



Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As many of you may have heard by now, the summer of 2008 was one we won't soon forget at Newhouse. In August the board and senior staff were faced with the difficult decision of closing the shelter or merging with another organization.

Many factors converged at once to create this situation—grant sources were slow to reimburse us; government contracts were slow in being forwarded to us; government grants have declined 18% statewide over the last year; our critical needs campaign was delayed in starting, and we had no reserve cash account.

Just as we were preparing to make our final decision, Angel Donors entered our lives. I received a phone message stating that the individuals had read of our plight and thought they might be able to help. We played “phone tag” until exactly one hour before our board meeting. After the phone conversation our Vice President of Development and I looked at each other in disbelief, did some preliminary research to try to confirm that this call was real and then I presented it to the board. The only stipulations on their gift were that we continue to serve women and children as a “stand-alone” organization, that they and the size of the gift remain anonymous and that we occasionally give them an update on our progress.

We moved the women to other shelters during our two week hiatus. Within reopening the shelter we filled 74 of our 86 beds within 48 hours.

These past months have been filled with meetings with funders and donors to explain our situation and detail our progress. Their response and support has been incredibly uplifting. Likewise, we have made programmatic changes, added new board members, asked board members to recommit to their roles, and most importantly, we have been thoughtful stewards of the generous gift we received. We were able to pay a significant amount of debt that had burdened us for some time and have the resources to get ourselves back on firm footing as we approach 2009.

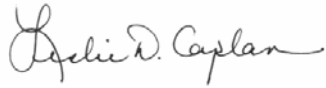
I wish I could say that our worries were over. This wonderful gift gave us breathing room but it didn't insure our future. That is up to the board, staff and our dedicated supporters.

As we begin a new year filled with uncertainty in tough economic times, I hope we can each remember two things:

1. If times seem difficult for us, imagine what it must be like to be uprooted from your home with only the clothes on your back to enter a totally strange setting filled with people you don't know. That is the reality for every woman victim of domestic violence who becomes a resident at Newhouse.
2. Being a donor doesn't require a lot of money. \$25 provides a woman and her children all of the personal care items they need while they are in shelter. A roll of paper towels or a box of 45 gallon trash bags is a tremendous help in our operation.

It is a "New Day at Newhouse" and I hope you will join with me and all the other wonderful people who have joined with us to insure that our women and children's lives are filled with bright days.

Best wishes in the year ahead.



Leslie D. Caplan
President