



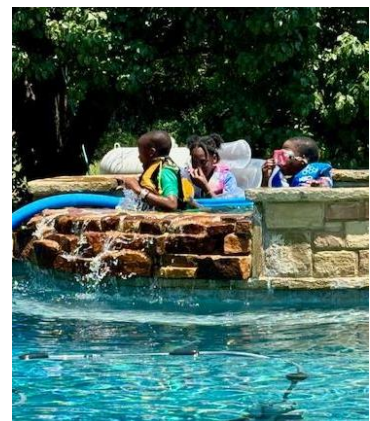
Restoring Peace · Reaffirming Worth · Renewing Hope

September holds special significance for RA, as the organization was established in September 2019 and opened its first shelter in September 2020. Each year, I take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've been on and to recognize that this work has been guided by God from the very beginning. Thanks to you, our supporters, we have been able to provide shelter and resources to over 200 women and children since September 1, 2020! While numbers alone don't tell the full story, I'd like to share one resident's experience, with all identifying details changed for privacy.

Sharon needed a short-term safe place for herself and her three children, ages 11, 9, and 8. She had been able to secure an apartment in government housing in a very small town in West Texas but required a secure place to stay until it was available. Sharon came from a long-term abusive and controlling relationship. Despite being the one who worked while her husband did not, he maintained complete control over their finances and restricted both her and the children's freedom, allowing them only to go to work and school. He threatened that if she ever left, he would report her as mentally unstable to the police and have her children taken away. This continued threat caused her such anxiety that she was afraid to leave.

In April, her 11-year-old daughter came to her and in desperation told her they had to leave, and the two of them worked on a plan of escape. Sharon told her husband that the children needed exercise, and she would walk them to a nearby park to play outside after dinner. He allowed this but kept a close watch to ensure they went nowhere else. For 30 days, every day, they walked to the park after dinner, until her husband became confident that they would always return. On the 30th day, they left for the park as usual, but this time Sharon had called a trusted friend who picked them up and took them to safety. Sharon had meticulously planned her path to freedom, confiding in just one trusted person and keeping the plan hidden from her younger children. She was ready to start her life with nothing if it meant ensuring their safety.

During their stay with us, we provided for their needs and tried to make their time as pleasant as possible. I offered to take the children on an outing, and they chose swimming. Sharon requested life jackets since the children didn't know how to swim, had never been swimming before, as their father had prohibited it. He had also prevented them from attending birthday parties or participating in school activities. Thrilled at the rare opportunity to swim, they were initially nervous and cautiously entered the pool wearing life jackets. They even climbed into the 3-foot-deep hot tub with both life jackets and floaties. Eventually, they relaxed and began to enjoy the water, with Sharon even joining them. They all had a wonderful time, and the 8-year-old excitedly declared, "This is the best day of my life!"



After settling into her new apartment, Sharon texted to inform us that she had secured a job and that her family was doing well. She also expressed her heartfelt gratitude for the assistance we provided.

I want to pass that gratitude on to all of you for supplying the resources that enable us to support families like Sharon's. RA is here to assist women like Sharon because of your support.

Jeannette Maxwell, Executive Director

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, and to honor this, we have planned a Family Fun Night at Green Canoe Outfitters in Hico to raise awareness of and support for the work we do. Please plan to attend and invite your friends!

