Pass On The Good

“We didn’t really know how bad things were until Jessica filed for divorce,” said Gat Meredith, Jessica Meredith Jacobsen’s mother. Jessica was a mother to two young boys, an executive at T. Rowe Price, active in her local community, and had hidden a secret – her marriage was failing.

Despite dealing with years of emotional abuse, Jessica continued in her marriage until January of 2007 when she filed for separation, after her husband revealed that his feelings for her had changed and that he didn’t have the same feelings for the children. At this point, as is the case with many victims who try to leave, the abuse continued. “He would threaten to kill himself, to keep Jessica around,” said Gat. The final straw came when he tried to strangle her in the kitchen of their home, only to be stopped by his own father. It was at this point that Jessica obtained a protective order.

Despite the protective order and the abuse, Jeffrey was granted supervised visitation rights with his two young sons. It was during a visitation exchange that Jeffrey went to what had been their home and with his two young sons watching, he shot Jessica in the chest two times. She was able to get into the yard and call for the neighbors to help. Jessica died in the front yard, surrounded by some friends from the neighborhood. Jeffrey went into the house and killed himself.

Since Jessica’s murder, custody exchange and visitation services have made limited progress, according to Dorothy Lennig, Director of the Marjorie Cook Domestic Violence Legal Clinic at House of Ruth Maryland. “We continue to struggle with the issue of supervised visitation exchanges – Baltimore County only offers some supervised visitation services. Baltimore City received a grant to establish a supervised exchange and visitation center but the grant was not funded again. Continued on page 2
At this time, the Baltimore Visitation Center is only serving existing clients and is not accepting any new referrals. The one bright point is in Montgomery County where the County including funding in the FY18 DHHS to open and operate a supervised exchange and visitation center for use in child custody cases,” said Lennig. “We also continue to fight legislation in Maryland that would establish a presumption of joint custody in all custody cases, which would require victims to have to negotiate and interact with their abusers after the separation. This would be potentially deadly for victims and children that we serve, as was the case for Jessica.”

“I still wonder why he was able to see her and the children, even with the protective order,” mused Gat, but then recovered with the positive, “We had her for 38 years, she was a beautiful part of our life and the horrific incident that took her from us is NOT going to take away the beautiful memories that we have of Jessica. It’s a choice you have to make to pass on the good that she no longer can,” said Gat.

One of the ways that the Meredith’s choose to “pass on the good” is through the annual 5K hosted by the Knights of Columbus. This year’s race will be September 23, at the Immaculate Conception Church in Towson. Over the last 10 years, the race has raised over $50,000 for House of Ruth Maryland, Fr. O’Neil Charities and the ICS Tuition Assistance Fund.

When asked what they would tell others who are friends and family of a woman who is being abused, Gat said, “We didn’t realize how serious this was. We never thought he’d kill her. Encourage your loved one to seek help with IPV providers or other trained professionals and be a resource to them. Always keep the door open for them because you never know when they will need it. Don’t ever give up on them.”

If you are friends or family with someone who is a victim of intimate partner violence, please contact our 24-hour hotline at 410-889-7884 for information on how you can help.

Dear Friends,

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

For House of Ruth Maryland that means stepping up our presence in the community, participating in local events, exhibit fairs, speaking engagements and sending our message through print and television media. The goal is to saturate communication channels with information about intimate partner violence that will help people to recognize signs of abuse, know what to do when they see it or when they experience it themselves – and how to reach us for services.

We need your help! Throughout the month we’ll also be sharing information via social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Youtube. If you haven’t already, please connect to us on those platforms. And then, join us in getting the message out. You can share our content, you can comment on it, you can encourage others to engage with us on social media and you can even set up a personal fundraising page to raise money for House of Ruth Maryland. Every person you reach is a person who may need our help or might know someone who does.

It’s simple, free and a very personal way to reach out to our community. You will, quite literally, be part of changing lives.

Please remember there are also many other ways to assist us. You can make a donation, volunteer, or host a donation drive. We are fortunate to have the long time support of the Imani Sister Circle. Each spring they buy gifts for our emergency shelter clients and create beautiful packages for every resident for Mother’s Day (see photo above). These gifts provide a sense of normalcy for the women, letting them know people care about them and want them to succeed. It’s empowering and a demonstration that the community supports their effort to rebuild their lives, to be safe and free from fear.

No matter how you choose to work with us, I hope you’ll renew your efforts in October and become part of the movement to share information. Let your circle know that YOU are taking a stand against intimate partner violence - and that YOU are prepared to provide support should they ever need it.

Sincerely,

Sandi Timmins
Executive Director
Community Partners

After recent changes to immigration enforcement, House of Ruth Maryland’s Adelante Familia program, which offers services in Spanish to Baltimore’s Latino community, saw a significant decrease in attendance at counseling sessions, group meetings and among walk-in clients. In direct response to client fear of going to courthouses because, in some states, undocumented victims of intimate partner violence were being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at courthouses, and due to other immigration related concerns, House of Ruth Maryland hosted an informational community event in May. While House of Ruth Maryland hosted the event, we were joined by representatives from the Baltimore City Police Department, the States Attorney’s Office, CASA, International Rescue Committee and other community partners. Each partner had an opportunity to speak to the group, in English and Spanish, to share information about their programs, what community services were available and how to access these services.

“It was a great opportunity for House of Ruth Maryland to take a lead role on an issue that is hurting the women we serve,” said Jesús Rivera, Program Coordinator for Adelante Familia. “We hope to host more community events like this in the future to make sure our clients have access to everything they need to be safe.”

We extend special thanks to our community partners for joining us and to Salem United Methodist Church for providing a meeting space for us.

To learn more about House of Ruth Maryland’s Adelante Familia programs and services, please contact Jesús Rivera at jrivera@hruthmd.org.

Second Glance

If you’re a reader of the Washington Post’s “Second Glance” segment, you may have recently noticed that one of the submissions was a picture of a quilt made from donations to House of Ruth Maryland! What you may not know, is that the quilt was created by long-time House of Ruth Maryland volunteer, Linda Silvern. Linda volunteers in our donations center, helping sort donations for our clients and Ruth’s Closet and when things are not appropriate for either group, she’s been known to upcycle them! The quilt is just one example – the quilt was created by using pockets from pants that were donated over the years but were stained, had rips, tears, etc., so couldn’t be used.

In addition to the quilt, Linda has been known to take items home that have minor issues, like missing buttons, and repair them, making them good as new for our clients and shoppers.

When asked to describe Linda, Social Enterprise Manager at House of Ruth Maryland, Jen Talbert, had this to say, “Linda is super smart, compassionate, is a weaver of Jewish ceremonial garb, a grandmother, and volunteers at the Maryland Food Bank. I just love her, one of my all-time favorite volunteers. And truly one of a kind!”

To learn more about making donations to House of Ruth Maryland, please visit our website www.hruth.org/get-involved.

Redressed Event

For many victims of intimate partner violence, a wedding dress is yet another reminder of broken dreams, broken promises and broken bones. This year, No Discipline Arts Collective had an idea – what if we take those memories and transform them into something fabulous? With that, the Redressed event was born!

On Thursday, June 8, No Discipline Arts Collective partnered with Chase Court to host the event which featured artwork that was created, in part, from pieces of wedding dresses that were donated by survivors and allies of intimate partner violence. “When I left my abusive marriage, I wanted to find a way to repurpose my wedding gown to help other survivors,” said Brigitte Winter, co-founder of No Discipline Arts Collective. “Every community member who made this event possible—including Chase Court, The Pantry Catering, and our 25 contributing artists—donated 100% of their time, talents, and resources so that every penny we raised went directly to House of Ruth Maryland.”

This year’s event raised nearly $4,000 for House of Ruth Maryland and raised awareness in our community about the issue of intimate partner violence.

For more information about events supporting House of Ruth Maryland or if you have an event idea you’d like to share, please contact our Development Office at 410-889-0840.
Double the Fun!

House of Ruth Maryland was the beneficiary of not one, but two golfing events during the spring of 2017. First, on April 19, Verizon, along with the Baltimore Ravens, hosted the Inaugural Network of Champions Golf Tournament at Waverly Woods Golf Club. Celebrity guests included Qadry Ismail, Jamail Lewis, Sam Koch, Ben Watson, Poe, the Ravens Mascot, and some of the Ravens cheerleaders. Golfers participated in a silent auction with all proceeds benefiting House of Ruth Maryland and the highlight of the event was the presentation of a $25,000 Verizon HopeLine Grant to House of Ruth Maryland.

Just a few weeks later on June 12, local golfers gathered at the Club at South River for the Benefit Indemnity Corporation’s First Annual Charity Golf Outing. Their first event was a huge success, raising over $20,000 for House of Ruth Maryland and Natural High. Congratulations to tournament winners: Jeffrey Levy, Brooks Bradley, Scott Long, and Michael Steinhardt. We also thank the many generous sponsors of the event, Benefit Indemnity Corporation, DavCo Restaurants, Reilly Benefits, Inc., Bernstein Private Wealth Management, Strategic Underwriting Solutions, LLC, D. W. Van Dyke & Company, Avail Accounting & Tax Group, Inc. & Access Receivables Management, Mainfreight USA, Avery Hall Insurance Group, Four Square Benefits, Axis Capital, Summit Insurance Advisors, and JRG Advisors.

We hope you’ll be able to join us next year for the 2nd annual golf outings!

For more information on upcoming events supporting House of Ruth Maryland, visit www.hruth.org/events.

In Memory Of:

Each year, House of Ruth Maryland is fortunate to receive gifts made in memory of individuals who are no longer with us. These gifts are a tribute to the person who has passed and they honor the memory of those we love and the things that were most important to them. We would like to recognize the following individuals who have been honored with a memorial tribute between February 1, 2017 and July 31, 2017. We thank the generous donors who make it possible for us to recognize their loved ones.

Harry Abplanalp Jr.
Ernest Fredrick Cooke
Howard Denton
William & Dorothy Geisenlestter
Robert Grenell
Pearl Grill
Jody Harvey
Marjorie S. Harvey
Joan Hoblitsell
Thomas A. Kelley
Edward Marcus
Christopher James Martin
Theresa Roanhouse
Peggy Righ
Colleen Tallent
George Anna S. Tsamoutalis
2017 Upcoming Events:

Jessica Meredith Jacobsen Memorial 5K  
September 23

OneSource Associates 5K  
September 23

First Annual Person of the Year  
October 2017

Adopt A Family Sign Up Begins  
October 2017

B-More Bags at Out of Hand Craft Show  
December 3

B-More Bags Trunk Show  
December 9

To learn more about upcoming events, please visit www.hruth.org/events or contact our Development Office at 410-889-0840.

Crabaret Recap

It was a steamy night in Baltimore on July 13 when the doors opened for this year’s Crabaret! The temperature didn’t keep the guests away as nearly 500 people enjoyed the Swingin’ Swamis, crabby concoctions by Gertrude’s Chef John Shields, wine provided by Lanterna Distributors and beer provided by Key Brewing Company.

A lively time was had by all as guests competed for fabulous packages in our live auction, raising over $15,000, and the last-minute bidding was fierce in the silent auction that raised nearly $16,000. We thank all the local businesses and individuals that supported both auctions!

As the doors closed and the last guests made their way home, over $130,000 was raised for victims of intimate partner violence. Thank you to our sponsors, guests, donors and vendors who made Crabaret a great success! Special thanks to Chef John Shields, Gertrude’s and the BMA for hosting us!

Title Sponsor: Anonymous

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Special Thanks: Merritt Properties for their Gold Sponsorship of the 16th Spring Luncheon

To learn more about fundraising events at House of Ruth Maryland, contact the Development Office at 410-889-0840.

Special Thanks

• To Baltimore Wine Fest, for inviting HRM for the second year to be guest pourers at the event! Tips from our booth directly benefited House of Ruth Maryland!

• To PricewaterhouseCoopers, for spending their annual Day of Service with us, helping us to get the Kidz Clothes Zone organized and ready for families to “shop”!

• To the Protestant Faith Community at Oakcrest, for inviting us to their congregation to share information about our services and for making a significant monetary donation.

• To the Pikesville Senior Center, for hosting “Christmas in July” at our Emergency Shelter – with full decorations, activities, and gifts for all!

• To Diane Janeway, Ruth’s Closet Volunteer, for not only donating Ruth’s Closet’s membership in the Reisterstown-Owings Mills-Glyndon Chamber of Commerce, but also attending Chamber meetings representing Ruth’s Closet.

• To Shannon Williams for volunteering extra shifts on-call at Ruth’s Closet supporting staff while we hire a new Store Manager.
1 in 4 women will be victims of intimate partner violence at some point in their lives – add your voice to those who are taking a stand against intimate partner violence – and become House of Ruth Maryland’s Person of the Year!

How can you become Person of the Year?

1. Nominate yourself or someone else to join the competition
2. Host virtual or in-person fundraisers to raise money for House of Ruth Maryland during the month of October.
4. Commit to wearing a symbol of your support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month every day in October.

The Person of the Year contest will run from October 1 – 31, 2017.

Every dollar raised helps House of Ruth Maryland fund programs and services for victims of intimate partner violence. For more information on the House of Ruth Maryland, Person of the Year program, or to learn how to nominate a candidate or enter yourself, please call 410.261.3027 or email Andrew Primrose at aprimrose@hruthmd.org. Nominations will be accepted beginning September 1st. Contest officially begins on October 1.