

HARBOR HOUSE

Happenings

NEWSLETTER

New Outreach Office Now Open

Harbor House of Central Florida is very excited to announce our new central Outreach office! Located at 708 East Colonial Drive, Suite 201, the new office opened earlier this month to serve clients. You are all invited to check it out at an Open House on Thursday, September 13 between 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. You will have the opportunity to tour the office, hear mission moments from advocates who work in direct service to domestic violence survivors every day, enjoy light refreshments, and help us stock our pantry.

The new centralized office is a one-stop-shop for survivors in the downtown area. In this office you will find a bilingual Outreach advocate, economic empowerment coordinator, and an injunction for protection attorney.

With free parking, the new office will field referrals from the other Outreach advocates for survivors who cannot afford courthouse parking or who just don't feel comfortable having an initial meeting at the courthouse.

The new office also has a counseling space where community partners can set up to help survivors complete food stamp applications, build resumes, offer child counseling, and more. The possibilities are endless!

Mia* began working with an Outreach advocate at Harbor House in June while her bruises were still healing. Her



boyfriend of four years had fractured her nose and cheekbone and strangled her with a cell phone cord. We know that abusers who strangle their victims are the ones most likely to eventually kill them. She also recently suffered a miscarriage caused by his physical and sexual abuse.

With encouragement from her advocate, Mia reconnected with her family. Her boyfriend had isolated her from family and friends and would not even allow her to work. Working with Harbor House's court program, Mia secured a lifetime injunction against her abuser. He is incarcerated, and she is sleeping well in the bed she was able to get from Harbor House community partner Annabel's Closet.

"She was so happy about that bed. She was just crying and overwhelmed," Mia's advocate recounted. "She is looking for employment now and focusing on herself. She is really enjoying her freedom."

As at all of Harbor House's locations, all services are confidential and offered at no cost to clients. This new office will enable us to help more survivors like Mia, equipping them with the tools they need to build a brilliant future.

**Name changed to protect identity.*

OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, September 13
4:30 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.
708 East Colonial Drive
Suite 201
Orlando, FL 32803

TOP DONATION NEEDS

Non-Perishable Foods
Cleaning Supplies
New Pillows
New Bath Towels
Gift Cards (\$20 increments)

Message from the CEO, Michelle Sperzel

The past several months I've been given the opportunity to attend more women-focused events – from women's leadership groups to church groups. Each time I attend, I am approached by a woman who either asks for guidance to help a loved one or a woman who shares her personal story of abuse. The conversations are ones of hope, horror, frustration, and strength. Some of the women I speak to confess they didn't call Harbor House but rather sought help from their family, friends, therapist, or church. When I ask why they didn't reach out to Harbor House, the answers are everything from "I didn't need shelter" to "I didn't know what you could do to help me" or "I didn't know it was abuse until my friend told me it was." As an advocate, I know that not everyone will reach out to us for help, but we know if they do they have a better chance of leaving safely and living a life free from abuse. I also know it takes the community to get involved with the local domestic violence organizations to facilitate the

conversations.

Conversations about change are constant. Harbor House's role in the change is creating innovative programs and removing barriers for survivors seeking or receiving services. Many people in the community know Harbor House for our shelter and court services, but not everyone in an abusive relationship needs shelter and not everyone wants to file an injunction. Three of the most valuable services we offer to survivors are safety planning, peer support, and support groups. Over the next year, we hope to help more people in our outreach program through our new downtown office (see cover story). In addition to domestic violence support groups, we are expanding the program to offer support groups for friends and family members of survivors, LGBTQ, male survivors, and children. We will also expand our empowerment workshops to friends and family members. Some of our new workshops will include cooking on a budget, art therapy, basic car

maintenance, understanding the court system, dependency, and budgeting. If you are interested in helping our advocates lead a workshop or you have an idea for a workshop, please let us know. If you want to learn more about how you can help a friend, co-worker, or family member who discloses they are being abused, please reach out to us.

Every day, someone's life is changed by domestic violence. Our community is faced with families being held hostage by an abuser as they try to control a survivor. Our own law enforcement officers put their lives on the line whenever they answer a domestic violence call. Every day it affects our community whether we realize it or not.

There is a support network to help, and you are part of it. We need the ongoing financial support and community engagement to innovate programs and provide services. Thank you for being a part of the conversation and for being a changemaker.

Board of Directors Welcomes New Members

With the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1, Harbor House welcomed four new members to our Board of Directors. The board plays the important role of providing governance and oversight, ensuring that Harbor House is always working to advance our mission.



Brian Bennett of Bennett Legal Group brings experience in construction law as well as strategic planning and financial management to the board. He has been named to The Best Lawyers of America for Construction Law, 2009-2018

Lori Cherry is the Public Relations/



Communications Director at SeaWorld Orlando, Aquatica, and Discovery Cove. She has over 20 years of experience as a public affairs professional in both the public and private sector. Lori is excited to share her expertise in marketing, events, public policy, and communications with Harbor House.



Heather Meglino of Meglino Law, LLC comes to the board during a successful first year on the Harbor House Young Professionals Board. Heather chaired the event committee

for the first ever Handbags for Hope, which brought in more than \$21,000 for children's services. She has also invested her time in training other lawyers on how to handle domestic violence injunction hearings.



Dianne Thomas-Roberts is the President of Redd Ash Technologies, a solutions provider in the information technology space. In addition to extensive IT expertise,

Dianne looks forward to contributing to Harbor House in the areas of fundraising, events, and financial management.

A Year at Harbor House

What does a year look like at Harbor House? As we closed out our fiscal year on June 30, we entered data and analyzed reports. We have some impressive numbers to share with you, but the numbers don't tell the whole story.

The real story is about the woman who slept soundly for the first time in years because she secured a lifetime injunction against her abuser. It's about the child who said our shelter is the nicest place he's ever stayed. The numbers don't tell you about the dog who plays happily now instead of cowering in a corner when he hears yelling. The data doesn't explain how hard a mom worked in two short months to rebuild her life—getting a job, securing childcare, buying a car—after leaving everything behind for her own safety and the health of her children.

We didn't do this alone. If you donated money or goods, volunteered, attended events, or shared a Facebook post, you are part of this. Thank you for everything you have done to make these stories possible.

63,887 Services Offered



Shelter Residents - 898

Adults - 459

Children - 439




Outreach Participants - 4,539



Hours of Children's Services - 13,647



Hours of Counseling - 10,991

Shelter Nights - 36,055 

24/7 Crisis Line Calls - 7,140 

Pets in Kennel - 33 

Purple Door Luncheon



Make plans to join us Wednesday, October 17 as the Purple Door Luncheon returns to the Rosen Centre. Each year Harbor House hosts the event during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Since opening in 1976, Harbor House has opened our doors to thousands of women, men, children, and pets seeking safe shelter and a path to a better future. Each time our door opens, we're offering a fresh start to a life free of abuse and fear. Today, Harbor House remains

Orange County's only 24/7 state certified domestic violence center that provides free services in the time of greatest need.

This year's Signature Purple Door Luncheon will include a special awards presentation for champions working to end violence in our community and on a national level. We will recognize champions in the following categories:

- Champion of Courage
- Champion of Advocacy
- Champion of Justice
- Champion of Equality
- Champion of Community
- Harbor House Legacy Award

Monies raised support our mission to stop the cycle of domestic violence by ensuring that every family member has the resources they need both in shelter and beyond.

The Purple Door Luncheon kicks off with a networking hour and our popular mystery bag sale at 11 a.m. The program begins at noon.

Tickets are \$40 per person or host a table of 8 for \$500. To purchase tickets, visit www.harborhousefl.com/purpledoor. Please call 407.703.2890 for more information about sponsoring the Purple Door Luncheon. Volunteers should call 407.703.2866 to sign up. We look forward to seeing you there—and wear purple!



It Takes Courage

Get your sneakers ready to go door to door, home by home, distributing door hangers with life-saving information about 24-hour resources for domestic abuse victims. Orlando Police Department, Orange County Sheriff's Office, and Harbor House of Central Florida are banding together to spread awareness about domestic violence.

This county-wide event will be held this year on Saturday, September 22. We will meet up at Valencia West Campus

for registration from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Then teams of 6 to 8 volunteers will

join an officer at a designated area in Orange County to hang the door hangers. Create your own team or join with other individuals.

Our goal is simple: Get the right

information to the right people at the right time to save lives.



This year, we hope to have more than 300 volunteers fan out across Central Florida to visit apartment complexes, hanging door tags to spread awareness. For more information on It Takes

Courage or to register, please visit www.harborhousefl.com/ittakescourage or give us a call at 407.703.2866. Gather your friends, family, and co-workers to join us!

Gifts of Hope



Harbor House works all year long to ensure an empowering atmosphere for the families we serve. We

need your help to create a festive and safe holiday season. Here are a few ways you can help Harbor House ensure that the children and their parents experience a sense of belonging, hope, and empowerment.

Fill the Holiday Gift Shop. Financial empowerment is important to us and to our survivors, so donating gift cards like Walmart, Target, Visa, and MasterCard allows the survivors we work with to give their families a holiday to remember in their own special way. While we receive many toys for children this time of year, we want to be sure the teens and moms have gifts too. Items like women's pajamas, bath sets, headphones, cell

phone cases, cologne or perfume, and sports equipment are appreciated.

Adopt a Family. You and your family can embrace a family this holiday season and purchase specific items from a family's wish list. Please contact us and we will match you with one of our Harbor House families.

No Time for Shopping? Give any amount to the Gifts of Hope and know your gift will keep giving throughout the year. Go to www.harborhousefl.com/donate/ to give the gift of hope today!

The deadline for Gifts of Hope donations is December 17. You can give on your own or organize a donation drive in your office, neighborhood, or place of worship.

For questions about Gifts of Hope, please contact our donation coordinator, Gabrielle Harb, at 407.703.2890 or g harb@harborhousefl.com.

Your Own Event

Are you looking for a way to get more involved and help Harbor House but aren't sure what to do? You can host your own event!

Individuals and organizations can host an independent fundraising event. These can be grateful survivors and families, civic organizations, places of worship, schools, businesses, government agencies... anyone in the community can hold an event to support us! Our development team is happy to work with you to come up with an idea that fits your interests and schedule.

Some possibilities include donation drives, coin collection, giving back a percentage of business sales for a day, holding a neighborhood block party, or donating for a special perk at work like a premium parking spot or dressing down for a day. It's up to you—make it your own!

For more information, call 407.703.2890.

Stay in the Know

