



Mission Statement

The Haven Shelter & Services, Inc. is committed to preventing and eliminating all types of domestic violence and sexual assault within our service area, which includes Westmoreland, Richmond, Essex, Lancaster and Northumberland Counties. The primary focus of The Haven's mission is to provide advocacy and shelter for identified victims of partner abuse and sexual assault as well as to provide support services to victims and their families. To greater further its mission, The Haven seeks to enhance public awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault through community outreach and education.

If you would like to receive our monthly email newsletter or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 333-1099.

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The Haven Shelter and Services, Inc.
P. O. Box 1267
Warsaw, VA 22572
www.havenshelter.org
Hotline: 800.22.HAVEN

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"Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he knows not, though he senses it. But without deeper reflection one knows from daily life that one exists for other people."

-Albert Einstein

"It is not by muscle, speed or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character and judgment."

-Marcus Tullius Cicero

"By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest."

-Confucius

"Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has many; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."

-Charles Dickens



As we reflect on the history of The Haven, we see a long and winding path that has widened over the many years of serving domestic and sexual abuse survivors. When this organization began, it took courage to bring attention to domestic violence and later sexual assault. People did not talk about such things. The Haven's history is a strong one, spanning over a 27-year period in which we have assisted thousands of individuals. Our organization has played a big role in bringing these issues out of the dark and bringing attention and assistance to survivors. After so many years in this work, our goal to prevent and eliminate all types of interpersonal violence still remains at the center of all we do. Through public awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault and community outreach and education, we hope to build a community that protects the rights of everyone to live free of violence. None of this would have been possible without your support.

Reflections on those we have served . . .

Participants in The Haven's programs have had the opportunity to regain the tools necessary to change their lives and the lives of their children in many positive ways. The paths these participants have taken over the last 27 years have been as varied as each individual. For some, freedom from violence has come from establishing independence from an abuser who has taken from them this very basic right. For others, it has come from implementing available legal remedies to hold perpetrators accountable for the abuse they have inflicted. Others have left our program and returned to relationships armed with a better understanding of what it means to be in a healthy relationship and a genuine desire for healthy relationships of their own. Many, who once had enjoyed productive, independent lives before the abusive relationship began, have gotten the opportunity to return to a life of self-sufficiency and freedom from abuse. Below is text from an email we recently received.

First and foremost I would love to say thank you for everything! I stayed at The Haven in 2009 during a horrible time in my life. I lost

custody of my son and basically lost grip with reality. I can proudly say that I am doing so much better I have FULL physical custody of my son, his father, my abuser, has no contact, and my life is finally back on track. I am doing great.

This participant's words later in the email effectively describe the conflicting and overwhelming experience of leaving the abuse behind.

After being in an abusive relationship having the strength to leave is one thing but the emotional turmoil that one goes thru is beyond the normal person's ability to understand - the utter loneliness, the feeling of rejection, the abuse, the stress, etc. I know when I left my abuser I felt like I was going to die without him, but I also knew I was going to die if I stayed with him. I was in such a confused state of mind and didn't know how to resolve the problem. Now that I look back I cannot believe I stayed as long as I did.

Make no mistake, when we reflect on those who have participated in The Haven's programs over the years, we are not seeing weak, down-trodden, souls who are blowing aimlessly in the breeze. We see some of the strongest and bravest individuals you could ever hope to meet. (You might be surprised to find that you have met many of them, and just don't know it.)

Reflections on how interpersonal violence has impacted our community . . .

Recently, an administrative office employee was extremely touched by several experiences she had while making presentations to local faith groups who support the work of The Haven. As she sat around big tables in church social halls and talked about the role our community can play in helping victims of domestic and sexual violence, she reminded those attending that "domestic violence is not a race, gender, or class issue – the person sitting next to you today could have at some point been directly affected by such abuse". In the moments following this statement, individuals slowly began joining in the conversation saying "my parents... my husband... my child..." each telling the group of their own reflections of violence they had experienced or witnessed. In one meeting, as many as 5 individuals out of the 20 present talked openly about how they had been personally impacted by violence.

Reflections on The Haven . . .

Over the period of 27 years, The Haven has grown, the staff has grown, the volunteer program has grown, our services have grown and the support of our community has grown with the needs of the participants we serve. We began with shelter - one small apartment. We provided shelter and safety to those seeking assistance, and that alone may very well have saved many lives. But the need to do more - to help more - led to offering not only shelter but to a wide variety of other services as well.

In the last year 1176 individuals called The Haven's 24-hour, toll-free crisis hotline receiving support, referrals, information, and validations when they needed it the most.

373 adults and children obtained advocacy services including, court and hospital accompaniment, information and referral, support group services, individual case management and counseling, crisis intervention, and much more.

Of those above, 116 adults and children resided in The Haven's shelter.

257 hours of prevention programming reached students in local middle and high schools.

Through our newly established Rapid Re-housing program, 5 homeless families have obtained financial support to assist with securing housing as well as on-going housing stabilization services.

There are many heroes who are responsible for the success of The Haven's programs and for offering participants a chance to change their lives.

- Volunteers and staff who run the Shoppe for Haven's Sake Thrift store and all the staff, board and volunteers who provide fund-raising assistance throughout the year insure that The Haven has the resources necessary to keep our services available.
- Office Staff and volunteers help the organization run efficiently and professionally to insure that we maintain our non-profit status and our reputation.
- Countless staff and volunteers sort, store, record and distribute the in-kind donations that are such an important part of our ability to keep our expenses manageable.
- Staff and volunteers organize and facilitate trainings, presentations, awareness events and prevention programs throughout our community all year.
- Advocates provide support for and cooperate with the large number of community partners to insure a coordinated community response to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Shelter staff and service coordinators answer the hotline, provide direct services to participants and facilitate support groups.
- Individuals, churches, businesses, civic groups, local governments and everyone who supports our fund-raisers, donates to our program, or refers individuals to us for services help us continue to meet the needs of the community we serve.

Reflection on how you make a difference . . .

You made a difference when you chose to read this newsletter and become more informed about The Haven. It is because of the support of the communities we serve that we are able to reflect with such pride on the past 27 years of service to those who have experienced sexual and domestic violence. You continue to make a difference by providing support to our organization through in-kind or monetary gifts, volunteering, attending our events, or by reaching out to those who have been touched by violence and referring them to The Haven's services. Reflecting on your friendship, we can look to the future with confidence that our services will be available for those who need us because you have shown us how much you care about those who have experienced violence. You have shown us you want to make sure our youth can live violence-free lives. You have shown us that you want to make sure The Haven's services are here if you, your children or grandchildren ever need them. **You are part of all the reflections of The Haven, because together..... we will continue to make a difference.**

In the words of Leo Rosten, "The purpose of life is not to be happy – but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have made some difference that you have lived at all."



Peace Begins at Home

Be a vehicle for change!

The Haven is committed to preventing and eliminating all types of sexual and domestic abuse in our local area. So even while we work to provide intervention services to individuals who have experienced abuse, we are also striving to provide programs and services to prevent future abuse. We need the help of supporters across Virginia.

The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Action Alliance is launching a Building Healthy Futures Initiative to secure funding for prevention programs across the state to provide healthy relationships education. The first source of funding for this initiative will be the Peace Begins at Home specialty license plate approved by the General Assembly during the last session.

You can help The Haven obtain more prevention funding by purchasing a specialty plate. Go to www.DrivePeaceHome.org to find out how you can help bring more healthy relationships education to our community.