

# **HELP & SHELTER**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2001**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Help & Shelter acknowledges with grateful thanks the assistance rendered by the following persons and organisations during 2001:

- All staff and volunteers
- All the resource persons who assisted with training in counselling and public education skills
- Attorneys-at-Law, Dela Britton, Wayde Bardswell, Reita Pendry, Reakha Persaud, Subrita Khan, Sanjev Datadin and others for providing free legal advice to clients.
- Funding partners for financial and technical assistance, including Building Community Capacity Project, Ministry of Human Services & Social Security, IICA, Ministry of Finance, Booker Tate, the Government of Japan, the Government of the United Kingdom, UNIFEM & GUYSUCO.
- Ministry of Housing & Water for rent free accommodation.
- All individuals and companies who gave donations.
- All national, regional and international Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations and Agencies with whom we collaborated.
- All those who supported our fundraising events.

And all others who contributed to Help & Shelter's work in 2001.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

2001 saw the completion of the sixth year of Help & Shelter's existence, the fifth year of the Crisis Service's operation and the first year of the Shelter's operation. It also saw the setting up of a special room with a separate telephone installed for hotline counselling and the launch of a 24-hour hotline service. During the course of the year staff and volunteers assisted 690 clients including 93 children, bringing our cumulative client figures for November 1995 to December 2001 to 4411 clients including 534 children. 19 women with a total of 29 children were taken into the Shelter.

Help & Shelter continues to be recognized as the premier organisation in Guyana dealing with domestic violence. Our staff and volunteers are also increasingly in demand as resource persons throughout the Caribbean.

## **2. OUR MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Our Mission**

To contribute to bringing about a society where attitudes to the use of violence (sexual, physical or psychological) have been transformed.

### **2.2 Our Goals**

1. To work to build respect for the rights of women, children, youth and men to live free of violence and the threat of violence.
2. To assist women, children, youth and men to develop alternative ways of handling power and resolving conflict.
3. To widen options for victims of domestic violence.
4. To establish a resource base to ensure the sustainability of Help & Shelter.

### **2.3 Our Objectives**

#### **For Goal 1**

To actively foster a high level of awareness among all sectors, governmental and non-governmental, about the prevalence, causes and costs of violence, including violence in the home and other personal relations and about alternatives to the use of violence.

#### **For Goal 2**

To provide progressively enhanced counselling for victims and perpetrators of violence.

#### **For Goal 3**

1. To provide temporary shelter for abused women and their children, with training that can develop psychological and practical skills needed for increased self-sufficiency.
2. To contribute to improved recourse for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

#### **For Goal 4**

1. To work towards the economic self-support of the shelter.
2. To develop, staff and implement a well-articulated fundraising plan

### **3. THE CRISIS SERVICE**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Our core activities continued to be:

- ❖ The provision of counselling.
- ❖ The provision of in-court support to clients during legal proceedings.
- ❖ The provision of legal advice to clients and the referral of clients to the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic or other attorneys-at-law for further legal assistance as required
- ❖ The referral of clients to other agencies for appropriate assistance when required.
- ❖ The dissemination of information about domestic violence to the general public, to target groups such as the police, medical personnel, teachers and students and to religious, service, social and other organisations on request.
- ❖ Training and refresher courses in public education and upgrading of counselling skills.
- ❖ Strengthening existing networking ties and developing new ones.

#### **3.2 Physical Infrastructure**

Women Across Differences (WAD) continued to share space with us in our rent-free offices at the bottom flat of the Annex of the Ministry of Housing & Water. Tragedy befell this Ministry when the main building was razed to the ground by fire in June. While our building was saved, electricity and telephone services were disrupted for two weeks. The fire also forced the closure of our canteen, which while not burnt had virtually everything stolen from it. The absence of a ready clientele made the re-opening of the canteen impracticable.

The establishment of a special hotline counselling room was made possible thanks to a generous donation from the Government of Japan, facilitated by Japan's Honorary Consul in Guyana, Mr. Hans Barrow. The donation also included funds to enable the purchase of computer equipment and a vehicle.

##### **3.2.1. Water**

A separate water meter was installed for Help & Shelter in July by the Guyana Sewerage & Water Commission. The Commonwealth Youth Programme, which occupies the upper flat of the building, also had a separate meter installed.

### **3.3 Administration**

#### **3.3.1. Board of Directors**

The following members were re-elected to sit on the board for the financial year 2001/2002 at the Annual General Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2001:

Denise Dias	–	Chairperson
Vidyaratha Kissoon	–	Vice Chairperson
Josephine Whitehead	–	Secretary/Treasurer
Elizabeth Cox		
Dela Britton		
Lisa Thompson		
Yvonne Quintin		
Sylvia Conway		

Two new directors were elected:

Pat Noel – Volunteer Representative  
Isha Husain-Singh

### 3.3.2. Staff

The following members of staff remained throughout the year:

Crisis Service Coordinator	–	Lynette Seabra
Counsellor/Training Coordinator	–	Lisa Thompson
Research/Clerical Assistant	–	Roxanne De Florimonte
Assistant	–	Kevin Massiah
Security Officer	–	Irma Gibson
Cleaner	–	Claudia Alexander

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2001 Margaret Kertzious joined us to take over as Coordinator at the end of the year, when Lynette Seabra's well-deserved second retirement took effect.

Merle Fredericks, Carol Inniss-Baptiste and Petal Baboolall completed their one year contracts funded under the BCCP "Strengthening Support Services for Victims" Project. They provided face-to-face and hotline counselling and court support.

### 3.3.3. Volunteers

As usual, four categories of volunteers assisted Help & Shelter during the year:

#### **Face-to-Face Counselling**

Merle Fredericks	Carol Inniss-Baptiste	Petal Baboolall
Rosica Mohamed	Yvonne Quintin	June Baird
Patricia Waddell	Patricia Noel	Juanele Kirton
Lebone Nelson	Debbie Lee Houston	Ruth Carberry

#### **Hotline Counselling**

Phillip Adams	Rosica Mohamed	Zairol Neisha
Denise Lewis	Seeta Singh	Kenzena Romao
Anjie Bazilio	Annie Pitamber	Nadia Sagar
Petal Baboolall		

#### **Public Education**

Patricia Noel	Colleen Ng	Carole Garraway
Martha Jones	June Baird	Shirley Philander
Leila Hutson	Kenrick Sumner	Juliana Hutson

#### **Assistance in the Office**

Shirley Philander	Yvonne Ismond
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On completion of training with the Problem Solving for Better Health (PSBH) Programme, June Baird arranged for a system to be put in place for abused persons to be dealt with on a priority basis and in confidence at the Public Hospital Georgetown. With the assistance of the Hospital Administrator a six-week Domestic Violence Awareness Programme was held for doctors and nurses to sensitise them about domestic violence and the need for vigilance in dealing with such cases. The facilitators were Hazel Halley-Burnett of the Women's Affairs Bureau and Lisa Thompson and Vidya Kissoon.

### 3.3.4. Volunteer Lawyers

Dela Britton  
Reakha Persaud

Wayde Bardswell  
Subrita Khan

Reita Pendry  
Sanjev Datadin

volunteered their service in the area of legal advice. This service has proved extremely valuable to our clients and ourselves. We are sorry to have lost the assistance of Ms. Pendry and Mr. Bardswell, both of whom have left the country.

### 3.3.5. Volunteer Project Manager

Following advertisement for a Project Manager, Dr. Elizabeth Robicchi was appointed in February. She began in April on a part time voluntary basis pending the completion of a project for another agency and before she could join us full time, unfortunately had to return to Italy for medical treatment. Following further advertisement, Andrea Mc Adam was appointed and joined us on a part-time basis in September.

### 3.3.6. Help & Shelter Annual Awards

At the Annual General Meeting held in September 2001 awards were presented to Pat Noel for her work in public education and to Rosica Mohamed for her contributions to hotline counselling. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Merle Fredericks and Colleen Ng and a special appreciation award was presented to Lynette Seabra.

### 3.3.7. Client Survey

A survey was carried out to determine client satisfaction. 180 clients of the Crisis Centre completed the questionnaire with the following results:

Area of service	YES	NO	NO COMMENT
Helpful	178	1	1
Thorough	170	9	1
Approachable	177	3	0
Understanding	179	1	0
Supportive	175	5	0
Respectful	179	1	0
Comfortable to be with	177	3	0
Informative	174	6	0
Non-judgmental	149	31	0
Professional	173	7	0

Sessions were held to address the shortcomings identified by the survey.

### 3.4 Vehicle

A minivan was purchased with part of the funds donated by the Government of Japan. Delivery was expected before the end of the year but delayed due to unanticipated problems experienced by the agent. The vehicle will prove most useful, particularly for transportation of clients to and from the shelter.

## 4. THE SHELTER

### 4.1 Introduction:

2001 was the first full year in which we were able to provide a temporary home for abused women and their children. 19 women and their children (total of 29) were accommodated at the shelter for an average period of three months each.

### 4.2 Administration

#### 4.2.1. Staff

The following staff members remained in their positions throughout the year:

Matron	–	Gwen Dalgetty
Cleaner	–	Bernadette Nelson
Security	–	Malcolm Barnes & Seedath Tularam
Relief Security	–	Cedric Hunte

In August Gemma Lass, an Overseas Training Programme volunteer from Britain, joined us on a one year stint, to assist in the administration of the Shelter. Patricia Bailey also joined the staff as Assistant Matron to work two days a week, thus providing Matron with days off. Counsellor Merle Fredericks visited the Shelter once a week to counsel residents. Lisa Thompson also visited the shelter on a regular basis, as did members of the Shelter Committee (Denise Dias, Elizabeth Cox, Dela Britton & Yvonne Quintin).

#### 4.2.2. Activities

Four officers from the Guyana Defence Force and three labourers provided voluntary service in clearing a large amount of iron and other waste materials from the compound. A low-bed truck was rented at a nominal cost from Messrs Buddy & Farouk Hassan.

Arrangements having been made by Heather Hobbs and Kathryn Jeffries of Youth Challenge International, twelve Youth Challengers spent three weeks at the Shelter doing voluntary work that included weeding, burning grass, planting, digging drains and laying the foundations for the poultry pen. After the departure of the Challengers the poultry pen was completed by a contractor, as a result of the receipt of the funds approved by the British Government and disbursed to us through IICA.

Ms. Diana Clarke, Administrator of 'The Shelter' in Trinidad & Tobago visited us in February and held discussions with the Matron, counsellors and directors, all of which were most useful.

Some of the activities that engaged the attention of the residents were, sewing, cooking, craftwork and gardening. Some sought and obtained employment in the area. Arrangements were made for primary school aged children of residents to attend a nearby school.

In addition to counselling sessions, residents took part in-group discussions dealing with such topics/projects as the preparation of edible items such as pickles, pepper-sauce and cakes, etc to assist in sustaining the shelter.

#### 4.2.3. Visitors

Among those who paid visits to the Shelter with a view to assisting us were Dr. Gardella and Messrs. Brady and Mc Grady of IICA; Drs. Austin and Armanauth of NARI; Ms. Shri Gururajah of UNICEF; Ms. Sandra Seenan of the British High Commission; Mr. Marcel Gaskin of Marcel Gaskin Associates and Ms. Liz Scholsbery-Lieveld and Ms. Siska of Suriname.



#### 4.2.4. Donations

We were fortunate in receiving a considerable amount of clothing, foodstuffs and other items for the shelter by way of donations from individuals and the business sector (see list of donors at pages 15 & 16).

A tinned food drive was launched, with boxes for donations of tins by customers being placed in Fogarty's and N.P. Supermarkets and the National Bank of Industry & Commerce & Bank of Nova Scotia. The School of the Nations and the American International School also held special drives for us.

#### 4.2.5. Staff Training

Matron participated in a six week Training Course for Care Workers organized by the Ministry of Human Services & Social Security.

#### 4.3 Title to land

The transfer of title to the land on which the Shelter stands, by way of gift from the government, is still being processed

#### 4.4 Skills Training

In addition to providing abused women with a place of safety where they can receive counselling and take part in discussions aimed at self-empowerment, we recognise the importance of giving residents skills training opportunities, and to this end project proposals for the funding purchase of equipment and materials to provide training in a number of skills, including soap and candle making, fabric painting and batik, were prepared and submitted.

#### 4.5 Sustainability

Through the agency of Mr. Patrick de Groot of Bounty Farms Ltd., an arrangement was made for the company to supply the Shelter with chicks, paddy husk, feeders and drinkers and to purchase all our excess chickens. The Shelter will thus not only have enough chicken for its own needs but will earn an income that will greatly assist us in ensuring the sustainability of the Shelter.

The poultry pen was completed during the second half of the year with the expectation of the arrangement with Bounty Farms Ltd. being implemented during the first quarter of 2002.

The development of a fruit and vegetable garden, which would not only provide sufficient for the Shelter's needs but an income from the sale of extra produce, suffered setbacks due to the discovery of a large amount of heavy metal embedded in the ground and a drainage problem. The metal was removed and the assistance of NARI and IICA obtained to deal with the drainage. Some planting was done and vegetables and ground provisions were reaped on a small scale.

The start-up funding for the poultry and fruit and vegetable projects was provided by the Government of the United Kingdom and donations in cash or kind from various individuals and enterprises.

## 5. TRAINING

Help & Shelter continued to provide training in domestic violence and related issues and counselling and public education skills, both to H&S volunteers and other groups and organisations as follows:

- ✓ Six persons received training in Hotline Counselling.
- ✓ Training Sessions on domestic violence were conducted for teachers and students of Mercy Wings School
- ✓ Vidya Kissoon and Lisa Thompson conducted a 2-day Domestic Violence Workshop for members of the police force.
- ✓ Sylvia Conway conducted a 2-day workshop on suicide for counsellors and volunteers.
- ✓ Dela Britton conducted a Domestic Violence Workshop for officers stationed at the Mahaicony Police Station.
- ✓ Vidya Kissoon conducted domestic violence training sessions with members of the Roadside Baptist Church Skills Training Centre and residents of Black bush Polder.
- ✓ Sylvia Conway conducted guidance & counselling workshops for teachers of Christianburg/Wismar School.
- ✓ Twenty-five persons completed a 6-day orientation programme for public education volunteers.
- ✓ Vidya Kissoon conducted a Suicide Workshop for members of the Bel Air/Prashad Nagar PYO.
- ✓ Pat Noel conducted a Training Workshop on Domestic Violence for 5<sup>th</sup> Formers at the North Ruimveldt Multilateral School.
- ✓ Vidya Kissoon conducted a youth development workshop for students of Bishop High School.
- ✓ Bonita Harris conducted a 2-day workshop on group facilitation skills for counsellors, volunteers and staff of H&S.
- ✓ Bonita Harris conducted a 2-day session for advocates against corporal punishment.

Help & Shelter volunteers also attended a number of courses, workshops and seminars arranged by other organisations:

- ✓ Pat Noel, Petal Baboolall, Sylvia Conway and Yvonne Quintin attended a three-day Participatory Approach Workshop organised by Building Community Capacity Programme.
- ✓ Carol Inniss-Baptiste participated in a CIDA-funded seminar on Counselling & Intervention Skills for Social Development

Professionals and Para-Professionals organized by the Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers and the Institute of Distance & Continuing Education.

- ✓ Carol Inniss-Baptiste attended the Introduction to Social Work I Course through the Institute of Distance & Continuing Education and passed with Credit.
- ✓ Merle Fredericks and Carol Inniss-Baptiste attended two 3-day courses at Lifeline Counselling: Networking for Non-Governmental Organisations and a workshop dealing with inputting statistics on computers.
- ✓ Merle Fredericks worked with the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association on a 1-week attachment.
- ✓ June Baird attended a workshop entitled "The Health Sector in collaboration with the Non-Governmental Organisation".
- ✓ Sylvia Conway attended an ECLAC-sponsored workshop on domestic violence data collection in Trinidad & Tobago.
- ✓ Merle Fredericks graduated with Distinction and received the Best Graduating Student Award upon completion of her Social Work II course conducted by the Institute of Distance & Continuing Education. Carol Inniss-Baptiste also completed the programme and passed with Credit.
- ✓ Irma Kirton, Juanele Kirton and Petal Baboolall passed their Social Work I Course organised by IDCE.

## **6. PUBLIC EDUCATION/OUTREACH**

Help & Shelter continued to be regularly requested to provide resource persons for a variety of radio and television programmes throughout the year. Among additional public education activities were the following:

- ✓ Lisa Thompson addressed a group of medical practitioners on child abuse at a seminar organised by the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO).
- ✓ Vidya Kissoon conducted Public Education Sessions for Eccles Vishnu Mandir, Sai Baba, Smith's Congregational Church, the Muslim Youth Organisation, St. Andrews Kirk Sunday School, Leonora Mandir, Glowing Star Youth Club, Newtown Assemblies of God and Region 5.
- ✓ Lisa Thompson conducted an orientation session for the new batch of Youth Challengers.
- ✓ In observance of International Women's Day, Lisa Thompson was a guest on the Voice of America's Caribbean Perspective Programme.
- ✓ Pat Noel, Carole Garraway and Pat Waddell addressed youths at the Youth Camps organized by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

during the August holidays. The focus was 'Child Abuse' and "Domestic Violence".

- ✓ Kenrick Sumner and Sylvia Conway participated in a Child Abuse Awareness Workshop at the Ebenezer AME Church.

We are most grateful to the Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Company Ltd. for placing our Spousal Abuse leaflets in telephone bills to subscribers. This led to a considerable increase in the number of calls to our Hotline.

We are also grateful to the Guyana Broadcasting Company for airing our radio spots free of charge and to channels 11 & 28 for showing our video as a public service.

## **7. NETWORKING**

Networking is essential to ensure that scarce resources are fully utilised and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. The following were among our networking activities during the year:

- Discussions with UNDP representative Ms. Jocelyn Thompson.
- Discussions with UNICEF country representative Ms. Shri Gururajah.
- Participation in activities in observance of International Women's Day, including a booth at the exhibition organised by the Women's Affairs Bureau, attendance at the Church Service in the Botanical Gardens, the luncheon at Carnegie School of Home Economics and the social function at Le Meridien Pegasus.
- Support to Mothers in Black during their regular Friday and special activities.
- Attendance by Carol Inniss-Baptiste, Pamela Nauth and Isha Husain-Singh at a Commonwealth Observer team briefing session.
- Meetings with representatives of Mercy Wings School.
- Participation in a fair organised by the Rotary Club of Georgetown.
- Attendance by Dela Britton at a meeting organised by the Women's Affairs Bureau to discuss Guyana's CEDAW report.
- The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Stabroek News and the Chronicle regarding the reporting of domestic violence cases.
- Participation in a Women's Rights Action Watch-sponsored CAFRA meeting to discuss NGO reporting to CEDAW on the status of women in Guyana for the preparation of a shadow report.
- Attendance by Petal Baboolall and Pat Noel at a Support Group Counselling Meeting held by Lifeline Counselling Service.
- Attendance by Carole Garraway at a meeting organized by UNDP on corporal punishment.
- Participation in the 'Ready Body' fair organized by Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association.

- Meeting with a representative of Canadian Crossroads to discuss the attachment of another Crossroads volunteer.
- Pat Noel attended the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Youth Club at Port Mourant.
- Participation in a Gender Equity Fund focus group meeting to discuss a programme for 2002.
- Attendance by Petal Baboolall, Isha Husain-Singh, Pat Noel and June Baird at a Problem Solving for Better Health (PSBH) Workshop.
- Attendance by Denise Dias and Sylvia Conway at the launch of the 'Say Yes for Children' Campaign.
- Attendance by Vidya Kissoon and Sylvia Conway at the Stakeholders Review of the Caribbean Gender Equity Fund's first cycle.
- Attendance by Sylvia Conway at the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana's (CIOG) Peace Initiative Meeting at the Muslim Youth Organisation Building.
- Attendance by Lynette Seabra at the Morning Glory Women's Club end of project programme at City Hall. The club members are all visibly impaired and showcased their talent in the form of songs, dances, skits and handicraft.
- Attendance by Elizabeth Cox at the annual general meeting of the NGO Forum.
- Participation by Pat Noel and Leila Hutson in training on Empowering Women in Local Government organised by the National Democratic Institute.
- Discussions with UNESCO's Regional Advisor Ms. Alya Saada and Guyana Secretary General Ms. Carmen Jarvis.
- Discussions with Mr. Martin Cheong, Amerindian Affairs Officer, on the procedure to be adopted in domestic violence cases.
- Attendance by Carol Inniss-Baptiste at the launching of the Family Counselling Centre organised by the Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers.
- Address by Lynette Seabra to the Regional Workshop for Shelters organised by the St. Francis Xavier R. C. Youth Club.
- Meeting with Drs. Glenda Maynard and Jacqueline Sharpe of PAHO on the status of child abuse in Guyana and Lisa's participation in a Workshop, to deal with the NGO aspect of Child Abuse. Others are to present on the Legal aspect and the Government aspect.
- Distribution of fliers and pinning of red ribbons to mark World Aids Day.
- Support to WAD's Women's Space Exhibition and Sale.

## **8. FINANCES**

The Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 follow on page 17 (see Appendix A). We continue to strive to maintain our reputation for transparent financial accountability and during 2001 took more stringent steps than ever to ensure that every dollar was wisely spent.

Two fund-raising events - a Bar-B-Que and a Take-Away Brunch (in collaboration with the Gentlewomen's Home) – were held. A number of individuals and businesses responded positively to our requests for assistance in cash or kind, despite the prevailing economic hardship. A list of donors during 2001 follows on page 15.

The expenses of running the Shelter were almost entirely defrayed from Lottery Funds received in 2000. Given the difficulties of securing funding from donor agencies to cover recurrent expenses, it is sincerely hoped that the Lottery Commission and Government will respond favourably to our request for assistance for a further year, during which both the fruit and vegetable garden and poultry projects should get well under way and bring in an income sufficient to see the Shelter some way towards self-sustainability.

While volunteerism has always formed the basis of our organisation, the fact remains that in the Guyana of today and the foreseeable future, it is unrealistic to expect all but the fortunate few to be in a position to volunteer their services on a regular basis, irrespective of how willing they may be. It has become essential to Help & Shelter that if we are to provide a reliable counselling, hotline and court support services we should be able to pay at least a stipend to those with the relevant skills.

We are therefore most grateful to BCCP for funding our Strengthening Support Services for Victims Project, which enabled us to employ a full time court support counsellor and 2 part time Hotline counsellors for 12 months. Our partnership with BCCP has continued to be one of the mainstays of our operations.

Help & Shelter has continued to be fortunate in its volunteers and staff and in the support received from donor agencies, the government and private sectors and individuals. As a result we have been able to meet the further increased challenges of running an NGO in Guyana and are confident that we can continue to not only remain in existence, but to strengthen and expand the services we provide.