

The Sojourner Truth

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SOJOURNER

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Our Mission:
Sojourner provides emergency shelter for women and children; legal advocacy and support to empower those victimized by domestic violence to reclaim their safety; and information and education to raise awareness of domestic violence prevention and intervention.

Annual Summary of 2010

As we report on events of 2010, it is important to remember that Sojourner originated in response to a problem witnessed by two women, Kitty Alcott and Jenny Arimond. They chose not to be by-standers and instead inspired the Hopkins Project, a safe haven for battered women and their children. Although the name changed a few years later to Sojourner Project, the mission has been maintained and the programs continue to offer free and confidential services to support victims and their children and encourage the transformation from victim to survivor.

Working with victims at any stage of their experience with domestic violence and abuse, Sojourner's advocates are committed to the safety, stability and empowerment of victims for the long-term. This commitment requires solid expertise, comprehensive services and an enduring dedication to the well-being and safety of the client. This is what makes us unique; it is our strength, and it is what distinguishes Sojourner Project.

During this past year, Sojourner:

- *Provided emergency shelter for 345 people for 6,158 bed nights*
- *Responded to 1,900 calls for Information and Referral*
- *Served approximately 20,000 meals in the shelter*
- *Legal advocacy and support provided to 753 adults and 385 children*
- *Provided 13,940 hours in direct client advocacy*
- *Facilitated 79 outreach events*
- *Is grateful for 8,679 hours contributed by volunteers*

In addition, in 2010 Sojourner:

- *Obtained the updated Charities Review Seal*
- *Updated our technology with a new server*
- *Implemented procedures in an effort to 'go green' via on-line social networks*
- *Secured funding for the installation of a new phone system.*
- *Held a successful Heart of Hope fundraiser led by the Board*
- *Increased our holiday appeal by approximately 11%*

The effects of the economic downturn continue to maximize problems among those more marginalized in our community. The outlook for improvement any time soon is not promising. These circumstances have contributed to the growing complexity of the issues faced by many of our clients. Our client numbers have increased and there can be no doubt that we are doing more with less. Efforts to curtail federal and state spending will surely result in cuts to human services and this will again have an impact on all non-profits. For Sojourner, this means continued financial vigilance. We continue to plan and implement strategies to secure needed revenues while closely monitoring expenses in order to maintain the organization's financial viability.

However we can be very proud all we have accomplished this year. We are very grateful for our dedicated and knowledgeable staff; for our loyal and innovative volunteers; and for the generosity and compassion of all those who contribute to the support of Sojourner and those we serve. Working together we have helped many to achieve significant and lasting changes in their lives and in doing so honored the strength and courage of those seeking a better and safer life.

Volunteers Make it Happen

Recently, thanks to some dedicated volunteers, Sojourner has been able to offer a yoga group for our shelter residents. Mia and Tammy met last August when Mia moved here from California. They said they shared an “instant friendship along with the feeling that they were meant to do something together to give back to the community.” Both ladies are avid yoga practitioners who have been studying the philosophy of yoga for a number of years and were filled with “the desire and intention” to share yoga with others.

Mia states that “Yoga is a transformational practice that empowers, heals and unites mind, body and spirit. Yoga also helps to bring balance, peace and happiness into one’s life.” They have been teaching beginning/restorative yoga at Sojourner for the past couple of months and “feel the positive effects already manifesting in both the students and teachers.” We are very grateful to Tammy and Mia for their willingness to share their time and talents with Sojourner.



Talking to Your Teen about Healthy Relationships

As the issue of dating violence attracts the attention of more teens and their parents, approaching your child with an effective response can be confusing.

New research on dating violence has not only increased our knowledge of the subject, but has added to prevention efforts. Until recently, the idea that teens, within the context of dating relationships, were being emotionally manipulated, physically threatened and sexually coerced was not thought of; more alarming are statistics which indicate that it’s happening to 18-38% of teens surveyed, and is considered a serious problem by 41% of teens in general.

During most of our children’s early lives, parents are the first line of defense when problems strike. As young adulthood begins, parents are often confounded at being increasingly “left out of the loop” of their child’s day-to-day activities. Even when we feel something is not quite right, we might have a hard time getting our teen to open up.

Being a comfort zone for your teen sounds deceptively easy, but if you feel a dating relationship is taking an unhealthy turn, she/he will need the support of an adult who can help them establish their own boundaries without seizing control or imposing judgments.

When addressing relationships with your teen, it is important to remember that listening is as instructive as giving advice. Self esteem and confidence are often lowered by an abusive partner, so let your teen have some control in decision making about problems in a relationship. Offering criticisms of a partner is less helpful than giving specific examples of behaviors that concern you. Don’t assume that your teen wants to leave the relationship or is ridiculous for hoping to keep it, but help them assess the situation and its effects. Safety should always enter the conversation, and ALL dating situations, first or ongoing, should include a safety plan for emergencies. Last but not least, be a role model for supportive, healthy relationships with your own partner.

Sojourner Project’s Community Education Program can help parents or parenting groups address the subject of dating violence. For more information call Sojourner at 952-351-4066.

Thank You for Your Donations

(If we have misspelled or omitted your name on this list, please accept our sincere apologies and let us know for future publications.)

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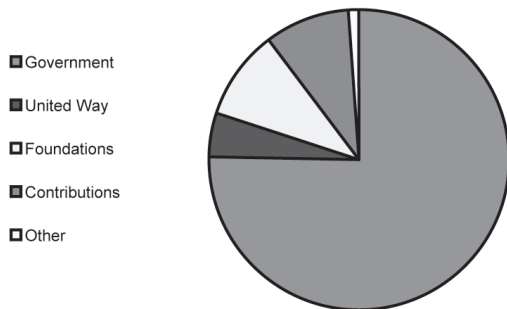
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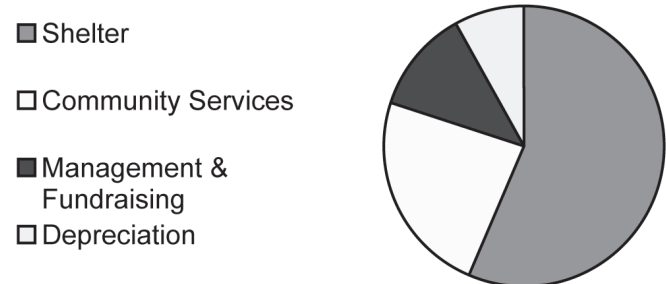
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Financial Report

2010 REVENUE



2010 EXPENSES



Government	\$ 785,116
United Way	\$ 47,176
Foundations	\$ 102,443
Contributions	\$ 93,826
Other	\$ 12,948
Total	\$ 1,041,509

Shelter	\$ 574,699
Community Services	\$ 241,530
Management & Fundraising	\$ 122,792
Depreciation	\$ 80,988
Total	\$ 1,020,009

Touching Lives in Our Shelter

Mary came to Sojourner's Shelter to escape an abusive husband. She met her husband and fell in love after he visited her home country several times. He told her how happy they would be together if she came to this country to be with him. Instead, he began to call her names and abuse her almost immediately after she arrived. She talked tearfully about the physical abuse she suffered and about being left alone at home for days with no food. An advocate took pictures of bruises on her arms and forehead to document some of the abuse she had endured. Mary summed up her feelings by saying she felt like her husband had bought her and that he treated her like she was his property.

Because she was from another country, we referred Mary to an immigration attorney and she was found to be eligible for help under the Violence Against Women Act. She was able to receive a work permit and temporary financial assistance. Our legal advocates helped Mary to obtain an Order for Protection and helped her get a volunteer attorney to assist with filing for a divorce and collecting spousal support. Advocates met with Mary often to provide emotional support, answer questions and discuss available resources.

She has been hurt deeply by this experience but still managed to persevere. After an extended stay at the shelter, she found a job and made plans to stay with a family that she met at her church.

Mary returned to the shelter later in the year to attend a holiday party. She shared that she had landed a better job, had her own apartment and had made new friends! Mary says that she will never forget the wonderful support that she received at Sojourner.

On behalf of all the clients and staff of Sojourner, thank you for the care and support that help make stories like this possible.



If you would like to receive future newsletters and communications by email or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact the Program Support Coordinator at 952-351-4062.



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