Help When They’re Ready

In 2017, Nadia came to House of Ruth Maryland with questions about the abuse she was facing in her home. She didn’t speak, read or write English. After speaking with a counselor, she decided she wasn’t ready to make the next step and ended the communication.

In 2019, after two years of enduring the abuse and trying to manage it, Nadia was ready to take the next step and House of Ruth Maryland was here to help. “On average, a victim leaves her abuser 5-7 times before she leaves for good,” said Janice Miller, Director of Programs and Clinical Services at House of Ruth Maryland. “Which means she has often exhausted her personal circle of support. We know that upending your life is a difficult decision, so House of Ruth Maryland is ready to help when the victim is ready to take those next steps. Whether it’s simply establishing a safety plan while they continue to live with the abuser, providing connections to counseling or basic needs supports, or helping her to find a safe place to live – we are available each time a victim reaches out,” said Miller. And that’s just what happened with Nadia.

In 2019, Nadia returned to House of Ruth Maryland and began working with a Bilingual Outreach Specialist. Although she was fearful of the process, Nadia worked with her Outreach Specialist to understand what would happen at her appointment to file for a protective order. Not only was she prepared, Nadia did not have to go to the courthouse alone – House of Ruth Maryland was there to help provide reassuring support. Continued on page 2
opportunities, please contact Kenia Thomas at kthomas@hruthmd.org.

The 18th Annual Spring Luncheon event was a huge success thanks for our many supporters! Nearly 600 people were captivated by our keynote speaker, prize-winning investigative reporter Megan Twohey. Guests also had the benefit of asking questions to get Megan’s behind the scenes thoughts on breaking story of Harvey Weinstein’s decades of alleged abuse towards women, igniting a global reckoning on sexual harassment.

The survivor speaker shared her story of intimate partner violence so courageously for the first time ever publicly, and she was absolutely invigorating. One attendee told us “We thought the luncheon was very inspiring and we’re looking forward to attending again in the future!”

We also want to extend a special thanks to Annika and the children in our After School program for making beautiful centerpieces to share with our guests!

So, if you were unfortunately not in attendance, do not fret as we are already diligently working towards Spring Luncheon 2020.

For more information about Spring Luncheon 2020 and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Kenia Thomas at kthomas@hruthmd.org.

For more information on the Safe Homes program, please contact Janice Miller, Director of Programs and Clinical Services, at janice@hruthmd.org.

Spring Luncheon Shines Again!

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Legislative Session Wrap-up

The 2019 Maryland legislative session ended with House of Ruth Maryland’s lead bill HB122/SB209 Protective Orders – Relief Eligibility – Rape and Sexual Offenses being debated, with no chance of a vote. It is tough to lose a bill that way but we know we got really close to passing it. We thank Senator Mary Washington for standing up for the rights of victims of rape and sexual assault and actively supporting the bill. I also want to thank Chairman Luke Clippinger, Vice Chair Vanessa Atterbeary, and Family Law Subcommittee Chair, Jazz Lewis for moving the bill through the House.

Despite the loss on the lead bill, overall the session was positive. We were able to complete the passage of HB121/SB130 Criminal Procedure – Charge by Citation – Violation of Condition of Release. This bill makes a small correction to a bill we worked on last year to allow the arrest of a defendant who violates a pretrial order to have no contact with the victim. Without this change, violating the conditions of a pretrial no contact order would have resulted in law enforcement issuing a citation to the defendant rather than making an arrest, defeating the purpose of the changes we made last year. We thank our lead sponsors Delegate Kathleen Dumais and Senator Susan Lee for their efforts on this bill.

We also want to thank all of our supporters for being so responsive when asked you to make phone calls. It really supports our work when legislative staff tell us that they were getting lots of calls on our bills.

Finally, we thank our lobbyists Sean Malone, Lisa Harris Jones, and Tommy Tomsett of Harris Jones and Malone who provide countless hours of work and support towards our legislative effort.

To learn more about House of Ruth Maryland’s Legislative Agenda or to be added to our email list to receive legislative updates, please contact Dorothy Lennig at Dlennig@hruthmd.org.
Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

What is normal?

For the person who is being violently abused, the answer is stunning. And horrifying. Kristen spoke at our recent Spring Luncheon, and shared her story of survival. In what should be the safety of her own home, she described sleeping with the window in her bedroom open - every night, even in the cold of winter. Living in daily fear that her ex-husband would break into her home, she wanted to be sure her neighbors could hear her scream.

For some, the normal of their lives is being told by a partner where they can go, who they are not allowed to spend time with, what they can and cannot wear. For some, jealousy and possessiveness is normal. For some, having a partner who explains away the violence by blaming it on stress or being drunk, is normal. For some, having no say in everyday decisions, from how money is being spent to what to make for dinner, is normal.

These “normals” are all around us. We all need to be able to recognize the signs of abuse, know how to respond effectively, and be willing to refer the victim to resources.

- Recognize – Any of the situations above are signs of control and abuse. While the victim may minimize or deny the situation, we shouldn’t.
- Respond – Reach out with concern and compassion for the victim. Describe what you are seeing, and let the person you care about know she doesn’t deserve to be treated that way. Consistent messages should convey your unease with the pattern of control, should reinforce that it’s not “normal”, and should include your availability for support. Be patient. This is often a long process, with many ups and downs. Being a steady voice will be helpful.
- Refer – Across the country there are agencies ready to provide services. House of Ruth Maryland’s confidential hotline is available 24 hours. Our hotline counselors are ready to simply talk through a situation, or provide immediate assistance. Our hotline is 410-889-RUTH(7884).

Together, we can do this. It means consistently confronting abuse when we see it, and making it unacceptable. The victim is not alone, and neither are you. Reach out to us, and let us know how we can help you.

Sandi Timmins, Executive Director

Special Thanks:

- Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU to all who participated in helping to make this year’s 18th Annual Spring Luncheon event a great success! Especially to Annika and the wonderful kids in after school care for the awesome handmade centerpieces!!
- Special thanks to Toni Borcz for donating luxury clothing to Ruth’s Closet from her anonymous client.
- Special thanks to the Northwest Chamber of Commerce Women in Business group for holding their spring Sip and Shop event at Ruth’s Closet.

To see more Special Thanks, visit www.hruth.org/specialthanks

Passing of Friends

While the spring flowers bloomed, they just weren’t as bright this year, as House of Ruth Maryland mourned the loss of one staff member and two long-time volunteers.

When you are fortunate enough to enjoy where you work, your colleagues can often become like family and this was true of Cheryl Moncrieffe. Cheryl worked at House of Ruth Maryland for several years and was like family to many, including the residents of our shelter. She could often be found helping residents with a kind word and a friendly smile. We’ll miss her calming presence and her giving spirit.

Connie Lopez was a long-time volunteer for House of Ruth Maryland. She combined her love of fashion, clothes and accessories with a desire to help others and worked her heart out during our One Great Thing events, the annual Clearing House Sidewalk Sale and at Ruth’s Closet. She was always happy to help in any way she could! We’ll miss her can-do attitude.

Lillian Augustus had a passion for helping those less fortunate and the women in House of Ruth Maryland’s emergency shelter held a special place in her heart. Lillian managed a small “boutique” in our shelter – giving residents, who often arrive with just the clothes on their back, the opportunity to “shop” for clothes, shoes, work uniforms, etc. But Lillian’s true passion was mentoring the survivors in our shelter, setting an example of mature, non-violent behavior and influencing the women’s choices in how they present themselves in appearance and behavior. We’ll miss her love for those she served.

We also thank the many friends and family who made donations to House of Ruth Maryland in memory of these amazing women. Their legacy lives on.

Sandi Timmins
Join us for a sensational sunset, creative cocktails, Chef John Shields’ divine delectable, music by the Swingin’ Swami’s and dancing – all to support House of Ruth Maryland!

For more information and to confirm your sponsorship today, please contact Kenia Thomas at kthomas@hruthmd.org or by phone at 443-569-0526.

17th Annual Crabaret
Thursday, July 11, 2019
6:30pm – 10pm
Gertrude’s at the BMA

Co-Chairs: Julie Hopkins and Joyce Ann Burman
Price: $100 before July 1, 2019
$125 Starting July 2, 2019

To purchase tickets go to www.hruth.org/crab

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