

Editor: Alex Kartheiser Contact: alex@abbyshouse.org Online: WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG/BRIGHTSPOT



Longtime volunteers, Edna Sexton and Lynn Biggins, enjoy HipHipHerRace!

The Spirit of Hospitality

By Alex Kartheiser

For many of us, the holidays remind us of where we belong. We make arrangements to visit family and friends near and dear to us. After all, home is where the heart is, right? Imagine for a moment that such a place no longer exists. What would you do? How would you feel? For the women at Abby's House, the idea of home is often a distant memory, or perhaps something they have never fully experienced.

At the core of Abby's House is hospitality, not just during the holidays but year round – "By offering warm hospitality, we

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Natalie Mello, *President*
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RECENT EVENTS

Hip Hip Hurray!



Board President Natalie Mello, enjoying the event.

345 people participated in the 3rd Annual HipHipHerRace 5k for Abby's House. Runners and walkers of all ages, levels, and from across Central MA joined together to raise over \$20,000 for Abby's House! 100% of donations will be used to provide shelter, housing, and advocacy.

Our deepest thanks to the founders, Susan Manero

of Susan Manero and Associates Insurance of West Boylston, Susan Lauring of the Three Rivers Building of West Boylston, and Peggy Dix of O'Brien & Gibbons Insurance Center of Worcester. They created this race with a vision of spreading awareness of Abby's House in West Boylston and surrounding towns. HipHipHerRace has become one of the largest annual fundraisers for Abby's House.

We would like to thank our wonderful volunteers who gave of their time and worked tirelessly to ensure the race ran smoothly and safely for all involved.

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WOMEN'S STORIES

Living Life Fearlessly

"I have a lot of things to prove to myself. One is that I can live my life fearlessly."

– Oprah Winfrey

Megan found herself at Abby's House two years ago after a long struggle with mental illness. Before settling at Abby's, she was living in a poor neighborhood where many of her neighbors struggled with substance abuse. In addition to her own psychological problems – including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression – she was being harassed by people around her.

Megan's mental health symptoms became overwhelming. She was suffering from severe paranoia and eventually fled her apartment. Leaving all her belongings behind, Megan checked herself into respite care.

While living in respite care, Megan learned about Abby's. She decided to make the phone call, and was offered a place in the shelter. By working with her advocates, she was able to develop an individualized service plan, and was offered a place in the affordable housing program.

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Thank you!

Abby's House donors contributed \$2,840 to The Giving Common Challenge which ranked us 65th among more than 540 non-profits from across the Commonwealth!

Upcoming Events

Book Signing!

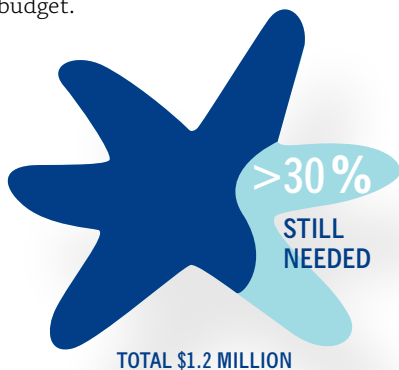
Please join Annette Rafferty for a book signing of her new memoir **Still Wearing Smooth the Path: 10 More Years at Abby's House 2001-2011** on December 6, 2012 at 6pm at the Gale Free Library, 23 Highland Street, Holden, MA 01520.

For more information on this event, please contact Alex Kartheiser at alex@abbyshouse.org or call Alex at (508) 756-5486 ext. 35.

BUDGET REPORT FY12

Current Progress

As of October 31, 2012 Abby's House has raised \$837,743.66 of its \$1.2M budget.



Necessities

Please contact Julie Komenos at (508) 756-5486 ext. 17 prior to organizing a food or clothing drive. Please visit our website for a complete list of our needs: www.abbyshouse.org/needs-list.

HOLIDAY GIVING

Every year, Abby's House gives 100 gift bags to residents and guests for holiday presents. This year we are in need of the following:

- Twin Sheets (Flannel)
- Towels
- Scarves & Gloves
- Travel Coffee Mugs
- Car Snow Brushes
- Flashlights

GIFT CARDS

- Pharmacies
- Coffee Shops
- Grocery Stores
- Gas Stations
- Local Restaurants

HOSPITALITY from Page 1

seek to be in relationships of caring and support.” We are a safe haven for women, a place to belong. Our community provides the atmosphere of support and encouragement. Through volunteers and staff, we offer the spirit of hospitality each and every day for the women who enter our doors.

We acknowledge that every woman is unique and her situation requires individual attention. Cheryl, a resident who has lived at Abby's for a year, says she feels successful because of the staff. “I have a sense of security at Abby's. Through my advocates, I am learning how to love myself. I am regaining confidence and creating positive friendships here. I feel like I am getting to know who I am again.”

Our shelter and housing advocates receive, on average, 26 phone calls a day, and they carefully listen and respond to each caller. Our Women's Center provides coffee and treats every morning to residents and guests, which allows for an opportunity to listen to and share stories. Sue, a shelter guest, says, “you allow women from the shelter to come to the Women's Center and always try to make them feel better. You give us the opportunity to make friends and help us with our housing situation.”

The volunteers of Abby's House make our organization a warm and welcoming place for guests and residents. Their presence is felt throughout the organization. Our reception volunteers, who are the first point of contact for anyone looking for information, are always ready to help. They are willing to offer an answer to any question or concern. Eileen, a volunteer for 9 years, is happy to make a difference. “I feel that I am helping in a small way to assist staff and residents. I try to ease

At the core of Abby's is hospitality, not just during the holidays, but year round.

some of the daily stress and Abby's House allows me to socialize in a positive and friendly way. It's the people that give Abby's a homey feeling.” Thrift Shop volunteers work diligently to keep the store running smoothly. They search through piles of donations to find items for shoppers and make

LOOKING AT THE ISSUES:

The Cost of Someplace

by Sarah Lange

The women and children who arrive on our doorstep have **no place** to go. They have exhausted all of their resources, having stayed with family, friends, and/or in their car. Our job is to provide them with **someplace**: someplace to sleep, to eat, to bathe; someplace in which to feel safe; someplace where they can regroup and rebuild; someplace to regain their footing on the path to independence.

Providing **someplace** costs \$35 per bed each night. That doesn't sound like a lot of money – and it's not, when you consider that we utilize more than \$400,000 worth of volunteer labor each year and leverage a plethora of donations so that we are able to direct 88 cents of every dollar to service. But when you start to multiply it by 94 beds and 365 nights, it adds up quickly. In fact, it adds up to \$1,200,850!

Like all nonprofits, Abby's House has to work hard to raise funds to meet its budget each year. With the economy the way it is, making ends meet for the past two years has been a struggle. In order to ensure that we are able to continue providing women and children with **someplace**, we will be unveiling a new way to raise funds.

*In January, 2013, we will be launching the **Buy-A-Bed Campaign**, a grassroots fundraising effort designed to engage businesses, colleges, individuals and community groups in collecting at least \$35 a piece in special Buy-A-Bed containers we will be distributing. Our goal is to raise at least \$35,000 between January - December, 2013. If your business or group would like to participate, please contact Sarah Lange: 508.756.5486 x18 or fill out the form on our website! ★*

For more information, please visit:
www.abbyshouse.org/buy-bed-campaign

it a fun and welcoming place to visit. Isa, a veteran Thrift Shop volunteer of 12 years says, "I have had the privilege of getting to know the women who have shopped at the Thrift Shop regularly over the years. I have gotten to know their children or have assisted with an important life event, like helping someone choose the right outfit for an interview or for their daughter's wedding. I also receive a sense of satisfaction when I can help the Spanish speaking women feel comfortable, knowing that they can communicate with others here." Meals are always at the center of all of our gatherings. Our kitchen volunteers thoughtfully prepare delicious and nutritious meals that our women enjoy. They serve the women just like they would serve their own family. Lastly, our shelter volunteers provide safety, security, and comfort to women who are temporarily calling Abby's House home. They oversee meals, listen to their cares and concerns, and provide laughter and support.

For the past 36 years our donors, volunteers, staff, and board members have provided hospitality to each and every woman and child at Abby's House. Because of the generosity of so many people, our women will have a warm place to live, because of a new roof; a child in our shelter will feel cared for, because of a toy received; residents and shelter guests will feel special, because of the gift bags we distribute each Christmas. These are not just gifts, but reminders that our residents belong somewhere; that they are part of a family.

As the holidays approach, we at Abby's House are grateful for the community that surrounds and supports us. Because of you, we can continue to extend hospitality to everyone who comes to our door. We hope that the smell of holiday meals and the colorful glow of holiday lights will make all of us feel a little more at home this season, give us a little more peace, and a real sense of how our mission of hospitality is alive each and every day. *



Family and friends of all ages show their support!



Thank you to the Worcester County Sheriff's Office (BRTA #38) for supporting Abby's House!



Runners prepare at the starting line.



345 people participated in the 3rd Annual HipHipHerRace, helping to raise over \$20,000!

Thank you for your support!

Teams

- Body Therapeutics
- College of the Holy Cross
- Faith House
- Fogerty
- Hanover Insurance
- Norrback's Wise Owls
- O'Brien & Gibbons Insurance Agency
- Sisters on the Run
- Sorelle
- St. Brigid Samaritans
- Sweet Dreams Team
- Team Bancroft
- Team Cheetah!
- Team Lisa Alexander
- That Team
- Top Shop Salon and Day Spa
- The Merry Mondays
- The Wanderers
- Woods' Walkers
- The Worcester County Sheriff's Office (BRTA #38)

Services

- Patrick Lee Photography
- Racewire
- West Boylston Police Department

Sponsors:

- Robert Hennigan, Attorney at Law
- Val's Restaurant
- Lauring Construction
- Metso, Hanover Insurance
- Susan Manero & Associates
- Peterson Oil
- Quaker Special Risk
- Physical Therapy Innovations
- Reliant Medical Group
- Charter Communications
- Keating Enterprises, Inc. (KEI)
- Annette Rafferty
- Braley & Wellington Insurance Agency
- William Lynch Co., Inc.
- J. Polito
- FDG Realty Trust
- KA FAI Management
- Worcester Fire Department Credit Union
- Orasyss LLC
- Ahearn Equipment Inc.
- St. Pierre Manufacturing Corporation

Raffle Donors:

- Adrienne Beaupre
- Banana Joe's
- Bhadon Gift Gallery
- Conzo Day Spa
- Dairy Queen
- Darby's Bakery
- Ellie's Pet Barn of Holden
- Gerardo's Bakery
- Il Forno
- Jeffrey Roberts Salon
- Mountain Barn Restaurant
- Mountainside Café
- O'Connor's Restaurant
- Oli's Italian Eatery
- Palomar Printing
- Picolos
- S&S Fruit & Deli
- Steve's Pizza
- West Boylston Seafood
- West Boylston Movie Theaters
- Safety Insurance
- Sweet's of Worcester
- Top Shop Salon
- Traveler's Insurance of Massachusetts
- Val's Restaurant
- The Worcester Restaurant Group - Sole Proprietor



Big smiles from race co-founder Sue Manero!

RECENT EVENTS

The West Boylston Police Department was also a big help, directing traffic and ensuring our safety throughout the morning.

Thank you to our wonderful photographer, Patrick Lee. He was able to capture fun and beautiful images of the race. To view and share pictures, please visit the Abby's House Facebook Page for the picture link. *

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Donate online! WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG

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The Spirit of Hospitality

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- *Recent Grants*
- *Annette Rafferty's Book*

Recent Grants

All Grants were received between 7.12.12-11.1.12

- Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
- Wynne L. Chase Fund (GWCF)
- Lillian S. Pratt Fund (GWCF)
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- GWCF: Ethel Cunningham Fund
- Reliant Medical Group Foundation
- Toyota 100 Cars for Good
- Webster Five Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- United Bank Foundation for Housing
- Saint-Gobain Corporation Foundation

Annette Rafferty's new book is on sale!

This new memoir details the last 10 years of Abby's House, including its 25th Anniversary and the acquisition of its fourth building. Book signing events are scheduled this winter around Central MA. Proceeds from the sale of the book support Abby's House. Each copy is \$25 plus \$3 for shipping. Call Marj Ropp at (508) 756-5486 or order the book on our website: abbyshouse.org/bookorder.



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!

FEARLESSLY *from Page 1*

Feeling safe and supported, with a place of her own, Megan began building her self esteem. She has reached a place where she is stable and able to focus on herself. Now she manages her mental illness with appropriate medication and has developed positive friendships with other residents.

What Megan enjoys most about Abby's House is the ability to live independently within a supportive environment. "I like having the option to have someone to talk to. I used to be a hermit. I was very self conscious about my mental illness and how I came across to people. Since coming to Abby's, I have become more

self assured and comfortable." She has also come to enjoy Worcester and is involved in the local community. "The location is near everything — the bus, the social security office, my therapist's office, and where I volunteer."

Megan has overcome significant challenges and has become an advocate for others. She is involved with a children's advocacy organization that assists homeless youth. Her struggles with homelessness and mental illness give her perspective and now she listens to others, gives advice and makes others laugh.

Thank you, Megan, for inspiring others and being a part of Abby's House. ★

Can Holiday Shopping Support Abby's House?

Yes! Purchase your holiday items through the Abby's House Amazon search & shop feature and Abby's House can receive as much as 6% of your purchase! Amazon has all of your holiday needs including electronics, clothing, household items, toys and more! It's an easy way to support Abby's House while checking off your holiday wishlists! Start your next shopping trip at our website! www.abbyshouse.org/holiday-shopping