



Restoring Peace · Reaffirming Worth · Renewing Hope

## SUMMER 2021

July 1, 2021

Usually in the newsletter I focus on the activities at Restoration Place. Providing safe shelter for women in unsafe homes is important, but that is not all we do.

*We work with other agencies in the area to fight against domestic abuse and to promote healthy relationships. We give presentations to civic groups of all kinds to help the community gain knowledge about the problem of abuse, the need for help in our area, and the resources we provide.*

Last year I responded to a request on Facebook from a woman who needed furniture. I found that she had fled an abuser and had been living with her parents. She rented a place of her own but had no furnishings. My husband and I met her at the RA storage building which contains donations we have not needed at the shelter and loaded our pickup and her car with furniture and kitchen supplies and took everything to her new home.

When we get a call from a woman in need of help, we pay for a motel for one or two nights as we listen to her story, discuss her options, and tell her about Restoration Place. Sometimes during that time, the abuser promises to make changes and a woman will decide to go back to her home to try to reconcile. We determine to never judge and are clear that we will support her in every way we can. This service has been valuable. **As one woman put it, “This cooling off period has been a God send for me. I can’t thank you guys enough for coming thru for me.** It means the world when you feel like you have nobody. Thank you for all you are doing! I truly cannot express that enough.” She headed back home with the assurance that we are available if she needs us again.

We have phone calls from women who are not ready to leave an abusive situation but want to get information and we are happy to help out in that way. Some have questions about the process and resources that are available to them. Many have questions about their legal rights. We are careful to not advise beyond our knowledge or ability,

but we can give the women basic information such as the fact that their children will not be taken from them if they leave, or that they will not lose everything if they walk out.

A few months ago, I had a call from a woman who said, "I know I need to leave my husband, but I don't know how." We discussed her options and I helped her devise a plan. She was working but did not have control of finances. With permission from her husband, she began to put aside cash to save "for a family vacation," which she kept in a safe place. She applied for and was hired at a new job without her husband's knowledge. She hired a lawyer. She rented a house and was able to take her children and, with some help moved into her new home.

*The hardest question to hear is, "Will God forgive me if I divorce my husband?" My answer comes quickly and without reservation, "God forgives you for everything. BUT leaving your abusive husband is not something that requires forgiveness."*

The understanding of these women is that God declared marriage to be permanent and commanded his people to not divorce except in cases of adultery. People sometimes quote a verse in the Bible, Malachi 2:16, "God hates divorce." But that is not the entire verse. This is what God says in that verse. "I hate divorce. I hate the person who covers himself with violence...Be careful not to be unfaithful." God is speaking very specifically to men who were unfaithful to their wives, then sent them away by divorce.

His purpose in speaking about divorce was to protect women who were being abandoned without any means of support. God does not want any of his daughters to live in violence, under threat, being controlled and demeaned. Does God value marriage? Yes, absolutely. God does not value marriage more than women, more than children. God desires that every woman be valued and cherished.

*Restoration Advocates agrees that women are of great value and should live in freedom and safety and that is why we are here.*

Thank you for partnering with us in that mission. **Since we opened Restoration Place last year, we have provided shelter for thirteen women and eleven children.** Thank you for your support. Your donations have made possible everything we do.

Jeannette Maxwell  
Executive Director