



# turning point

Spring 2010

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

## Hear Her Voice: Life After Abuse

by Leah McKee

### In Our Own Voices

*"My work at Sistercare has been both humbling and gratifying."*

Sabrina Griffin,  
Sistercare Executive Assistant

*"Volunteering at Sistercare gives me the opportunity to fulfill my purpose and pursue my passion of giving back to those in need of total healing."*

Pamela Mitchell,  
Sistercare Speakers Bureau Volunteer

*"Being able to volunteer [as an interpreter] gives me the chance to give back to my community and I am content knowing I might have made a difference in someone's life, helping them to escape a horrible situation."*

Alicia Osborne,  
Sistercare Hispanic Support Volunteer

*"The day-to-day challenges of my work with battered women and their children are numerous, however, the reward is far greater."*

Chris Johnson,  
Sistercare Shelter House Manager

*"Sistercare Crisis Line, this is Christina, how may I help you?"*

When a battered woman calls Sistercare's 24 hour-a-day Crisis Line, it is the first step, the first big leap, to a new, violence-free life.

When Christina, shelter manager of one of Sistercare's emergency shelters, answers the crisis line, she gives a lending ear and hope to the battered woman on the other end of the line.

This particular caller is Lisa, a 31-year-old mother with three children. She is abused by her husband for eight years when she makes the decision to call Sistercare's crisis line. She is hurt, scared, and worried about the future both she and her children hold.

Christina assesses Lisa's situation to assure she is not in imminent danger. Lisa explains her violent relationship and commits to moving herself and her three children into Sistercare's shelter. Lisa fears her husband's retaliation, so Christina assures her that her identity remains anonymous and the shelter is in an unidentified location. Lisa is then referred to her local law enforcement department so an officer can confidentially and safely escort her and her children into the shelter. For the first time in years, Lisa feels protected.



Lisa quickly packs a few essential belongings and takes a last look at her house for the past eight years. A house that held few happy memories; a house where her children often hid under their covers to muffle the sounds of their screaming mother; a house where she was terrified to hear her husband's car pull into the driveway followed by the angry slam of the front door. Lisa is ready to make a change, and she knows Sistercare will support her in taking these first few critical steps.

As the police vehicle pulls up to the shelter, Lisa is surprised that it is actually a beautiful house with a big yard, front porch, and playground; an inviting and warm place to call home for the new few months. She and her children are immediately greeted by one of Sistercare's advocates and shown around the house.

Lisa is amazed to see that she will have a large room for herself and her children along with easy access to a full bathroom, laundry room, living room, dining room, resource room, and fully stocked kitchen, all thanks to the generosity of local donors.

After Lisa and her children get settled, she completes the paperwork on her domestic violence history. The children are placed with one of Sistercare's children's counselors and transitioned into the nearby school system.

# turning point

Sistercare publishes *Turning Point* three times a year and is a non-profit organization chartered under South Carolina laws to provide services to battered women and their children.

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803-765-9428 24-hour service line  
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www.sistercare.com

## SOLD OUT CROWD SUMS UP SEVENTH ANNUAL SONGBIRD CAFÉ

by Kathleen Shaw

A sold out crowd was delighted by the musical talent of a fine mix of singers/songwriters at Sistercare's Seventh Annual Songbird Café to benefit battered women and their children.

Mark Bryan of Hootie & the Blowfish, Ken Block and Andrew Copeland of Sister Hazel and Doug Jones of Cravin' Melon provided an entertaining and lively concert with their spirited blend of music.

Special thanks to Jimmy Stevenson who donated the venue at Leaside as well as the delicious hors d'oeuvres prepared by Southern Way Catering. And to Ricky Wright, owner of Hampton Hill Athletic Club, who arranged the excellent musical talent.

Now in its seventh year, the Songbird Café is modeled after Nashville's Bluebird Café where many musicians find their start in the music industry. The Songbird Café has become Sistercare's annual branded fundraiser.

Sistercare would like to thank all attendees and supporters. Special thanks also to the following sponsors whose financial support is critical to the event's success.

### The Dove—\$25,000

Lexington Medical Center

### The Eagle—\$15,000

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina

### The Heron—\$10,000

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*Continued from front cover*

by Leah McKee

After a couple of weeks, Lisa and her children have made progress toward the goals she set. Lisa not only participates in individual counseling, but she has a rigorous schedule of support groups throughout the week. These sessions include: Parenting, Financial Literacy, Job Coaching, Empowerment, and Domestic Violence Education. Lisa's favorite session is Transitional Group Counseling. In this session she looks deeply at the person she was when she was abused, and she makes goals for who she wants to be now and in the future. Her counselor often compares the transition of a life of domestic violence to a violence-free life, to that of a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

Lisa can also see a dramatic change in her children. When they first arrived at the shelter, her children showed signs of fear, depression, and sometimes aggression. However, with the help of Sistercare's children's counselor providing individual and group counseling partnered with therapeutic play, Lisa sees her children becoming happier and well adjusted.

Thirty-two days after coming to the shelter, Lisa has her first job interview. With the help of her Sistercare advocate, she has perfected her resume and practiced her job interviewing skills. As her three children see her off, she has never felt more proud. Lisa wasn't allowed to have a full-time job or control of finances in her marriage. While anxious about living independently, she has never been more confident in her abilities and achievements.

Lisa can see that her time at Sistercare's shelter is planting the seed for the rest of her life. When she wakes up each morning, Lisa feels hope. Although the emergency shelter is a temporary residence, she knows that Sistercare will be there to support her for as long as she needs through the post-shelter follow up program, even when she and her children get a place of their own. She knows she can receive the kind of support, whether it is emotional, job-related, or legal, to help her become self-sufficient and live free of domestic violence.

After Lisa packs her belongings, she takes a last look at her home for the past three months. A home that changed her life; a home where people cared, where they would listen to her, help, and encourage her; a home where her children learned to smile again. Lisa knew there was still a long road ahead of her, but for the first time in eight years, she wasn't scared of the journey.

## **Tasty Tacos Benefit Sistercare**

by Leah McKee

Sistercare received a gracious \$24,000 check from Fred Kotoske, a Midlands Taco Bell Franchisee, this past November. He showed his support through the "Tacos for Sistercare" program that donated ten cents to Sistercare for every taco sold in his restaurants. This event has had wonderful community response over the last 17 years. In fact, "Tacos for Sistercare" has cumulatively raised more than \$244,000 over the years, making it one of Sistercare's largest annual fundraising events.

Both Fred Kotoske and Nancy Barton, Executive Director of Sistercare, believe a strong community response is necessary to fully address the serious and pervasive problems of family violence. "I primarily employ women at my Taco Bell franchises and have come to understand the affect domestic violence has on family life and the business community," said Mr. Kotoske. "I continue to be committed to our fundraising efforts for Sistercare. They help families in crisis find safety and the services they need to make changes in their lives."

"Tacos for Sistercare" funds have made a tremendous impact in the lives of battered women and their children served by Sistercare over the past 17 years. It is certain that raising money to help families in need has never tasted so good.



## **Sistercare Welcomes Class of 2010 New Board Members**



by Leah McKee

**Scott Berry** has been involved with the insurance industry for 21 years and is currently a partner with Insurance Office of America. Scott is active in community service, church ministries, and the Thornwell Home for Children. Scott is an enthusiastic, active volunteer who is quite capable of making a difference in the lives of domestic violence victims by serving on the Sistercare board.

**Andrea McCoy** is the Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor at Bible Way Church of Atlas Road, the Business Manager for Sunrise Communications, and she participates in numerous community activities. Working with a faith-based organization has given her experience with battered women, and she understands the impact domestic violence has on their lives. Andrea is honored to serve on the board of Sistercare.

**Geraldine Trapp** has been a volunteer with Sistercare for several years during which she coordinated projects at her place of work to collect needed items and gifts for women residing in our emergency shelters. In addition, she is a claims agent with Allstate, an organization whose foundation has donated \$50,000 in grant funds over the past year. Geraldine is thrilled to be a Sistercare board member and is eager to be of assistance to battered women and their children.

# Yes!

I will help prevent domestic violence.

Pledge Amount : \_\_\_\_\_

(Monthly)  (Yearly)

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*Sistercare is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) partner agency of the United Way.*

## Sistercare Launches the "Jim and Claudia Maloney Shelter Fund"

by Leah McKee

After receiving a generous donation from a close family friend of Jim and Claudia Maloney, Sistercare established the "Jim and Claudia Maloney Shelter Fund." James Matthew Maloney, a long-time friend and supporter of Sistercare, passed away October 16 in Columbia, S.C. The fund was started by Lynn Cobb of Virginia to memorialize Jim and to honor his wife, Claudia. Donations to the fund will support Sistercare's three emergency shelters that serve battered women and their children in Richland, Lexington, Kershaw, Newberry, and Fairfield counties.

Claudia Maloney is a long-time Sistercare volunteer and supporter who has served for 16 years as the primary coordinator for the "Women After Five" Benefit for Sistercare.

To support the "Jim and Claudia Maloney Shelter Fund," please send donations to Sistercare at P.O. Box 1029, Columbia, SC 29202.

### Patron—\$500 or under (continued from Page 2)

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