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One of many beautiful views from our shelter.

Thank you
Holiday 2008 donors!

On behalf of the clients, staff and Board of Directors we extend a very heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to Helpmate during the holidays. We truly have an amazing group of generous donors to keep us going year round. Thank you for the gifts for the women and children in our emergency shelter, the food, the in-kind donations, and the financial contributions.

... and a very special thanks to **Claudia Wales**, a Helpmate volunteer. Thanks to Claudia, all of the women and children who were in the shelter during Christmas received presents. Claudia worked hard to get toys, clothes, gift certificates and more donated. Her hard work ensured that women and children alike had a very merry Christmas morning.

Executive's Letter

Of the many blessings associated with working at Helpmate, I count the opportunity to bookend my day by walking through a busy kitchen to and from my office. When things are going really well in the house—when the ladies collaborate on meals and in caring for the children—it's easy to forget that these people are relative strangers to one another, thrown together by personal tragedy. I linger long enough to comment on how good the food looks and

smells, chat about who's found leads on a job or an apartment, and hear about what the kids are learning in school.

Lately, during the day and between those trips through the kitchen, I find myself frequently responding to questions about the current economy and what it means for Helpmate's programs. With donors, colleagues, friends, and community leaders, I am candid in my concern, but wary of

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Outdoor Play

Those of you who attended our **Spring 2008 Open House** probably remember that we still had a little bit of work to do- making our outdoor space an attractive and serene environment for residents and their children.

Thanks to the vision of landscape architect **Jerry Snow**, we made modest improvements to the design of the existing deck work to create "flow" for women supervising children at play. A grant from the **Mission Health System's Community Health Enhancement** had already been made available to help us purchase and install playground equipment and fixtures. What remained was much needed support to prepare the deck space and add some landscaping.

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Employees from area Lowe's busily prepare...

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To this end, area Lowe's stores volunteered labor and donated up to \$5,000 in materials to help transform our backyard. In addition to repairing and painting large portions of our deck, they built a walking path beside our vegetable garden, placed lattice around the bottom of the deck, donated all manner of outdoor equipment, including power tools, lawn tools, a picnic table, and a swing, and planted three wonderful flower beds. They also donated an energy efficient washing machine and installed a second refrigerator for our families. Toiling for many hours, they became part of our Helpmate family- and we are so grateful for their lasting mark on the lives of those we serve.



...a new outdoor playspace for our families

Needed: Caring Hearts and Hands!

There are countless ways you can volunteer through Helpmate- as many ways as there are talents and people to share them! We have need for volunteers to assist in answering our 24-Hour Hotline, adults who can help provide activities and supervision for our children, assistant Court Advocates to help victims navigating the court system, and Language Interpreters for victims who speak English as a second language.

There are a number of indirect service volunteer positions as well. Our Administrative Assistants support clerical and reception work. Volunteer community educators provide domestic violence education to various at-risk and professional groups, Special Events volunteers support fundraising events, and Building and Grounds volunteers help us keep on top of a "honey-do" list to maintain a wonderful facility for our families.

Our next volunteer training begins Tuesday, March 10, and consists of five sessions held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Indirect service volunteers and volunteers supporting childcare assistance need only attend the introductory session on March 10.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, our training schedule, or our training curriculum, please contact the **Volunteer Coordinator, Christy Price** at **254-2968 x 12**, or **cprice@helpmateonline.org**. Our Volunteer application can be downloaded on our website at **www.helpmateonline.org**.

Support Helpmate While You Search the Internet or Shop Online!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up for Helpmate! GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall, which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause - Helpmate. Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter **Helpmate, Inc.** as the charity you want to support. **In addition, be sure to spread the word!**

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predicting just how much and how hard the agency will be impacted as a result of the recession. I fear that we are all in for the long haul and that it's too early to tell.

I'm a lot clearer right now about how the recession has and will continue to impact the families we serve. On a national level, calls to domestic violence are up 18% over 2007 rates of use. A National Institute of Justice (USDOJ) report estimates that couples under financial strain experience three times the amount of violent episodes than do solvent couples. As the length of time in financial insecurity increases, so does the incidence of violence; the same study sites that the rate of domestic violence jumps from 4.7% to 7.5% during the first period of the perpetrator's unemployment, and jumps again to 12.3% when the perpetrator experiences two or more periods of unemployment.

Locally, the lack of affordable housing and entry-level, living-wage jobs in our community mean that our residents require longer periods of support as they establish self-sufficiency. This is reflected in the increased numbers of nights

of safety experienced at our emergency shelter, up 40% - from 3,560 nights of safety in the fiscal year 2007-08 to 5,005 nights of safety in the calendar year (January- December 2008). Since this time last year, our average daily occupancy- the number of people in the shelter on any given day- has increased 101%.

We have every reason to believe that the trend toward more people for longer periods of time will worsen as we ourselves navigate the realities of managing a nonprofit in this economy.

The natural reaction to this grim reality is to circle the wagons and hold fort on our own status quo, as much as it will be possible to do so. But that is precisely what we cannot do in the face of increased need. We must be prepared, be more efficient, to feel rise to the challenge of innovation in light of scarcity of resources. We must maintain our compassion and passion, and we must follow the lead of a caring community that believes in its capacity to stop the cycle of domestic violence. It is the same generous community that supported our agency, programs,

- Gift cards for clients
- Non-perishable foods
- Toilet paper, paper towels, tissues
- Sponges
- Children's dishware
- Cleaning supplies
- New women's slip-on shoes
- New women's underwear
- New women's sweatsuits (sizes 6-3x)
- School supplies
- Alarm clocks
- Date/appointment books
- Combination locks
- Brooms and mops
- Garbage bags
- Q-tips
- Dishwasher detergent
- Laundry detergent
- Aluminum foil

For more information, please contact **Ann Flynn**, at aflynn@helpmateonline.org or **254-2968 x 11**.

and families as we purchased and renovated our new home. And it is providence that we have the ability from that new home to house more families for longer lengths of stay.

It cannot all be doom and gloom, and this is a lesson I take from walking through the kitchen at the shelter. The other day a client was enjoying some stone soup at the kitchen counter. "It is the best soup," she commented over the din of playing children, "and we all did it together."

— Valerie Collins



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**Working with our
community to eliminate
abuse and fear**



United Way of Asheville
and Buncombe County

How YOU Can Help Battered Women and Children

Financial Contributions: Please donate. Your financial and in-kind contributions give abused women and children an opportunity to heal and to have hope for their future.

Honorariums/Memorials: Donors may make gifts in honor or memory of family and friends. Please remember to specify the address of the honorary gift recipient(s) so we may notify them of your gift.

Planned Gifts: Please consider a planned or estate gift. For additional information, please contact Ann Flynn, Director of Development at 828-254-2968 x11.

In-Kind Donations: In-kind donations are greatly appreciated. Please check our Wish List on page 3 of this newsletter.

Donor Recognition: We make every effort to recognize donors appropriately and track mailing preferences according to your wishes. We apologize if any errors escape our attention. Please contact us to help serve you better.

Donate Through Our Wish List: Gifting a wide variety of products provides direct support to our programs and our residents. We frequently update our wish list on our website, www.helpmateonline.org.

Go Green...

Receive our e-newsletter!

Just send an email to:
aflynn@helpmateonline.org

New Website

We have a new website, thanks to **Totsie Marine**, totsie@totsie.com, website designer extraordinaire.

We think you will find it more user friendly as well as visually appealing. Helpmate staff will be keeping it updated with current events, new stories, volunteer opportunities and other significant information.

In addition, you can now donate directly to Helpmate from our website. So check us out at www.helpmateonline.org.