

HELP & SHELTER



ANNUAL REPORT 1998

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- * Crisis Service staff and volunteer counsellors
- * All the resource persons who assisted with training in counselling and public education skills
- * Dela Britton and Guyana Association of Women Lawyers members Sheila Chapman-Wong and Liz Deane-Hughes for providing clients with free legal advice
- * Funding Partners for financial and technical assistance - SIMAP, the Canada Caribbean Gender Equity Fund, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Basic Needs Trust Fund
- * The Ministry of Housing & Water for rent free accommodation
- * Devika Singh for assistance with leaflets
- * All governmental, non-governmental and international agencies and organisations nationally, regionally and internationally with whom we collaborated
- * Lolita Sahai of the Bureau of Statistics for help with design of data collection formats
- * All individuals and companies who gave donations in cash or kind
- * All those who organised and supported our fundraising events

And all others who contributed to Help & Shelter's work in 1998

Our Mission, Goals, Objectives & Related Areas of Action

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

Our Goals are:

1. To work to build respect for the right of women, children, youth and men 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. Establish a resource base to ensure the sustainability of Help & Shelter.

Our Objectives are:

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 in other personal relations, and about alternatives to the use of violence.

For Goal 2

To providing 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 proposed shelter.
2. To develop, staff and implement a well-articulated fundraising plan.

And the Related Areas of Action are:

1. Public education, advocacy and networking with like-minded individuals and groups, including men, youth and child/children's advocates organising against violence.
2. Provision of counselling, including a crisis hotline.
3. The establishment and maintenance of a shelter.
4. Lobbying for the strengthening of relevant laws and implementation mechanisms where necessary.
5. Fundraising

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Directors

The following members were elected to sit on the board of directors at the Annual General Meeting held on 4 April 1998 and were directors during the 1997/98 financial year :

Denise Dias	Chairperson
Susan Moore-Williams	Vice Chairperson
Josephine Whitehead	Secretary/Treasurer
Elizabeth Cox	Volunteer Representative
Andaiye	
Vidyaratha Kissoon	
Marguerite Buckmire	

Members of Staff during 1998

Crisis Service Coordinator	Yvonne Mbozi (Jan. to Nov.) Lynette Seabra (Dec.)
Secretary/Receptionist	Roberta Ninvalle (Jan. to Apr.)
Temporary Clerical Assistant	Waveney Lee (21 Apr. to 28 May)
Clerical Assistant	Roxanne de Florimonte (Jun. to Dec.)
Office Assistant	Damien Lewis (Jan to 5 Mar.) Brendan Facey (Apr. to Dec.)
Security Guard	Irma Gibson

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Volunteer Counsellors

Volunteer counselling during 1998 was done by:

Joan Arthur	Petal Baboolall	Farida Bacchus
June Baird	Marguerite Buckmire	Elizabeth Cox
Bella Datadin	Cheryl Forde	Monica Fordyce
Merle Fredericks	Debbie Houston	Jennifer Ganpatsingh
Elizabeth Deane-Hughes	Pamela Nauth	Carol Iniss-Baptiste
Vidyaratha Kissoon	Zairool Neisha	Colleen Ng
Patricia Noel	Lilian Persaud	Alita Singh
Susan Moore-Williams	Yvonne Quintin	Dulary Sookram
Isha Hussain Singh		

Public Education Committee

The following volunteers did public education work during 1998:

Carole Garraway Cheryl Forde Vidyaratha Kissoon

Fundraising

The following volunteers organised/helped with fundraising events during 1998:

Marguerite Buckmire Isha Hussain-Singh

Awards

At our Annual General Meeting in April 1998 three awards were presented:

- To Vidyaratha Kissoon - Second Help & Shelter Award for Outstanding Contribution
- To Lilian Persaud - Special Award for Contributions as a Volunteer Counsellor
- To Yvonne Mbozi - Special Appreciation Award

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Introduction

This is our fourth annual report. Whereas previous reports have been primarily intended for distribution to funding agencies, corporate and other donors and other interested persons as well as members, with the inauguration of our half yearly newsletter, which serves the purpose of keeping our donors and supporters informed as to our activities etc., this year's report and subsequent annual reports will be primarily aimed at our members and sent out with notice of our annual general meeting.

Help & Shelter's financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June and the financial statements appearing in this report are for the year ended 30 June 1998. However, given that our annual general meetings are invariably held after the commencement of the following calendar year, it seems appropriate to continue to report on the work and achievements of the organisation on a calendar year basis.

In organisational terms, 1998 began on a good note with funding and technical assistance from various sources approved, and despite some drawbacks, most of the activities and developments envisaged have taken place. These are detailed under separate headings below.

In terms of our aim of securing a reduction in - and the eventual elimination of - violence however, the year was disappointing and we joined with Red Thread and Women Across Differences in issuing a New Year statement calling for gender violence to be recognised as a public outrage and pledging to work with each other against violence of all kinds.

The Crisis Service

The SIMAP-funded rehabilitation of our Homestretch Avenue premises was completed during the first half of the year and resulted in an improved environment for our clients, volunteers and staff. As from early 1999 one of the counselling rooms will be set aside and specially furnished/equipped for the counselling of children.

Monthly meetings with volunteer counsellors were held throughout the year and as part of the Canada Caribbean Gender Equity Fund (GEF) funded Action and Outreach Project (AOP) ten core volunteers benefited from a special course in counselling children which was conducted by Dr. Faith Harding. Further special courses will be held during 1999.

After hours counselling began in mid-1998 and as a result we have been able to assist clients who cannot come during working hours. With call forwarding having been made available by GT&T during the year, it is now possible for us to provide hotline counselling at nights and weekends as well as during the day, but the response to requests for existing volunteers to do call-forwarded hotline counselling has been limited.

It had not been intended to train any more 'in-house' volunteer counsellors for the time being but instead to concentrate on outreach training (i.e. training of persons attached to organisations operating in areas outside of Georgetown) under the AOP. Given the demand upon our service however, we are now planning to run a course in hotline counselling, in the hope that it will attract volunteers who may be unable to come in to the office but are regularly available at home to counsel clients whose calls are forwarded to them.

Despite the fact that over 50 people have received training in counselling skills from Help & Shelter, only about 15 volunteer counsellors came in to the service regularly during 1998 and on a number of occasions due to prior work, family or other commitments, there were none available when needed. It was therefore decided that it was necessary to employ a full time professional counsellor and Lisa Thompson joined the organisation at the end of October. In addition to counselling, Ms. Thompson supervises the volunteer counsellors and has training and public education coordination responsibilities.

Our statistics for 1998 and for November 1995 to 31 December 1998 appear on pages 8

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and 9 respectively. The number of people seeking our help has increased dramatically since the greater publicisation of the service began in November 1998 with the appearance of items in the media, the distribution of new sets of leaflets and the airing of radio spots (funded by GEF under our Public Education, Networking & Documentation Project (PEND)). The increase is likely continue during 1999 and the resulting pressure on our existing counselling resources will probably require the employment of at least one more counsellor.

As part of PEND, our data collection formats have been upgraded and a computer which will be used for data collection and analysis has been purchased.

Dela Britton and Guyana Association of Women Lawyers members Sheila Chapman-Wong Elizabeth Deane-Hughes have continued to provide clients with free legal advice throughout the year

The Shelter

Our application to the Basic Needs Trust Fund for funding for the construction of a shelter was approved towards the end of 1997. During 1998 the design of the building was completed, the contract awarded at the conclusion of the tender process and construction commenced. There were some delays with the construction and it is now estimated that construction will be completed in the third quarter of 1999.

The formalisation of the gift by the Government of the property identified for the shelter is not yet completed but it is hoped that it will be during 1999.

The projected costs of getting the shelter ready to open and keeping it running are substantial. Under the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded Building Community Capacity Participation Project (BCCP) Help & Shelter will benefit from technical assistance in the form of development of fundraising and marketing plans, training of a fundraiser/marketing manager, income support for the fundraiser/marketing manager and it is hoped that once the plans and Fundraiser/Marketing Manager are in place, the required targets will be met.

Once the shelter is nearing completion a shelter administrator will be employed and receive training through BCCP.

Public Education

Our public education work in 1998 continued to consist of dissemination of information about Help & Shelter, publication of advice to victims and activism aimed at the reduction of violence in all its forms.

In November distribution of 5 new leaflets commenced, as did the airing of radio spots. Public education volunteers, who had the benefit of a training course in public education in June, have appeared on a number of radio and television programmes and acted as resource persons at various seminars etc..

During the week of observances to mark International Day Against Violence Against Women in November, Help & Shelter again promoted the wearing of purple (this being part of the UNDP global women's human rights campaign against violence against women), took part in a successful march and rally and had a number of public education items published in the press.

In our joint statement (with Red Thread) to mark IDAWAW, we drew attention to the atrocity of child rape and called for a national campaign on the issue. This call was repeated in our joint New Year statement (with Red Thread and Women Across Differences).

In 1999 distribution of leaflets and posters and airing of radio spots will continue, and a series of tv spots will be produced and aired.

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Networking

The establishment of linkages with other organisations dealing with gender, violence and human rights, which was begun as soon as Help & Shelter was formed, was continued and expanded during 1998.

At the national level our networking includes the following:

- * Women's Affairs Bureau - collaboration on activities to mark International Women's Day and International Day Against Violence Against Women; mutual referrals of clients
- * Probation & Welfare Department - mutual referrals of clients
- * Ministry of Health - participation in development of National Plan of Action on AIDS
- * Guyana Police Force - advice on format for collection of data on domestic violence reports; advice on content of Training Project; frequent communication regarding clients' matters
- * Guyana Human Rights Association - collaboration on Men Against Violence Against Women
- * Red Thread - general collaboration, including issue of joint statements
- * Women Across Differences - sharing of office space; general collaboration, including issue of joint statements
- * National Commission on Women - assistance with data for report on the Legal Status of Women
- * Guyana Association of Women Lawyers - provision of free legal advice by GAWL members; referral of clients needing legal representation
- * Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic - referral to Clinic of clients needing legal aid; referral by Clinic of clients needing counselling
- * Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers - provision of resource persons for training; frequent contact to ensure optimum use of each organisation's resources and avoidance of unnecessary duplication of work
- * Camal International Home - referral to the home of clients in need of shelter; referral by the home of clients in need of specialised counselling
- * Genesis Complex - referral to the home of clients in need of shelter; referral by the home of clients in need of specialised counselling
- * Women's Leadership Institute - collaboration in events to mark International Day Against Violence Against Women
- * Community Based Rehabilitation - provision of resource person for workshop

Our networking at the international level includes the following:

- * UNIFEM - participation in Women's Human Rights Campaign; participation in Second Regional Conference on Domestic & Sexual Violence in the Bahamas 4-7 November 1998; participation by one of our counsellors (as a former victim of domestic violence) at the Regional Violence Forum in Barbados in November
- * UNDP - general collaboration, including on production of materials about the DVA
- * CIDA - participation in the Building Community Capacity Project
- * Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad - sharing of material, experiences and ideas,
- * Senator Diana Mahabir-Wyatt of Trinidad - discussions re establishment

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- and operation of a shelter; discussions on domestic violence legislation
- Bahamas Crisis Centre - sharing of material for leaflets etc.
- International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy
 - consultation on the development of instruments to implement an international criminal justice strategy to eliminate violence against women

Technical Assistance

The technical assistance received in 1998 under BCCP included the preparation of a first business plan, which covered the period 1 July to 31 December 1998; the drafting of a two and a half year business plan to cover the period January 1999 to June 2001, training of staff in the use of Peachtree accounting software which is to be used for the preparation of our accounts and financial reports; and discussions with the consultants retained by BCCP who are to advise and assist in the development of fundraising and marketing plans for the organisation

Financial

The pressure of competing with an increasing number of other NGOs for donations from the business community was eased somewhat during 1998 with the commencement in April of the GEF-funded Action Outreach Project, the components of which are counselling, production and revision of training materials, ongoing training of core counsellors and outreach training and the commencement in June of the GEF-funded Public Education, Networking and Documentation Project, which covers promotion of the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, training for public education, production and dissemination of public education materials, including radio and television spots, data collection and analysis and reporting and a semi-annual newsletter. The first project will run until the end of August 1999 and the second until the end of November 1999.

A small amount of income was again generated in 1998 through the sale of "Help & Shelter" t-shirts and our share of the profits of the canteen at the Ministry of Labour. In 1999 it is intended to use some of the winning and other entries from the schoolchildren's art competition to produce notecards, cards etc. for sale.

With the appointment of a Fundraiser/Marketing Manager and the development of fundraising and marketing plans, it is anticipated that not only will we be able to handle the daunting task of getting the shelter up and running but that we will also be able to secure regular funding to ensure our continued survival.

As required by the Company's Act we state that there were no significant changes in the fixed assets of Help & Shelter and that no shares or debentures were issued during the 1997/98 financial year.

Our audited financial statements and the auditor's report follow on pages 12 to 16.