

2021 ANNUAL REPORT





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Letter From the Executive Director

Hi Friends,

Reflection is not for the faint of heart, but it is good for the soul. As I reflect on the past year, I am certain of this: I could not have predicted the events, needs, challenges, changes or triumphs that 2021 brought to the Merryman House. Yet, here we are... refined and resilient.

Toward the end of 2020, I met with our Leadership Team to share my vision for the 2021 calendar year. After a season of exponential growth (new campus, additional staff and programs, and a successful Capital Campaign), I sensed we needed to drill down into the day-to-day processes and do the work of a refinery. By definition, a refinery “converts raw materials into products of value.” I wanted us to accentuate our recent breadth (growth) with more depth (expertise). Likewise, I sensed our team needed a time to “bounce-back” after 2020 - a focus on resiliency. So, I proclaimed, “In 2021, I want us to be Refined and Resilient!”

Soon, that vision took shape, and we set sail to review and/or revise every policy and process, every internal form that we use, every required report we produce, and every touchpoint we have. We examined practices and programs. If I’m honest, it was overwhelming! You know, it’s like when you go to paint one room, and then all the other rooms suddenly need an upgrade? That was us for the two quarters of 2021. Our team showed up, asked hard questions, and refined our processes and our “product” of how we serve, and how we measure successful outcomes of those we serve. You, our supporters, deserve that.

Before we knew it, we were finding our rhythm, working our way out of ruts formed by outdated thinking, and refining how we execute this sacred mission of Saving, Building and

Changing the lives of those affected by domestic violence.

Then, the fire came. Not an actual fire. The heat. You know, the heat caused by unforeseen circumstances and stress? That heat. For us, it came in multiple forms. Life turned up the heat as we continued to navigate COVID-19 needs and demands. Life turned up the heat via a 35% funding cut from our largest federal grant, which translated to a loss of nearly \$700,000. Life turned up the heat when we had to respond in-kind with a reduction in force, program cuts, and waitlists for services.

On December 10, 2021, life heated up via catastrophic tornadoes that ripped through our region, and while our structures were spared (and we are so grateful), many of our clients and staff faced very uncertain realities. Survivors needed us even more, and the staff charged to provide care to them needed to be cared for as well. Yes, life turned up the heat.

Quietly, in my reflection, I remembered that refinement comes in the fire. Just ask any jeweler that works with gold. Fire removes impurities, and allows the metal to be stretched and resized. In the end, refinement produces precious, valuable results, but not apart from the heat. As I reflect on this, I am drawn to the realization that refinement doesn’t take heat only. It takes other elements, too. In the case of gold, it takes a jeweler with knowledge, and skills. It takes patience, and an ability to “see” the finished product even though the current product has been reduced to mere

liquid. It takes vision. It takes patience. It takes persistence, and it takes endurance to complete the process. It takes resiliency, both in the product and in the people invested in it.

As I look back on 2021, I am in awe of the Refiner’s fire. I am grateful for the heat. I am hopeful for the future, and relishing in the resiliency I see in our organization, in our leadership, in our staff and in our clients. Each has faced life’s heat. And, in the hands of a strong Board of Directors, steadfast team of servant-hearted staff, and a resilient and generous community of support, I can confidently report to you that 2021 produced a refined and resilient Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center!

We know our mission, we are equipped to provide life-saving, life-building, and life-changing services to survivors of domestic violence, and we trust that you, our fortress of partners and friends, will continue to invest into the life of this organization, and those we serve.

Simply put, our raw materials are of great value. You are continually needed as we work to help others face life’s heat, and find protective, restorative and transformative care.

Refined and Resilient,
Dr. Mary E. Foley
Executive Director

Puckett's Fine Jewelry staff explaining the refinement process to our Leadership Team.



Board of Directors Executive Committee



Dr. Rheanel Tolar
Board Chair

Premier Primary Care
Doctor, Internal Medicine
rheaneltolar@hotmail.com
270.554.4820



Abbey Shelton
Board Vice Chair

Rose Garden Florist
Owner
abbjones@gmail.com
270.442.0020



Elizabeth Neelley
Board Secretary

WPSD Local 6
Local Sales Manager
eneelley@wpsdlocal6.com
270.415.1908



Sherry Newcomb
Board Treasurer

L.A. Miller, CPA, PSC
Associate I Senior Staff Accountant
sherry@lamillercpa.com
270.575.3444



Carl Medlin, Jr.
Board Member at Large

Medlin Construction
Owner
medlinconst@comcast.net
270.538.0555



Judd Myers
Board Immediate Past Chair

KeeFORCE
Vice President of Support Operations
jmyers@keeforce.com
270.366.0658

Board Members



Dr. Ronald Kelley, MD
Kelley Psychiatric Clinic
Psychiatrist
kpc2@comcast.net



Catherine Fuller
Kentucky Legal Aid
Managing Attorney
cfuller@klaid.org



Christopher Henderson
Progressive Insurance
Managed Repair Rep
chris_henderson@progressive.com



Stacy Thomas
McCracken County Schools
Community Outreach & Diversity Coordinator
stacy.thomas@mccracken.kyschools.us



Justin Lewis
Compass Counseling
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
justinplewis@gmail.com



Gerald Washington
Retired
gerald.washington5@gmail.com

Thank you to our dedicated Board of Directors!

In Honor of Our Founder

On July 18, 2021, we sadly announced the passing of our Founder, J. Merryman Kemp. Anyone who knew Merryman understood that she was a force for good. In her words, what kind of force, and with what intensity, depended on the situation facing her. She described herself as “*an iron fist in a velvet glove,*” but always a force for change and for good.

Merryman Kemp founded Woman Aware Inc., (now known as the Merryman House) in 1978 in response to the growing needs of battered women. “They simply had nowhere to go,” she shared with us. So, she created a place for them to go by opening her own home. Her sons shared that it was not uncommon for them to return home after school, only to have “a strange woman or families in our rooms.” She saw the need and met the need - a habit she continued and encouraged in others for the rest of her life.



As we remember and honor the life of Merryman, three words come to mind: *Love, Peace, and Courage*. It is these words that she used as the valediction in all correspondence. When asked about this, Merryman replied, “Well, we always need more love, and we always wish for peace. But over the years, I’ve found that we need more courage.” Merryman went on to share that she often became discouraged by the lack of courage. She described that many needs or problems seem overwhelming, so people don’t act. “They need more courage,” she said. “When you see something... a need... you have to DO SOMETHING. Give it legs. That takes courage.”

With more than 1,000 victims of domestic violence seeking services in the Purchase Region alone, looking at the size of the problem alone is overwhelming. Yet, Merryman lived a life that embodied facing a problem with the right amount of force, and the right amount of courage. In light of this, we continue her legacy of love, peace and courage, and we are grateful for the honor of continuing her life’s work of serving others, recognizing that problems are opportunities for change, and believing that we can each leave the world better than we found it.



So, we ask you to live purposefully in 2022.
We ask you to see, with fresh eyes, the needs of survivors, and the problem of domestic violence in our community. Give legs to your hopes for a brighter tomorrow and peace in Kentucky homes.

Together, let's find courage, and do not tire in doing good.

Merryman, thank you for the trails you blazed, the sacrifices you made, and the legacy you have left for us. We honor your beautiful life.

Bridging the Gaps Murray Transitional Housing

If a survivor is fleeing domestic violence and needs a place to stay, they are offered a bed in our 24/7/365 emergency shelter. From there, advocates work with survivors to find safe, sustainable housing as soon as possible. Then, survivors tackle the other barriers that may be keeping them from healing or from reaching their goals, like a lack of transportation, or a need for mental health therapy. And at the same time, as survivors move out of shelter, they make room for the next caller in crisis who needs that space.

In a perfect world, one without domestic violence, that process happens exactly as it is described above, and there are more than enough safe, sustainable housing units that are accessible to the survivors we serve. But, we live in an imperfect world, where trauma and domestic violence tactics often prevent survivors from learning the knowledge and skills it can take to sustain one's own apartment or home. Or, the cost of living is too high to go from having nothing or very little to a deposit plus one month's rent, plus groceries, plus utilities and other bills.

Sometimes, an in-between step is needed. This is called transitional housing. Transitional housing units offer tenants stepping stone-like assistance as they look for permanent housing or wait for their permanent housing to become available. Until 2021, Merryman House did not have any transitional units to offer survivors.

But then, in July 2021, Merryman House entered a lease of a beautiful, nine-room facility in Murray of what was once an assisted living home. Since July, two single survivors and six survivor families have landed at this safe haven on their way toward their own future homes. And while tenants have six months to stay there, we have already proudly watched four of those survivors and their families move on to homes of their own. We are so thankful to our partners at the facility, and to the Murray community for already stepping in to get engaged and to help their neighbors get on their feet as quickly as possible!

We can't wait to see how just a safe, sustainable space of one's own changes even more lives!



Bridging the Gaps Hotline Chat

As we have found, the process of refinement often does not mean less work, or only eliminating tasks and workload. It means looking into why we are doing what we are doing, and really evaluating if it still works, if it is still the best practice. Then, we must commit to the process of fixing what we find.

In our workplace, "safety" is often our "why." As technology and domestic violence tactics change over time, there is a continual need to evaluate our methods for keeping survivors safe.

What are the safest practices for a survivor when they're looking to get out of the abusive home or relationship? Do we have policies or practices in place that are creating safety concerns instead of removing them? Recently, we asked each other, "How would a survivor safely call us to work on their escape plan if the abuser is in the home?" And the answer was clear - it is not safe. We would not recommend it. So, what are survivors to do?

So, we provided an alternative to our traditional crisis call. We launched our Hotline Chat option in July 2021, and in the six months that followed, 115 conversations were started with our crisis hotline staff. One hundred fifteen contacts may have not been made if someone hadn't asked, "Is that safe?" once again.

Survivors can access the Hotline Chat through our website at www.merrymanhouse.org/hotline-chat, which is accessible on any device that has internet access. And like our regular crisis line, it is staffed 24/7/365.

Melissa's Story

Meet Melissa, one of the strongest people we know. Melissa has faced unimaginable abuse, addiction and trauma, and she still shows up, smiles and greets you by name when you walk into the room. She embodies the phrase “quiet strength.” We are so thankful for her resilience, courage to continue on and for her openness. In her words, she is an “open book.”

Melissa's exposure to abuse started when she was a child. “When I was growing up, my stepdad beat on my mom all the time and treated her the same way [my abuser] was treating me.” So, she says she didn't realize her adult relationships were abusive at first. She thought that behavior was normal, a thought that was reinforced when she was in the middle of her first stay at a domestic violence shelter in Bowling Green: “The other women had been through some really, really messed up stuff. I was like, I guess what I was going through was just normal, compared to what they had been through.”

Melissa's first abusive relationship began when she was 18. She had just broken up with her boyfriend, who we will call John, after finding out he was cheating. Two weeks later, she found out she was pregnant, which reconnected the couple. After the birth of their son, John became abusive.

“He did some really gruesome things to me, and I ended up pregnant with my second child. So by the time my first child was one, I was already pregnant again. And had my daughter. She had major problems, so I had to take her to the children's hospital in St. Louis. He started cheating on me whenever I was there. Whenever I would come back, he would basically degrade me and tell me I wasn't anything, and have his way with me, raping me whenever he wanted to and felt that it suited his needs, and I ended up with my third child, my second son.

My daughter then had more problems and I had to take her back to St. Louis, where I never left her side. So, John had to stay with my boys. When I got back, I realized he had whooped my oldest son with a belt for wetting the bed. And he had marks on him. After seeing that, I called it quits. I was done.”

Melissa became homeless and began using drugs. She describes multiple more violent encounters with John, who somehow found her in locations she never told



“After seeing that,
I called it quits.
I was done.”

him about, or he sent friends and family to “check in” on her. Melissa also describes her struggle to get clean, and other abusive, coercive relationships she was in as she tried to get better. For extended periods of time, Melissa sent her children to live with their godmother as she worked on herself or went to sober living facilities so they would be safe and with someone she trusted.

Then, she says she hit her rock bottom. She had her own place, her kids were with her, and John found her again. He beat her in the doorway of her apartment in full view of their children. Melissa's neighbors called the police and child services, who took the kids into foster care. Melissa describes the aftermath of the days that followed: “I finally, like really woke up when they talked about potentially giving the kids to their dad, who had just beat me in front of them. I knew I couldn't let that happen. I had to do something.”

Soon after, Melissa's child services case worker called the Merryman House with her, and she came into emergency shelter. For the next five months, Melissa worked to overcome each barrier to getting her kids back. She got sober, gained employment, attended support groups, earned her GED, got her driver's license back and started to repair her credit and finances. Melissa says she had tried to get her GED and driver's license on and off for seven years.

Finally, she got her children back into her custody. Melissa's family was accepted into one of MHDCC's housing assistance programs, and they left shelter. Then, in October 2020, Melissa was hired as MHDCC's Nutrition



Services Assistant, where she serves as a dependable teammate and as an unofficial encouragement coach for clients who are standing exactly where she's been.

When asked how she can talk so openly about her experiences, and why she said yes to sharing her story, Melissa said, “If I can help even one person, this will be worth it. I wish I had gotten the help I got here earlier, so I want to be that person for someone else. ... This is my newfound family.”

Melissa, thank you for sharing your story in hopes of reaching someone else who may not realize that what they are experiencing is not normal - it is not OK. We are in awe of your strength, and of your love of your children.

Reader, if you have any questions about your relationship or someone else's, please call our free and confidential hotline at 800-585-2686.

Internship Program Growth

Non-profit agencies like MHDCC succeed when our communities are invested in our work and when we are fully staffed with trained, trauma-informed advocates. Luckily, we have you, dear reader, and our community is intensely invested in our mission (see pages 16-17!).

As for ensuring we are fully staffed with the right people? One of our methods is to invite volunteers in, in hopes that they fall in love with the work. More specifically, our partnerships with area colleges and universities have provided special volunteer opportunities for students through volunteer internship placements with us for years, mostly through one or two placements per semester.

The goal of our internship program is to provide the opportunity for students to gain valuable experience into the operations of a non-profit agency, and allow them to see the effects of domestic abuse on individuals and families.

The fall semester of 2021 saw our internship program grow to THREE interns serving survivors multiple times per week, from healing therapy spaces to the courtrooms of the eight counties we serve! Our intern roster was composed of a Master's level Clinical Intern, a Bachelor's level Advocacy & Empowerment Intern, and a Bachelor's level Legal Intern.

When they began, each intern had shared aspirations to help Save, Build and Change the lives of those affected by domestic violence. By the end of the semester, each intern had watched our agency operate and were integral pieces of our mission, and more survivors were served because of the interns' time here.

Our Clinical Intern said, "It's all about walking with folks on the non-linear journey from victim, to survivor, to thriver. I'm confident now that I can learn to do this work... I'm confident that I'm on the right path."

Thank you to Genevieve, Lauren and Destiny for your time with us!

And thank you to our local schools for your continued partnership and for giving us the opportunity to help shape the future's change-makers!

Pictured: Destiny Hagan - Legal Intern



Pictured: Genevieve Postlethwait - Clinical Intern



Pictured: Lauren Riley - Advocacy & Empowerment Intern



On the Go WKCTC Guarantee Community Connections Service Award

Speaking of our wonderful area colleges and universities, in December 2020, West Kentucky Community and Technical College received a \$15 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott to further efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion.

Then, in the spring of 2021, we were invited to the first of multiple surprise Zoom meetings at which WKCTC passed along \$65,000 to area organizations and nonprofits!

“The work of these organizations is in keeping with MacKenzie Scott’s vision of assisting under-represented minorities, low-income individuals, and others facing barriers to education,” WKCTC President Dr. Anton Reece said of the awards.

MHDCC was awarded \$2,000 directly, and \$2,500 in WKCTC scholarships for our clients. We were thrilled to receive this surprise funding, and to pass on the scholarship opportunities to our clients. Within the year, all five of the \$500 scholarships were passed along and used by survivors!

“We were honored to receive these funds to further this work, and to remove barriers, and to provide survivors with tools.”

“It’s important to note that the idea for the Merryman House was born in a class at the college more than 40 years ago,” MHDCC Executive Director Dr. Mary Foley said. “Our Founder, Merryman Kemp, was taking classes and saw a need, and it was actually in one of the classes offered at WKCTC that she began to form Woman Aware Inc., so we certainly have roots with the college. And, we are very much committed to the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion because violence is no respecter of persons, and yet so many of those that we serve have additional barriers. And so, we were honored to receive these funds to further this work, and to remove barriers, and to provide survivors with tools - like these scholarships - with which they can rebuild their lives.”

Thank you for your partnership WKCTC!



On the Go Giving Opportunities Program

Imagine not having a car. How would you get to work? How would you transport your kids to medical appointments? How would you get your groceries home? How would you do all of that during daylight hours, and do it safely? That is a reality so many survivors we serve face every day.

Additionally, reliable and accessible transportation is essential for independence in western Kentucky. Having one’s own vehicle is what we call a “protective factor,” meaning it may lessen the impact domestic violence has on a survivor and their family and may make their healing and rebuilding easier and safer.

In an effort to remove the transportation barrier, our G.O. Program was created. Generous community members have donated vehicles to us, and we have passed those along to survivors in need (after cleaning, safety checks and a check-up at the mechanic, of course!).

In 2021, we were able to give away *six vehicles* to survivors because of your generosity!

In 2021, we were able to give away SIX vehicles to survivors because of your generosity! These are truly life-changing gifts. Those recipients don’t have to worry anymore about how they will get to work, transport their families to appointments, get their groceries home, or how to travel safely. They can shift their focus past today.

To read how the G.O. Program changed its first recipient’s life, see page 22.

Community Highlight Reel

When you get involved with us, whether that is by sending a check, by supporting our donation drives, or through volunteerism, or by wearing purple, we get *excited*. Every expression of support builds and reinforces the support system that is crucial to our mission: Staff see that they aren't doing this work alone, and survivors see a need met or see community cheerleaders encouraging them through their journeys. Each engagement contributes to the resilience of every person at our program.

So, whether it was showing up at events, volunteering time or donations, selecting us in your AmazonSmile or Kroger Community Rewards accounts, or liking our social media posts – *Thank you.*

DVAM

Domestic Violence Awareness Month brought community partners together to bring awareness to an issue we strive to end every day.

A special DVAM shout out to Paducah Beer Werks who hosted a hugely successful donation drive for us!

Project United

Each year, United Way of Paducah-McCracken County hosts Project United, a day for community members to give back to United Way Partner Agencies across the county. In just one day, we had 34 volunteers assist with projects across our Paducah campus, including painting fences, landscaping, vehicle detailing and building a lean-to!

Thank you Harrah's and Reidland Middle School, and to United Way for organizing!



Volunteerism

Volunteers are vital to our mission's success and the call for volunteers in 2021 was, and still is, needed more than ever. From assisting in our shelter, working reception, tending the garden, working events with us, and any other task that popped up, our volunteers showed up.

287 volunteers **2700+** hours

Shop & Share

In partnership with Kroger and the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Kroger shoppers SHOPPED and SHARED items to stock our kitchen and pantries for survivors. Close to \$5,000 in groceries and monetary donations were brought in from this event to relieve our budget!

Groceries for Good

In November, the 29th Annual Paducah Sun Groceries for Good campaign took place. The donation drive provides groceries to those in need, including our food supply for survivors.

Thanks to The Paducah Sun for organizing and to the Paducah Kroger locations, Food Giant in Reidland and Forthman Foods in Kevil for making this possible.



Help Needed at the Merryman House Facebook Group

Did you know we have a Facebook group (**Help Needed at the Merryman House**) where you can access up-to-date volunteer and client needs? At the end of 2021, the group had 315 members!



Photos: Shop & Share



7th Annual Paducky Derby



Rubber duck racing is a silly way to start a conversation about the difficult topic of domestic violence. And yet, our community has ramped up its support for survivors through this silly race year-over-year. 2021 saw our 7th Annual PaDucky Derby take place on October 23, once again at Bob Noble Park's Montgomery Lake in Paducah.

As soon as sponsorship opportunities opened up in late spring, we knew this year would be special. We quickly secured our Top Duck Sponsor in Paducah Elks Lodge #217, a longtime partner, and more than 60 other businesses and organizations followed suit and jumped on board to support the race!

When adoptions kicked off in early September, more than 2,000 of our 10,000 ducks were adopted in the first week. So, adoptions continued on through the month at record pace, in large part due to the promotion of our in-kind media sponsors: WPSD Local 6, Bristol Broadcasting, VUE Magazine and the American Quilter's Society.

Then, in late September, we found out about the \$700,000 cut from our largest funder (you can read more about this on page 20). As we scrambled to adjust through September and early October, we sold

out of ducks a full two weeks before the race! That strong, out-of-the-gate community support allowed us to fly in 3,000 additional ducks to be adopted out in an effort to fill a little bit more of that funding deficit, making our duck racer total **13,000!**

And then, we sold out AGAIN with six days to go until Race Day! And so, our sold out race was ready to go on October 23. Paducah Power built us a second Duck Drop Box to handle our extra ducks, the Paducah Fire Department provided the race current, Mark Cope BBQ and KONA Ice were on site with delicious food and treats, Steve Shwetman and Mark Ryan emceed the race, and Caleb Buford coordinated and facilitated our video and streaming operations.

The three fastest ducks won their adoptive parents these cash prizes:

- \$ 2,500 Joseph Potchanant
- \$ 1,000 Joetta Kelly
- \$ 500 Steve Millizer

Every step of the way, our community was the air beneath our wings, keeping us flying toward our goal. The 2021 race yielded more than \$75,000 for MHDCC and survivors of domestic violence! THANK YOU!

We want to extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to everyone who adopted, and to these sponsors and partners:

- Paducah Elks Lodge 217
- Cornerstone of Hope
- Heartland Capital Investments
- Humana Healthy Horizons
- Kelley Psychiatric Clinic
- Strawberry Hills Pharmacy
- Taylor Motors
- Audiology & Hearing Center
- Baptist Health Paducah
- James Sanders Nursery Inc.
- Rainbow International
- Adventure Camper Sales
- Atlas Equipment Services
- BFW Engineering & Testing
- Marcum Engineering
- Country Chevrolet Buick GMC
- Courtyard by Marriott Paducah
- David Spicer Jewelers
- Dawson Physical Therapy
- Denton Law Firm, PLLC
- HB & Co.
- IMAC Regeneration Centers
- Independence Bank
- KeeFORCE
- Kentucky Farm Bureau - Ricky Greenwell
- L.A. Miller & Associates, Inc.
- Matt Sullivan
- Mercy Health
- Murray State University Occupational Therapy Program
- Paducah Barge
- Peel & Holland
- Rose Garden Florist Inc
- Sensory Solutions - KY, LLC
- Socially Present

- Stanley Steemer
- VUE Magazine
- Williams, Williams & Lentz LLP
- Wyatt Bell and Company
- Chantillies
- Craig Johnson Construction
- Dannenmueller Blinds, Shutters, Closets
- George Bray
- Home Floor & Kitchens
- Mattress Market
- Milliner Orthodontics
- Murtco Inc.
- Paducah Power
- Paducah Rigging
- Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 184
- Puckett's Jewelry
- REB Architects, PLLC
- The Station Burger Co.
- Universal Compressor Solutions
- West Kentucky RECC
- White & White Family Dentistry
- Zebra Graphics
- Mark Cope BBQ
- KONA Ice
- WPSD Local 6
- Bristol Broadcasting
- VUE Magazine
- American Quilter's Society
- Paducah Fire Department
- AAA Stow-a-Way
- David Morse
- Brent Housman
- Mason DeJarnett
- Dr. Daniel Jones

The 2022 race will be held again in October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Follow our Facebook page for updates: www.facebook.com/PaDuckyDerby.



Financial Sustainability

Since 2017, the Merryman House has benefitted from increasing support from the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet's federal VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funding. These dollars were and are critical in helping Merryman House to expand its walls to create more safe spaces, to extend its outreach to the most marginalized and oppressed in our communities, and to engage our community in building resilience and taking ownership for the health and well-being of all.

For the fiscal year running from October 2021-September 2022, MHDCC received a 35% reduction in its VOCA award, due to significant cuts to Kentucky's federal funding. VOCA grants are the largest source of federal funds to domestic crisis programs across the Commonwealth. These reductions impacted staffing, and some planned workforce activities were and will be curtailed as we continue to adjust and respond to reductions in VOCA federal and state allocations.

The Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center has been meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence, both adults and children, for more than *40 years*. Each season of growth has often been preceded by a season of challenge and struggle leading to a season of renewal, growth and change.

We know that this funding challenge is no different. We will renew, grow and change. Yet, one thing remains constant: We remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission to "Save, Build and Change the lives of those affected by domestic violence."

*"Save, Build and
Change the lives
of those affected
by domestic violence."*

We express our gratitude, and appeal to all funders and community members for their ongoing commitment to ensure a safety net exists for those in danger. We await in earnest expectation as we trust that our supporters, both private and public, will help us bridge the gap. We will continue to offer protective, restorative and transformative services to all who are in need as the road rises to meet us.

If you would like to strengthen our safety net by giving, we welcome gifts through our website at www.merrymanhouse.org. And, we would love to speak with you about planned and annual gifts, which allow us to budget more accurately and further down the road. Please contact Dr. Mary Foley or Kayla Myers for more information (contact information on page 23).

A Survivor's Thank You

Dear Merryman House,

I just want to say Thank You for giving me the opportunity of being the recipient of the G.O. Program.

Before this opportunity, I was spending hundreds of dollars a month on taxis, gas for friends for rides, and gas for my mother to get me to and from work, doctors' appointments and visits with my children. Almost half my income was being spent to insure I had transportation to meet my obligations. My social worker had even mentioned multiple times that if I had my own way to go, that she could let my children move home.

Since receiving my own car, I've been able to actually save money for bills, and for occasions like my daughter's birthday. I was able to throw her a party and afford her a nice gift. I haven't been late to work, not even once since having my car, and my social worker has since let my children move home also. I'm now considering going back to college to further my education.

As I look back to the woman I was last August, coming to Merryman House broken, beaten, hopeless and felt near helpless. Well I don't even recognize her anymore. I walked through the doors with a little tote bag of two outfits, the shoes on my feet, a can of deodorant and a toothbrush. These were my only possessions. But over the past year I've gained so much. Merryman House fed me three times a day, provided me resources for clothing, they bought me shoes and clothing I needed to wear to work. Provided me transportation a lot of the time, helped me with a bus pass. The staff encouraged, inspired, counseled, and believed in me. They jump started my spirit and hope. They helped me get my confidence within

myself back. Merryman House walked me down the road of healing and restoration.

The programs Merryman House offered me were my resources to change and ensure my life. Programs like the funding used to buy me non-slip shoes to work. The United Way program that funded my taxis for transportation to work and more. Now the G.O. Program. I am speechless and in awe of gratitude for every resource and opportunity I've had through Merryman House.

I know none of this would have been possible without the angel donors of Merryman. I pray every day those donors are able to know and see the difference they make possible. The lives they assist to build, save and change, as they have mine and my children. They now have a safe home to live in, a working, confident mother, and now a dependable, safe automobile to deliver us all to our obligations. All of this made possible by Merryman House and donors of. My children and I thank you Merryman House and donors for all the hope, love, support and resources we've received to make our success possible. I beg of you to continue this life-changing cause, so the next lady, mother, the next me and children, have the same access to the same opportunities and resources to build, save and change their lives as I have.

With all my love,

Merryman House Client & First G.O Program Recipient

Get in Touch

Leadership Team

Dr. Mary E. Foley
Executive Director

maryf@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8056

Amy Abernathy
Director of Operations

amy@merrymanhouse.org
270.442.3712

Colette Buford
Director of Finance

colette@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8057

Stephanie Hook
Director of Housing & Stabilization

stephanie@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8063

Dr. Brooke Jacobs
Staff Psychologist

brooke@merrymanhouse.org
270.538.9834

Kayla Myers
Director of Community
Engagement

kaylam@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8071

Brianna Weitlauf
Director of Grants & Compliance

brianna@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8053

Maressa Young-White
Director of
Advocacy & Empowerment

maressa@merrymanhouse.org
270.448.8070

24/7 Crisis Hotline

800.585.2686
270.443.6001



merryman house
saving, building & changing lives

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