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DRUGS & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: A VICIOUS CYCLE



It is courageous for a woman to recognize her addiction and seek the help she needs when she has been living in the shadows of drugs and sexual exploitation. It is also brave to stand up to offer her support and accompany her in her journey to recovery. This is precisely what we do at Santa Maria Hostel.

Drug addiction and human trafficking go hand in hand. In many instances, substance abuse and drug addiction lead to prostitution. An addicted woman will often turn to prostitution in order to support her drug addiction. This vicious cycle can often lead them to become victims of sexual exploitation or human trafficking. In other cases, women turn to drug use as a coping mechanism to deal with the trauma of sexual exploitation or trafficking. Perpetrators have also been known to use drugs to control their victims, making it harder for them to resist and get help.

Many of these victims suffer from severe trauma, depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues as a result of the difficult lives they live. Overcoming trauma and mental health issues at the same time as dealing with the issues of their substance use dependency may be difficult, but with the right health care treatment, extensive support and training, recovery is possible.

The **Women's Access Project for Houston (WAPH)** is a collaborative effort between the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), Houston Area Community Services (HACS) and Santa Maria Hostel (SMH). It is targeted to low income or homeless minority women who have a history of incarceration, addiction to substances and/or involvement with prostitution or sex trafficking. By connecting the clients with the services they need and providing them with the resources they require, the WAPH project empowers women, increasing self-esteem, self sufficiency and psychosocial functioning in relation to housing, employment, criminal justice involvement, and health as well as to decreasing the frequency of mental health and trauma symptoms.

This program begins with street outreach as well as outreach inside correctional facilities and the local jail system. The SMH Recovery Coaches and staff from HACS work hard to connect with the individuals and offer them a holistic approach in the treatment of substance use disorder. The Coaches meet the individual and determine exactly where they are at in their path of recovery and work with them side by side to choose their own solution and put together a personalized recovery wellness plan. Once a woman enters treatment, she has access to specialized counselors who work with her to address her trauma history and its relationship to her substance use dependency. Often it is the first time a woman has trusted enough to open up about the trauma she has endured.

We understand there is a real struggle for these women. Their addiction makes them vulnerable. Coercion from others to offer sex against their will is ever present. It is very hard for them to break this vicious cycle on their own. The **WAPH** project at Santa Maria Hostel provides these women the opportunity and hope they so deserve with the ultimate goal being a path to recovery and long term wellness.

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE.

SONJA'S NEW LIFE

At a very young age Sonja found herself drinking alcohol as a way to suppress the trauma she had gone through in her childhood. Later on she found in cocaine the consolation she needed when life just simply wasn't going her way.

She had a tough childhood. Her dad passed away when she was 6 years old. She grew up watching her mother and grandmother suffer from alcoholism. Her mom passed away at the age of 44 from cirrhosis of the liver. Two of her uncles also died of the same disease. "It runs in my family", she said. "So I knew I had to do something different with my life."

As a result of her addiction, she ran into problems with the law and was charged with both assault and possession of narcotics, resulting in 2 years of probation. During this time, Sonja realized that in order to put her life in order and break from her family's history, she had to be honest with herself and surrender – so she asked for help.

"I was so nervous to go to jail; I didn't know what to expect. It was hard, but I just knew I had to do it". Her family was supportive, and they knew Sonja was determined; she wanted to do it for herself but also for her 10 year old daughter who is living with her grandmother while she seeks treatment.

After a month and a half at the Harris County Jail, Sonja was transferred to Santa Maria Hostel where she was admitted into residential treatment and was introduced to the Women's Access Project Houston (WAPH). She completed 3 months of the WAPH Program while in residential treatment, followed by 4 months as outpatient. While still in treatment she suffered the loss of 2 family members: her uncle and cousin, both deaths within a week of each other. These unfortunate events lead Sonja to a relapse. "Luckily I had the best team of counselors and coaches who took me under their wings from day one. They know that things can happen and are here not to judge but to help me in my recovery."

This episode of relapse reminded Sonja to stay humble, to work on sobriety and recovery every single day. "In order to deal with addiction I have to deal with my trauma and my emotions. I had to start by forgiving my mother, my grandmother and especially myself." "I have a lot of 'wow' moments, where I am able to recognize the reason behind my actions and that gives me so much confidence in myself... I don't regret anything that has happened because thanks to my past I am who I am today. Recovery has made me a better person." "I'm forever grateful to SMH for the role it has played in my life. It has been a life changing experience. They change lives for real, they changed mine."

Now Sonja is part of the Transitional Living program (HUD) at SMH, which she calls her "safe heaven". She now has a full time job, studies Business Administration at South University, serves as a member of the Peer Advisory Council of SMH and has big dreams for herself. "Some times it's overwhelming but I just feel determined. I prioritize and I get it done. I find motivation when I look back at how far I've come and how much I've grown as a person. I'm putting in the work now and the sky is the limit"

SMH and her Recovery Support Team made such an impact in Sonja's life that she wants to advocate for recovery as a way to give back. "I turned my life around and I'm making the difference in my family... because I'm doing things differently. Now I want to make the difference in someone else's life too".



"I turned my life around and I'm making the difference in my family." — Sonja



FAMILY FUN DAY

A big thank you to **BMC Houston**, especially to Tom Telleson and Jennifer Wall for successfully organizing the BMC Bison Family Fun Day at Bonita House on November 12th. The women and children thoroughly enjoyed an afternoon filled with excitement and entertainment. From the door prizes to the bouncy houses, the petting zoo, arts and crafts activities and to the wonderful meal you provided made this day memorable to our children and families.



A SHOPPING MALL

A very special Thank you to **ELEVATE CHURCH**, Meagan Williams and their wonderful members for bringing so much joy to all the women and children of SMH on December 23rd. Our cafeteria was turned into a shopping mall where our moms were able to "buy" age appropriate toys for their kids and even have them nicely wrapped as part of their shopping experience. This event was truly a gift, thank you for your kindness!

THANK YOU TO YOUR GENEROSITY IN 2016!
WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THE SUPPORT
OF OUR CARING VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS.

1,375 AMAZING VOLUNTEERS
14,205 VOLUNTEER HOURS

4,640 WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO RECEIVED SERVICES.

1,005 WOMEN BENEFITTED FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT, DETOXIFICATION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.

HOLIDAY HELPERS A WARM FILLED THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS FOR MAKING THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHT FOR OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

3RD Coast Strikers
Abiding Faith Church,
Deborah Vaughn
American Legion
Unit 490
Angel Simon
Applebees
Archway Academy
Awty International
School
Blue Cross Blue Shield
BMC Houston
Byron Wake
Candies
Motorcycle Club
Chapelwood UMC,
The Women's
Perspective Group

Chapelwood United
Methodist Church
Christ Methodist
Church
Community of
Faith Church
Constable Thomason -
Precinct 1
Cub Scouts Pack 1332
Customs and Border
Protection, Officers
Longoria, Scott,
Guitierrez
Cynthia Corder
Daughters of the
American Revolution
Deaconesses of
Deadwood
Debbie Smith

Deborah Keyser
Delta Gems
Destiny Johnson
Donna Rogers
Elevate Church
ExxonMobil
Golden Penguins
Grace After Fire
Greater Pure Light
Church
Hannas Heart of Hope
Harlem Knights
Dynasty
Harris County
District Attorney
Office/ SAFE Court
Janice Thomas -
Discovering U

Jenna Thomas
Joe Holeck
Joyful Sound Choir
Karen Creswell
Katherine St. Andrews
Klein United Methodist
Church
Kohls
Lady Angel Simon
LBJ Creative Ideas
Ledgent Search Group
Lone Star College/
Psychology Students
Mahana Family
Mark Nailor
Moiya Jackson
Moms in Prayer
Natalie Schwab

NCL Cypress Gems
NCL Patroness
Outreach
Community Church
Precision Medical
Billing Group,
Petria McKelvey
Secret Place Book Club
Serenity of the
Woodlands, Joey
D. King
Sharpstown
International School
Shekinah Glory
St. Luke's Hospital
St. Mark's Ministries
St. Pius X School
Stage Stores

STAR Drug Court -
Diaper Drive
Street Wise
Retail Advisors
Susan Hightower
Tammy Johnson
The Salvation
Army, Lieutenant
Jennifer Phillips
The Vision Church,
Rev. Hunt
Tommy Austin
Tracey Gerl
United
Methodist Women
Walmart Central Fill
Well Spring Hospital
World Changers
Church-Houston



SMH is proud to be a part of the **LETTER TO MY MOTHER** project by Branislav Jankic. This visual and literacy body of work seeks to raise awareness of, and change the conversation around, addiction with the goal of lifting the stigma and creating an international support system from those suffering from this disease. Pictured are SMH CEO Nadine Scamp with model Monika Jagaciak, Co-director of the film.



Our mothers and families from **BAMBI, WWC, and WHO** Programs enjoyed a delightful feast provided by **APPLEBEES** around our Thanksgiving Holiday. We sincerely appreciate your kindness!

We would like to thank the **HOUSTON METHODIST FOUNDATION** for your generous funding for our **MIRRORS** program. SMH, our women and children appreciate your kindness!

Our sincere appreciation goes out to the members of **KLEIN UMC** who donated the Thanksgiving Dinner and volunteered their time to make this holiday extra special for our clients at Bonita House.



Thank you to the **GIRL SCOUTS TROOP 122001** for showing their support to SMH and organizing a bake sale on January 21st... a sweet way to raise some money! They also collected books, board games and clothing items for our children. Thank you girls!



Thanks to **DR. BEVERLY WALKER** and **KAREN CRESWELL**, Santa Claus came to SMH this past Christmas!... and besides a hearty meal, he brought along many gifts and much joy to the mothers and children in our Recovery Programs. Thank you!

SANTA MARIA 2605 Parker Road
Houston, TX 77093



WANT TO RECEIVE
PATHWAYS ELECTRONICALLY?

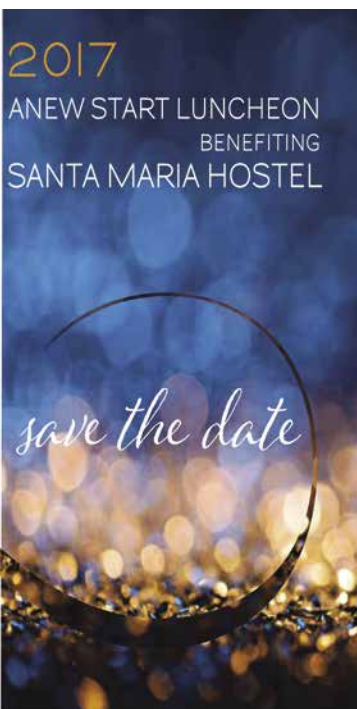
Email: msalgado@santamariahospel.org

RiSE

TUESDAY
MAY 23, 2017

11:30 REGISTRATION 12 NOON LUNCHEON

RIVER OAKS COUNTRY CLUB



Special Guest Speaker Leisa Holland-Nelson
Honoring Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez

Reserve your table today by contacting Barbara Page
715-301-2618 or bpage@santamariahospel.org
www.santamariahospel.org

WISH LIST 2017

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING
THESE ITEMS SO THAT YOU
CAN HELP US MEET OUR
CLIENT'S NEEDS.

- Financial Contributions
- Children's books for ages 4-10
- Educational material for ages 4-10
- Coloring books, arts and crafts supplies
- Personal care items for women
- Bath and Face towels
- Baby diapers
- Baby wipes
- Baby bottles
- Infant Formula
- Infant and Childrens Clothing
- Infant Bedding, including receiving blankets
- Diaper bags
- Car seats
- Strollers



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