



2007

report to the community



crossroads safehouse



crossroads safehouse

2007 The Coloradoan
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2006 Affordable
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Dear Friends,



It is a great honor and pleasure to present Crossroads' first Report to the Community. We have two purposes in providing this report. The first is to express our gratitude to you, the wind beneath the wings of Crossroads Safehouse, for your generous support, without which there would be no Safehouse. Our second purpose is to give you an overview of the quality and quantity of life-saving services that you make possible, especially services that have come about in the past four years.

National research has shown that many domestic violence survivors return to their abusers because of nonexistent affordable legal and permanent safe housing options. Since 2004, Crossroads has been evolving to address these needs, for example via an outreach facility on College Avenue in Fort Collins, first-ever domestic violence transitional housing, and a legal department that serves relationship abuse survivors. We are proud to state that all services offered by Crossroads are free of charge and that our transitional housing and legal projects are supported by federal grants and not strictly local dollars.

These and our other programs help Crossroads to pursue its ultimate goals of: 1) ending domestic violence in Larimer County, and 2) assisting each victim who seeks our assistance to find the help that is needed, whether through outreach advocacy, a lawyer to assist in a protection order hearing, long-term safe housing, or immediate recourse to the Safehouse.

In addition to these more recent service enhancements, the passionate, cohesive, and well-educated Safehouse professional staff of over 30 full- and part-time members continues to provide round-the-clock, on-the-scene Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) response to law enforcement, hospital, and campus police pages, as well as compassionate daily and nightly assistance to an average of 35 Safehouse and transitional housing residents. Three categories define our work: **safety, healing** and **prevention**.

Crossroads is dedicated to working with others to create a safer place to live. And, since you are reading this report, we know that you join us in our efforts. Thank you for sharing our vision of a community that is safe for everyone.

Cordially,

Vicki Lutz,
Executive Director



P.O. Box 993 | Fort Collins, Colorado 80522 | www.crossroadssafehouse.org

Business Line: 970-530-2353 | Hotlines: 970-482-3502, 1-888-541-SAFE

ONE WOMAN'S STORY

“I am a survivor, happy to be living a life free of violence. I am going to tell my story but, in compliance with my personal safety plan, I must summarize, be deliberately vague on some aspects, and not disclose my name.

I have been beaten, punched, choked and kicked. I have had my personal property destroyed, my phone calls and letters monitored, been followed all day, and have been isolated from contact with my friends and family. I have been locked in a garage during the middle of summer for three days without food or water so that no one could see the injuries to my face or arms. I have had my cell phones destroyed and the battery removed from my car. I have seen my pets killed when I threatened to leave. Some of these incidents were reported to the authorities – many were not. Over the years I heard many people say “just leave.” That, of course, was the correct thing to do but when the choice was finally made it was both simple and terrible.



Leaving is not just a matter of changing your residence, it is often the choice whether to have a residence or not. It entails a dramatic change in finance, and often a change of job and location. On one occasion of particularly severe abuse I ended up in the ICU of a hospital where I realized that I would have to leave my abuser or most likely end up dead. It was a holiday weekend and I had called several shelters; however, all of the shelters in Denver were full. I had no way to reach anyone that was not connected to my abuser. I found myself with the decision of returning to my abuser or being homeless. I decided to be homeless.

I had a friend that lived in Fort Collins and I believed she might be able to help me. I did not have food or water and I was wearing the clothes

and slippers I had at the hospital, but I decided to walk to Fort Collins. The first day I walked from the hospital in south Denver to the E-470 bridge, where I slept that night. The next morning I began to walk again and arrived at my shocked friend's doorstep very late that day.

The next day, Crossroads was contacted and they agreed to help. They provided me with food, shelter, counseling and support, and most importantly, time. I had left my car, furniture, clothes, pictures and everything else I owned behind. In my thirties, I found myself starting over.

While I was at Crossroads I was able to find a minimum wage job. It wasn't a career – that takes more time, but it was a start. I was accepted into Crossroads' transitional housing program which allowed me to get housing with a very small down payment. With a job and housing taken care of, I was able to begin building my violence-free life.

At Crossroads, I met many different women and families from different social and economic backgrounds. We all had one thing in common, a desire to be free of abuse. It was stunning to discover that although my experiences were terrible they were neither unique nor all that uncommon. This is why I wanted to tell my story. First, to thank Crossroads and all the many volunteers and donors that gave me a successful start for a new life. Second, to encourage continued support for Crossroads and, if possible, an expansion of services so that no woman or family eager to escape abuse is ever told that there is no room, as I was one desperate and terrible night not so long ago.

The generosity and support of a community can and does make a difference. It changed my life and it has tremendous potential to change the lives of many other survivors that are seeking a way out, but fear that they have nowhere to go.

Thank you.”



SAFETY

Crossroads is the only emergency Safehouse serving all of Larimer County. Along with our confidential shelter site, our 24/7 help lines and our legal services, we offer a comprehensive approach to safeguarding domestic violence survivors. Our role as an emergency shelter provider is critical; however, we were saddened that, **in 2007, we could not bring into the Safehouse 38 percent of victims who requested shelter due to a lack of available beds.**

6,246 nights of Safehousing for 169 adult and 144 child domestic violence victims

Crossroads helps survivors of domestic violence escape life-threatening situations by providing emergency shelter in our Safehouse. Our clients may stay at the Safehouse for up to six weeks while we provide them access to tools to enhance their independence.

1,119 victims provided with legal representation or legal advocacy

Our legal advocates supplied 1,008 victims of domestic violence with information about restraining orders and the civil and criminal processes, and provided support at daily bond hearings and other court proceedings. Crossroads also provides direct legal representation, with two full-time attorneys who represented 111 clients in custody, support, divorce and all manner of family law cases. These services are provided free of charge under a federal grant.

667 crisis calls

Our help lines are staffed around the clock by trained advocates who handle crisis calls from survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and from their families and friends. Callers are provided with a lifeline that results in safety plans, discussions about resources available in the community, and crisis intervention. Many of our staff and volunteers speak English and Spanish. If another language is needed, we can provide access to interpreters in 160 languages.

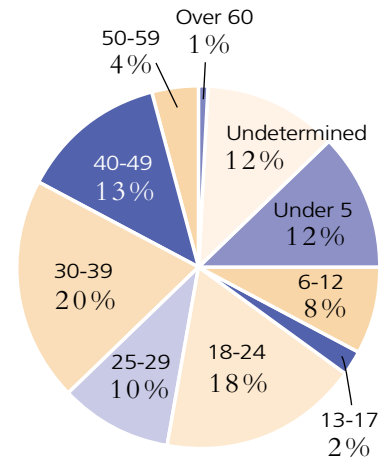
253 on-site responses to domestic violence calls

Crossroads, like police and fire departments, is a Priority One service provider in Larimer County. Our Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to respond with law enforcement to the scene of domestic violence incidents. Our 32 trained DART volunteer and 8 staff advocates work with victims to provide support, legal assistance, community referrals, and, when necessary, immediate safe housing.

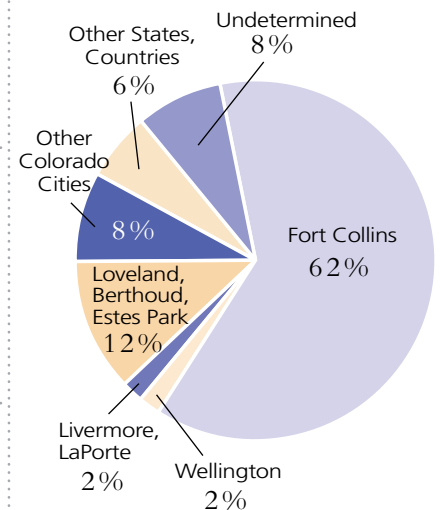
192 adults and children in off-site shelter

Because our Safehouse is often full, we provide alternative emergency off-site shelter. When possible, we place prospective clients in other domestic violence shelters. Unfortunately, these facilities are often full and we must then place victims in unsecured hotel rooms.

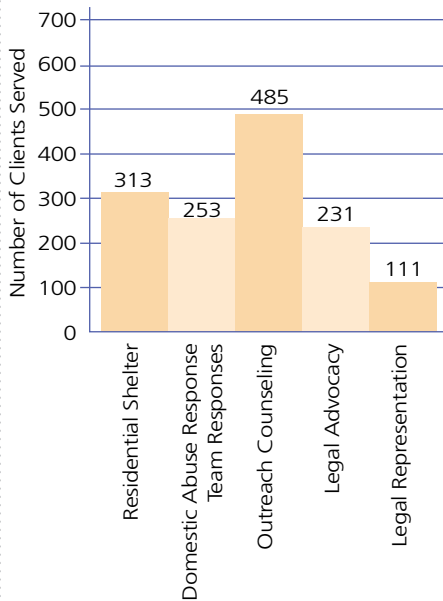
2007 Client Demographics by Age



2007 Client Demographics by Location



2007 Client Activity by Program/Service



HEALING

Domestic violence victims suffer loss of self-esteem, psychological trauma, and economic abuse along with physical battering. We ensure that survivors are given the opportunity to heal by providing advocacy, life skills training and transitional housing.

6,982 nights of transitional housing for 12 adults and 11 children

Federal funds support Crossroads' Transitional Housing Program, which in 2007 staffed and filled 12 units of long-term affordable housing. Through transitional housing and supportive services, survivors now have options other than returning to an abusive environment or becoming homeless.

Over 4,000 individual advocacy contacts in Safehouse

Our staff and trained volunteer advocates provide Safehouse residents with assistance in developing viable plans for a violence-free family life. We offer confidential, bilingual, individual and group counseling at no cost for women, children and men who have been hurt by their abusers. Part of ending future violence is healing those suffering from past abuse.

Over 1,500 advocacy contacts in community

Only one in ten domestic violence survivors report this crime to the police, which means nine out of ten who have been assaulted live in fear and silence. Crossroads' advocates help individuals break the silence and heal, whether they report the assault or not. We offer confidential individual and group outreach sessions at no cost for women, children and men.

345 women attended support groups

Support groups are available to residents of the Safehouse and to community members who seek education and support regarding domestic violence issues. Staff facilitates these groups, including weekly bilingual meetings.

249 children attended support groups

Our children's advocates work with residential children on an individual as well as group basis. The Living in a Fear-free Environment (LIFE) curriculum is used in individual and group sessions with these children, who are victims and witnesses of family violence.

14 pets in foster care

Crosstrails, our animal care program, provides foster care service to pets of Safehouse residents so these animals cannot be injured or used as pawns by a violent partner.



PREVENTION

Prevention happens on many levels. We prevent violence when we teach professionals, such as social service providers, school personnel, health care providers and criminal justice employees, to recognize and respond to risks and warning signs. Prevention also happens when we work with youth, teaching new ideas and establishing new beliefs by encouraging them to build safe and healthy relationships. Prevention continues to happen every time we stop the cycle of violence in a family that comes to us in need.

11,530 information and referral calls were answered

These calls to the Safehouse and Outreach Center include inquiries about outreach services and programs, non-crisis counseling calls, and non-emergency requests for help or advice.

3,325 professional and community members received education and training

By providing safety, healing and prevention programs to Fort Collins and Larimer County, we are striving to end domestic violence. Crossroads' staff provided information about domestic violence issues through 98 presentations made in the community. These presentations were made for local schools, law enforcement groups, businesses, government agencies and community organizations.

1,330 students and teachers attended youth programs

We share our prevention message with hundreds of youth and adults annually through our school-based services and community education, to build awareness and skills for preventing violence and promote safe and healthy relationships. Our Youth Program continued to add teen services in 2007, teaching in all area junior and senior high schools with an approved curriculum on teen dating violence. Our youth advocates gave 30 presentations this year and facilitated several new groups at local agencies.

Mission

The mission of Crossroads Safehouse is to advocate for and provide a safe environment for victims of domestic violence and interpersonal abuse in Larimer County, and to promote positive change through education and intervention.



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Back row, from left to right: Al Shorre, supervising attorney; Gail Grueckshank, financial manager; Pat Parker, associate director; Nancy Abrams, board member. On the floor, Vicki Lutz, executive director, left, and Kelly Doherty, financial assistant at Crossroads Safehouse.

Photo by Frank Cordelle

2007 Winner Nonprofit of the Year

By Sara Reed

SaraReed@coloradoan.com

CJ Cullins credits Crossroads Safehouse with helping her break the cycle of domestic abuse in which she found herself.

In 2000, Cullins' fiancé beat her in an attempt to cause a miscarriage when he found out she was pregnant. Then, he emptied the bank accounts and sold everything.

When Cullins returned to Fort Collins, she began attending counseling sessions offered by the agency.

"She opened my eyes that I was at risk for falling back into the same pattern," Cullins said of a

Crossroads employee.

And that is why Crossroads is so necessary to the community, executive director Vicki Lutz said.

"We are as necessary as the emergency room at the hospital, the police department and the fire department," she said. "It saves lives."

Crossroads Safehouse is being honored as the Nonprofit of the Year in this year's 2007 Best in Business awards.

The agency, now in its 28th year, offers a wide variety of services beyond providing a safe haven for victims of domestic violence.

The agency also offers civil legal services,

transitional housing, counseling — in English and Spanish — and outreach, foster care for pets and a toll-free domestic violence hotline. Women who live in the transitional housing also can get aid with transportation, furniture and other needs, Lutz said.

When police respond to a domestic abuse situation, the victim can request an advocate from Crossroads and, like other emergency responders, those advocates are on the front lines, Lutz said.

"We are responding to the need for safety of innocent lives," she said. The safehouse also is the only one that serves all of Larimer County and the demand for that service is growing.

Since it opened its doors in 1980, the organization has provided residential services to more than 11,000 women and children and outreach services to more than 22,000 women and children, Lutz said.

The number of nights the housing project provided in 2007 topped the 2006 total of 6,106, Lutz said. In 2006, the shelter turned away 209 people, putting some of them up in hotel rooms.

There are many reasons Crossroads is deserving of the nomination, Cullins said.

"Crossroads forces into people's minds that this is happening everyday," she said. "We can't forget. If we do forget, we will keep letting it happen."

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Crossroads Safehouse

- > **Top executive:** Vicki Lutz, executive director
- > **Years in Business:** 28
- > **Type of business:** nonprofit serving victims of domestic violence
- > **Number of employees:** 15 full time, 17 part time
- > **Address:** 528 S. College Ave.
- > **Phone:** 530-2353



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