

HOME FREE

A program for battered women and their children.

Working Together to Provide Safety



Each year, Home Free welcomes over 500 battered women and their children into the Shelter. Throughout the years, we have explored many ways in which we could provide as much help as possible to those who need it. One of the priceless resources we have are our good-hearted volunteers who are able to lend us a hand in a variety of ways.

For example, recently, when Amy and her two small children came to

Home Free's door, they weren't alone - in tow was a puppy named Buster.

Right away, we could see that Buster was a member of the family and how afraid Amy and the kids were of losing him. Over the years, we have learned that when battered women leave an abusive partner, one of the most heart-

breaking decisions is leaving their pets behind. Pets are often abused as well, and they might be used as a way to further hurt the woman who has left.

Home Free staff was not sure what to do, as it was against the Shelter's policy to keep pets. However, they knew that Amy and her children had already been through so much, and losing Buster would cause them even more pain.

Immediately after meeting Amy's family, Mary, the Home Free director made

some calls to her volunteers and found a perfect temporary home for Buster. The couple who volunteered to host the puppy came and picked him up the same day, but not before promising the children that they would bring Buster back for a visit every weekend.

Buster was well taken care of in his new home, and was still able to spend time with his family every weekend during their six-week stay at the Shelter.

With the help of advocates at Home Free, Amy was able to find a safe, new home. Buster was reunited with his family the very day Amy and the children moved in. There were smiles, and tail-wagging, all around.

Home Free is grateful for our wonderful volunteers and their contribution to providing safety to the women, children, (and pets!) we serve.

Minnesota Femicides

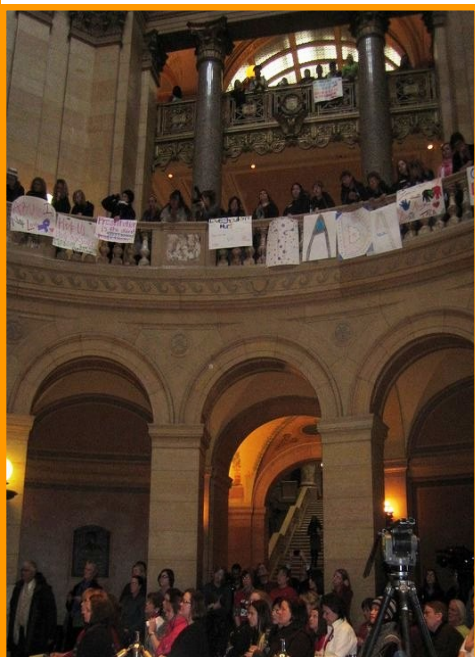
The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women recently published the 2010 Minnesota Femicide Report. We learned that last year, at least 28 people were killed as a result of domestic violence. Seven of them were children. During the Action Day to End Violence Against Women at the State Capitol (for more information see page. 2), each victim was remembered. A rose represents each adult victim and the teddy bears represent the children.

This devastating information makes it clear that we must continue to work even harder towards putting an end to domestic violence in our 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.

Action Day to End Violence Against Women



Home Free participated in the Action Day to End Violence Against Women on March 9th at the Minnesota State Capitol. The Action Day to End Violence Against Women is an annual event organized by different state-wide coalitions with a common goal to raise awareness of violence against women and its impact on our communities. In addition to the educational aspect of the event, individuals have an opportunity to meet with legislators and share concerns about this topic.

Survivors, coalitions, programs, and friends gathered to show their support of this important event. Home Free spent the morning talking to our legislators about what cuts to funding for domestic violence programs would mean to the women and children we serve. The event also included legislative training, a rally, a memorial service for the 28 victims who were murdered in 2010 as a result of domestic violence, and looking ahead at the work we have yet to do.

We hope that this event helped our legislators recognize the importance of continuing the funding to programs working to provide safety, resources, advocacy, and information to battered women and their children, and that any cuts to this funding would have devastating consequences on victims and our communities.

Home Free Community Outreach Program and Mother's Day Event

Home Free recognizes the importance of educating our community on the dynamics of domestic violence and the role each of us need to play in putting an end to it. Domestic violence is not a private matter, but a public safety issue concerning us all.

Home Free gives presentations at businesses, schools, places of worship, and civic groups. Some of the topics recently covered were: dynamics of domestic violence, bullying in schools, teen dating violence and stalking.

In 2010 alone, Home Free provided 63 community education trainings and presentations, reaching an audience of nearly 3,000 people.

In honor of **Mother's Day**, Home Free is launching a month-long awareness-raising event in May. We will be visiting churches, civic groups and businesses to speak about the dynamic of domestic violence and what we all can do to keep our community safe.

Please let us know if you would like a Home Free representative to speak at your event or if you are interested in participating in our Mother's Day event.

For information, please contact
Kari Hitchcock at
(763) 559-9008 or
khitchcock@missionsinc.org.

Do you have a used cell phone that you don't need anymore? Home Free has a great need for cell phones, so please consider donating yours today. Also, if you would be willing to put a cell phone collection box at your place of work to encourage others to donate, we will make sure to provide you with boxes.

Please contact Kari at (763) 559-9008 for more information.

Educational Support Group

On March 31, Home Free launched a new ten-week support group for battered women. This support group includes dinner, free childcare, and an effective curriculum on the dynamics of domestic violence.

We will have another group this Fall, taking place from September 15th through November 17th. The group will meet 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 ten sessions as well as volunteers to assist us with childcare.



Acknowledgement of Donors November 2009-December 2010

Churches/Religious Organizations

Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley
Church of St. Joseph
Church of St. Joseph the Worker
Holy Name Church
Holy Nativity Evangelical Lutheran Church
House of Hope Lutheran Church
Mount Olivet Lutheran Church of
Plymouth
Oak Knoll Lutheran Church
Pilgrim United Methodist Church
Plymouth Presbyterian Church
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St. James Lutheran Church
St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church
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Groups and Organizations

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Brooklyn Park Women of Today
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Golden Valley Women's Club
Kiwans Club of North Hennepin
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Young Leader



Thomas and his mother, Linda while visiting Home Free children's program.

A few months ago, we met Thomas when he began volunteering at the Home Free children's program with his class from Breck Middle School. Thomas told us he has enjoyed coming to Home Free and spending time with the children and we love having the extra help.

When Thomas was preparing to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah, he asked his family and friends to give donations to Home Free in his honor. Within a month, Home Free received donations from 24 individuals in Thomas' name totaling \$1,450! In addition to these donations, Thomas donated

\$250 of his own savings to Home Free. When we asked Thomas what he learned from his experience as a volunteer at the Home Free children's program, he answered: 'I learned that even people who have gone through horrible things can still be happy and enjoy life. I like seeing that when the kids come here, they can laugh and play and have big smiles. You would never know what they have been through.'

Thomas is right, many of the children we serve have seen horrible, scary things, and all of them are leading lives of uncertainty while at the Shelter. However, we are happy to be able to provide a space for them that is safe, and fun, allowing kids to simply be kids.

We are proud and inspired by Thomas' selfless actions and accomplishments.



**Thank you,
Thomas!**

Lennar does it again!



Lennar employees and Home Free staff at last year's Halloween activities.

Home Free received a \$10,000 grant from the Lennar Foundation. This is the seventh year that we have received this important support.

Over the years, Lennar has done so much for Home Free. In addition to their substantial monetary support, Lennar helped Home Free build a deck, renovate 2 bathrooms, renovate the entrance way, build a brand new kitchen, and much more. Lennar employees also come to Home Free regularly to do crafts, read to the children and give them books. Lennar also often takes the children from Home Free on

field trips to Apple Orchards, sporting events, and fishing trips. Each Christmas, Lennar sends Santa and Mrs. Claus to Home Free to spread the holiday cheer.

We simply don't know what we would do without our friends at Lennar.

Home Free Community Program sends a special 'Thank you!' to the **St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church** for adopting 16 families through our 'Adopt-A-Family' program during the holidays. This program allows groups, families, or individuals to provide gifts or holiday meals to families affected by domestic violence. Through this effort, St. Philip the Deacon brightened up the holidays for so many families in our community.

Thank you so much!



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Current Needs

- ◆ Disposable diapers (size 5 needed), wet wipes, construction paper for art projects.
- ◆ Cleaning Supplies—liquid dish soap, mops, brooms, toilet bowl cleaner, disinfecting wipes, etc.
- ◆ Gift cards—Target, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Walgreens, Cub, etc.
- ◆ Bus or 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.homefreeprograms.org

Thank you!!!



Please contact Stela Osmancevic if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, have corrections or are moving.
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