intimate partner violence is not a private matter; there is no shame in finding yourself a victim and reaching out for help; people who witness or suspect partner abuse can, and should, make a difference by extending support to the victim and insisting the abuser change behavior; the impact on children who witness abuse is extensive and must be addressed. Our advocacy efforts will drive toward having all community systems working to protect and restore the safety and dignity of intimate partner violence survivors and their children. We will have resolute conversation about how the responsibility for change rests with the abuser, encouraging men in our community to have a larger voice in this message.

Thoreau was right. It's not enough to be busy - we have to be busy working toward our vision that one day, every woman in Maryland will be safe in her own home.

Sincerely,



Sandi Timmins
Executive Director



Sandi Timmins

Legislating Change

Each year, House of Ruth Maryland works with state legislators to help the Maryland General Assembly pass laws that support victims of intimate partner violence. As in past years, we will be working with Sean Malone of Harris Jones and Malone, who provide their services pro bono, and you, our supporters, to encourage legislators to pass several key bills that will help the victims of intimate partner violence.

Governor O'Malley has highlighted the need to end intimate partner violence as part of the legislative agenda for his office. Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown will take the lead and continue his ardent support of legislation that supports the victims of intimate partner violence. We appreciate their dedication to this issue and their support of our top legislative priorities. This session, our top priorities are:

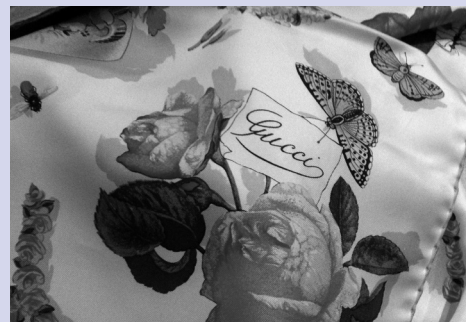
HB307/SB333/SB 28 - Family Law - Peace Orders and Protective Orders – Burden of Proof– We support this bill because it would change the standard of proof in protective order and peace order cases from clear and convincing evidence to a preponderance of the evidence, which is the same standard that a judge uses in almost all family law matters, such as custody, visitation, child support, alimony, and use and possession of the home. **This change has the potential to impact the lives of many victims seeking final protective orders and will align Maryland with standards of proof required for protective order in the other 49 states.**

HB306/SB 337 – Criminal Law – Crimes Committed in the Presence of a Minor – Penalties – We support this bill because it would increase the penalties for a defendant who commits a domestically related crime of violence in front of a minor.

HB 309/SB 334 – Family Law – Domestic Violence - Permanent Final Protective Orders – We support this bill. Under the current law, protective orders are only in effect for one or two years. There are very few circumstances under which a court can order a permanent protective order. Under this proposed law, the circumstances under which a permanent protective order could be ordered would be expanded to include the crime of second degree assault and to allow cases where the defendant is sentenced to, rather than served, 5 years.

We ask for your help in our efforts to get these bills passed into laws. Please consider telling your elected officials that you support these bills. “The public’s support is crucial in getting legislation passed. Legislators act on behalf of their constituents” explains Dorothy Lennig, our Legal Clinic Director. “When you call and tell them how you feel, that has a big impact on how they vote.” If you would like to contact your elected officials and tell them you support the House of Ruth Maryland’s legislative agenda, you can find information on your officials at www.mdelect.net. This is our best chance of getting laws passed that protect all victims in Maryland, even those who never reach out to House of Ruth for help.

For more information on House of Ruth Maryland’s legislative agenda, please contact Dorothy Lennig at dlennig@hruthmd.org and like us on Facebook for up-to-date status reports on these key bills.



One Great Thing

On October 10, 2013, House of Ruth Maryland kicked off the 3rd annual One Great Thing event at Ruth’s Closet. One Great Thing is an annual shopping extravaganza for fashionistas, featuring fabulous items like furs, designer handbags and shoes, and fine and costume jewelry at bargain prices. In just one weekend, One Great Thing 2013 surpassed its \$25,000 goal and raised nearly \$40,000 for House of Ruth Maryland!

One Great Thing 2014 will kick off with a ticketed preview event on Thursday, October 23rd. During the preview event, shoppers will get an exclusive first pick at this year’s selection of spectacular items. Tickets to the preview event will be available beginning September 1st. One Great Thing will continue through Sunday, October 26th.

“We are delighted to be co-chairs for the House of Ruth’s One Great Thing 2014 event. We were thrilled with the success of OGT 2013 and look forward to even greater participation this year. It is easy to ask people to contribute to One Great Thing to support an important organization, doing really great work”, said Betsy Nelson and Debbie Swartz, One Great Thing 2013 Co-Chairs.

Thank you to our co-chairs, committee, ambassadors, donors, volunteers and shoppers who made last year’s One Great Thing outstanding. We are looking forward to an even more successful One Great Thing 2014!

For more information on how you can become involved in One Great Thing, please contact Jana Stengel at jstengel@hruthmd.org.

A Flood of Thank You's!

On January 8, severe weather hit the Baltimore area and caused significant damage to our shelter. In the middle of the night, a sprinkler head burst from the pipe in a resident's room on the third floor, causing severe flooding all the way through to the first floor. In the end, 11 resident rooms and 5 staff offices, the kitchen and main dining area, main hallways, stairs and several other common areas sustained water damage.

As soon as it happened, our staff sprang into action. We would like to extend a very big thank you to the Baltimore City Fire Chief for responding quickly and turning off the sprinklers which prevented further damage. Our shelter staff immediately began working to make sure residents were relocated, belongings were retrieved or moved, and the clean-up began almost as soon as the flooding started. With one exception, our residents did not experience significant losses in their personal items.

We are very fortunate that the Baltimore community quickly came to our aid. We would like to thank several local businesses that have generously provided for our residents and supported our cleanup efforts: Mission BBQ, Workforce and Technology Center and their food service vendor, PattyCakes, Schindler, ServiceMaster, and Simplex/Grinnel.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the following organizations for their support: Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Human Services, Homeless Services; Baltimore County Family Crisis Center, Baltimore Outreach Services, Calvert County Safe Harbor, Carroll County Family and Children's Services, Homeless Environmental Emergency Services Unit, Howard County Hopeworks, Montgomery County Abused Persons Program, Salvation Army Booth House, and Turn Around.

In the last four years, we've felt the impact of five extreme weather events: the blizzards in 2010, Hurricane Irene, SuperStorm Sandy, the Derecho and now the "polar vortex". Each time, plans were in place: our dedicated staff made life as pleasant as possible for the victims of intimate partner violence, and the Baltimore community stood by and was ready to help when we needed it.

Hopefully, this is the last "event" for a very long time!

If you would like to support our recovery efforts, please consider making a monetary donation. You can make a donation online at www.hruth.org, by calling our Development office at 410-554-8443 or by mail to the Development Office, House of Ruth Maryland, 2201 Argonne Drive Baltimore, MD 21218

Bring Your Bling!

The House of Ruth Maryland's Young Professionals Group hosted the second annual Bring Your Bling Martini Fling on February 20th at Silo.5% Wine Bar in Locust Point. The focus of the event is to raise awareness about intimate partner violence and to raise money and solicit donations of jewelry for Ruth's Closet, a social enterprise of House of Ruth.

"We wanted to bring together creative minds to develop events that focus on raising funds for the House of Ruth, and most importantly, raising awareness about intimate partner violence among young professionals," says Lorie Graffius, Chair and founder of the Young Professionals Group.

"This year's Bring Your Bling was a great success and we've already started planning Pretty for Preakness 2014, which will be held in early May."

We'd like to thank the following sponsors for supporting the event: Silo.5% Wine Bar, Stella & Dot, J. G. Sassy, ReMix Jewelers, Van Gogh Vodka, Mike Stavrinis Photography, Pandora's Box, Red Bull, and T. Wray McCurdy.

Since the Young Professionals Group began in 2012, they have developed two signature events: Bring Your Bling Martini Fling and Pretty for Preakness. This year will mark the third anniversary of Pretty for Preakness, a cocktail hour event held at a local fashion boutique with proceeds benefitting House of Ruth Maryland.

If you would like more information about Pretty for Preakness, please contact Jana Stengel at jstengel@hruthmd.org.

Special Thanks To

- Danielle Nicole, Downtown Diane, Kenneth Petty and The Admiral's Cup for hosting an event and donating a portion of handbag sales
- Alpha Chi Omega at College Park for making us the beneficiary of their kickball fundraiser
- Hampden retailers for hosting an "Eat, Shop and Fund" charity night in November and donating a portion of proceeds
- St. Joseph Medical Center for donating all proceeds of their event in memory of Victoria Glover
- St. Paul's School for Girls for hosting the Old Sneakers Project – this drive yielded usable clothing, shoes, and handbags, as well as \$97.50 in recycling revenue
- Mary Harris Jones, Vice President, OneMain Financial and Elaine Bonneau, owner of Garbs for Good for hosting Shop, Sip, Savor...a cocktail party November 16, with 10% of purchases donated to the House of Ruth
- Blue Ridge Motors for repairing our only House of Ruth van
- Maryland Glass & Mirror Company for donating glass to fix a broken door
- Lingerie Lingerie at Kenilworth and Bare Necessities at Greenspring Station for donating bras for the Weinberg Center Clothes Closet
- Amy Leigh Photography for hosting a beauty & photography event this winter with proceeds benefiting the House of Ruth Maryland
- Hatch Mott MacDonald for painting the common spaces at Adelante Familia – keeping the festive theme
- Talbots Outlet in Cockeysville for donating over \$2,000 worth of fixtures for Ruth's Closet, the Women's Clothes Closet and the Kidz Clothes Zone
- RCI – Realistic Computing for hosting a Bowl-a-Thon in our honor, raising \$800
- Dr. Cole Reilly's Education cohorts at Towson University for hosting four Movie & Activity Nights for our families staying in emergency shelter
- Roland Park Place Knitters for knitting beautiful blankets, sweaters, and winter items for our clients this holiday season
- Help Portrait for coming to our shelter for the second year in a row to do hair, makeup, and professional portraits for our families
- Mike Hinline & the Baltimore County Police Department for their annual visit to our shelter, bringing gifts, education, and the fire truck
- The University of Maryland Cheerleaders for hosting the annual "Shop for Mom" evening, where children choose and wrap gifts for their moms for the holidays

Regrets *In our last edition, we acknowledged many of our generous donors and we regret the following errors and omissions: Mentors (\$1,000-\$2,499) Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Marchman and Sustainer (\$500-\$999) Virginia T. Pond. We sincerely regret the error and extend our appreciation to all of our donors for their ongoing support.*

2014 Upcoming Events:

April 23

Annual Spring Luncheon

May 18

MAC Half Marathon and 2-Person Relay (Sunday)

July 10

Crabaret at Gertrude's at the Baltimore Museum of Art

September 3

Clearinghouse Sidewalk Sale

September 9

Golf & Grapes at Turf Valley Country Club

October 23

One Great Thing Preview Sale



Insuring a Warm Winter

On December 7, Executive Director Sandi Timmins visited with the regional staff of Erie Insurance during their holiday party. During the visit, Erie Insurance presented Sandi with a check for \$7,000 for the House of Ruth. The check was just the beginning, as employees of Erie Insurance also collected dozens of blankets, pillows, coats, hats, scarves and countless other items for the victims we serve. Thank you to Erie Insurance for making sure our clients stay warm this winter!



HOUSE OF RUTH
MARYLAND

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If you receive multiple mailings or need to update your address, please call our Development Office at 410-554-8443.



Spring Luncheon 2014

The 2014 Spring Luncheon will be held on **Wednesday, April 23, 2014** at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel, **co-chaired by Olwen Modell and Vicki Deyesu**, this year's luncheon will feature keynote speaker **Judge Jeanine Pirro, the host of "Justice with Judge Jeanine"**.

Judge Pirro began her career as an advocate for victims of intimate partner violence, and as the first female District Attorney of New York's Westchester County she established one of the first domestic violence units in the nation. She will share her personal experience and insider's information about the legal trials and tribulations faced by victims who are leaving an abusive relationship. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, please contact **Jana Stengel** at **410-554-8448** or **jstengel@hruthmd.org**.

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