

# Sable House

www.sablehouse.org

Holiday 2012

## Bilingual Advocates Are Indispensable

Bilingual advocates help clients to communicate with other agencies more effectively, and this in turn helps to ensure that the other agencies fully understand the unique safety needs of the client. Having a bilingual and/or multicultural advocate to work with helps the client to trust that their needs are fully understood and their best interests are pursued. Even in cases where the client does speak some English, there may be difficulty understanding the responses.

An example of how our bilingual-Spanish advocate made an impact for a family was in a sexual assault case where our County Victims' Assistance Program needed to communicate with the minor victim's parent about the process. The victim had been sexually assaulted by an adult neighbor. Being able to understand information about the court



system processes, and about court dates and timing issues, made the parent feel more informed and comfortable with the process.

The parent also said that she felt better knowing that there was someone she could call if she needed more clarification. The bilingual advocate also discussed the family's concerns about continuing to live in the same apartment complex as the perpetrator's family members, and explained that the family had a legal right to break their lease early and move without additional financial penalty.



hotline  
503-623-4033

office  
503-623-6703

**Increasing the safety of domestic and sexual violence victims in Polk County through crisis intervention and community education services.**

*scenes from...*

## The Polk County Threat Advisory Team

### A Story About the Importance of Our Partnership

At a recent threat advisory team meeting, Sable's family services coordinator made a plea for help for one of the families we had worked with in prior years. After multiple reconciliations with her abusive partner, the mother and her three children needed to get out fast, and for good this time. She was determined to leave now, but needed help to make it out quickly and safely.

Because of the lethality of the situation, it was vital to respond fast, and to respond with an expert team of law enforcement and social service professionals who could come together to make the transition safe and address all of the possible safety risk scenarios.

Thanks to our partnership with the advisory team, member agencies mobilized immediately to help. Within a matter of hours, everything was in place: safe emergency housing, help moving the household, advocacy services to help with a restraining order, safety plans for the kids while at school, and for Mom regarding a route to and from work. We could not have accomplished all of this without the dedicated members of the threat advisory team. We are grateful for our partnership!

## Opportunities to Help

### Our Jeep Still Needs a Windshield!

Our Jeep is in desperate need of a windshield replacement. The Jeep was donated to us a number of years ago by the US Dept of Agriculture's Veterinary Services, when they bought a new vehicle for the veterinarian. We use it to transport clients and their children to appointments, and to transport donations to the shelter facility.

### Water Heater Woes

We have two water heaters at the shelter facility because they get so much use there. Guess what? They both went out in the same budget year. What an unpleasant surprise. Replacement cost was about \$800 each. We didn't anticipate needing to replace both water heaters within the same budget year so it impacted us in a very big way.

**If you can help with either (or both!) of these needs, please contact Deborah at 503-623-6703.**

## Polk County Youth Show They Care

This school year, four Central High School students chose to help Sable House for their Senior Project:

Two of the students hosted a bake sale at the Hop & Heritage Festival. With the money they raised, they purchased products to make toiletry kits for families moving out of the shelter.

One student is collecting wish list items from the Monmouth / Independence community, and she has also placed collection jars at Roth's in Independence.

The fourth student was trained by Sable House staff and then gave a presentation on healthy relationships to an eighth grade class at Talmadge Middle School in Independence. Because she was a victim of dating violence during her freshman year, she wanted to help others by sharing information about the warning signs of unhealthy relationships, and how to get help.

We send our gratitude to these students for their hard work and for raising awareness about Sable House.

# The Heart and Soul of Sable House: Our Volunteers

## Shelter Playroom Gets a Makeover

A huge thank you goes out to Jill and Wendee from the Women's Ministries Committee at Salt Creek Baptist Church, for giving our children's playroom at the shelter a much needed makeover.

We've included before and after pictures so you can see what a fantastic job they did! These ladies are amazing - they supplied all of the paint, decorations, curtains, and the elbow grease to get it done!

What a beautiful transformation!

*before*



*after*



To our incredible volunteers,

# MANY THANKS!

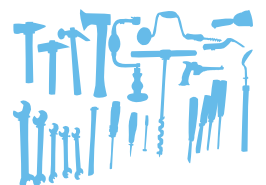
We couldn't do it without you!

## Volunteers Team Up to Provide a Deep Cleaning At Our Shelter

Recently, three couples from the Christian Missionary Alliance Church worked tirelessly at the Sable House shelter for more than five hours! They deep cleaned carpets, scrubbed all of the floors, cleaned the kitchen, and organized our huge pantry and storage area in the garage.

Our shelter provided 1,791 nights of safety just last year - you can imagine what all of that traffic does to a facility! We are so grateful for the help to get the shelter in tip-top shape again. Thank you CMAC volunteers!

A very special thanks to our long time dear friend, supporter, and handy guy Scott, who donates tons of his time and materials to help us keep the shelter facility maintained and running efficiently year round. Scott also makes an impact by assisting our staff with community education at high schools, teaching teens about healthy relationships.



**Crisis Hotline**  
24 hours a day  
7 days a week

**503-623-4033**  
**866-305-3030**



## New Program Fills Safety Gap

Through funding priorities set by the Oregon Legislature, Oregon's Department Of Human Services offices around the state now house co-located domestic violence victim advocates.

**What are co-located domestic violence victim advocates?** They are paid victim advocates who have received extensive training from a local domestic violence ("DV") victim services agency and who are located at the DV victim services agency part time and at DHS self sufficiency and child welfare offices part time.

**What is the purpose of co-located DV victim advocates in DHS offices?** The ultimate purpose is to increase the safety of DV victims and their children who utilize DHS services. The need to fill this gap was identified by DV victims, victims advocates, DHS staff, law enforcement and other stakeholders. As a result, Oregon lawmakers launched two pilot projects in Oregon. The pilot projects clearly demonstrated that the presence of a DV victim advocate increased the safety of the DV victim by offering comprehensive on-site safety planning and case management services tailored to the unique safety needs faced by DV victims. The pilot projects also showed that the presence of the DV victim advocates increased the likelihood of victims remaining safe and not returning to abusive situations.

**What does a co-located DV victim advocate do?** Eighty percent of their time is spent at the DHS office assisting DV victims who apply for services. They complete safety plans with victims, and provide the victim with information and referrals to other providers in the community that can assist them to get out of the DV situation and stay out. The DV victim advocate also assists DHS case workers with DV training and consultation that help case workers to identify and respond to DV victims more effectively.

**How does having co-located DV victim advocates in DHS offices benefit the community?** Studies indicate that in cases where poverty exists, the likelihood of DV also increases. If we can increase the safety of DV victims and their children, we are building a stronger, healthier and safer community for everyone. We hope to interrupt generational cycles of violence that will positively impact future generations of Oregonians.

**Exactly what does this mean for Sable House and Polk County DHS?** It means that a Sable House DV victim advocate funded by DHS is now located on site in our local DHS office to assist with domestic violence cases. The amount of funding was very limited, so each county's allocation was different and calculated by a formula that included a number of factors, such as the size of the county. Polk County was allocated enough funding for 12 hours a week. That may not sound like a lot of time, but our DV victim advocate served 47 victims during July through September.



Did you know?

Sable House was incorporated  
as a non-profit in 1993.

Next year will mark our 20th Anniversary!

### Donate Your Old Cell Phone to Us!

We provide 911 cell phones to clients in need for emergencies, and we receive cash for the cell phones we recycle. We can accept any cell phone, even if you don't have the battery or charger.

# The Friendly Parent Enigma

## Part One: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A married couple with two children is in the midst of a divorce. They often have disagreements, mostly about the children, ranging in importance from decisions about where the children will attend school, to whether the children can bring clothes from one house to the other.

Are you surprised by this story? Probably not, especially if you or your loved ones have been divorced. Some couples are fortunate and are able to remain civil and cooperative, but they are the exception.

What may surprise you is how a divorcing couple's disagreements can become a powerful tool in a child custody case. In Oregon and many other states, one of the issues that a judge must consider in deciding which parent to give custody to is the "friendly parent" factor:

"The willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the other parent and the child." ORS 107.137(1)(f)

At first glance, this sounds like a great idea. Children generally do best when they have a close relationship with both parents, and we certainly don't want divorcing parents to sabotage their child's relationship with the other parent.

Unfortunately, this factor creates several problems, all of which can be detrimental to the very children it is designed to protect. The first, and perhaps most obvious, occurs when one parent has abused the child.<sup>1</sup> Should we expect parents to be willing to support their child's relationship with someone who has assaulted the child? Oregon's friendly parent statute does contain a clause designed to address this situation:

"However, the court may not consider such willingness and ability if one parent shows that the other parent has sexually assaulted or engaged in a pattern of behavior of abuse against the parent or a child and that a continuing relationship with the other parent will endanger the health or safety of either parent or the child." ORS 107.137(1)(f)

The key to this exception is that it not only requires abuse but requires a continuing threat from the abusing parent. Proving a continuing threat can be difficult – courts do not assume that someone who has abused in the past will do so again in the future. Keep in mind that this is not a question of whether the parent who abused will be allowed to spend time with the child – it is a question of whether the other parent (often referred to as the "protective parent") should be penalized for not wanting that contact to take place, regardless of whether they will obey a court's order for contact.

On the other side of the coin, if a parent does not protect a child from a person that has abused that child, Child Protective Services can then step in and remove the child from the parent for "failure to protect."

Lundy Bancroft, the author of several books on domestic violence and children, explains the conundrum:

Our society is currently giving mothers a powerful and crazy-making mixed message. First, it says to mothers, "If your children's father is violent or abusive to you or to your children, you should leave him in order to keep your children from being exposed to his behavior." But then, if the mother does leave, the society many times appears to do an abrupt about-face, and say, "Now that you are spilt up from your abusive partner, you must expose your children to him. Only now you must send them alone with him, without you even being around anymore to keep an eye on whether they are okay."<sup>2</sup>

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Even when abuse can be proven, the protective parent must prove, as in the previous situation, a continuing threat from the abusive parent. This is even more difficult in this situation. Many judges feel that domestic violence is a problem caused by certain relationships – the abuser is only abusive when in a relationship with the victim – so if the relationship is over, then the danger must be gone.

Judges also seem reluctant to draw a connection between abuse of a spouse/partner and risk of abuse to the children. This is despite studies that show a strong correlation between the two types of abuse. A parent who abuses their spouse is more likely to abuse their children; and the more times they have abused their spouse, the more likely it is that they will abuse their children.<sup>3</sup>

The protective parent now has two options: take action to protect themselves and their children and risk losing custody of their children, or pretend that nothing happened and “play nice” with the abusive parent. This may seem like a harsh, unrealistic conclusion. Unfortunately, it is not.

After twenty years in family law courtrooms throughout the country, I confidently say that no woman, despite very abundant evidence that her child has been sexually molested by her ex-husband or that she has been repeatedly pummeled by the violent father of her child, can safely walk into any family court in the country and not face a grave risk of losing custody to the abuser for the sole reason that she dared to present the evidence to the judge and ask that the child be protected.<sup>4</sup>

Imagine, just for a moment, that you were mugged while walking to your car after work. Now imagine that a court expects you to allow your children to spend a weekend alone with the mugger – and also expects you to have a smile on your face the entire time.

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1 For the purposes of this article, “abuse” is defined as it is in ORS 107.705(1): (a) Attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury; (b) Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly placing another in fear of imminent bodily injury; or (c) Causing another to engage in involuntary sexual relations by force or threat of force.

2 *Child Custody Justice*, [www.lundybankcroft.com/?page\\_id=134](http://www.lundybankcroft.com/?page_id=134)

3 S.M. Ross, *Risk of Physical Abuse to Children of Spouse Abusing Parents*, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 20, No. 7, pp. 589-598 (1996).

4 Richard Ducote, *What I Have Learned at the Courthouse*, *Exposé: The Failure of Family Courts to Protect Children From Abuse in Child Custody Disputes*, (Elize T. St. Charles & Lynn Crook, eds., 1999).

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Stay tuned for part two in our next newsletter: How the friendly parent factor is also harming children in cases that don't have abuse allegations or issues; the history of the friendly parent concept; and the truth about parental alienation.

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## Board of Directors

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## Small Business Generosity Makes a Big Impact

Non profits rely on the generosity of local businesses to make ends meet, and it's no different for Sable House and our community of small businesses here in Dallas. Many local businesses help in a variety of ways, and we've profiled a few of them here.

If you want to help, please contact us. Whatever the size of the donation, it helps us to keep doing our important work. Below are some basic ideas about how you can help:

### ***Donate Goods or Services***

Goods and services are always a welcome donation to Sable House. For example if you have a tire store, the Sable Jeep needs tires about every five years. If you have a glass store, the Jeep desperately needs a new windshield. If you have a printing business, we need letterhead and envelopes. If you have a gas station, we need gas to transport clients to important appointments. If you have a movie theater or restaurant, clients and their children would be grateful for the gift of healthy activities.

### ***Donation Jars***

Put out a donation jar and offer your customers the opportunity to help, they will be happy to know that you support us! Ask your customers if they would like to give their change to support Sable House.

### ***Collection Bins***

Put out a collection bin and ask customers to donate items to Sable House. The donations can be items from our wish list or other items that would be needed in a household. Please call if you have other ideas, or would like suggestions of specific items to request.

### ***Car Wash***

Car washes are very popular in the summer months and you can get your employees to coordinate them. You could offer them an incentive to participate and make it a competition, such as allowing participants who work the most hours at the car wash to come to work an hour late one day, or by giving away coffee cards etc.

### ***Make a Monthly Donation***

No matter the size, when joined together with other's donations, your gift helps us to sustain our programs.

Sable House is a 501(c)(3) organization.  
Your contribution is tax deductible.  
Our tax ID number is: 93-1122800

## Sable House Business Heroes

Our pantry was bare - it had no shelves! Van Well Building Supply came to the rescue by donating all of the materials to outfit the pantry *and* our storage area with shelving.

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Every year, in support of our tree recycling fundraiser, Starbucks donates plenty of coffee, creamer and cups.

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The Itemizer Observer helps get the word out about the fundraiser by announcing it in the paper.

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The staff of Envy Spa Salon donated hair care services to our clients.

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Grandma's Attic pays for our newsletter, and holds a quilt challenge every year that benefits Sable House. They also sponsor a tree of giving to collect donations during the holidays.

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A-Team Locksmith donates all of the key and lock services we need - even making house calls.

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Every year, Citizens Bank sponsors a tree of giving in their lobby that benefits shelter residents. They also set up a no-cost merchant account so that our legal services program could accept credit card payments.

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The Dallas Aquatic Center donates swim passes so that children living in our shelter have healthy activities on the weekends.

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Allied Waste of Dallas sponsors our annual tree recycle day, and Dallas FFA works hard all day, collecting trees from all over Dallas.

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Many, many local churches and church groups support us by making blankets, conducting donation drives, and by inviting us to speak about what we do.





Sable House

PO Box 783  
Dallas, OR 97338

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
DALLAS, OR  
PERMIT #83

## christmas tree recycling day!



3 easy  
options

call 503-623-6703  
to request a pickup

fill out and return the  
enclosed envelope

drop off your tree at  
1030 W. Ellendale Ave