

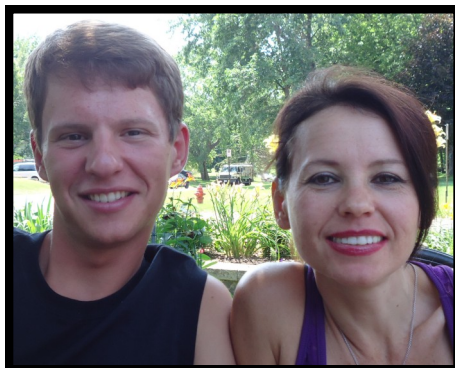
HOME FREE

A program for battered women and their children.

A Better Life

Yana and her teenage son, Alex (not their real names) left their home in Ukraine and came to the United States looking for a better life. Soon after, Yana got married to a man she did not know well. The abuse began as soon as the marriage did. Yana was safe as long as her son was around, but often as soon as he left the house, her husband threatened and hit her. Yana was regularly beaten and she and her son were often left without any food or money. Yana and Alex were new to this country, they did not speak English, and did not know what their rights are. Because of this, they never called the police.

Yana worked to improve their situation by taking English Second Language courses, so that she could find a job. One day after not having



Alex and Yana, pictured recently.

money for food for days, Yana finally told her ESL teacher about what was happening in her life and how desperate and scared she felt. The teacher immediately put her in contact with Bri, a Home Free advocate who specializes in working with immigrant and refugee battered women.

Yana and Alex lived at Home Free for five months. During this time, Bri

worked with Yana to help her understand her rights, and the options she had as she worked to build a brighter future for herself and her son. Bri helped Yana find an apartment and eventually, a job.

Yana has now lead a life free of abuse for over two years. She owns a small business and her son is working at a job he enjoys. When asked about his experience at Home Free, Alex said in perfect English: "Home Free helped us stand on our feet. They were like another family; they took care of us."

Despite their busy schedules, both Yana and Alex often volunteer at Home Free, and we love seeing them. Yana and Alex found the better life they were seeking; we are glad Home Free was able to help them get there.

Home Free Services

It is the right of every woman and child to lead a life free of violence.

If you or someone you know is being abused, know that help is available. Please contact us for more information at (763) 559-9008 or the crisis line at (763) 559-4945. Below is a summary of services provided by Home Free:

- ◆ 24-hour crisis line providing support, information and referral
- ◆ Emergency shelter for battered women and their children
- ◆ Community Program providing legal advocacy and support services for victims of domestic violence living in the community
- ◆ Support Groups - Home Free offers weekly support groups for battered women and their children. Groups are available for Shelter residents as well as women living in the community.



Our mission is to provide battered women and their children with safety, support, and information, so that they have the opportunity to explore alternatives to living with a violent partner.

Home Free Volunteers

Home Free would not be able to do the work it does without the continued support of its volunteers. Last year alone, volunteers donated over 3,100 hours to Home Free, providing direct service, working in the children's program, and Community Program. In addition, volunteers provide assistance with events such as decorating rooms, activities for the kids, and parties for the holidays.

Many thanks to all of our volunteers!

Our volunteers are:

Cathy Anderson
Liz Anderson
Frances Bennett
Ashley Bonsen
Natalie Booth
Linda Boyadjis
Michelle Cici
Mary Conda
Lizzie Conda
Jenna Cordova
Michelle Huntley Dill
Svitlana Dzyba
Gretchen Evans
Rachel Evans
Elyssa Fink
Jennifer Fisher

Carmen Ford
Melanie Gray
Oleg Grytsyna
Bill Hannik
Gail Heyda
Andrea Kabachenko
Angela Knollenberg
Taisa Kushner
Brenda Landwehr
Peggy Larkin
Dawn Lund
Bridget Madden
Alisha Marcotte
Christie McCullum
Lynne Meckstroth
Aniko Meszaros

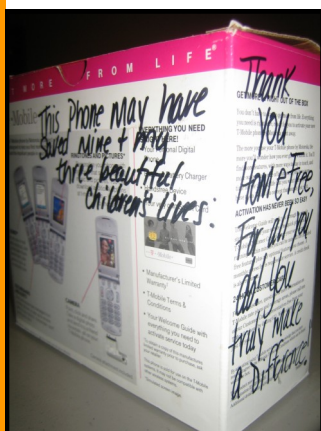
George Muellner
Abigail Nash
Lela Nmah
Brenda Reeves
Shelley Rorvick
Lauren Schmidt
Kelli Schmidt
Sharon Stein
Jessica Stinson
Katie Sullivan
Lori Thompson
Amy Toberman
Shawn Tubbs
Andrew Whitman
Luwana Whittington
Cynthia Wright

Volunteer Groups / Special Project

Brooklyn Park Women of Today
Breck School
Cedar Crest
Church of the Open Door
Hanover MOM's Club
Home Escapers
Lennar Family of Builders
Luther Crest Bible Camp
Masons
Mount Olivet Church
Sharon Nelson "Toots the Clown"
St. Barnabus Women' Group
St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church
United Way Emerging Leaders
Waytonka MOM's Club
Word of Peace



Cell Phone Collection

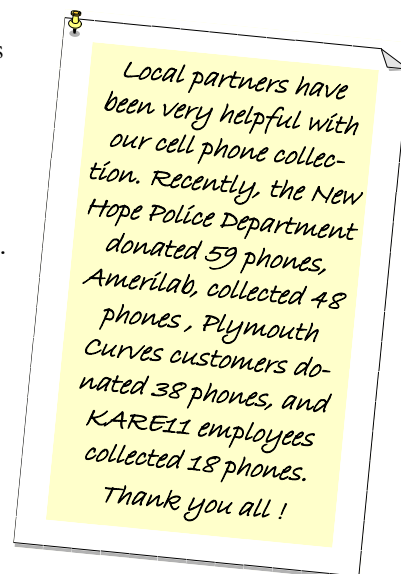


For years, Home Free has been collecting used cell phones in our community. Some of the cell phones collected are given to women to help keep them safe.

In some cases, these cell phones proved to be life-saving. A woman who was served by the Home Free Community Program returned a cell phone given to her by Home Free. On the box, it was written: ***"This phone may have saved mine and my three beautiful children's lives. Thank you, Home Free, for all you do! You truly make a difference."***

Phones that are not distributed to women are recycled through the GRC Shelter Alliance recycling program. For each phone collected, Home Free receives a donation.

If you have a phone you would like to donate, or would like a cell phone collection box to assist us with this effort, please contact Kari Hitchcock at (763) 559-9008.



Summer Celebration!



Every year, Home Free celebrates Summer with a fun celebration for current and past residents, staff, and volunteers. The goal of these celebrations is for everyone to gather and have some fun! This year, the 26th Annual Summer Celebration took place on Friday, July 29th, with a Native American-themed celebration.

The event began with carnival games, and face painting. The Raptor Center later taught us about exciting birds such as owls, eagles and falcons. After lunch, we were joined by police officers and fire fighters from the community. The event was concluded by Native American Expedition style dancing and drummers. The entire day was fun and laughter-filled!

We are grateful we were able to once again have such a fun Summer Celebration!



Candlelight Vigil

The Domestic Violence Prevention Network's annual candlelight vigil will be held on October 3rd, 2011 at 6:45pm at North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park. Each year we honor women and children who were killed as a result of domestic violence in the northwest Hennepin County area. The Northwest Hennepin Clothesline Project will be on display as a memorial to those who have died. For more information, please visit www.dvpreventionnetwork.org.

October is domestic violence awareness month.

Please join us.

Eagan Funfest with Lennar

Home Free participated in the Eagan Funfest 4th of July weekend. The Lennar Family of Builders donated a wonderful children's play house which we raffled off. During this three-day event, Home Free earned nearly \$1,500 on raffle ticket sales!

In addition to selling raffle tickets, Home Free staff and volunteers had the opportunity to talk to the event attendees about domestic violence and the services Home Free provides. Thank you Lennar, for a great weekend!



Special 'Thanks!' to Susan Reese for all of her hard work during this event!

Educational Support Group

Home Free concluded its first ten-week educational support group in June. This support group included dinner, free childcare, and an effective curriculum on the dynamics of domestic violence. Because it was so successful, we will extend the next group to twelve weeks, starting on September 1st and meeting every Thursday.

If you or someone you know is interested in attending, please contact Carlein at (763) 559-9008.

We are looking for community partners who would like to donate a meal for any of the twelve sessions as well as volunteers to assist with childcare.

Thank you to everyone who made the last group such a success!



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HOME FREE

A program for Battered Women and their Children



Current Needs

- ◆ Pencil/school boxes, 3-prong folders
- ◆ Baby Wash
- ◆ Full size deodorant, full size lotion
- ◆ Gift cards - Target, K-Mart, Walmart, Walgreens, Cub, etc.
- ◆ Bus and gas cards
- ◆ Used cell phones

For an updated list of current needs, please contact Kari at (763) 559-9008 or via email at khitchcock@missionsinc.org. Current needs are also listed on our website: www.missionsinc.org

Thank you!



Please contact Stela Osmanovic if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, have corrections, or are moving.
(763) 559-1883 • sosmanovic@missionsinc.org • 3409 E. Medicine Lake Boulevard • Plymouth, MN 55441

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