

## **Shelter Available for Family Emergencies, Inc. (SAFE) History of the Organization**

In 1985, a task force was established to assess the needs of victims of domestic violence. They found that in Transylvania County there was abuse, neglect, family violence, sexual assault, rape and incest, and that there was no structured program to deal with this violence. On August 25, 1985, SAFE was officially incorporated; a grant was written, and Jean Young was hired as a part-time Director.

SAFE was to give a new outlook on life and transitional living to families suffering the emotional, mental, and physical abuse created by domestic violence. It would also educate not only victims but the community at large.

The first SAFE office was opened at the United Methodist Church with a part-time staff. In 1986, Terri Fosmire became the full-time Executive Director. With a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission, a part-time position was created, and a Community Outreach Coordinator was hired. SAFE sponsored the first Women's Festival, began court accompaniment, recruited and trained volunteers to staff a 24-hour hotline, and spoke to nearly every agency and organization in the county. A contract was made that enabled battered women and their children to be sheltered in the local home on an "as needed" basis. A system of "SAFE HOMES" was established to meet the ever-increasing needs for shelter.

In 1987 was a year of increased contact with battered women and their children. Support groups were offered, and the community education program was in full swing. A committee was formed to investigate the possibility of renting or purchasing a permanent shelter facility. Many locations were toured, and the committee continued meeting through 1988.

In the spring of 1988, Dianne Hall was hired as the Executive Director. By early summer, a contract was signed to lease a shelter. In October of that year, we leased the facility and moved the offices out of the church and into the new facility. In order to provide 24-hour services to women and children, volunteers were trained on intake procedures and shelter policies.

Over the next few years, there were various trainings for the medical profession, the judicial system, and the ministerial association. Contact with other agencies, particularly DSS, Trend, and the Children's Center have proved beneficial to all.

In March of 1992, through grants from Z. Smith Reynolds and the Janirve Foundation, a new shelter, which could house eight persons, was purchased.

Roberta Hallinen became Executive Director in June 1993. During her tenure, SAFE became widely recognized in the community and achieved a positive, cooperative working relationship with both branches of law enforcement.

In July 1998, SAFE's Attic was opened with Board approval. Staffed by a manager and volunteers, this successful resale shop helps to generate funding for our programs and clients.

August of 1999 saw the transfer of the sexual assault/rape crises program from The Healing Place (which closed its Transylvania Co. office) to SAFE. A community educator/counselor was hired. Awareness programs were initiated at Brevard College and in the school system, moving toward community-wide education.

Recognizing the need to increase awareness of domestic violence and our services within the local African-American community, in February 2000, a community outreach liaison person was hired to open communication and establish trust among this underserved population. In the summer of 2001, largely due to this outreach, a Satellite Office was established within the Balsam Crest Apartments area.

Programs were further expanded in April 2000 by hiring the Domestic Violence Intervention Services facilitator to work closely with the judicial system and ensure the batterers' compliance with this important program.

In January 2002 Salley Stepp became Executive Director. Recognizing the pressing need for our services and to keep up with the rising demand, Ms. Stepp initiated and implemented a major re-organization initiative. By capitalizing on the skills and expertise of the staff, Ms. Stepp redefined positions, procedures and policies to enable the organization to function optimally in order to better meet the needs of all victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

SAFE's current domestic violence shelter was purchased in October of 2006. It housed at least 16 clients, which is double the capacity of SAFE's former facility. It was named Stacy's House in honor of former Executive Director Roberta Hallinen's daughter. Stacy Ann Carter, who died at the hands of her abuser at age 24.

New construction to Stacy's House took place in early 2014, adding 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. The new addition allows select clients to remain at Stacey's House to work on building the skills needed to remain free of domestic and sexual violence in the future.

SAFE remains committed to our mission of ending domestic violence and sexual assault and empowering the victims.

## WHY VOLUNTEER?

Did you know that in 1972 Americans had 15 hours of leisure time a week and today each person has less than five and that additionally 2/3 of today's volunteers work outside the home. So, why would someone volunteers? Each person seeking volunteers knows that their cause is important...but that perspective volunteer may not. The goal is to get that perspective volunteer to first see the need and then recognize that they are the people to fill that need and most importantly advise them on the benefits.

### **People volunteer for different reasons:**

- The number one reason is friendship
- To feel a connectedness to someone or something else
- To widen their circle of acquaintances
- To involve their families and instill values
- To be among kindred spirits and associated with something
- To fulfill the need to be worthwhile
- To be needed and wanted
- For humanitarian reasons

### **Volunteering gives a person:**

- A sense of uniqueness
- A sense of personal power...that they make a difference
- An opportunity to learn new skills
- The chance to grow personally and enhance their self-esteem
- An opportunity to network
- An arena to learn leadership skills
- An opportunity for recognition
- A chance to polish skills for reentry into the job market
- A sense of posterity

### **Volunteering keeps people:**

- Young
- Lowers their blood pressure
- Releases endorphins
- Makes a person happier
- Provides an invaluable service to their neighbors, their communities and indeed the world
- According to American Health, "Researchers found that doing regular volunteer work, more than any other activity, dramatically increased life expectancy and vitality."

### **And last year the 93 million adults:**

Who volunteered an average of four hours a week happily agree!

## Confidentially

Those who come to us for help are placing a great deal of trust in us. They will often be pouring out their stories, all their problems, and personal details-all of which we must treat with **absolute** confidentiality! If, at any time, we are tempted to disclose any confidential information to another, stop and put yourself in the place of that person who has come to us for help. How would you feel if someone you had turned to, in your desperation, said something about your "case" to another, because "it was too interesting?" Sadly, this kind of reach sometimes occurs-by professionals as well as volunteers!

Let us remember, too, that the integrity of SAFE in the eyes of our community must be earned. One of the ways it will be is by our discretion. If you are asked by a client/victim, you may need to spell out our policy of strict confidentiality.

All records and reports on clients are to remain in the office of SAFE. The file in which they are kept will be locked when there is no one in the office. Each volunteer, on completing a record report, should turn it into the Case Manager. Please do not take any of this information home.

When it is necessary to refer a client to another agency, be sure to ask the client/victim to sign a release form; giving you permission to share any information that the agency needs to have to address the needs of the client.

When a breach of confidentiality is brought to the attention of SAFE's director, the issue becomes a matter for review by the Board of Directors. Disciplinary action may follow such a review.

Before you begin working with SAFE, you will be asked to sign a statement of confidentiality.

## Why Volunteer?

Individuals volunteer for a variety of reasons. All of which, stem around the desire to help others. Although, finding the time to volunteer can be a hectic challenge. The benefits of volunteering are enormous for not only yourself, but your family as well as your community.

### **Benefits of Volunteering:**

#### **Volunteering connects you to others**

Volunteering is a perfect opportunity for you to connect with others in your community and a wonderful way to make new friends.

#### **Volunteering increases your social and communication skills**

Volunteering is an excellent way to learn additional social and communication skills without the stress of feeling judged for that interaction, as one often feels in the traditional work field.

#### **Volunteering is good for your mind and body**

According to American Health, "Researchers found that doing regular volunteer work, more than any other activity, dramatically increased life expectancy and vitality."

- Volunteering increases self-confidence/self-esteem
- Volunteering combats depression
- Volunteering helps you stay physically healthy

#### **Volunteering can advance your career**

- Volunteering can provide career experience
- Volunteering can teach you valuable job skills
- Volunteering gives you an opportunity for networking, connecting you with people/organizations within your community.
- Volunteering provides an arena for learning leadership skills and a sense of posterity.

Volunteering provides an individual with an opportunity to give back to their community while obtaining personal benefits for themselves (as noted above). Not-for profit agencies provide fundamental services to regions which provide profound benefits in the community often unable to be provided by government or private agencies. However, to achieve the goal, they rely heavily on volunteers. SAFE, in particular, needs volunteer assistance in order to meet the needs of our community in an effort to assist and educate our community, provide safe alternatives to those faced with domestic violence, and provide essential resources to our community. By becoming part of our volunteer team, you become part of empowering your community.

(We value our volunteers. In an effort to show our appreciation, we provide an annual volunteer appreciation luncheon and also provide a 20% discount in both our store locations)

## **Sexual Assault/Hospital Volunteer Job Description**

- **Must be able to attend and complete training**
- **Must be able to be on call during evenings and weekends**
- **Must be comfortable with going to Transylvania Regional Hospital to provide information and support to victims**
- **Must be comfortable with talking to law enforcement, usually a detective, and family without giving any information because it is the victim's story to tell**
- **Explain rape kit to victim and keep clothes in your car or home to take with you to the hospital to have for victim if rape kit is done.**
- **Be able to stay at the hospital until rape victim leaves or until staff from SAFE arrives**
- **Must be able to be honest with victims about what her options are within the hospital and with law enforcement**
- **Inform victim of anonymous reporting**
- **Explain your role as a volunteer to victims, law enforcement and hospital. You are there as an advocate between victim, law enforcement and hospital.**
- **Don't give any information about victim to family or law enforcement unless victim consents verbally or in writing.**

## **Community outreach/education Job Description**

**Domestic abuse and sexual assault can be difficult to talk about but raising awareness is critical to changing existent attitudes and preventing domestic violence and sexual assault.**

**SAFE helps survivors of domestic and sexual violence break the cycle of abuse and begin to lead healthy, productive, independent lives. Our approach is centered on helping clients develop personal skills and a support network that will see them through the period of transition. We focus on helping people rebuild their lives—emotionally, physically, and financially—so that they have the means to avoid returning to the abusive relationship.**

**SAFE's Community Outreach and Education Program provides:**

- Presentations to schools, social service agencies, churches, businesses and professional groups that help increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and sexual assault.**
- Prevention education to middle and high school students that helps youth recognize abuse and develop healthy relationships.**
- Educational workshops that cover topics such as safety planning, domestic violence assessment, and effects of abuse on children and community.**

**Our volunteers would assist with the above types of community outreach programs. In addition, we recruit volunteers to assist at booths in the community at various functions to promote awareness to the support programs offered at SAFE as well as to raise awareness and education.**

## **A WORK OF HEART**

Violence in the home strikes at the heart of our community – our families. However, with intervention, the cycle of abuse can be broken. Volunteers truly make a difference in the lives of victims of domestic and sexual abuse and their children.

The opportunity to make a difference in someone's life is at the heart of the volunteer experience. At SAFE, we recognize that volunteers are a valuable resource and our best ambassadors. Volunteers make the choice to help. Simply, because they care, volunteers have a far-reaching positive impact on our clients and the community. We simply could not provide the life-changing services to victims of domestic or sexual abuse and their families without the support and commitment of our volunteers.

You can make a difference in our community and in the lives of others by sharing your time and talents. As a volunteer, your help supports the goals of the agency, which are to provide a 24-hour hotline, safe shelter, counseling, case management, legal advocacy, childcare, and prevention education to domestic and sexual violence victims and their children. Your volunteer hours will help victims escape the cycle of violence and prevent future family violence. One kind heart will help the hearts of others!

### **Fundraisers and Events:**

- Designer House
- Lama Roma Golf Tournament
- Assistance with Mailings
- Assistance with Appeals
- Assistance with locating additional donors

## **CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE**

- **Be available when women have group from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Monday evenings.**
- **Background check is required**
- **Assist children with homework**
- **If needed watch children in conference room at the courthouse while mom is in court proceedings**
- **Be a mentor**
- **Training provided**





# TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

## FOUR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CALLS

1. **CRISIS CALLS:** Calls when people are in immediate danger of need of emergency services.
2. **VENTILATION CALLS:** Calls during which people just want to talk about their problems. These calls can be frustrating for an advocate, but remember, helping the client to clarify her feelings may be just the first step in a long, long process of changing her life around. She has a right to move at her own pace.
3. **VENTILATION/INFORMATION CALLS:** Calls from people wanting information that usually come into the office. The individual may want to know what services are available at SAFE, volunteer information, etc. You may refer to our brochures to give out the information over the phone or office to mail the requested information to the caller. You may also have a message for the Director or other staff.

## HOTLINE PROCEDURES

- Remember to keep a cool head and stay calm. Determine the seriousness or immediacy of the call. What is the crucial need of the caller right now? Do not get overwhelmed with the problem.

If the call is not an emergency or need for shelter, your contact will probably be limited to the phone.

1. Be a good listener- try to determine what she needs at this time.
2. Ask specific questions gently and tactfully, remembering that the caller may be very scared.
3. Assure her that everything she says is confidential between you and SAFE. We need to know her situation in order to help her. What is her support system? What options does she know about? How has she dealt with the situation before?
4. Get a full name and address, if possible. Ask if she has children. You may encourage the client to call the SAFE office Monday (or the next working day) morning. Fill out the call sheet and notify the office the next working day about the call. Bring in your call sheet as soon as possible. The staff will follow up.

If the call is an emergency or need for shelter, the following questions should be asked:

1. Does she need **medical attention**? If she needs an ambulance, **tell her to call 911** and that you will meet her at the Emergency Room.
2. Has she called law enforcement? How long ago? Have they arrived? Does she have transportation? If she is at home and she does want to leave, the officers can take/follow her to a family member's home or to the Sheriff's Office or Police Station,

where you will meet her. **DO NOT GO TO HER HOME.** If she chooses to leave, urge her to leave NOW with any children to avoid further violence. If she can safely get her keys, wallet, identification, money clothes for herself and the children, she should take them with her. She can go back later with law enforcement to get the rest of her personal items.

3. Ask her if she has a safe place to stay (with relatives or friends) or does she need to come into the shelter?
  4. If she does not need to be sheltered but wants to **take out criminal charges** for Assault on a Female, Communicating Threats, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Criminal Trespass, etc., **tell her to call the Magistrate's office to let them know she is coming.** (Magistrate is in the Sheriff's office.) If she has no transportation, have her call law enforcement to pick her up. Once she has made this contact, tell her you will **meet her at the Sheriff's Dept.** for moral support. If she has been drinking or is hysterical or incoherent, tell her to wait until the next day or until she is more rational.
  5. If she wants to take out a 50B restraining order, advise her to call the SAFE office the next working day for assistance in completing the paperwork.
- After immediate safety needs are met, use good judgement on when to discuss next steps and other alternatives. Someone in crisis will not retain much factual information about legal options, community resources, etc.
  - Your role is to help her do things for herself- not do them for her. **EMPOWERMENT!** Identify community resources for her- give her the names and phone numbers if possible. When in doubt- don't fake it. Tell her you'll try to find the information or have a staff member contact her. Be specific about your role. Explain what you can and cannot do to help and the amount of time you have available. Do not extend yourself. At the conclusion of the contact, encourage her to contact the SAFE office for additional support.

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

**SAFE will lead our community in eliminating domestic violence and sexual violence through prevention, advocacy, education and healing.**

## IN CONCLUSION

SAFE is dedicated to leading our community in advocating for and standing with those faced with domestic and sexual violence by providing resources, support, education and training to victims as well as the community, in an effort to prevent domestic and sexual violence, as well as, provide healing to the survivors. “Survivors work to keep themselves and their children safe from abuse every single day. We need to let survivors know that they are believed, that they are not alone, and that they do not have to tolerate violence.” Thank you for taking the step to assist us in our journey. Your generosity will go a long way in making a difference in our community, as well as, the lives of survivors.

If you, at any time, have any questions, concerns or comments, please contact Randi, SAFE Volunteer Coordinator, at (828) 885-7233, or by email at [randi@safetransylvania.org](mailto:randi@safetransylvania.org).

One additional request, please fill out the evaluation form in the back of this booklet. We will use this information to evaluate and make possible changes in the future as needed. Thank you.