A Note from the Director

“For it is in giving that we receive…”
St. Francis

As the year 2011 winds down, we have so much to be grateful for. We have received an outpouring of gifts from our community. Businesses have made generous donations for fund-raisers, as well as providing materials and labor for shelter improvements. Individuals have donated everything from cash to lovingly-sewn quilts. Your generosity has touched our hearts again and again.

It is because of your gifts that we have been able to give the gift of hope to families that come to us. We had a young mother knock on our door this fall. She had a two-week old baby in her arms, a toddler by the hand, and another little one peering out from behind her skirt. They had been sleeping in the woods, terrified and in hiding. We welcomed them, gave them food, diapers, and clothing. We assisted her and her family for over two months until she was able to move into her own apartment.

Before moving out, she handed me this note: After all the tears and pain, I realized that the task ahead of me is never as great as the power behind me. And with the help and support of The Bridge, I now see what I’m worth. As I walk in the sunlight I can breathe. The sunlight is more than just my light, it’s my serenity and peace.

May you walk in serenity and peace this holiday season, and may you know that your kind generosity kindles the light of hope in the families we serve.

Naomi Cummings

Raffle and Silent Auction Donors for Bridge Bash

Xcel Energy
Whispering Emerald Ridge Farm
Conagra Foods
Pleasant Valley Tree Farm
Hay River Pumpkin Seed Oil
Lammer’s Food Fest
Bodyworks Athletic Club
Wal-Mart Super Center
Wal-Mart Distribution Center
Jodi’s Culinary Services
Dana E. Brunstrom, CPA LLC
Kathy Markham
Jamie’s Buckshot Bar
Blind Munchies
Deja-Vu
CEC Theaters
The Pourhouse
Iris Boutique
Images
Green Bay Packers
Culver’s
Bank Mutual
Whitetail Golf Course
Legacy Chocolate
Midwest Home Improvement
Log Jam
Andrea Gerasimo
Zanzibar
Stephanie Weisheipl
Nancy Cook
Applebee’s
Down to Earth Garden Center

Thank You!
The ladies in Over the Edge Quilt Group made and donated 7 twin bed quilts and 2 baby quilts for our clients. They look absolutely beautiful and will be most appreciated as the cold weather keeps rolling in. Thank you so much!

We had a great group of youth come out to our shelter to rake leaves and trim the front bushes for us this fall. Thank you to Mae Simpson and her Ellsworth High School class for doing such a great job!

Our first annual Bridge Bash was a great success! We were so fortunate to have such a great crowd come out to the Fish and Game Clubhouse in Wakanda Park to support us. We boogied all night to Brass Monkey and enjoyed amazing food from our local vendors. Thank you to all our sponsors, vendors, and donors!

Thank You to All of our Sponsors!

Mayo Clinic Health Systems—Red Cedar
WESTconsin Credit Union
Dunn County News
Down to Earth Garden Centers
Cedar Creek Dental

Xcel Energy
Dunn Energy Cooperative
Bank Mutual
Conagra Foods

Oh! The Yummy Delights of the Bridge Bash!

What was the most memorable? Was it the...
Tasty smoked trout spread from Bullfrog Fish Farm?
Lip-smackin’ good barbeque ribs from The Waterfront Bar & Grill?
Heavenly pumpkin spice cake from Richard Thomas?
Zesty pizza from Big Donkey Pizza?
Savory summer sausage from Cut-Rite Meat Shoppe?
Vibrant Italian cheese from Eau Galle Cheese?
Succulent Swedish meatballs and to-die-for brownies with salted caramel frosting from Jakes?
Unbeatable loaves from Rustic Country Breads?
Delectable crab dip from Skoogs?
Marvelous cookies from Kwik Trip?
Delicious deviled eggs from Menomonie Market?
Invigorating jet fuel coffee from Blind Munchies?
Brew-mazing beer from Leinenkugels?

A huge shout out to Brass Monkey for contributing their talent and keeping the party rockin’ all night. Another shout out goes to Dunn County Fish and Game Clubhouse in Wakanda Park for donating their space.

We had a great group of youth come out to our shelter to rake leaves and trim the front bushes for us this fall. Thank you to Mae Simpson and her Ellsworth High School class for doing such a great job!

Thank you, Over the Edge Quilt Group!

The ladies in Over the Edge Quilt Group made and donated 7 twin bed quilts and 2 baby quilts for our clients. They look absolutely beautiful and will be most appreciated as the cold weather keeps rolling in. Thank you so much!
Imagine you’re at the bank. In the process of doing your normal business, suddenly someone blasts through the doors spraying bullets. “EVERYBODY DOWN ON THE FLOOR”! Now imagine this little trip turning into hours of terrorism with the perpetrator periodically shooting into the air, yelling at you and the other customers: “SHUT UP, DON’T SPEAK OR EVEN MOVE UNTIL I TELL YOU TO”! You and the others held captive are hungry, thirsty, missing your families, but this person with the gun has the power and you can’t do anything unless they tell you to. You can’t even go to the bathroom without their permission. You may be saying to yourself, “I didn’t sign up for this! I just wanted to do my banking!”

Now imagine this scenario in your home. Your spouse comes home after work and without even saying hello, yells at you: “WHY ISN’T DINNER READY? Is it too much to ask to have food on the table when I get home after a hard day?” You now get busy finishing dinner. During this time, the kids start to argue. “You better shut those kids up!” So you leave the kitchen to deal with the kids. Then the dog starts barking and he gets up and kicks the dog. Now the kids are crying because daddy hurt the dog. In the midst of this, you remember the dinner in the kitchen and your worst fears come true…the dinner is now ruined. You quickly come up with something to feed your family; you do the best you can. After dinner the tension in the home is almost unbearable. You get the kids to bed and now you walk around on eggshells wondering if you will be beaten yet again. Then it happens. As you are cleaning up, he enters the kitchen and starts yelling at you. You just listen, because you know if you say anything you will end up beaten again. This time, you endure verbal abuse; no hitting, strangling, pushing or shoving. But what about next time? You know there will be a next time.

Relationship terrorism. You may be thinking these scenarios are in no way the same. The people in the bank don’t have a choice and this woman can leave whenever she wants to. I challenge that belief. The woman at home feels she has no choice but to stay. Her husband has not allowed her to go to work, so she has no work history or skills. She has no credit, or she may have bad credit because of his poor money management. She has no rental history because everything has been in his name. She has been told for years that she’s worthless and lucky to have her husband. She has no friends anymore because he doesn’t like them. He has made it known that even her family is not welcome. He has repeatedly threatened that if she ever tries to leave, he will take the kids. And what about the dog? She can’t leave Rover there with him! She is a prisoner in her own home!

This is domestic violence. This is relationship terrorism. It’s all about power and control by the abuser. You may ask, “Why in the world would someone get involved with a person like that”? Abusive behavior does not begin until the victim has a deep emotional commitment to the abuser. She fell in love with someone who brought her flowers, who told her he loved her, and was jealous when she talked to other men. And what about leaving? No one asks a hostage in a bank robbery why they didn’t leave. The woman who is a prisoner in her own home has heard threats that if she leaves, he will hunt her down and kill her. He says he will take the kids away from her. There is nothing that would make her believe he wouldn’t follow through on these threats. She stays. She thinks, “I didn’t sign up for this, I just wanted a loving family.”

Why is it so hard for us to believe and sympathize with the relationship terrorism victim, and so easy to believe and sympathize with the hostage in the bank robbery? These victims are not weak, they are doing the best they can to survive…just like the hostage in the bank.

By Nancy Olsen

Domestic Violence Awareness Month was in October. To help promote awareness, we set up a display at the Menomonie Public Library, October 17th-31st. The display showed 58 Barbie dolls who represented the 58 lives lost in Wisconsin in 2010 due to domestic violence.

A special thank you also goes out to Katy Dahl who provided the Barbie dolls we used in our display. Thank you, Katy!

An individual left this comment about our display:
“I appreciate the use of Barbie to get your point across. It is a common figure of what girls should look like, an ideological trademark that oppresses women. It reminds me of how my own mother pushed me to follow guidelines in dating…let the man do everything–pay for dinners, ask you out–my mother was beaten for 8 years in her first marriage. Being born from her second marriage, I quickly developed the notion that nobody will ever touch me if I can help it. Nobody has. I use my knowledge and empowerment as a woman to encourage other women to stand up for themselves. Do for themselves. Help those who can not help themselves and love themselves.”
Window World

In late October, Nick Pegram and Joel Petrich (shown in picture) with Window World came and installed 11 new donated windows in our shelter. The double hung and sliding windows have been a great addition to our building! They will help keep our clients stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We are very grateful. Thank you Window World, you did an amazing job!

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