



35 Years of Growth and Change at Abby's House

On June 7, 1976, Abby's House opened its doors to homeless and abused women, with or without children, for temporary, emergency shelter. Thus began an amazing journey that through the years, transformed Abby's into a multipurpose organization offering a variety of services to women in central MA. Abby's today is one home with four buildings, where on any given day, you experience not only the painful realities of women who are abused, homeless, or mistreated but are witness to their courage and resiliency. Despite everything they have been through, the women of Abby's have hope.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BUDGET REPORT FY11

Current Progress

As of 3/28/11, we have raised
\$218,140 of \$1,162,000.



WOMEN'S STORIES

A New City, A New Life

In life, you come across a few people who make you feel totally at ease, like you've known them forever even though you've just met them; that's my experience with Maureen. You can find "Mo" in the dining room chatting with housemates over morning coffee or sitting in a quiet spot with her head buried in the most recent mystery novel she borrowed from Annette. With her spunk and sense of humor, you'd never guess the hardships she has seen, and once you know, you are amazed

Maureen shares the story of her journey.

by her strength, resilience, and positive attitude.

All her life, Maureen has been struggling with addiction. When she finally made the decision to get clean she wanted to stay in Boston, where she is from originally. Unfortunately, she was unable to join a local recovery program. As a last resort, Maureen found a program in Central MA. At first she regretted her choice because she felt isolated, having no transportation and living far from her friends and family, but she ended up being very successful and after 6 months, Maureen was ready to move on to a residential program.



Look Inside!

Fashion Show Photos!

Continued on Page 4

Upcoming Events

Abby's House 35th Anniversary Reception & Concert

Featuring Natalie Cole
Thursday, June 9, 2011
Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Hanover Theatre

Concert tickets on sale here:
<http://bit.ly/tickets4abbys35>

Reception tickets are available
at this web page:

[www.abbyshouse.org/
Natalie_Cole](http://www.abbyshouse.org/Natalie_Cole)

For more information, contact
Marj Ropp: 508.756.5486 x21

35 YEARS from Page 1

Below is a summary of just a few of the historical events that have transformed Abby's House into the organization it is today:

1973-1975

A Task Force of Women is formed to study the need for shelter for women with or without children in Worcester.

1975

Major meeting of about 40 women results in a Coalition dedicated to making the shelter a reality.

1976

The Coalition rents 23 Crown Street to use as a shelter.

June 7, 1976

Abby's House opens its doors to their first guests.

1982

Abby's starts its largest fund raiser, the Tag Sale, which becomes a city tradition. They also begin Abby's Food Pantry and a 24-hour hotline.

April 1985

Abby's House Celebrates its 10th Anniversary!

September 1993

Rehab of 19 Crown Street, Abby's second building, offering affordable housing to women.

April 1996

Abby's House celebrates its 20th Anniversary with the opening of 77 Chatham Street, a third building offering safe, affordable housing for women and children.

September 2000- August 2001

The Sisters of Mercy approach Abby's House with a proposal; that they consider taking over 52 High Street (formerly St. Joseph's Residence for Women) as a housing provider. Abby's accepts and becomes one home with many buildings. Main offices are moved to 52 High Street.

May 2001

Annette publishes her first book, *Wearing Smooth the Path 25 Years at Abby's House, an Unfinished Memoir*.

May 2004

Worcester "Women in Wine" sponsors the 1st annual wine tasting fund raiser for Abby's House. The event raises over \$9,000!

March 2006

Abby's House celebrates 30 years!

September 2006

Members of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette give their time on United Way's Day of Caring to paint at 77 Chatham St. In addition, Abby's receives a check from the Annual Auction sponsored by Worcester State College Student Government.

January 2007

Abby's House becomes a member of the CHAIN Initiative (Comprehensive Homeless Assessment and Intervention Network)

May 2007

One of our residents receives her nursing degree from Worcester State College

April 2008

College of the Holy Cross celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the S.P.U.D. Program (Student Program for Urban Development). Women students from the Program have volunteered at Abby's for 35 years!

April 2009

Citizen's Bank names Abby's House a Champion in Action for excellence in affordable housing, providing a \$25,000 grant, media coverage, and volunteer promotional support.

October 2010

Abby's goes through a Rebranding Initiative to update our logo, website, and communications. We also organized the first Annual Benefit 5K run/walk, entitled HipHipHerRace. This event raised over \$8,000!

Necessities

Please contact Julie Komenos at (508) 756-5486 ext. 17 prior to organizing a food or clothing drive, and to coordinate the drop-off of donations.

TRANSPORTATION

- WRTA Bus Passes

APPLIANCES

- Microwaves (6)
- Coffee maker with auto-shutoff (4)

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- Coffee
- Reusable Travel Coffee Mugs (with lids)
- Tea
- Bottled Water
- Sugar
- Sweet & Low
- Cran Apple Juice (low sugar)

OFFICE SUPPLIES

- Copy Paper
- Postage Stamps

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

- Industrial Size Paper Shredder (2)
- External Hard Drives (50Gb capacity or more)

KITCHEN SUPPLIES

- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Paper Napkins
- "Ziploc" Bags (zippered storage)

- Plastic Silverware

- Aluminum Foil

TOILETRIES

- Liquid Hand Soap
- Facial Tissues

CLEANING SUPPLIES

- Furniture Polish
- Bathroom Disinfectant
- Windex
- Kitchen Cleaner
- Dishwashing Liquid
- Laundry Detergent
- Dishwasher Detergent
- Sponges, SOS or Brillo Pads

BEDDING & LINENS

- Pillows (standard size, must be new)

GIFT CARDS

- Staples
- Grocery Stores
- Walmart

Please visit our website for a complete list of our needs.

This is just a short list of accomplishments Abby's House and its staff, guests, and volunteers have made possible. In the words of Darleen Gadt, published author and longtime member of Abby's House Women's Center, "About twenty years ago I was a struggling sister who arrived...and I have been a part of the struggles since, a member of the sisterhood and I've seen Abby's grow."

To paraphrase the words of founder, Annette Rafferty, Abby's is the same, yet so very different than it was 35 years ago. Perhaps life was much

simpler in 1976. The staff and volunteers at Abby's have become much more than shelter providers; they are landlords, supportive service providers, fund raisers, and public relation experts; but most importantly, they are dreamers, creators, and believers in the power of women and community. Maybe next year, or in 5 years, or in another 35 years, homelessness will be a thing of the past. Until then, we will continue drawing inspiration from Abby Kelley Foster and our mission, providing shelter, housing, and advocacy to each woman who walks through our doors. *



FASHION SHOW: *It was a standing-room-only crowd at Ralph's.*

Recent Events

Abby's hosted its inaugural vintage fashion show, Reciprocal Style, on Thursday, March 24 at Ralph's Diner. The sold-out event was attended by more than 150 people and raised more than \$10,000 — what a huge success! This evening benefit featured shopping, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, raffle items and of course, a fashion show, showcasing vintage items from the Abby's House Thrift Shop! Proceeds from this event and sales at the Thrift Shop are used to run the Abby's House shelter, which serves hundreds homeless women and children from across Central Massachusetts each year.

Jodi Salerno, Thrift Shop Manager, said, "The response to Reciprocal Style was overwhelming. It was amazing having such an incredible group of women come together for Abby's. As individuals we choose to express and present ourselves a cer-

tain way — it is these choices that make us who we are. Abby's House too is unique. There's no place like it and it was important to me to get that point across with this event. Reciprocal Style is a reminder to ourselves of how important we are to each other as individuals and a community."

Reciprocal Style is a reminder to ourselves of how important we are to each other as individuals and a community.

Speaking of reciprocity, this event would not have been possible without the support of our staff, board, volunteers and members of the business community, who provided us with the goods, services and donations needed to make this event successful. We'd like to thank:

- Milk Row Studio
- Ralph's
- the Abby's House Board of Directors
- Arlington Lithograph
- Frederick Bayon Family Dentistry
- the Bean Counter
- Bisceglia, Steiman & Fudeman
- the Brier Patch
- Charter Communications
- Conzo Salon and Day Spa
- Counseling & Assessment Clinic of Worcester
- Erb Photography
- Fallon Community Health Plan
- Elaine Fallon Imports
- Ed Hyder's Mediterrean Market
- Nora Keil
- Le Mirage Restaurant
- MASS Liquors
- Nu Café
- O'Brien & Gibbons Insurance
- O'Connor's Restaurant
- PL Jones & Associates
- Annette Rafferty
- Reservoir Package Store
- Sun Bird Yoga
- Ubi Hair Salon
- the Wine Vine
- Redd's of Roslindale Square
- Sol of Mexico
- Spring Street Café of West Roxbury
- Top Shop Salon and Day Spa
- Joe Zupan

LOOKING AT THE ISSUES:

Homelessness Still an Issue for Women and Children in Central MA

Homelessness among women is often misunderstood due to the lack of visibility of homeless women and their children on city streets. You will not see them panhandling with their children. Instead, they are "couch surfing" at friends' or families' residences or living in cars and shelters. Ana, one of our most recent shelter guests, can attest to that fact: "If it wasn't for Abby's" she said, "I probably would have froze in my car this winter."

The data for homeless families in Massachusetts is startling. The income cutoff to be considered very low income in the state of Massachusetts is \$37,150; however, the average income for a single mother with two children in Massachusetts is \$20,400. It is no wonder women are forced to choose between basic necessities for themselves and their children.

With the economy in recession, women and children in Central MA are even more affected by homelessness. On any given day,

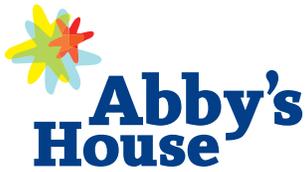
the Abby's House Shelter Advocate receives up to 19 phone calls from women who are looking for housing. However, in light of the increased length of stay at our shelter (from an average of 11 nights to 27 nights) there are times when we do not have a bed available and must help the woman find another place to stay. Sometimes, this search ends up with the woman "couch-surfing" for another night, week, or month.

In addition to an increase in demand, Abby's House has seen a change in the population we serve. There has been an increase in women age 55 and older who are losing homes due to foreclosure, layoffs, domestic violence, and divorces, women in their 20s who have aged out of the foster care system, and in the working poor, who can no longer afford market rents. We have adapted our programming to meet the needs of these diverse populations, but until more affordable housing units and shelter beds are available for women and children, homelessness will continue to be an issue.

Until that day, our doors will remain open for women and children searching for a place to call their own. ✨



FASHION SHOW: *Jodi Salerno, Thrift Shop Manager*



52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609

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35 Years of Growth and Change at Abby's House

OTHER ARTICLES:

- A New City, A New Life
The FY11 Budget Report
Upcoming Events
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Necessities

Recent Grants All grants were received between January 1 - December 31, 2010.

- Bank of America, Stoddard Charitable Trust, Hermann Foundation, Fuller Foundation, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, St. Vincent Hospital, Digital Credit Union (DCU), McHugh Foundation, Sisters of St. Anne, Commerce Bank, Price Chopper/Golub Foundation, Webster Five Cents Savings Foundation, Sovereign Bank, TJX Foundation, Fletcher Foundation, Avidia Bank*, Citizen's Bank, Saint-Gobain Corporate Foundation, Keurig, Inc.*, Hoche-Scofield Foundation, Bay State Savings Charitable Foundation, People's United Bank, Carpenter Foundation, United Bank, Dale Foundation*, The 200 Foundation, St. Francis Community Health Care, Inc.*

* = new source

GO GREEN

We are developing an E-Newsletter version of "Bright Spot". To receive the latest information about Abby's House, please contact Alexandra Kartheiser, Communications Coordinator at alex@abbyshouse.org or call 508.756.5486 ext. 35. YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP ONLINE AT WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG!

NEW LIFE from Page 1

Like so many people out of work, Maureen struggled to find a job due to the economy and transportation restrictions. How would she afford to leave the program to start her new life? Maureen and the program staff became very frustrated that she was still there. They told her if she couldn't find a job, she would have to go elsewhere.

Fortunately, Maureen met someone in her recovery program who knew about Abby's House. A few weeks later she walked through our doors, and met with our Shelter Advocate, Parlee. As fate would have it, the day that Maureen was accepted into the Shelter she also received a job as a Telemarketer. Two weeks later, she moved from the shelter into one of our long-term housing units at 52 High

Street. Since then Maureen has lost her job due to layoffs. She continues to live at Abby's House, where she feels at home and no longer in transition. She continues to look for employment in the Medical Reception and Administration field. Till then, she continues to brighten Abby's House with her charm and warm spirit. *



We're not just updating our status; we're building a network of people who can help. When we need help — extra baked goods, winter coats for the kids in our shelter, or volunteers to help cook a meal (when we're short-handed) — can we turn to you? Join our Facebook community and help us make a difference.

facebook.com/abbyshouse1