

Newsletter

Summer 2024

Summers are always special for children, and this newsletter focuses on the children who stay at Restoration Place. While our mission is to provide a safe environment and resources for women who are victims of domestic violence, we deeply value their children and strive to offer them a chance at a better life. Because of the support you provide, we hope to break the cycle of abuse, showing their children that a better way of life is possible.

Children in homes where one parent is abused often feel fearful and anxious, constantly on guard for the next violent event. Young children who witness intimate partner violence may show their concern through increased crying and whining, struggle with sleep and experience severe separation anxiety. School-age children may internalize guilt about the abuse, blaming themselves for it. This can damage their self-esteem, leading to poor participation in school activities, lower grades, fewer friendships, and more frequent trouble. Teens who witness abuse often exhibit negative behaviors such as fighting, bullying, and drug use. These teens frequently have low self-esteem and difficulty making friends and may withdraw and suffer from depression. Children exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk of perpetuating the cycle as adults, either by entering abusive relationships or becoming abusers themselves.

When a mother arrives at Restoration Place with her children, we strive to make them feel welcome and safe. We provide age-appropriate toys, and if a child has a special interest or favorite kind of toy, we do our best to accommodate that. I take the moms shopping for food, allowing them to choose familiar foods their children are used to, like chicken strips, macaroni and cheese, sometimes canned spaghetti or soup, and often lots of fruit. Given the total disruption in their lives, having familiar food is a small but significant comfort.



All of our bedrooms are furnished with a twin bed and a set of bunk beds. For families with multiple children, we often add a crib or extra mattress to the room. Each mother has a private bedroom where she can stay with her children. We are fortunate to have outdoor play areas for the children with swing sets. Because of our generous donors, we are able to provide a home for these

children that is not only safe, but inviting and pleasant with special areas for play. Our volunteers often take extra interest in the children and sometimes offer to take the children out to special events.



They may even arrange for a special guest to visit!



Mothers often tell me that their children feel safe and secure for the first time in a long while. They report that they are sleeping better and performing better in school, they are more relaxed, focused, and engaged in their daily activities.

I've noticed significant changes in many children after just a week or two. When I first meet children during intake, they are understandably reserved. But just two days later, they are happy and excited to see me and run to hug me. I often share the touching words of a 7-year-old who said, "People who see us together probably think you're my grandmother. Can I pretend you are my grandma?" My response was an enthusiastic, "OOOH yes you can!" Who wouldn't love the experience of being a temporary grandparent?

Many children who come to us have been deprived of relationships with grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives. Having safe and caring adults in their lives is very meaningful for them and they genuinely appreciate the bonds they form with the volunteers, finding joy and comfort in these connections.



I wish I could share many pictures of the children in the shelter playing, running around, and making messes and feeling very much at home. However, to respect their privacy, I am only sharing a few photos that don't show their precious faces.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and the dedication of our volunteers, we have provided a temporary home for 126 children since we opened. Because of your generous support, these children have a safe place where they feel secure and happy. They have experienced a healthy environment and now have the opportunity for a better, brighter future. On behalf of the children who come to Restoration Place, the women, and our Board of Directors, I express deep gratitude.

My sincere and heartfelt Thanks,
Jeannette Maxwell, Executive Director