

# **HELP & SHELTER**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2006**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Help & Shelter is a non-governmental organization whose mission is to contribute to bringing about a society where attitudes to the use of violence and practices of violence have been transformed.

We are a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The members in general meeting elect our board of directors annually and day-to-day operations are carried out by a combination of paid staff and volunteers (who may be, but are not necessarily members of the company).

Since its establishment in November 1994, Help & Shelter has become a recognized leader in the fight against violence in Guyana, particularly in the areas of domestic, sexual and child abuse. Domestic violence takes a heavy toll on the individual's emotional and physical health and has high social and economic costs for families, communities, workplaces and the country as a whole.

This report is intentionally as concise as possible, to save on photocopying costs. Project agreements and reports, statistics and other relevant information are available on our website – [www.sdn.org.gy/hands](http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands).

## **OUR PEOPLE**

### **Our Volunteers**

During 2006 Help & Shelter continued to benefit from the contributions of volunteers in all the areas of its work. Some staff members and project personnel also did a considerable amount of voluntary work outside their paid hours.

Monthly volunteers' meetings continued to be held on the second Saturday of the month and an element of ongoing education was incorporated into most of them.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions during 2006, Ingrid McDonald and Ebeth McIntosh were chosen as the recipients of the 2006 Help & Shelter Volunteer Awards.

### **Our Members**

With the admission of 3 new members during 2006, at the end of the year membership stood at 50.

Although it has always been a policy that applicants for membership must have demonstrated a commitment to our work before being admitted and that all members should continue to play an active part in the organisation, several factors, including new or increased demands on peoples' time, unfortunately militated against full participation by all members.

### **Our Staff & Project Personnel**

With the re-opening of the shelter in March, our complement of staff and project personnel was increased by the addition of a shelter manager, alternate shelter manager and 3 security guards and a gardener.

Thanks to project funding, government support, fundraising events and donations, we were able to retain or engage the services of counsellors and public education and administrative personnel to carry out an increasing amount of work.

### **Our Board**

Our board continued to meeting on the third Thursday of the month and on an ad hoc basis as and when required.

Having rejoined the board at the 2005 AGM, Vidyaratha Kissoon resigned in January 2006 due to pressure of other commitments, as did Elizabeth Cox in April. In March, Navindra Persaud, who is a qualified accountant, accepted appointment as treasurer.

A list of those who contributed to our work during 2006 is at Appendix I.

## **OUR WORK**

### **The Crisis Service**

During 2006 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

### **Integrated Programme for Addressing Domestic Violence through Advocacy, Crisis Counselling, Court Support, Research, Analysis and Public Education Project (1/11/04-15/4/06)**

#### **Funded by the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund**

This project enabled us to consolidate the work done under the Gender Fund previous project in the areas mentioned in the project title.

With the completion of the project, our partnership with the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund sadly came to an end. The importance of the support that Help & Shelter received from the Fund cannot be over emphasized: it is that support that very largely enabled us to help our thousands of clients and to carry our public education work across the length and breadth of Guyana. We will always be immeasurably grateful to the Government and People of Canada and to the Fund managers and administrators for the confidence repeatedly placed in us.

During the 17½ months of the project, Help & Shelter was able to deliver face-to-face and/or hotline counseling to 847 victims/survivors of domestic violence and to support 76 victims through the court process.

Thanks to the key personnel training and sensitization programmes carried out under the project, there were significant improvements in the police and courts' handling of domestic violence cases, particularly with regard to the more expeditious handling of Domestic Violence Act applications and the protection of victims' right to privacy.

As a result of the project, more than 2,473 persons, including frontline and community workers, teachers and school children, were sensitized on the issue of domestic violence and our public education outreach and advocacy initiatives were facilitated by the reproduction of our video 'Counselling is a Must', brochures and posters.

The final project reports are available on our website.

### **USAID/Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction & Prevention Project (GHARP)**

Help & Shelter's Training and Advocacy on HIV/AIDS, Domestic Violence & Child Sexual Abuse Project, which had begun in July 2005, came to an end in June 2006, save for a 3 month counselling services extension.

A second 12 month project entitled HIV/AIDS and Domestic Violence Counselling, Education and Referral Project began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006. The objective of the project was to provide counseling, education and referral services for 500 persons vulnerable to the risk of HIV/AIDS infection as a result of being sexually or otherwise abused.

The project contributed to the PEPFAR 5 year strategic activities that included the following:

1. Providing support to women to mitigate potential violence or other negative outcomes of disclosing HIV-positive status to male partners
2. Organising campaigns and events to educate local communities about sexual violence against youth and strengthen community sanctions against such behaviour

3. Training health care providers, teachers, and peer educators to identify, counsel, and refer young victims of sexual abuse for other health services

The July to September 2006 project report is available on our website.

**Counselling, Public Education & Advocacy, Networking, Shelter, Administration & M&E Support  
Funded by the USAID-GDCCR Project (30/1/05– 31/5/06)**

The funds provided for vital administrative support were literally a lifeline, enabling us to pay expenses that were not covered under other projects and which we did not have sufficient own funds to pay.

The request for support and final narrative and financial reports are available on our website.

**Counselling, Public Education & Advocacy, Networking, Shelter, Administration & M&E Support  
Funded by the USAID-GDCCR Project (1/6/06 – 31/7/07)**

We applied for and obtained a further grant from the Project to start in June 2006 and run for 14 months.

In addition to providing short-term support for our counselling services pending coverage under another project, the new grant covers shelter operations and a public education programme, with special emphasis on incorporating awareness of and support for victims of trafficking in persons.

By the end of 2006, TIP had been incorporated into our public education programme and progress had been made in development of a portfolio of TIP public education materials (leaflets, posters, radio & TV PSAs).

The grant application and proposal are available on our website.

**Joint Red Thread/Help & Shelter Project in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women  
Funded by UNIFEM as administrator of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women**

The aim of the project is to document sexual abuse and violence against women and girls in the racial/ethnic/political conflict in Guyana.

Project activities were begun following receipt of funds in April 2005 and the project should have been completed in March 2006. Delay was however caused by changes in the conditions under which project work was being done and the difficulty experienced in coming to a clear understanding of the changes and then working out what they meant for the project, as explained in the August 2006 report & request for project extension to UNIFEM.

The project proposal, grant agreement and 2006 report are available on our website.

**Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative: Community/Police Outreach and Rehabilitation of Male Perpetrators (January 2004 – February 2007)**

**Funded by UNIFEM as administrator of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women**

The public education work continued, with sessions focused on young people, including a one day session during which 6 facilitators work with 90 Hindu youth. Other activities included participation at a culture fair at which outreach work was done with about 600 persons.

Our project proposal, grant agreement and interim reports are available on our website.

**Pickney Project  
In collaboration with EveryChild Guyana**

In October we started discussions with EveryChild Guyana about a suitable project to deal with child abuse prevention. Our concept note was accepted in November and work began on developing a 3 year project – our first devoted specifically to the prevention of child abuse - to start in June 2007.

The concept note is available on our website.

## **The Shelter**

With the funds (\$6m) received in August 2005 from the government (under an agreement for the shelter to be used as a refuge for both female victims of domestic violence and their children and female and pre-pubescent males victims of human trafficking) in hand, arrangements for the re-opening of the shelter continued during early 2006 and the shelter was formally re-opened on 7 March.

In addition to the government funds, we received considerable support from the donor community, business enterprises and private individuals in the form of donations of furniture and equipment, curtains, bed linen, etc. Several companies also kindly resumed their regular donation of food stuffs and other essential supplies.

We broadcast the availability of the shelter as widely as possible, producing and distributing a poster and leaflet about the shelter and mentioning it in all our public education work.

Between March and December 2006 the shelter accommodated 43 victims of domestic violence/human trafficking and their children. The length of stay ranged from 1 day to several months.

Efforts towards reaching some measure of self-sustainability resumed with the planting of the garden with fruits and vegetables. We hoped to resume poultry rearing but the state of the industry was such that none of the commercial producers felt able to partner with us.

Our re-opening press release and shelter intake data are available on our website.

## **OUR STATISTICS**

During 2006, we provided counselling services to 548 clients of all ages, 88% of them female, 65% from rural areas and 46% being victims of spousal abuse. This represented an increase of more than 30% over 2005.

At the end of the year, we had, since we opened in November 1995, counselled 6,767 clients of all ages, ethnicities and occupations, 85% of them female. We had also, by our estimates, reached more than twice that number through our public education work.

Our annual and cumulative statistics are available on our website.

## **OUR FINANCES**

We continued to adhere to high standards of financial transparency and to be always ready to account to our funding partners and donors for all moneys received.

Experience has show that in some cases it does make financial sense to put all one's eggs in one basket. In our case, we have found that one large, well-organised event will raise considerably more funds than several smaller ones, and our third fundraising garden party in July was extremely successful, netting some \$750,000.

At the end of the year we were looking forward to a donation from the proceeds of the Old Year's Night party organised by Elizabeth and Michael Perreira and Denise and Dennis Dias.

Our audited financial statements for 2006 appear in Appendix II.

During 2006 there was a significant change in the fixed assets of the company as a result of the acquisition of: 1 Toshiba laptop computer; 1 Toshiba projector; 2 desks, 2 executive chairs; 2 filing cabinets and 1 Samsung digital camera, valued at a total of \$ 875,410.

The company did not issue any shares or debentures during the period 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2006.

**Help & Shelter extends deepest appreciation to all those who in any way assisted us in our work during 2006.**

## Appendix I

The following persons contributed to our work as volunteers and/or staff and project personnel during 2006:

- Petal Baboolall
- Carol Inniss-Baptiste
- Elizabeth Cox
- Dennis Cuffy
- Denise Dias
- Patricia Gray
- Karen Gomes
- Julian Haynes
- Margaret Kertzious
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Kevin Massiah
- Patricia Noel
- Renita Noel
- Navindra Persaud
- Yvonne Quintin
- Danuta Radzik
- Colleen Reis
- Hemwattie Roopnarine
- Hamala Sharma
- Josephine Whitehead

The following persons also served as directors during 2006:

- Elizabeth Cox
- Denise Dias
- Patricia Gray
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Patricia Noel
- Navindra Persaud
- Yvonne Quintin
- Danuta Radzik
- Colleen Reis
- Hemwattie Roopnarine
- Hamala Sharma
- Josephine Whitehead