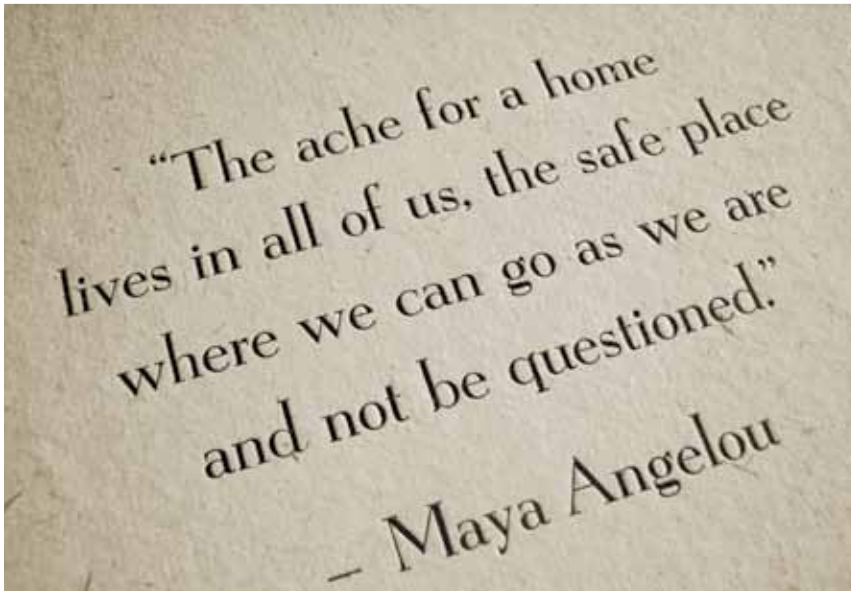


Editors: Sarah Lange & Alex Kartheiser Contact: alex@abbyshouse.org Online: WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG/BRIGHTSPOT.HTML

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Your Own Set of Keys

by Parlee Jones, Shelter Advocate

So, you've led a pretty good life. Maintained yourself, paid your bills, gone to work, maybe even raised a family. Always at the end of the day, you could go home, put a key in the lock, and enter a place of your own.

As the women and families that come through Abby's know, all of this can change in the blink of an eye.

Working with the women in the shelter is a humbling experience. Each time I open my door at home with my own key, I can't help but think about the women and children at the shelter struggling every day to get a key of their own.

Continued on Page 2

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BUDGET REPORT FY11

Current Progress

Between January 1 – June 30, we raised \$404,835 toward our budget.



HIGHLIGHTS

Special Recognition

Congratulations to our founder Annette Rafferty! She was honored by the Center for Nonviolent Solutions with their Community Leader Award 2011 for "opening our eyes to the problems of violence in its many forms, from domestic violence at home to the struggles between nations, and for her tireless work in promoting nonviolent solutions, justice and compassion in a troubled world."

Annette also was recognized April 8, 2011 at the Worcester Homeless Action Committee's Annual Meeting, "An Evening with Tom O'Neill" with the 2011 State Representative James O'Day Award. *

New!

We've launched our totally redesigned website — check it out!

www.abbyshouse.org



Proud CNVS award recipient Annette Rafferty and presenter Marjorie Ropp



Jeanne Rosenblatt, Honoree Annette Rafferty, Elaine Lamoureux, Parlee Jones, and Mayor Joseph O'Brien at the WHAC Annual Meeting

Upcoming Event

2nd Annual Hip Hip Her Race 5K Benefit Run/Walk for Abby's House

A race for runners and walkers of all ages! Prizes will be given in many categories. Raffle prizes will be available, as well. Saturday, October 15
Location: Middle/high school in West Boylston.

Registration is \$25/\$20 (students) until October 6, \$30/\$25 thereafter.

To register or get more information, visit:
www.abbyshouse.org

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

APPLIANCES & KITCHEN ITEMS

- 1 set of sturdy, high-quality pots & pans for our food service

FOOD

- Coffee
- Coffee Mate/ Coffee Creamer
- Tea
- Bottled Water
- Cans of Tuna & Chicken

GIFT CARDS

- Dollar Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Staples
- Walmart

OFFICE SUPPLIES

- Postage Stamps
- Paper Shredder
- Black Permanent Sharpies (Size Medium)
- Silver Permanent Sharpies (Size Medium)
- Clothes Racks (Rolling type)

CLEANING SUPPLIES

- Furniture Polish
- Bathroom Disinfectants (Lysol, Clorox, Mr. Clean etc.)
- Windex
- Kitchen Cleaner
- Dishwashing Liquid (Dawn, Joy, etc)
- Laundry Detergent
- Sponges
- Soft Scrub
- Dishwasher Detergent
- SOS pads

BEDDING & LINENS (NEW)

- Twin Size Blankets
- Twin Size Mattresses
- Twin Size Box Spring Sets
- Mattress Covers (Twin Size)
- Twin Comforters
- Pillows

YOUR OWN KEY from Page 1

Most of our shelter guests have keys of one type or another, but not one that opens a door to a place they can call home. She may have a car key. With a loss of income, unable to pay for insurance or gas, this car – which may have also served as a bedroom – is now more of a burden than an asset.

She may have a mail box key. If she didn't, her mail would be scattered from place to place.

She may have a key to her luggage. Her luggage is most likely stored at different places or has been left behind at a friend's home. She locks it because she fears that other people will go through her belongings.

She may have a storage key. Furniture, pictures, everything removed from her home, waiting for a time when she will be able to unpack it again. Sometimes that time does not come and she ends up losing it all.

But what she longs for – and what each of us needs – is that key that you can put into your front door, that key that provides access to your own peace, your own sanctuary.

That longing can wear a person down. Rhonda's ache for a home of her own is so piercing you can see it on her face. Yet at age 26, after surviving foster care for 10 years, leaving a domestic violence situation and a life of uncertainty, Rhonda has finally given up. Searching endlessly for work and housing, her situation started to

Each time I open my door at home with my own key, I can't help but think about the women and children at the shelter...

get the best of her, and her anger about all the injustices she has suffered started coming to the surface. One day, Rhonda didn't return to the shelter, leaving behind all of her things, leaving me to wonder and worry about her fate.

Kerry and her two children, Adam (10) and Sabrina (8), recently relocated from Orlando to Worcester for a new job and a new beginning. Last hired, Kerry was the first fired as the company struggled to survive. Kerry has

nothing to return to in Florida and is unable to move in with her mother, who is in subsidized housing. Because the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) cannot verify her housing situation in Florida and because Kerry has not established residency in Worcester, she is unable to go into a family shelter. The children's father will take Sabrina, but not Adam, because he has a learning disability. Kerry does not want to be separated from her children, or have them separated from each other. Kerry is out there on a daily basis, looking for work. She is on the waiting list for the Interfaith Hospitality Network shelter, which is the only other shelter in Worcester who will take a family without approval from the DTA.

Glenda was with Abby's for 3 months when she finally got that key. The factory she'd worked at for 20 years moved out of state five years ago, and she has been searching for a job ever since. She has had some temporary positions, but has not been able to find anything permanent. Glenda finally received housing from WCHR and now has a safe place where she can go, as she is, unlock her door and not be questioned!

Dani has a key of her own after relocating to Worcester via a domestic violence shelter. Dani has no children. When you are in a domestic violence shelter, you cannot work or look for work — in fact, most times, you cannot leave the premises. After 4 months, she was really aching to get a job and begin her new life. She couldn't do that at the DV shelter, so she transferred to the Abby's House shelter. Dani is an artist. When she fled from her home, away from the life she knew, she left behind what little artwork had not already been destroyed by the hands of someone she loved. Dani hadn't been able to pick up a paintbrush for a while after coming to Worcester, but has recently begun making art again now that she has that key, that safe place that she can go.

The next time you use your key to unlock your front door, we hope that you will think of the women and children of Abby's House, who long for a place to call home. ✨

The True Cost of Homelessness

Homelessness doesn't just affect the people who have no place to live; it affects us all. When it comes to the homeless, many people have mixed emotions. Some are confused about how someone could end up living on the streets, feel uncomfortable around the homeless, or are uncertain how they can help. Some people feel that the homeless "allowed" themselves to end up that way and do not feel that it is their problem. Others feel it is a social justice issue and need to do something about it. Whether we understand it or not, we all bear the cost of homelessness in our community.

There are many paths to homelessness

Some common issues that contribute to a person becoming homeless include: lack of education, lack of financial management or life skills, lack of affordable housing, lack of job skills, reduction in hours or job loss, illness, injury, disability, addiction, incarceration, and mental illness. Some people become homeless in the wake of a natural disaster, such as a fire, or another type of emergency. Others become homeless when they choose to leave an unsafe situation, such as domestic violence.

With one of the highest costs of living in the U.S., it is easier to become homeless in Massachusetts than in more affordable states. At present, there is a significant gap between the state's minimum wage and the living wage, which is calculated based on the cost of living and includes items such as food, housing, child care, medical expenses, and transportation. Most residents in the Commonwealth are trying to get by with no savings or reserves. If some sort of crisis erupts in their lives, they are at risk of becoming homeless. This is especially true if the person or family has no friends or relatives to turn to for help.

The Big Three

There are three primary socio-economic costs of homelessness:

1. **Cost to taxpayers**
Health and mental health services, criminal justice system.
2. **Loss of productivity**
Decreased health and more time spent incarcerated means that homeless people have more obstacles that prevent them from contributing to society through their work and creativity.
3. **Effect on children**
Perhaps the most difficult cost to quantify is the loss of future productivity due to the lower educational achievement of homeless children.

We invite you to get involved!

All of these costs affect each one of us in society. As citizens of the Commonwealth, the United States, and of the World, we are responsible for the well being of each other, especially those that cannot always speak up or fight for themselves, like the homeless women and children who turn to Abby's House for help. You can help the women of Abby's House by helping to confront homelessness at its social and economic roots, and by embracing it as a community problem. ✨

Recent Events

On June 9, 2011 Abby's House celebrated it's 35th Anniversary at the Hanover Theatre with a very special performance by Natalie Cole! It was a night to remember as longtime volunteers and supporters of Abby's celebrated the night together. Natalie Cole wowed the audience with her beautiful voice and commanding stage presence. Thank you to everyone who came to this wonderful event to honor Abby's House and its 35 years helping women and children in Central MA. The profits from this event will be used to help the homeless women and children who turn to Abby's House for help. ✨



LONG-TIME STAFF: (left to right) Elaine Lamoureux, Associate Director Julie Komenos, and Founder Annette Rafferty



FAMILY & FRIENDS: Abby's House Staff, Parlee Jones, enjoys the evening with her guests, including her daughter Sha-asia.



RECEPTION SMILES: Our supporters enjoy the 35th Anniversary Reception before the Natalie Cole Concert



52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609

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Contents:

FEATURE:

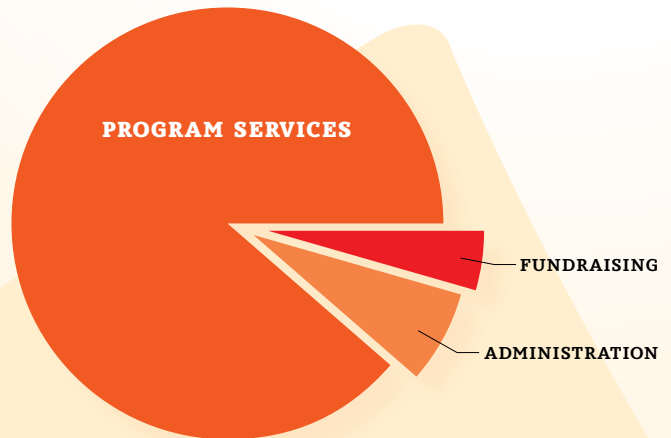
Your Own Set of Keys

OTHER ARTICLES:

- *Special Recognition*
- *The Budget Report*
- *Upcoming Events*
- *Looking at the Issues*
- *Recent Events*
- *Necessities*

Services come first!

Abby's House allocates 89 cents of every dollar received directly to Program Services. We couldn't do it without your help. Thank you for your continued support that allows us to provide Shelter, Housing & Advocacy to women and children in Central MA.



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!

Abby's House Thrift Shop now features a **Vintage Parlour!** Come check out vintage clothing, hats, shoes, purses & jewelry — all at fabulous prices!

Dates & Hours:

Thurs., 9/29 (10-4)

Mon., 10/3 (10-3)

Wed., 10/19 (10-3)

or by appointment:
call Jodi Salerno at
(508) 756-5486 x31.

This coupon good for

20% OFF

your entire clothing purchase at the
ABBY'S HOUSE VINTAGE PARLOUR.

Coupon valid only on:
September 29, 10:00 – 4:00

Recent Grants

Between Jan 1 - June 30, we received grants from:

- Greater Worcester Community Foundation (discretionary & Dodge Fund)
- Jeanne Remillard Curtis Fund @ GWCF
- Fallon/OrNda Health Fund @ GWCF
- Wynne Chase Fund @ GWCF
- C. Jeanne & Myles McDonough Fund @ GWCF
- Sisters of Notre Dame
- Stoddard Charitable Trust
- Marshall's
- Hyde Charitable Trust
- Hermann Foundation
- Intel Matching Gifts Program
- St. Vincent Hospital Health for Life Community Benefits
- George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
- DCU for Kids
- John L. McHugh Foundation
- TJX Foundation
- Price Chopper/Golub Foundation
- Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
- Fletcher Foundation