

Fall/Winter 2020

## Your Support Keeps Women Safe

*This Holiday Season*

The holiday season is upon us, although it's sure to feel unlike any other as the Coronavirus pandemic continues to cause undue hardships for many. The women who rely on the services that Abby's House provides have been impacted by the loss of a job or reduction in hours, experienced social isolation and lack of available support due to closed services, are worried about their risk of contracting the virus, and have felt uncertain about the future. **What continues to give them hope is the unwavering support and commitment of this community to ensure that the doors of Abby's House remain open throughout this pandemic and beyond.**

As an essential organization, Abby's House has continued to be a sanctuary for a total of 145 homeless and low-income women and children this year. Since the start of the pandemic, we've welcomed 16 women into our shelter and 17 new residents into our housing, as the need for a safe place to stay continues to be greater than ever.

"Being homeless is a traumatic experience in and of itself and is usually coupled with other traumas," said Rose Rodriguez, Housing Specialist for Abby's House. "We've had women come to us who are battling medical diagnoses, need support as they work on their sobriety, or have been staying in an unhealthy, abusive relationship just to keep a roof over their head. The supportive housing that Abby's House provides not only takes care of the immediate need of safety, security, and stability, but it goes a step further and helps them begin a healing process. Even now with COVID, women feel more at ease knowing that they have a reliable, safe place to stay where they are less vulnerable to contracting and spreading the virus, and are happy to be in a compassionate, supportive environment where they can regain control of their lives and thrive."



Through your support, women and children continue to be cared for this holiday season and beyond.

During this time of physical distancing, Zoom meetings, and conference calls, it's more important than ever for women to feel connected and supported. Advocacy staff are assisting residents and guests with new technology so they can access medical professionals through Telehealth appointments, update benefits, and apply for needed services. For those facing increased financial difficulties, advocates are assisting women through the Annette Rafferty Survive to Thrive (ARST) fund as well as partnering with community resources to help cover rent, transportation, and medical expenses. The ability to stay connected through fun and informative Women's Center activities and house meetings has helped keep women emotionally healthy and happy! Advocates are also providing connection by leaving special surprises in resident mailboxes, like gloves and hats, and a bi-weekly letter is sent to keep everyone informed about updates on the Coronavirus and available resources.

**All of this is made possible through your generosity.** Your support is what provides women with safety, security, and the resources they need to heal and reach their goals, knowing that you are beside them every step of the way this holiday season and beyond.



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Annette Rafferty  
*Founder*

Stephanie Page  
*Executive Director*

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#### Bright Spot

Vol. 38, Issue 3

November 2020

Published three times per year

#### Mission Statement

The mission of Abby's House is to provide shelter and affordable housing, as well as advocacy and support services, to homeless, battered, and low-income women, with or without children.

#### Vision Statement

Abby's House empowers the women we serve to lead self-directed lives filled with dignity and hope.



## Holiday Greetings



*From Executive Director, Stephanie Page*

In our 44 years of operation, this holiday season will be different from any other we've experienced due to the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. **What brings me peace and hope is knowing that we continue to lean on each other and find strength in one another,** just as Annette Rafferty envisioned when she laid the foundation for Abby's House many years ago. We are getting through the pandemic and this stressful and divisive time in our country together, and Abby's House continues to be a "bright spot" for so many.



**Stephanie Page**  
**Executive Director**

This year I've witnessed the deep and genuine love, hope, and connection from this community for the women and children we serve. As we shifted our operations to ensure the safety of residents and guests, volunteers and staff, I saw the love from this community through the encouraging notes that were sent, the immediate response to purchase items off our needs list or make a donation, and the outreach from individuals, businesses and local foundations asking how they can help keep the women and children safe. Volunteers and staff stepped up to provide 24-hour coverage for women in the shelter, and the Thrift Shop resumed its operations through the dedication of volunteers and staff as well. I have witnessed hope on the faces of those we serve as our advocacy staff delivered care packages, access to virtual and in-person activities resumed in our Women's Center, and talk of how to safely host holiday celebrations began. I've seen the connection to our mission through the countless number of donation drives that were held and the overwhelming participation in our virtual fundraising events. **You have shown your steadfast commitment to keep women and children safe at Abby's House, and I thank you greatly.**

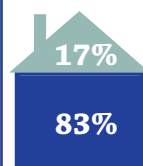
Because of you, the community at Abby's House remains strong in spirit, keeping women and children lifted up during such an exceptionally difficult year. They know that they are safe and that your support guides them on their journeys.

On behalf of everyone at Abby's House, I wish you the very best for the holidays and year ahead.

With heartfelt gratitude,

*Stephanie*

## Program Funding



As of November 2, 2020, we still need to raise 17% of our total operating budget of \$1,727,487.

**Help us raise \$288,441 before December 31, 2020**

to meet our mission and fully fund the shelter, housing, and advocacy services for the women & children who rely on us.

## Volunteers Needed!

### 8th Annual Spring-Tacular & Online Auction

We're looking for volunteers to help plan the 2021 Spring-Tacular event. If interested, contact Kelly Whalen, Director of Development at [kelly@abbyshouse.org](mailto:kelly@abbyshouse.org) | (508) 756-5486 x214

## Stories of Impact

### How Your Light Shines At Abby's House



*This year has been unlike any other in our history as we faced new challenges while continuing to meet the needs of those we serve. Through the dedication and support of many, we remained a "bright spot" for women and children in need.*

#### Corporate Volunteering - The Hanover Insurance Group

The Hanover Insurance Group is no stranger to Abby's House. Prior to this year, groups would come onsite once a month to serve meals, help in the Thrift Shop, provide outdoor cleanup of our properties and more. When the Coronavirus pandemic hit, The Hanover Insurance Group didn't waiver in their commitment, and shifted their support to purchase food for our shelter, supplies from our needs list, and joined the planning committee for this year's 5K.



*"Abby's House has been a source of inspiration and strength for our teams," said Maureen O'Driscoll, AVP MA Branch, and Stephanie Seibold, VP Hanover Programs. "At times, we feel that Abby's House gives us more than we could ever repay – our teams are stronger and more connected because of the time taken out of our days to connect with each other while making sure the women and children at Abby's House know that they have an army of support behind them. We could not be more proud to be a part of Abby's House's community of supporters!"*

#### Shelter Volunteers - Keeping The Doors Open

When the Coronavirus pandemic hit, Abby's House worked quickly to ensure everyone's safety, especially the residents and shelter guests staying with us. At the shelter, we shifted to a 24-hour a day operation, allowing shelter guests to remain safely inside as the virus spread. This was only made possible through the dedication and support of 17 volunteers and staff.

*"The volunteers stepped up in a big way," said Parlee Jones, Shelter Manager. "Many of them took on extra days and nights and worked around their schedules to ensure that our guests could stay inside as much as possible. There are no words that can express how deeply grateful I am to have had their help in keeping our most vulnerable women safe. We couldn't have done it without them."*

#### Leaving A Legacy - One Woman's Story

Paula first learned of Abby's House as a student at Holy Cross, and volunteered in the shelter from 1976-1978. As the years passed, Paula stayed connected to Abby's House by donating money as well as helping to organize clothing donations for the Thrift Shop, but felt called to do more. After retiring, Paula began volunteering in the Thrift Shop and made the decision to join the Legacy Circle at Abby's House by leaving a portion of her estate to the women and children we serve.



*"The Jesuits often taught, 'to whom much is given, much is expected.' I have been blessed in my life and feel that I am called to support the women and children of Abby's House in any way I can. I know that, through my support, I can continue to help women and children in need for decades to come, even after I'm gone," - Paula Sasso, Legacy Circle Member.*



**Presented by:**



### Thank You!

Through your overwhelming generosity, **you raised over \$48,000** for the women and children of Abby's House.

Thank you to the 583 participants from 22 states and 2 countries who completed five to help her thrive, individual and corporate sponsors, auction donors, fundraisers and donors who helped make this event a success for the women and children of Abby's House!

Special thanks to Patti McKone, 5K Committee Chair and to the entire race committee!



## Get Involved At Abby's House!



**Abby's House relies on the collective contributions of time, talent and treasure from our supporters.** Even though the current health crisis has limited ways for us to get together in-person, you can still make a huge impact in the lives of the women and children we serve.

### Make A Gift:

Now more than ever, your gift makes it possible for women and children to dream of a hopeful future. Once safely housed, women develop a plan to avoid future homelessness and housing insecurity.

To make a gift, visit [abbyshouse.org/donate](https://abbyshouse.org/donate). Set up monthly recurring gifts to multiply your impact.

### Donate Needed Items:

To fully serve the women who come through our doors each year, Abby's House relies on donated items from the community.

To view the complete list of our most urgent needs, visit [abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items)

### Join the Legacy Circle:

The Legacy Circle recognizes donors who have named Abby's House in their will or other form of planned gift. Planned gifts are an extraordinary way to leave a lasting impact on the women and children of Abby's House.

Please contact Kelly Whalen, Director of Development at (508) 756-5486 X214 or [kelly@abbyshouse.org](mailto:kelly@abbyshouse.org) to discuss ways you may further your commitment.

Learn more at [abbyshouse.org/get-involved/ways-to-give](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved/ways-to-give)

## Give a Gift This Holiday Season



This year, we are in need of the following new items:

### Gift cards to:

- Target
- Amazon
- Price Chopper
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Walmart
- Prepaid Visa/Mastercard
- Solid, neutral-colored twin comforters
- Solid, neutral-colored towel sets
- White shower curtains
- White shower curtain liners
- Bath robes and slippers
- Glove, hat and scarf sets

If you would like to organize a holiday needs list drive contact Jean Anger at [jean@abbyshouse.org](mailto:jean@abbyshouse.org) | 508-756-5486 x227

**To view a full list of needed items, as well as information on how to safely drop off donations,** visit [abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items)

## Operating Grants

Received from 11/13/19 - 11/1/20

Albert W. Rice Charitable Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee	Janki Foundation The Ludcke Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Foundation	Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation
Berkshire Bank Foundation	Nordson Corporate Foundation
Blanke Foundation	People's United Community Foundation
Center for Community Recovery Innovations, Inc. MassHousing	Reliant Foundation
Citizens Energy Corporation	Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation
Community Engagement Grant, Dell Technologies	Saint-Gobain Foundation
Digital Federal Credit Union	Sisters of Saint Anne - St. Marie Province Ministry Program
E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation	TJX Foundation
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation	W.R. Berkley Corporation Charitable Foundation, Acadia Insurance
Fallon Health	Wynne L. Chase Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Fred Harris Daniels Foundation	Worcester Together, Central Mass COVID-19 Relief Fund
George I. Alden Trust	Wyss Foundation
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	
The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts	

## Naming Opportunities Available At 52 High Street Location

Would you like the opportunity to name a space in our largest property of safe, supportive housing in honor or in memory of a loved one? If so, contact Kelly Whalen, Director of Development, at [kelly@abbyshouse.org](mailto:kelly@abbyshouse.org) or by phone at (508) 756-5486 x214.

Naming opportunities are \$7,500 and above. All gifts provide immediate support to ensure that each woman and child has a safe place to heal and thrive.