

HouseLine

House of Ruth Maryland Changing Attitudes. Saving Lives.

Spring 2019

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**House of Ruth
Maryland**

A Tradition of Giving Back

The holidays are a wonderful time to give back and House of Ruth Maryland's (HRM) Adopt A Family program has become an annual tradition for many in Maryland. Any current client (and family) of HRM, creates a wishlist for the holidays and that wishlist is then shared anonymously with their Donor. In 2018, 280 donors "adopted" 463 families, giving 1,345 individuals holiday gifts. "Gifts for the holidays are one less thing our clients will need to stress over as they build their stability through our internal services such as legal, counseling, childcare, housing plans and work to move closer to their goals" says Kristina Page, House of Ruth's Associate Director of Stability Services.

The beauty of this program is that anyone can participate in "adopting" a family, whether it's a large corporation, a local restaurant, an alumni group, or a small family, everyone can give back. We're grateful to say that this annual program has turned to a tradition for many amazing donors.

Cori Rivers, Adopt A Family Coordinator for Raytheon, says their employee resource group chose HRM 2000 since they wanted to focus more on women's issue. "Through the years the women's networking group has changed – younger members joining, older members retiring, even our location has changed, but since 2000, every year we have participated in Adopt A Family" says Rivers. When asked their reflection of the program, Rivers sums it up: "It's too easy to get caught up in our own struggles...[It] gives us a chance to see how lucky we are to be able to give our time, energy, and money to help women and children that are facing such adversity." ***Continued on page 2***

cont. from cover story

Joanna Colosimo of DCI Consulting, a 10 year donor of the program, not only echoes Rivers' sentiment, but also points out the teambuilding aspect of the program as well, "The program really fosters a sense of community within our own firm each holiday season... [it's] an amazing opportunity to connect with the community, serving those in need."

In the spirit of teambuilding, an impressive feat of collaboration for the 2018 year was achieved by our longtime supporter T. Rowe Price Associates. Their teams, led by Rachel Protzman, Rebecca Wiley, and Dan Beadell, put in a tremendous amount of effort in organizing the adoption of 96 individuals, an entire department clients' wishlists!

It's not just the long-time donors who are making a difference. In 2018, Inovalon, Inc, started a new tradition - as they adopted 61 individuals and had to rent a truck to transport all of their gifts. Beth Krapf, Inovalon's co-coordinator along with Eric Sullivan, notes that "corporate responsibility is core to Inovalon's company culture, and as a team, we work diligently to improve and help shape the communities of which we are a part. We are proud to support organizations like House of Ruth Maryland that are working diligently to support local women, children & families that are in need."

Families have also created traditions around Adopt A Family. Melissa King shares that her family's 10 year tradition began as newlyweds, "instead of buying gifts for each other, we wanted to give gifts to two people who gave up so much to gain freedom from an abusive relationship...When our family grew, so did the number of people we adopted. Ten years later we adopt a family of five and our kids help select the gifts given to the adopted children."

House of Ruth Maryland is incredibly grateful for these new and old traditions; for each and every donor and we cannot express the magnitude of our gratitude, nor can our clients. One client, who moved into her new apartment just two weeks before Christmas said, "Now we can have Christmas, in our new home." Yet another client was planning for the future, "I did not think my kids and I would even have a holiday with all we had going on...one day I hope I am in a better place and can come back and help how you all helped me."

For more information on the Adopt A Family program or other ways you can get involved, please contact Sarah Lance, Community Relations Associate, at slance@hruthmd.org.

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 August 1, 2018 and January 31, 2019. We thank the generous donors who make it possible for us to recognize their loved ones.

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ruth Bissar | Carmen Deyesu | Rosalie Hilton, Hr |
| Aunt Rose Brill | Dorothy Dixon | Richard Jones, Jr |
| Tulia Briscoe | A. Eric Dott | Ruth E Kehrl |
| Donna Jean Brown | Doris Fader | Karl Koch |
| Judy Burger | Virginia Frei | Wanda Ladzinski |
| Kathleen Cutsail | Richard A. | Emma E. Long |
| Bruce David | Froehlinger, Jr | Patricia Masterman |
| Marion "Sis" Decker | Michael Harper | |

Special Thanks:

- To **Clavel** for hosting a proceeds afternoon to benefit House of Ruth Maryland and the clients we serve!
- To **M&T Bank** and their **WIN Baltimore group** for collecting accessories, gift cards, jewelry, and more for our clients over the holiday!
- To **Tabrizi's Restaurant** for hosting a proceeds evening for HRM in addition to hosting a dinner for our clients!
- To **JHU SOURCE** for organizing 16 amazing volunteers to help sort and organize donations in our children's clothes closet for our moms and children in our emergency shelter.
- To **Katrina Armwood and her students** at Mary E Rodman Elementary School for their collection of vital non-perishable food items!
- To **Toyota WIIT Committee** for organizing an amazing drive of much needed baby items and items for our childcare department!
- To **Boomershine Consulting** for your generous donations of many gift cards for our clients during the holiday season.
- To **John** and **Joan Schochor** for sending beautiful Valentine's Day flowers for our clients.
- To **Sheri Slater** and **Latter Day Saints Church on the Alameda** for your contribution of \$1000 worth of wish list items for our shelter!
- To **Taste this Cake** for contributing to HRM!
- To **Junior League of Baltimore** for your continued support of our childcare department so that our clients can attend group therapy sessions .
- To **Right at Home** for their continued support of HRM!
- To **Barbara Bianco** for donating merchandise and store supplies left after closing Lingerie Lingerie.
- To **Cathy Sidlowski** for continuing to offer her store, Freesia, as a drop-off location for donations to Ruth's Closet.
- To **Mano Swartz** staff for their support evaluating furs and for continuing to accept donations for Ruth's Closet.

To see more Special Thanks and to read about a special Valentine's Day in our shelter, visit www.hruth.org/specialthanks.

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Sometimes, the most important part of a shocking story is hidden. In December, sensational headlines crossed the nation about a good Samaritan being murdered in Baltimore. A city that already lays claim to significant violence seemed to become even more dangerous. An innocent woman, trying to help someone, on a cold dark night, was murdered, in cold blood.

For many, the story didn't feel right from the start. There were questions that remained unanswered until March 3, when the news broke that not only was there no panhandler, she was murdered at the hands of her husband and step-daughter. One family member said he knew from the beginning that her husband did it, but they had to wait the process out.

The focus of this story has largely been around the impact it has had on perpetuating Baltimore's reputation for being a dangerous city, and on how the homeless population has paid the price as people became afraid to offer assistance. The reality, however, is that yet another woman paid the price and lost her life at the hands of an intimate partner. Research tells us that murder isn't the first instance of abuse and it's very likely that Jacquelyn Smith suffered prior to that fateful night.

Jacquelyn's name will now be added to the grim list of people who died as a result of intimate partner violence in Maryland. The statistics compiled by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence are startling: for the year of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018, 17 women, two teenage girls and seven men were killed by their intimate partners. Five bystanders were killed. Fifteen abusers were killed either in their own suicide or during police response. The result – at least 35 children orphaned and countless lives changed forever. In just one year.

How can we possibly put a stop to this onslaught of violence? It starts with each of us. We have an obligation to our community to pay attention to the signs of abuse before it becomes violent, to know the appropriate way to react to the situation and to be willing to refer the victim to resources. We have the opportunity to share messages and encouragement through social media. We need to be bold enough to confront the attitudes that support a person who is manipulating a partner and creating fear in the relationship. We need to be clear in our support of the person being abused, and equally clear in our intolerance of abusive actions.

Every single one of us is part of the solution. There's no better time than now to take a stand.



Sandi Timmins,
Executive Director



Sandi Timmins

HRM will also add a Housing Specialist, who will assist families in locating safe, affordable housing from reputable landlords. In partnership with Maryland New Directions, our long time workforce development partner, we will provide 50 families with access to intensive training classes, aimed at increasing the skills needed to obtain higher income positions.

The second grant HRM received is to create and run Baltimore City's Victim Coordinated Entry system, or VCE. Coordinated Entry (CE) is an important element of HUD's Continuum of Care, ensuring that homeless individuals can go to any organization, be given the same screening tool and assisted with Shelter Diversion (assisting individuals with maintaining their current housing, one time assistance payments, food pantry assistance, etc.), Emergency Shelter Placement, and efficient placement into permanent housing solutions like Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing. The VCE will run parallel to the City's homeless CE system, while maintaining strict victim confidentiality and protecting their personally identifying information. Victims can go to designated site and be screened and assisted with diversion, shelter and housing placement, and connected to other supportive services both within and outside of HRM.

House of Ruth Maryland's Training Institute will also be providing in-person training for all of the City's Outreach staff so that they may better recognize, respond and refer victims that they come across in their work, and we will be developing an online training course that City homeless service providers can also access on a rolling basis.

For more information on the Safe Homes Project, or Baltimore City's Victim Coordinated Entry system, please contact House of Ruth Maryland's Director of Programs and Clinical Services, Janice Miller, at janice@hruthmd.org.

Creating Stable Housing for Victims

House of Ruth Maryland (HRM) was recently awarded two grants through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) national Continuum of Care competitions. These grants focus on serving individuals and families who are homeless as a result of domestic violence. HUD recognizes that these individuals face additional life threatening concerns when they become homeless, and need special supports to help them regain their stability while maintaining their safety.

One grant will allow us to expand our Safe Homes Strong Communities project to serve an additional 100 families from Baltimore City. Safe Homes assists victims by quickly placing them in rental housing in the community, then providing them with step down rental assistance, six months of service coordination, and access to the full array of HRM victim service programming such as counseling and legal assistance, so they can maintain their safe home. **Continued next column**



**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.

18TH ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

They Told Her **No One** Would Listen. They Were **Wrong.**



Megan Twohey

Join us at the Baltimore Hilton on Thursday, April 25th for House of Ruth Maryland's 18th Annual Spring Luncheon, featuring this year's special guest, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, Megan Twohey. Ms. Twohey was one of the authors of the New York Times investigative articles that toppled Harvey Weinstein, fueled the rise of the #MeToo movement and helped make it possible for long-suffering victims of sexual assault to speak out.

Event Co-Chairs: Jeri Hawthorne & Jen Quinlan

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Purchase your tickets today at www.hruth.org/spring or for more information contact Kenia Thomas at kthomas@hruthmd.org or by phone at 443-569-0526.