

# HELP & SHELTER



## ANNUAL REPORT 2005

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**H**ELP & 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**

The contributions of the following people to the work of Help & Shelter, whether in a voluntary or paid capacity, during 2005 is gratefully acknowledged:

#### **Counselling**

- Petal Baboolall
- Karen Gomes
- Yvonne Quintin
- Zairol Neisha
- Hamala Sharma
- Beverley Gomes-Lovell
- Dennis Cuffy
- Carol Inniss-Baptiste
- Kathleen Scott

#### **Public Education & Advocacy**

- Hamala Sharma
- Lisa Thompson
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Carol Inniss-Baptiste
- Kevin Massiah
- Dennis Cuffy
- Frederick Christian
- Anita Khun-Khun
- Danuta Radzik
- Patricia Isaacs
- Karen Gomes
- Margaret Kertzius
- Hemwattie Roopnarine

### Administration

- Zairol Neisha
- Denise Dias
- Elizabeth Cox
- Josephine Whitehead
- Patricia Noel
- Yvonne Ismond
- Margaret Kertzious
- Samantha Harrinauth
- Lydia Proffitt

### The Shelter

- Chris Lewis
- Zairol Neisha

In recognition of their outstanding voluntary contributions during 2005, the recipients of the 2005 Help & Shelter Awards are:

- ✧ Carole Iniss-Baptiste
- ✧ Patricia Isaacs
- ✧ Lisa Thompson

The following persons served as directors during 2005:

- Denise Dias
- Josephine Whitehead
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Lisa Thompson
- Elizabeth Cox
- Yvonne Quintin
- Patricia Noel
- Patricia Grey
- Sandra Plummer
- Colleen Reis
- Nicola Mendes
- Danuta Radzik
- Patricia Isaacs
- Hemwattie Roopnarine

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

### **THE CRISIS SERVICE**

Throughout 2005 our core activities continued to be:

- ❖ The provision of face-to-face and hotline counselling
- ❖ The provision of in-court support to clients during legal proceedings
- ❖ 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 & advocacy
- ❖ Training and upgrading of volunteers
- ❖ Strengthening existing networking and developing new linkages

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

Most of our counselling and in-court support was provided under the auspices of our Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Programme's Integrated Programme for Addressing Domestic Violence through Advocacy, Crisis Counselling, Court Support, Research, Analysis and Public Education (our Gender Equality Project)

Our counsellors provided face-to-face counselling to 414 new clients, 219 persons accessed counseling through the hotline service, 60 clients were assisted through the court process and 269 clients were referred to various agencies for appropriate assistance.

Magistrates continued to refer cases to us for counselling of perpetrators and victims.

Our counselling data for 2005 and cumulative data up to 31 December 2005 appear 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 & Advocacy**

Our public education work included:

- Workshops under the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Implementing the Domestic Violence Act Project for frontline workers in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 10
- Raising awareness of domestic, sexual and child abuse in schools
- Providing training in domestic sexual and child abuse issues to members of the Guyana Police Force
- Facilitating or providing resource persons for seminars, workshops and other activities organised by educational, religious, community and other organisations and groups
- Using television and radio programmes to increase awareness of domestic, sexual and child abuse
- Producing and distributing leaflets and posters
- Distribution of Guyana Women Lawyers' Association's 'The Law and You' booklets
- Distribution of Red Thread's 'Household Guide to the Domestic Violence Act'
- Taking 2 advertising spaces on the Georgetown to UG sea wall

Our Public Education Diary is set out in Appendix III

Our range of leaflets was expanded, topics covered including:

- ✓ Wife Abuse
- ✓ Understanding Spousal Abuse
- ✓ Child Abuse
- ✓ Child Neglect
- ✓ Rape
- ✓ Sexual Assault
- ✓ Anger Management
- ✓ What is Child Abuse?
- ✓ Sexual Harassment Poison the Work Place
- ✓ For Parents

We upgraded our website at <http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands> to allow easier updating of the information it provides about domestic violence and child abuse in Guyana. The website is also used to maintain its accountability to the public by the posting of its annual and some project reports. Most of the access to the website in 2005 continued to be from outside Guyana.

We continued to advocate for legislative changes, including the abolition of corporal punishment in schools, comprehensive reform of sexual offences legislation and the enactment of the Children's, Family Court and Status of Children Bills.

In September 2005 we accepted an invitation to sit on the Task Force on Domestic Violence chaired by Ms. Magda Pollard in the hope that it would have the weight to bring about improvements in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act that Help & Shelter lacked.

## **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.

In June, the Crisis Service Coordinator attended a training programme on TIPS – Victims Assistance, in Miami, USA.

## **Networking**

We continued to maintain and consolidate our relationships with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with gender, violence and human rights issues. 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 – collaboration on advocacy and mutual referral of clients
- National Commission on Women – provision of data for report on the Legal Status of Women
- National Commission on the Rights of the Child – provision of data for 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 persons/training activities
- CAMAI 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
- Red Thread – collaboration on advocacy on social and legal issues

## **PROJECTS**

### **Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Programme's Integrated Programme for Addressing Domestic Violence through Advocacy, Crisis Counselling, Court Support, Research, Analysis and Public Education**

Our Gender Equality Project provided funding for the period 1 November 2004 to 15 April 2006 and enabled us to consolidate the work done under previous projects funded by the Gender Equality Programme.

Thanks to the project:

- ✓ Hundreds of victims of abuse received counselling
- ✓ Thousands of frontline and community workers, teachers and school children were sensitised to and educated about domestic, sexual and child abuse
- ✓ Tens of thousands gained some knowledge of our existence and the issues we address through our leaflets, posters, sea wall signs and public service announcements broadcast countrywide on radio and television
- ✓ As a result of key personnel training and sensitisation programmes, 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
- ✓ In the wake of the January 2005 floods, approval was given for Help & Shelter to organise a training course in psycho-social counselling for 16 participants from the Volunteer Youth Corps, Red Thread, Women Across Differences, the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security, Men of Purpose and Help & Shelter.

Help & Shelter again acknowledges the enormous debt of gratitude owed to the Government and People of Canada for their invaluable support.

### **USAID/GHARP Training & Advocacy on HIV/AIDS, Domestic Violence & Child Sexual Abuse Project**

Under this 12 month project, which began on 1 July 2005 funding was programmed to enable:

- The development, production and testing of a training guide addressing the linkages between domestic and child abuse and HIV/AIDS
- Workshops using the training guide in each of the 10 administrative regions of Guyana with frontline and community workers
- The provision of counselling services and basic HIV/AIDS information & education to survivors of domestic violence and child abuse
- The provision of enhanced referral for care and support services
- The establishment of a formal referral relationship with the GUM Clinic

### **USAID/Guyana Democratic Consolidation & Conflict Resolution Project**

From February to December 2005 Help & Shelter received vital administrative support from the USAID/GDCCR Project, which funded employment and other expenses not covered under other projects, thereby enabling us to sustain the operation of the Crisis Service.

### **UNIFEM Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women Domestic Violence Prevention Project**

The UNIFEM project allowed us to continue our rap sessions and advocacy activities, especially with the police. We did a Rapid Assessment Survey on attitudes to Domestic Violence so as to inform the public education activities.

The full project report is available at our website at <http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands/files/unifemreportjan2006.pdf>

### **UNIFEM Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women Joint Project with Red Thread**

In April 2005 funding was received for Red Thread & Help & Shelter's joint project entitled 'Documenting Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls in the Racial/Ethnic/Political Conflict in Guyana'. Red Thread undertook main

responsibility for project implementation while Help & Shelter undertook legal responsibility for overall administration and responsibility for financial administration and reporting.

As a result of changes in the conditions under which the project was being implemented, some of the programmed activities could not take place as planned and at the end of the year it was anticipated that the project would be extended to accommodate the changed conditions.

### **HELP & SHELTER'S 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25) 2005 was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launching Help & Shelter's Crisis Service. We marked the day and the 16 days of Activism Against Violence Against Women with a number of events, including:

- A film show at the Sidewalk Café, Middle Street
- An evening of poetry and prose at the Oasis coffee shop on Carmichael Street
- A Saturday morning street intervention in front of NBIC on Water Street

As usual, Help & Shelter collaborated with the Women's Affairs Bureau in the organisation of and participation in activities to mark IDEVAW and the 16 Days of Activism.

### **THE SHELTER**

In January we responded positively to the Government's request that we allow the shelter to be used for the temporary accommodation of flood victims. Over 117 persons stayed at the shelter during a 3 week period.

As a result of discussions with the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Security, in August 2005 funding of \$6 million was provided for the reopening and running of the shelter under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry & Help & Shelter whereby the shelter would be used as a refuge for both female victims of domestic violence and their children and female and under 14 male victims of trafficking in persons.

By the end of the year a Shelter Manager had been employed and progress towards the re-opening of the shelter was well underway.

### **FINANCES & ACCOUNTABILITY**

Help & Shelter benefited substantially during 2005 from an increased Government subvention. We remain extremely grateful to the Government for providing us with an annual subvention, rent free accommodation for our Crisis Service and for having given us the land on which our shelter was built and supported our application for funding to build the shelter.

A combination of the January 2005 floods and their long after-effects and the absence of large fundraising event expertise resulted in a substantial reduction in fundraising income during the year. We did however continue to receive support in cash or kind from a number of individuals and organisations and we are extremely grateful to each and every one of them.

Our adherence to high standards of financial transparency continued. Our audited financial statements appear in Appendix IV.

### **CONCLUSION**

2005 was another challenging year for Help & Shelter. The demand for our counselling and public education services stretched our financial and human resources but thanks to the funds provided through our projects and by the government, individuals and organisations and to the dedication of our staffers and volunteers, we ended the year reasonably confident that we could survive the challenges of 2006 and beyond.

The need for the services that Help & Shelter provides remains – unfortunately – as strong as ever. The extent to which violence in all its forms continues to pervade Guyana spurs us on to find more effective ways of reaching and assisting victims and changing attitudes and practices.

Once again, Help & Shelter extends deepest appreciation to all those who in any way assisted us in our work during 2005.