

HELP & SHELTER



ANNUAL REPORT 2004

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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. 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.

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, sexual 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

During 2004 Help & Shelter continued to benefit from the contributions of volunteers in all the areas of its work. Some of our staff members also did a considerable amount of voluntary work outside their paid hours.

Monthly volunteers' meetings were held on second Saturdays and an element of ongoing education was incorporated into most of them.

We are very grateful to the following people who gave their time and skills in 2004:

Counselling

- Petal Baboolall
- Karen Gomes
- Shirley Philander
- Yvonne Quintin
- Colleen Ng
- Margaret Williams
- Zairol Neisha
- Hamala Sharma
- Beverley Gomes-Lovell

- Sylvia Conway
- Dennis Cuffy
- Kenrick Sumner
- Colin Stuart

Public Education

- Anita Khun-Khun
- Hamala Sharma
- Colin Stuart
- Kenrick Sumner
- Lisa Thompson
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Carol Inniss-Baptiste
- Kevin Massiah
- Dennis Cuffy
- Frederick Christian
- Zairol Neisha

Administration

- Zairol Neisha
- Margaret Williams
- Colleen Ng
- Denise Dias
- Elizabeth Cox
- Josephine Whitehead
- Patricia Noel
- Yvonne Ismond
- Seta Singh

Legal

- Dela Britton

In recognition of their outstanding contributions during 2004, Help & Shelter Awards were presented to:

- ✧ Petal Baboolall
- ✧ Karen Gomes
- ✧ Zairol Neisha

Our Staff

Our permanent staff during 2004 comprised:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Margaret Kertzious – | Crisis Service Coordinator |
| • Roxanne De Florimonte – | Research/Clerical Assistant [resigned in November 2004] |
| • Kevin Massiah – | Public Education/Office Assistant |
| • Gwen Dalgetty – | Matron for the Shelter [until the end of February 2004] |
| • Kaye Dianne Caleb – | Cleaner [left at the end of February 2004] |
| • Lydia Profitt | Cleaner |

In addition, under the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund Implementing the Domestic Violence Act Project, the services of the following persons continued until April 30th 2004:

- Sylvia Conway – Full-time Counsellor
- Claudette Norville – Full-time Counsellor (migrated prior to 30 April)
- 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 the period 1 January to 20 November 2004:

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

At our Annual General Meeting on 20 November 2004 the following persons were elected to the board:

- Josephine Whitehead – Chairperson
- Lisa Thompson – Vice Chairperson
- Elizabeth Cox – Treasurer
- Yvonne Quintin
- Patricia Noel
- Patricia Grey
- Sandra Plummer
- Colleen Reis
- Nicola Mendes
- Danuta Radzik

Patricia Isaacs was subsequently elected to the board as volunteer representative.

THE WORK OF HELP & SHELTER

On Saturday, January 10th 2004 a special meeting of volunteers and staff was held, at which the work plan for the year was discussed, new volunteers were introduced and the volunteer awards for 2003 were presented.

It was agreed that a similar meeting would be held early every year.

The Crisis Service

During 2004 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

Up to the end of April 2004, most of our counselling and in-court support was provided under the auspices of the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund Implementing the Domestic Violence Act Project

Between the end of April and 1 November 2004, when a further Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund project came on stream, we were able to continue to provide uninterrupted services due to the dedication and commitment of volunteers and qualified permanent staff.

Our contracted and volunteer counsellors provided face-to-face and hotline counselling to 444 clients, and 63 clients were assisted through the court process. Magistrates continued to refer cases to us for counselling of perpetrators and victims.

Our counselling data for 2004 and cumulative data up to 31 December 2004 appear in Appendix V.

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

The year was another busy one for our public education work. More work was done outside of Georgetown, with workshops under the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Implementing the Domestic Violence Act Project being held in Regions 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10. We continued to work with schools and the Guyana Police Force (who have since developed their own project with the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund) and to facilitate or provide resource persons for seminars, workshops and other activities organised by educational, religious, community and other organisations and groups and to appear on numerous television and radio programmes.

Our Public Education Diary (excluding TV and radio programmes):

January

- Workshop in Siparuta, Region 6, in collaboration with Roadside Baptist Skills Training Centre
- Workshop with Varqua Foundation, Youth Can Move the World project
- Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund Project workshop concluded in Lethem, Region 9
- DV Awareness seminars with nurses at the St Joseph's Mercy Hospital Nursing School
- Awareness session at the Grove Maasjid
- DV session at Kitty Health Centre

February

- DV session with Guyana Police Force recruits
- Seven rap sessions at Kitty Health Centre with pre-natal and post-natal clinic patients

- Three day Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund workshop in Mahdia, Region 8
- Input into Stabroek News editorial on Child Abuse

March

- Session held with students of Roadside Baptist Skills Training Centre, No 63 Village Corentyne.
- Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund workshops in Regions 2, 4 and 9
- Support of various International Women's Day activities
- DV sessions with trade union women at CCWU Hall

April

- DV session with lay pastors in training for the Reformed Churches in Guyana at Burns Memorial Church
- DV session with Nurses and other staff of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation
- DV sessions with the Region 5 Women's Affairs Committee and the Church of Christ, in Region 6
- One- day workshop in Region 5 at Fort Wellington with Guyana Women in Development
- Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund impact assessment in Regions 1 and 7

May

- DV session with members of the Church of Christ of Region 6
- Participation in the Global Women's Strike march with the Crossroads Centre in Guyana

June

- Distribution of leaflets to employees of DDL Security Service
- Session on child abuse in Region 3 with community members at Kawal Primary School
- DV session in Kamarang
- DV session with school dropouts at Friendship Youth Development Center

July

- Session on child abuse with 30 constables as part of Guyana Police Force Training Programme
- Session with the Cove & John Ashram Youth Camp
- Commencement of UNICEF Peace Education Project - Beterverwagting
- DV session in Paramaktoi
- DV session with school drop-outs at Friendship Youth Development Centre

August

- Continuation of UNICEF Peace Education Project - Lodge and Covent Garden
- Orientation session with a cross section of Hindu workers on domestic violence, child abuse and suicide - through the Our Children Our Future Group.
- Session on child abuse with the Rights of Children Committee, Region 6 in New Amsterdam

September

- DV session with nurses at Georgetown Public Hospital

October

- DV session with 25 Nursery School teachers from BV/Triumph Community at LBI Nursery School
- Session on child abuse for Guyana Police Force Senior Officers Training Programme

November

- DV sessions with members of the Church of Christ
- Four DV sessions at Kitty Health Centre with pre-and post-natal patients
- Four DV sessions with teachers from Sea View Nursery School.

- Four DV sessions with teachers and pupils of J.E. Burnham Primary School.
- Three DV sessions with teachers and students of St. Roses High School.
- DV session with residents of the Amerindian Hostel.

December

- DV sessions with teachers at J.E. Burnham Primary School
- DV sessions with teachers at St Roses High School
- DV sessions with pre and post natal mothers at Lodge, Beterverwagting and Covent Garden health centres

Our range of public education materials was increased with the production of 12,000 leaflets entitled:

- ✓ Wife Abuse
- ✓ Understanding Spousal Abuse
- ✓ Child Abuse
- ✓ Child Neglect
- ✓ Rape
- ✓ Sexual Assault
- ✓ Anger Management
- ✓ What is Child Abuse
- ✓ Help & Shelter Fact Sheet
- ✓ Sexual Harassment Poison the Work Place
- ✓ For Parents

Our website at <http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands> was kept up to date and had an average of 300 hits per month. A number of requests for information came from abroad, including several with regard to refugee applications in North America.

Training and Upgrading

Two groups of new volunteers received orientation and training during the year and there were a number of upgrading sessions for staff members both in-house and organised by other agencies.

The Crisis Service Coordinator attended a UNIFEM workshop on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence against Women in Barbados during May 2004.

Networking

Help & Shelter continued to maintain and consolidate its good relationships with governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with gender, violence and human rights issues during the year. Networking partners included:

- Women's Affairs Bureau – ongoing collaboration
- 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 – training projects/sessions with recruits; 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
- Varqua Foundation’s ‘Youth Can Move the World’ – provision of resource persons for workshop sessions
- UNICEF – facilitation of research on domestic violence and child abuse.

Policy on Sensitive and Other Issues

In June 2004 Help & Shelter adopted a Policy on Sensitive and Other Issues. Every person who works with us in any capacity is required to sign the policy document (see Appendix II) and adhere to the practices set out in it.

Projects

Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund

As indicated above, the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund Implementing the Domestic Violence Act Project begun on 11 September 2002 and continued up to the end of April 2004. As a result of the project, efforts to ensure that the Domestic Violence Act is fully and properly implemented throughout Guyana were significantly enhanced through meeting of the required project objectives, which were essentially to continue the provision of a range of quality services to victims of domestic violence.

During the 19 months of the project, Help & Shelter was able to deliver face-to-face and/or hotline counseling to 1385 victims/survivors of domestic violence and to support 45 victims through the court process.

Thanks to the key personnel training and sensitisation 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.

Thanks to the project, more than 1500 persons, including frontline and community workers, teachers and school children, were sensitised on the issue of domestic violence and our public education outreach and advocacy initiatives were facilitated by the production/printing of a video, brochures and posters.

The Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund Help & Shelter Integrated Programme for Addressing Domestic Violence through Advocacy, Crisis Counselling, Court Support, Research, Analysis and Public Education Project began on 1 November 2004 and will conclude in mid-April 2006. This project is enabling us to consolidate the work done under the previous project in the areas mentioned in the project title.

With the completion of the current project in April 2006, our partnership with the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund will sadly come to an end, as the Fund’s cycle is, we understand, not to be repeated. The importance of the support that Help & Shelter has received from the Fund over the past decade cannot be over emphasised: it is that support that has 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.

UNICEF

Help & Shelter worked on two UNICEF-funded projects during 2004: an Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Project and a specific phase of the Peace Education Pilot Project.

The OVC Project, which extended from January to April 2004, was a research exercise conducted through the administration of a questionnaire in each of the ten administrative regions with the objective of assessing the number and needs of children whose parents had died from HIV/AIDS and related causes. Both the children and their caregivers were interviewed and special consideration was given to the existing physical and social environment in which the children were living. The project findings were used as the basis of a report produced by UNICEF.

The Peace Education Pilot Project phase comprised:

- (1) Three-day workshops dealing with domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and reproductive health and conflict resolution and targeting frontline workers (teachers, police officers, social workers, nurses and agricultural extension workers) in the three pilot communities of Lodge, Beterverwagting and Covent Garden. 75 persons participated and the sessions were conducted by facilitators drawn from several organizations including Help & Shelter, the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, Living Values and the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security.
- (2) Evening and weekend public education sessions targeting religious groups in the pilot communities, which attracted a total of 50 persons. The sessions were facilitated by Help & Shelter representatives with input from the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, Love Outreach International and Living Values.
- (3) Sessions on domestic violence conducted by Help & Shelter with pre- and post-natal mothers, at health centers in the pilot communities.

At the end of the three-day workshops, representatives drawn from the pilot communities participated in a five-day Help & Shelter 'Training of Trainers' workshop, at the conclusion of which certificates were awarded to the participants and they enlisted as Help & Shelter volunteers.

UNIFEM

Work continued under the public education component of the UNIFEM Project. The activities are set out in Appendix III.

The Shelter

It was with great reluctance that the decision was taken to close the shelter at the end of February 2004. The Lottery funds received in 2003 were virtually exhausted, we had no other funds to continue to cover operation costs and the rate of occupancy had for some time not been such as to justify a further application for Lottery funds.

We believed that the low rate of occupancy was due not to a lack of need for a place of safety but to a cultural resistance on the part of most women (of all ethnic, socio-economic etc. backgrounds) to leave their homes. We also recognised that there may have been aspects of the way in which the shelter was run that might have caused potential residents to reconsider their options.

Having discussed the steps that could be taken to overcome the reluctance of abused women to avail themselves of the shelter and in view of our previously fruitless searches for any donor agency that would provide funding to cover shelter operational costs, we decided to attempt to pursue a partnership

with a US based organisation that was already running a children's home in Guyana and proposed to establish other children's homes and shelters for victims of domestic violence here. When however, following preliminary discussions and a site visit, we received no response from the leadership of the organisation for several months, we had to conclude that the envisaged partnership was unlikely to come about.

We therefore approached Dr. Dale Bisnauth, the Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security and broached with him the possibility of the collaboration between the ministry and Help & Shelter to facilitate the re-opening of our shelter for dual or multi-purpose use, namely a place of shelter for our clients and victims of trafficking in persons (TIPs), and, possibly a children's home. The suggestion regarding victims of trafficking in persons was made in the context of the ministry's efforts to comply with the requirements of the Government of the United States of America in relation to TIPs, and media announcements by the Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Bibi Shadick, that our shelter had been identified as a place to house TIPs victims.

Minister Bisnauth agreed with our assessment that low occupancy should by no means be taken as an indication that there was no need for a shelter and also agreed that it would be sensible to make the best use of the shelter by combining use purposes. At the end of the year therefore, the prospects for the re-opening of the shelter were favourable.

Shortly following the closure of the shelter, our self-sustainability poultry rearing arrangement with Bounty Farms Limited came to a halt. With the possible re-opening of the shelter in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security in mind, preliminary plans were made to not only re-start the poultry rearing arrangement but to expand it by the addition of more chicken pens, which would lead to an increase in the number of chickens raised per batch and hence in the income from their sale.

FINANCES

In addition to funds received for Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund and UNICEF project work, we received a substantially increased Government subvention of \$1m, which greatly assisted us in covering non-project funded costs, and a number of companies and individuals again assisted during the year with donations in cash or kind.

We always send a letter of appreciation to each donor but take this opportunity of again expressing our gratitude to all those who provided financial assistance to us during 2004.

Our 'Tribute to Mothers' fundraising garden party held on the 30 May at the Georgetown Club was extremely successful. The funds raised - approximately \$500,000- proved to be of vital importance in keeping our basic services going during the middle of year. A list of the people who helped to make the event such a success appears at Appendix IV.

While we recognise the pressing need to become less dependent upon project funding, the achievement of a greater degree of self-sustainability remained as elusive as ever in 2004. Greater innovation and creativity are required in our fundraising efforts but the reality remains that the number of people who have the necessary talent, inclination and time is too small to enable us to hold more than one large event.

Our ongoing efforts to identify sources of funding for project work and/or to cover overheads did however yield a positive result, and we are very pleased to report that our proposal submitted to the United States Agency for International Development for administrative support was approved under USAID's Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution Project (GDCCR) in December 2004.

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. Our audited financial statements (including the list of donors) appear in Appendix VI.

CONCLUSION

2004 was another year in which the tragic results of domestic violence frequently hit the front pages, indicating the need for Help & Shelter not only to be able to continue its work but to expand it and to constantly seek ways to make it more effective.

It is unlikely that the challenges to survival that Help & Shelter, in common with most other Guyana NGOs, faces will diminish in the foreseeable future. We will however continue with our efforts to secure the necessary material and human resources to enable us to fulfill our mandate of bringing about a reduction in and changing attitudes towards the use of violence.

At the end of the year, our plans for 2005 included:

- Continuing with the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Fund project to deliver counselling, court support and public education
- Re-opening of the shelter
- Ongoing public education work with schools and specific target groups such as the police (the latter including further advocacy for the launching of domestic violence units)
- Maintaining relationships with critical partners such as the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security, the Guyana Police Force, donors and other groups in ten community
- Seeking sources of funding to support our work at the conclusion of existing projects

Once again, Help & Shelter extends deepest appreciation to all those who in any way assisted us in our work during 2004.