

PASSAGES



*October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Remember to wear your Purple Lapel Pin!*



Area Agency Training provided by COOR Coalition



On September 23, 2009 several area agencies came together to learn about the psychosocial effects of domestic and sexual violence on children. The COOR Coalition against Sexual Violence

Agencies such as Department of Human Services, Community Mental Health as well as local fire departments and police agencies were there to learn about the effects of such trauma, and given some insights as to working with children who have been abused.

Presenting were Dr Kerri Schroeder, PhD and Dr. Wayne Simmons, PhD.

Dr. Kerri Schroeder received her PhD from Kent State University. She was the Unit Psychologist for girls who were hospitalized at the Ohio Maximum Security Hospital for five years. Ninety percent of the girls were sexually abused. She moved to Traverse City in 1989 and began private practice. She works with various county DHS offices conducting abuse and neglect evaluations.

Dr. Wayne Simmons trained at the University of Detroit, receiving a PhD and participated in the Child Therapy Training Program at Lakewood Clinic in Birmingham, Mi. He worked with hospitalized adolescents at Clinton Valley in Pontiac, Mi., Also in the Dept. of Child Psychiatry at Mercy Hospital in Detroit. He has been in private practice over 30 years.

If anyone is interested in attending a COOR coalition meeting and becoming more involved please contact River House, Inc. at 989-348-3169.





Volunteer Spotlight



For nearly 20 years Jim Mueller has been a familiar face at River House, Inc. He has spent countless hours sitting on the Board of Directors, assisted in community awareness projects and donated many afternoons helping to keep the landscaping beautiful at the shelter and administrative offices.

When asked how he became involved in work at the shelter, Jim explained that he had moved to the area as commander at the State Police Post and it was suggested that he become involved in community organizations. River House had a mission that he believed in and still does.

Jim is retiring from the board but still continues to volunteer his time at the shelter. His work is much appreciated!

River House, Inc. Upcoming Events

Domestic Violence Month Awareness Activities:

10/20/2009 KCC Balloon Launch 11am

10/24/2009 Make a Difference Day– River House
10 am - 4pm

10/24/2009 Rocktoberfest at the Ole Barn in Grayling. Party starts at 6pm. Come listen to local bands as they jam and raise money to fight against domestic violence.

10/25/2009 Family Bowling at Fred's in Roscommon. 12-4pm

10/27/2009 Empty Bowls art show and silent auction KCC 6-8pm

Please call 989-348-3169 for more information about any of these events

Make A Difference Day

The national day to help others October 24, 2009, the 19th annual Day



Make A Difference Day is the most encompassing national day of helping others—a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. And, everyone can participate! Make A Difference Day is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of every October.

This year River House, Inc. will host their Make a Difference Day on

October 24, 2009 from 10am until 4pm.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact River House, Inc. at 989-348-3169 or

volunteer@riverhouseinc.org



*Volunteers and Staff Make a difference
At last year's Make a Difference Day!*



One Woman's Story

The following story was written and submitted by a River House client. The name has been withheld for confidentiality purposes.

“Eggs Shells “ By A Survivor

As I write this letter, I will more than be opening old wounds for you and myself also.

It won't be easy, but if my story can help at least one of you to break the cycle, then it will all be worth it.

I believe that events in our childhoods shape our futures. I will be leaving some of my own “hell” out of this letter as it is too painful.

I had been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder at age 15. I knew there was something wrong with me before that. My parents got divorced at age 12. Soon afterwards my father abandoned me, thank God for my wonderful mother. As a result of the abandonment, I figured if my own father didn't love me that there must be something wrong with me and therefore I didn't love myself.

As a symptom of bi-polar, I began drinking and doing drugs and becoming more and more interested in boys. Always looking for someone to love me, validate me. I made 80% of the wrong choices in men. I've survived a world of abuse in one way or another, verbally, emotionally and physically. Most always I was so ashamed I hid it from my family. When I did find a wonderful man, I was so used to chaos that I sabotaged my own happiness, I couldn't handle it. I had spent so much time walking on eggshells wondering when the next beating was going to happen. And again when those good men were in my life I was still walking on eggshells worrying when it was all going to go wrong. When the other shoe was going to drop.

The absolute happiest days were the days that my two daughters were born. They are amazing and now I have a grandson, he's awesome!

Now, I'll tell you about my last abuse. It started very subtly. I truly thought this one was it. I have a lot of health problems and he took great care of me. But as I started to get my health and strength back, he began to tell me what to wear, what color to dye my hair. I couldn't talk to my daughters or mother with-

out him sitting right next to me. He had told me when I tried to break it off with him that if he couldn't have me no one would. Then he moved to Texas after putting me in the hospital with severe injuries.

For a short time, he stalked me by phone. Then I



had a call from a local number with a voice mail saying that he already had my grave dug and he was going to break in and cut several parts of my body. As soon as I heard that and knew that he was back in town, I packed a bag and called a

friend and went straight to River House. 2 days later, the police arrested him in the act of destroying my house. He cut up 80% of my clothes and shoes. He stole my bike and broke my household goods. When the police caught him, he had a huge knife and a larger monkey wrench.

When abuse escalates to life threatening, please, I beg of you to believe it and seek a safe shelter. River House and their staff are wonderful. They kept me safe.

Now as I close this letter, I am thanking my Lord for keeping me alive one more day. I'm drinking my coffee, I'm sober now and I'm learning to love myself. And it feels good.

I call myself a survivor now! God Bless to all and never lose faith. Take the threats seriously.

~ A Survivor

Finally, I can clearly see.

A poem written by a survivor

Though my perceptive abilities
Were limited and narrowed
And evil surrounded me and kept
Me scared and harrowed
Recently, I have been delivered and
So have been set free;
My pin hole has been expanded
And finally, I can clearly see

Absolutely, I was bound up, my
Reality all jumbled and I
Couldn't upright walk so most of
The time I stumbled.
All my life's aspects were filtered
Kaleidoscopically,
And confusedly colorful, scary
But finally, I can clearly see.

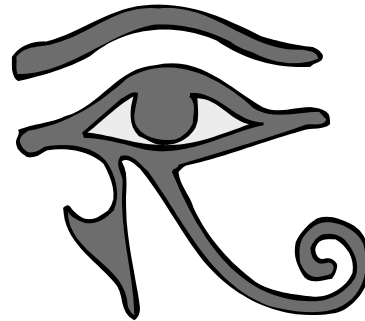
Trying desperately, I sought to
Let the pain pass over
But all the things I strived to
Release oozed back upon
My shoulders;
Constantly, the rank decays
of death were breathed in and
Perceived by me,
I clung with my last breath
To my blessed pinhole, and finally,
I can clearly see.

Sometimes my eyes looked dead,
Though no could understand;
People closest to me couldn't
Imagine how much of me
Insanity did command.
Hearing mesmerizing drums of
Hell's demons,
Took all my good thoughts from me.
God gracefully delivered me and
Now finally, I can see clearly

Lord, please let me never again
Cross pure evil's bridges
But if you choose to let me,
I know you can cart me back
o'er its putrid ridges

I felt the rank breath of
Death on my neck briefly
Constantly;
Though then nearly blind
And panicking, finally, I can
Clearly see.

Scary though it is to me to
Know that I once then had
Been there,
I look back on it thankfully,
Knowing that God will spare me.
He will hold my dying spirit
And breathe his life back in me
And open my poor blinded
Eyes and make it so finally,
I can clearly see.



Empty Bowls October Art show and Silent Auction

Where: The Kirtland House Gallery
When: all through the month of October
What: An art show to raise poverty and hunger
awareness.

Who: Everyone is welcome
There will be a silent auction, starting at \$5, for the
bowls during October and a final
dinner reception on October 28th

Proceeds to go to River House, Inc.

Thoughts From an Intern...

Cassy DeVos is an MSU student who interned this summer at River House, Inc. and quickly became a valuable part of the "River House Team". She is studying psychology and plans to complete her bachelors degree this year.



One out of every three women worldwide – according to the Family Violence Prevention Fund – is a victim of sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse in their lifetime. It is one thing to hear this statistic, to learn about it, and to memorize it in an attempt to 4.0 a final in some psychology class. Let me tell you, it is quite another thing to actually witness this statistic; to arrive at an internship where you can see the physical and emotional scars that abuse has left upon its beautiful victims. Sometimes it is hard to think about the people who are mistreated, I know it broke my heart. However, the best part about witnessing the healing process is the part where you see the women change from being a victim to a survivor.

This past summer I interned at River House, Inc. I can't imagine another place that is more empowering. I witnessed firsthand how important support is when domestic violence occurs. Between support from staff members and fellow clients, women began to regain their lives. This experience really opened my eyes as to how important it is for our community to come together and help those in need. My experience working with River House was my opportunity to help out in the most rewarding way I could ever imagine.

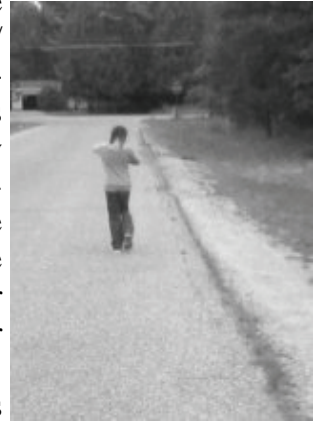
Homeless Are Not Only Homeless

By Nancy Hook,
Coordinator of COOR Housing Coalition

Clients come into shelter because they were evicted or lost their job or income. Very often after they get settled in River House, they tell you they were abused by someone which could be their boyfriend, husband, or a family member. The women who come into the shelter are not always abused that day or week or even year.

A majority of the women and children that come to stay at River House are victims of domestic and/or sexual violence. We provide counseling to the clients and find that a majority (83%) have a history of being the victim of some type of abuse. The abuse can be some sort of sexual abuse or domestic abuse (verbal or physical).

River House helps clients with finding housing. Staff help clients by assisting them to: fill out applications, provide resources for finding housing such as newspapers with rentals listed, refer clients to various agencies for assistance with money for housing such as the Department of Human Resources, and look for housing for the clients on the internet at the housing locator website (www.michiganhousinglocator.com). Staff also works with the client in advocating for a client with a landlord or agencies providing a rental assistance program.



The Fly Factory in Grayling Holds Fundraiser for River House, Inc during canoe races!

Billy Bones BBQ Rustled up some delicious food for the event!



Mailing List

We are updating our mailing list. If you are not the person listed on the label or would like to receive our newsletter electronically please contact us at

989-348-3169 or

office@riverhouseinc.org



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The River House, Inc. website now has PayPal capabilities. If you wish to make a donation using paypal, click on the DONATE button associated with the fund of your choice.

The website can be found at
www.riverhouseinc.org

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“I won’t be a victim anymore!!”

~Quote from River House Client

Newsletter Sponsorships

This year River House is offering a new opportunity for giving. We annually publish a newsletter in April and October.

You may want to consider including one or both of these publications in your community development or advertising budget this year.

The newsletters reach over 2000 families in Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda and Roscommon Counties and other parts of the region. All you need to do is provide us with your business card or desired print specifications.

For more information or to receive a sponsorship price list you may call 989-348-3169 or contact us by email at

volunteer@riverhouseinc.org



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