



## **Our History**

SafeHouse Denver was established in October, 1977 as an emergency shelter for battered women and children. Community professionals were working with a large number of women on a variety of issues and found that in many cases the underlying problem was domestic violence, yet there was no safe place for these women to go. SafeHouse was born out of this need for an emergency shelter for women and children living with domestic violence. In 1993, recognizing that shelters solve only part of the problem, SafeHouse extended its programming by providing non-residential counseling and advocacy services and expanding its community education efforts. Today, SafeHouse Denver is the only agency in the city of Denver providing both emergency shelter and non-residential programming specifically for women, children and youth who are victims of domestic violence.

## **Our Mission, Purpose and Services**

SafeHouse Denver's *mission* is to assist adults, children and youth in reclaiming their right to a life free of domestic violence. The agency provides a broad spectrum of effective, culturally-competent services to women and children who have been impacted by domestic violence . . . building awareness that there are options available and that SafeHouse can assist with those options. Services include: emergency shelter; safety planning; individual counseling; personal advocacy; support groups; parenting sessions; a therapeutic Children's Program; referrals to community resources; outreach to special populations such as teens and the LGBT community and a 24-Hour Crisis and Information Line. Services are available through the non-residential Counseling and Advocacy Center, as well as through the emergency shelter. Through its Community Education Program, SafeHouse increases community awareness of, and accountability for, the intervention in, and prevention of, domestic violence.

## **The Need for Domestic Violence Services**

Domestic violence survivors face severe emotional and physical trauma, homelessness, unemployment and other economic barriers to supporting themselves. One in three women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The power and control cycle of domestic violence gradually isolates victims and diminishes their life choices. More than 60% of Denver households with children living on the streets reported abuse in the home as the reason for their homelessness in a 2007 point in time survey. While domestic violence is found in all economic classes, poverty and domestic violence co-occur at a high rate and magnify each other's effects related to a victim's stress, powerlessness and social isolation. Physical abuse between intimate partners is the second leading cause of death for women who are pregnant and results in an estimated 1,200 deaths and 2.6 million injuries among women and men every year.

In just one day in 2013, Colorado's local domestic violence programs served 978 victims. According to a report by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the programs provided emergency shelter or transitional housing to 517 domestic violence victims and counseling and advocacy services to 461 adults and children. Also, on the day of the census, September 17, 2013, domestic violence service providers answered 361 crisis line calls in the 24-hour census period, averaging more than 15 hotline calls every hour.

## **The Impact of Our Services**

SafeHouse Denver ensures that victims are physically safe and helps them to improve their emotional wellbeing. Our skilled advocates provide clients with tools to improve their safety; decrease their isolation and increase their knowledge about the how domestic violence has affected them and their decision-making. This increased understanding helps them to begin to see available options, reconnect to healthy coping skills and overcome barriers on their path to self-sufficiency. We believe that with consistent exposure to information and support, victims of domestic violence begin to re-establish their personal belief systems, and experience the changes that lead to improved well-being over time.

In 2013, SafeHouse Denver's programs and services provided the following: answered 15,664 calls on our **24-Hour Crisis and Information Line**, providing callers with counseling and referrals to other community resources; provided 169 women and 89 children fleeing domestic violence with 8,747 nights of safe shelter and support services at the **Emergency Shelter** program; provided 920 children and adults, including 17 male victims, with counseling and advocacy services through the non-residential **Counseling and Advocacy Center (CAC)**; and the **Community Education and Awareness** program reached 931 individuals through educational presentations on domestic violence.

SafeHouse Denver's clients are primarily from the metro Denver area, however, some clients come from adjacent counties and out-of-state depending on their specific safety needs. The ethnicities of our adult clients in 2012 are: 39% Caucasian; 35% Hispanic; 13% African American; 1% Native American; 2% Asian/Pacific Islander; 1% other; 5% unknown; and 4% Multi-racial. Nearly 99% of the families we serve in our emergency shelter earn less than the Median Family Income in Denver.

## **The Effects of the Economic Downturn**

Like most non-profits, SafeHouse Denver was affected by the economic downturn that began in 2008. However, we are proud to report that we finished the past four years in a positive financial position and that 83 cents of every dollar went directly towards mission. We will continue to implement an aggressive fund development plan in 2013, focusing on continually expanding our base of individual, corporate and foundation support for overall fund diversification.

Not surprisingly, as charitable giving declines, the need for domestic violence services is increasing. In our non-residential program, we are seeing a growing number of women and children who are staying in unsafe situations. Lack of income, job loss and/or fear of becoming homeless make it challenging for victims to leave their abuser. The nature of the services they are requesting is also changing. Many non-residential clients are in need of basic items such as food, clothing, prescription medications and school supplies for their children.

At our emergency shelter, we continue to see many more large families and the length of their stay is often longer than 28 days. Many women are unable to find employment, even in the area of day labor and the lack of transitional housing is also a barrier to their ability to leave the shelter. Our shelter staff reported that, in 2013, they referred over 2,400 requests for safe shelter to other resources as our shelter was full.

## **How You Can Help                      Tax ID #84-0745911**

The generosity of our donors, sponsors, volunteers, funders and friends is essential to our ability to provide services to women, children and youth who are victims of domestic violence. Every gift to SafeHouse is important and potentially saves lives. Please visit our website at [www.safehouse-denver.org](http://www.safehouse-denver.org) to learn more.