

# **HELP & SHELTER**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2003**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Help & Shelter is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to contribute to bringing about a society where attitudes to the use of violence and practices of violence have been transformed. (Our Mission, Goals, Objectives and Areas of Action are set out at Appendix I.)

We are a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Our members are people who have shown a commitment to actively participating in the work that we do. During 2003 membership increased significantly as a result of the admission of a number of newer volunteers. The board of directors is elected annually by the members in general meeting and day to day operations are carried out by a combination of paid staff and volunteers.

Since its establishment in November 1994, Help & Shelter has become a recognised leader in the fight against violence in Guyana, particularly in the areas of domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse.

### The Philosophy of Help & Shelter

We believe -

- ✓ that the culture of tolerance of violence must and can be changed through education
- ✓ that everyone is a unique and valuable person
- ✓ that everyone has the right to the power to take control of their own life
- ✓ in equal rights of all human beings
- ✓ that no one has the right to be violent to another human being

## **THE PEOPLE OF HELP & SHELTER**

### **Our Volunteers**

Help & Shelter has always relied heavily on the concept of volunteerism and has been fortunate in that, despite the continuation of difficult circumstances, a core of volunteers has continued to assist in all areas of our work. New volunteers are always welcomed and provided with appropriate orientation and training.

We are very grateful to the following people who gave their time and skills (counselling/public education/legal/administrative/fundraising) to our work in 2003:

- Petal Baboolall
- Rozanna Girdharry
- Wanda Kyte
- Karen Gomes-Marks
- Shirley Philander
- Yvonne Quintin
- Colleen Ng
- Elizabeth Cox

- Margaret Williams
- Zairol Neisha
- Fiona Jordan
- Anita Khun-Khun
- Wonel Lewis
- Samantha O'Brien
- Harmala Sharma
- Colin Stuart
- Kenrick Sumner
- Lisa Thompson
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Pat Noel
- Yvonne Ismond
- Dela Britton
- Denise Dias
- Josephine Whitehead

### **Our Staff**

Our permanent staff during 2003 comprised

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ○ Margaret Kertzious –    | Crisis Service Coordinator    |
| ○ Roxanne de Florimonte – | Research/Clerical Assistant   |
| ○ Kevin Massiah –         | Receptionist/Office Assistant |
| ○ Kaye Dianne Caleb –     | Cleaner                       |
| ○ Gwen Dalgetty –         | Matron for the Shelter        |

In addition, under the CIDA/Gender Equality Fund project, we were able to employ the services of:

- |                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ○ Sylvia Conway –      | Full-time Counsellor               |
| ○ Claudette Norville – | Full-time Counsellor               |
| ○ Dennis Cuffy –       | Public Education Officer           |
| ○ Petal Baboolall –    | Part-time Court Support Counsellor |
| ○ Karen Gomes-Marks –  | Part-time Court Support Counsellor |

### **Our Board**

The following were directors during all or part of the year:

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Denise Dias –         | Chairperson         |
| • Vidyaratha Kissoon –  | Vice Chairperson    |
| • Josephine Whitehead – | Secretary/Treasurer |
| • Elizabeth Cox         |                     |
| • Dela Britton          |                     |
| • Yvonne Quintin        |                     |
| • Patricia Noel         |                     |
| • Kenrick Sumner        |                     |
| • Yvonne Ismond         |                     |
| • Lisa Thompson         |                     |

## **Our Awards**

In recognition of their outstanding contributions during 2003, Help & Shelter Awards were presented to:

- \* Wonel Lewis
- \* Samantha O'Brien
- \* Fiona Jordan
- \* Kevin Massiah

## **THE WORK OF HELP & SHELTER**

### **The Crisis Service**

During 2003 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 and the referral of clients to the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic or other attorneys-at-law for legal assistance as required
- ❖ The referral of clients to other agencies for appropriate assistance as required
- ❖ Public education
- ❖ Training and upgrading of volunteers
- ❖ Strengthening existing networking and developing new linkages

### **Counselling & In-Court Support**

Our ability to satisfy the demand for these services was due largely to assistance received under the CIDA/Gender Equity Fund Project.

Our contracted and volunteer counsellors provided face-to-face counselling to over 450 clients and hotline counselling to over 300 clients, and 36 clients were assisted through the court process. As has always been the case, our clients came from all age, ethnic and socio-economic groups, and from all religions and regions.

Our counselling data for 2003 and cumulative data from the time our Crisis Service opened to the end of 2003 is set out in Appendix II.

#### Why We Counsel

We believe that

- ✓ everyone has the right to share her/his feelings and not be violated by another
- ✓ when people explore their feelings, thoughts and actions they can make healthier choices for themselves
- ✓ We believe that positive responses to decisions made by oneself can increase self-esteem

## Public Education

Activities under our CIDA/Gender Equity Fund Public Education Outreach Skills Training Project continued throughout 2003, with workshops being held in Regions 1, 2, 6, 7, 9 and 10, in which 164 community and frontline workers participated.

Throughout the year also, Help & Shelter was overwhelmed by the demand for workshops, seminars, discussions, rap sessions and other public education work. Much of this work was done under the UNIFEM Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative project.

Help & Shelter also produced and lobbied for the free airing of public service announcements on radio and on television. Our contacts in the media facilitated regular broadcasting of the announcements during the time under review. Specific mention must be made of the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation and Channel 2 television.

Two new posters were launched in 2003 – ‘Fathers Are Parents Too’ and ‘Don’t Hit – Talk’ - and 300 copies of each were widely distributed. Over 8,000 leaflets (‘Sexual Assault’; ‘Anger Management’; ‘Rape’; ‘For Parents’; ‘Harassment Poisons the Workplace’; ‘Help & Shelter Fact Sheet’ & ‘Understanding Spousal Abuse’) were also distributed countrywide.

Our website ([www.sdn.org.gy/hands](http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands)) was regularly updated and received an average of 200 hits per month.

### January to March

- 2 day session on domestic violence awareness with the Lutheran Church Women of Berbice in collaboration with St. Xavier Youth Club
- 3 day training programme at Port Mourant, Berbice, with frontline workers to create awareness of domestic abuse and improve skills in advocacy and intervention in abusive relationships Regular appearances on TV Channel 2’s programme ‘Focus on Women’ by representatives from Help & Shelter
- Child Abuse awareness sessions with students of Brickdam Secondary School, Central High School & Dolphin Secondary School.
- Rap sessions with the Jet Setters Senior Club at the Youth Week Seminar coordinated by the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sports
- Participation in the regional administration of justice conference on the prevention of gender based violence
- Session on domestic violence with over 50 participants between the ages of 13 – 25 from the Young & Thoughtful Youth Group
- Participation in Women Against Violence Everywhere (WAVE) protests
- Participation in the National Democratic Institute (NDI) workshop on ‘Violence through the Media’
- Participation in the planning of activities for International Women’s Day
- Participation in a march and an interactive exhibition for International Women’s Day
- 2 day awareness workshop with Women Reaching Out
- Domestic violence awareness workshop with over 150 students at the Kuru-Kuru Training Centre drawn from all 10 administrative regions of Guyana
- Rap session on domestic violence with youths from various agencies at a Youth Seminar organised by the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sport
- Sessions with Guyana Police Force recruits and CID induction course participants on working with male abusers

#### April to June

- Meeting with the Commissioner of Police to discuss Help & Shelter's input into training of police officers on domestic violence issues
- Participation in workshop on non-violent communication
- Participation in School of the Nations literacy training programme
- Domestic Violence & Advocacy training programme with members of the Guyana Women in Development of Berbice
- Session with Kingston Methodist Church on domestic violence and substance abuse
- Session with Guyana Police Force recruits on working with male abusers
- Participation in 'Youth Make a Difference' exhibition
- Rap sessions with Young & Thoughtful youth group & Deliverance Tabernacle youth group
- CIDA/GEF workshops in Regions 1 (Mabaruma) & 7 (Bartica) respectively
- Collaboration with the Chief Justice in organising a magistrates' seminar on domestic violence (planning the programme, identifying and briefing resource persons and follow up)
- Launching of short film "Counselling is a Must" & "Fathers are Parents too" & "Don't hit...talk" posters
- CIDA/GEF workshop with frontline workers and community members in Region 2 at Mainstay
- 2 day follow-up workshop at Kuru-Kuru training College

#### July to September

- CIDA/GEF 3 day training workshop with front line workers in Region 10
- Session on domestic violence with students at the Kuru-Kuru Training Centre
- Awareness workshop on domestic violence and child abuse with the delegates of the Miss Guyana World 2003 Pageant
- Workshop at Kuru-Kuru Training College
- Sessions for the Guyana Police Force (recruits & officer training programmes)
- Awareness session with Varqua Foundation's "Youth Can Move the World" programme
- Sessions on domestic violence with staff members of COPS Security, MMC Security Force & Federal Management Systems
- Appearances on HBTV Channel 9 TV programme 'Girl Talk', Channel 4's 'Focus on Women' and GTV's Channel 11 'Let's Talk'
- Sessions on domestic violence with participants from Santa Rosa in collaboration with the Amerindian People's Association
- CIDA/GEF workshop with frontline workers and community members at Moruca in Region 1
- Participation in an interactive exhibition at the Diamond Community Centre Ground
- Rap sessions with St. Anthony's RC Church, the Grove Craft Production Centre and the Linden Branch of the Women's Advisory Committee of the Public Service Union
- Workshops under the CIDA/GEF project with members from the Hope Foundation and the Bartica community and with frontline workers and members of the community at the Macusi Research Unit – Annai in Region 9.

#### October - December

- CIDA/GEF workshop in region 7 at Kako Village, Upper Mazaruni, and in partnership with the Amerindian People's Association, with participants and frontline workers from Kwebana, Upper Waini

- Rap sessions with final year students of the International Relations programme at the University of Guyana and with students of the Saraswati Vidya Niketan Bhavan
- 2 day orientation session for persons wanting to work against domestic violence and child abuse
- CIDA/GEF workshop with frontline workers and community members at Aishalton in Region 9
- Participation in various activities to mark International Day Against Violence Against Women
- Organisation of public forum 'God and Domestic Violence' as part of the 16 days of activism against violence against women. Panellists were drawn from the Baha'í, Christian, Hindu & Muslim faiths
- Participation in symposium at Diamond Community Centre in collaboration with Creative Theatre Movement
- Rap session with students from lower and upper forms of School of the Nations
- Rap session with residents of Agricola
- Organisation and facilitation in collaboration with the Roadside Baptist Skills Training Centre in Orealla, Region 6 of a 2-day workshop on domestic violence with frontline workers and members of the community

#### Confidentiality

- \* Help & Shelter is committed to maintaining client confidentiality
- \* Breach of confidentiality by a volunteer or staff member will result in termination of services
- \* The ONLY circumstances in which information about a client may be disclosed are –
  - if the client gives written permission
  - if the client is suicidal &/or a danger to her/himself
  - if the client is homicidal or is threatening to engage in behaviour which is likely to result in harm to others
  - if the client is a minor and there is reason to believe s/he is being abused
  - if disclosure is ordered by the court

#### Training and Upgrading

Between April and August 2003 Help & Shelter conducted an IDCE-certified domestic violence counselling training programme. Of the 21 persons who registered, 14 successfully completed the programme, which included training in face to face and hotline counselling and an attachment at Help & Shelter or the Ministry of Human Services & Social Security. As a result, 13 new volunteers joined our ranks and demand for another programme was generated.

Regular supervision and training/upgrading of counsellors took place under the CIDA/Gender Equity Fund, in addition to which, training/upgrading sessions were made an integral part of the monthly volunteers' meetings.



## Networking

Help & Shelter maintained and consolidated its good relationships with a large number of governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with gender, violence and human rights issues during the year.

A major component of our work during 2003 was the development of partnerships with groups outside of Georgetown to facilitate public education activities. The groups are mentioned in our list of public education events and some of the new ones include Guyanese Women in Development in New Amsterdam, Berbice and the Makushi Researchers Unit in Region 9. These new partnerships resulted in an increase in public education activities outside of Georgetown.

Other networking partners included:

- Women's Affairs Bureau – collaboration on a number of matters
- Probation & Family Welfare Department – mutual referral of clients
- Ministry of Health – training of medical staff on issues of domestic violence; participation in a development of a National Plan of action on HIV/AIDS and the mutual referral of clients
- Guyana Police Force – the training initiated by the GAFRA/IADB programme in 2000 was continued with Help & Shelter remaining involved in the running of the sessions; collection of comparative statistical data on domestic violence and effective communication regarding assistance to clients
- Guyana Human Rights Association - mutual referral of clients
- National Commission on Women – data collection for report on the Legal Status of Women
- National Commission on the Rights of the Child – report on the Legal Status of Children in Guyana
- Guyana Association of Women Lawyers – referral of clients needing legal representation
- Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic – mutual referral of clients
- Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers – provision of resource person/ training activities
- CAMAL International Home – referral of clients in the need of shelter
- University of Guyana/IDCE – collaboration on training activities; provision of resource persons for sessions/discussions on domestic violence
- Varqua Foundation's 'Youth Can Move the World' – provision of resource persons for workshop sessions
- St Joseph's College (USA) – exchange of ideas and views on counselling

## The Shelter

Lack of funds resulted in the shelter being closed during the early part of the year, but reopening in April was made possible thanks to a grant of \$3 million from lottery funds.

During the year we were able to provide a temporary home for 7 women and 16 children for an average period of six months each. Sylvia Conway & Merle Fredericks regularly visited the shelter to provide counselling to residents.

We are firmly of the belief that what might be regarded as 'under occupancy' of the shelter is not due to lack of need but to a combination of lack of knowledge of its existence and what might be termed as a cultural resistance on the part of the majority of victims to leaving their homes, however much at risk they and their children may be by remaining. Help & Shelter recognises that greater efforts need to be made to publicise the existence of the shelter and to address the fears that victims may have of in essence taking a step into the unknown by availing themselves of the shelter we can provide.

In April Help & Shelter acquired title to the land on which the shelter (itself built with a grant from the Basic Needs Trust Fund) stands as a gift from the Government of Guyana. This of course resulted in an increase in the value of our fixed assets, as is reflected in our audited financial statements.

Our poultry rearing arrangement with Bounty Farms Limited continued throughout the year. We reared 9 batches of chickens, thereby earning approximately \$830,000: which was used to defray the overheads of running the shelter. It is hoped that this effort at self-sustainability may be expanded in the future by the addition of more chicken pens and hence an increase in the number of chickens we can raise per batch.

## **FINANCES**

The majority of funding for our Crisis Service activities during the year was received from the CIDA/Gender Equity Fund under an 18 month project that commenced in September 2002, the objective of which was improved implementation of the Domestic Violence Act.

As previously indicated, assistance was received from the Government of Guyana in the form of a grant of lottery funds to cover the running of the shelter. In addition we received a substantially increased Government subvention of \$1m, which greatly assisted us in covering non-project funded costs.

A number of companies and individuals assisted during the year with donations in cash or kind, including regular donations of supplies for the shelter. We are most grateful for all the support received.

Our 'Tribute to Mothers' fundraising garden party held on the Saturday before Mother's Day at Cara Inn was so successful that it is intended that it become an annual event. Experience has taught us that the holding of one or two large, well-organised events is considerably more productive than holding numerous small events such as barbecues, cake sales, etc.

Our efforts to identify alternative sources of funding for project work and/or to cover overheads continued throughout the year, but with disappointing results, as so many international donor agencies, foundations, etc. will not consider applications from countries in which they do not have an office.

We attach great importance to adhering to high standards of financial transparency and are always ready to account to our funding partners and donors for all moneys received. Our audited financial statements are attached as Appendix III and our list of 2003 donors as Appendix IV.

## OUR SERVICES ARE FREE

No one at Help & Shelter is authorised to request payment for any services rendered

### **CONCLUSION**

2003 was a year in which the need for more to be done to address violence in Guyana was tragically underscored. Twenty six women were killed by men who were supposed to love them, some in front of their children. And there is little doubt that for every one of those women thousands more – and children and men - were subjected to abuse of one form or another.

Our response has been and must always be to continue to provide counselling and other support to those who seek our help and to expand and strengthen our public education, advocacy and networking as we seek to change attitudes towards the use of violence and help to bring about a reduction in violent behavioural patterns.

Our activities under the CIDA/Gender Equity fund project were carried out as planned and we believe that the project was an overall success. However, although the need for the establishment of a male perpetrators programme, which was one of the objectives of the UNIFEM Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative Project, remained undiminished, we were unable to achieve it due to a number of reasons including:

- The partnerships that were to be established with the Government and the courts did not materialise due to the lack of capacity within the various agencies. For example, the magistrates' seminar on the Domestic Violence Act held in May revealed the many challenges that remain to be overcome in effectively implementing the Domestic Violence Act.
- The core facilitators who were trained by Mr. Calvin Bell moved on to other jobs, and one of the more experienced ones migrated. Despite their best intentions, they were unable to find the time to set up and run the programmes, even on a voluntary basis. Similar initiatives in other Caribbean territories have also met with limited success.

Help & Shelter participated in the "Partners to End Male Violence" online forum which ran from April to October (results at <http://www.endabuse.org> ), and acquired a greater realisation of the extent of international discussions on ways of dealing with male violence. We have therefore conceded that the plan to establish intensive rehabilitation perpetrator programmes has to be shelved, and decided that instead other activities which raise awareness of male violence and gender issues should be promoted and that these activities should be merged with our outreach programme and education activities.

The political and economic environment in 2003 continued to present enormous challenges to NGO survival, never mind expansion. That Help & Shelter was able to do the work that we consider so vital was due as always to the financial and other support received from the Government, funding agencies, corporate and individual donors and to the dedication of all those who contributed to the work of Help & Shelter in any way.