

# **HELP & SHELTER**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

HOMESTRETCH AVENUE, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

TEL: + 592 225-4731; 227-3454; 227-8353 FAX: 227-8353

EMAIL: [hands@networksgy.com](mailto:hands@networksgy.com)

WEBSITE: <http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands>

## **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 in our Governance, Policies & Procedures Manual, which is available on our website – [www.sdn.org.gy/hands](http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands).

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 project personnel and volunteers (who may be, but are not necessarily members of the company).

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. 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, media statements and other relevant information are available on our website

## **OUR PEOPLE**

### **Our Volunteers**

Despite an economic climate that continued to militate against volunteerism, a number of dedicated volunteers provided support in a number of areas and used all available opportunities to expand upon and strengthen their skills, particularly in relation to public education facilitation.

It is heartening that we continued to receive offers of volunteer support throughout the year and held two orientation sessions with 22 new volunteers.

### **Our Members**

There were few applications for new membership during the year and of the existing members in the country (several live abroad, wishing to remain members and periodically assisting, either with personal donations or organising Guyana association fundraising activities for our benefit), many were willing but simply unable to make significant contributions due to work, family or other commitments.

In April 2008, the names of 5 persons who had failed to respond to our requests to contact us with regard to their lengthy inactivity were removed from the membership register.

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

Thanks to continued government support for the shelter and project funding, we were largely able to employ/contract the services of sufficient qualified people to carry out our work.

In addition to work for which they were paid, many of our staff and project personnel also provided voluntary services.

### **Our Board**

Several changes in the board were occasioned by extended absence overseas and pressure of other commitments. It remained a challenge to find persons ready, willing and able to make the contributions in time and skills that are essential for the board to adequately keep the organisation on track.

A list of those who contributed to our work during 2008 is at Appendix I.

## **OUR WORK**

The principal activities of Help & Shelter during 2008 continued to be the provision of counselling services, public education, networking and lobbying, the maintenance of the shelter and raising funds.

2008 was an extremely busy year for us, with an unusually large number of projects starting, continuing or closing.

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

The Training and Counseling on HIV/AIDS and Domestic Violence Project, which had begun in October 2007, came to an end in September 2008 and with the start of a new 5 year cycle of funding, Help & Shelter was successful in securing funding for a 12 month (from October 2008) Training and Counseling on HIV/AIDS and Domestic Violence Project.

The core project activities and technical areas are:

- ✓ Prevention Community Outreach Program covering face-to-face, hotline and court support counseling and referrals
- ✓ Prevention Program with the in school youth (ISY) in 3 identified schools (Cummings Lodge Secondary, Kingston Community High and St. John's College)
- ✓ Prevention A & B (Abstinence and Be-faithful) sessions with out of school youth (OSY) with youths from 3 communities in Region 4.

The 2007-8 project report is available on our website.

### **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 project aimed at documenting sexual abuse and violence against women and girls in the racial/ethnic/political conflict in Guyana.

The project was intended to run for 12 months (April 2005-March 2006) but a number of factors militated against completion of activities until early 2008.

The project proposal, grant agreement and final report are available on the website.

### **Ending Domestic Violence in Guyana's Administrative Regions (24/8/07– 24/8/08) - UNIFEM Micro Grant**

The objective of the project was to significantly increase the level of awareness and thereby reduce the high incidence of violence against women through public education and advocacy initiatives applied in training and capacity building of an identified NGO working with community-based groups in each of 3 administrative regions. The NGOs chosen were Linden Care Foundation in Region 10, New Vision Santa Rosa based in Moruka, Region 1, and Hope for All based in Region 2.

Between January and August, the work that had been begun in 2007 was continued and following the workshops for a total of 55 participants from the NGOs, evaluation sessions were held with each in July and August.

The project proposal, grant agreement and final report are available on the website.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Form Awareness-Building Project**

#### **Funded by the British High Commission**

The aim of this project was to build awareness among 4<sup>th</sup> form students at selected schools throughout Guyana about domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide.

The project was originally intended to run from April 2007 to March 2008, but following completion of the programmed activities and evaluation during the first quarter of 2008, it was agreed that further work should be done, and the British High Commission and Ministry of Education kindly agreed to an extension. Further visits to schools were made between April and July 2008 and again between November 2008 and January 2009, and in addition to 4<sup>th</sup> formers, sessions were also held in some (both previously visited and new) schools with 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or 5<sup>th</sup> formers and parents and teachers.

In total, the project engaged with over 2,300 students from 34 schools and over 200 parents and teachers.

The final project report is available on our website.

**Increasing Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Awareness at Health Centres  
Funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives**

This project, which began in March 2007, was originally intended to run for 12 months, but approval was given to extend it and to use the funds that had been budgeted for the production and broadcast of radio and TV PSAs to enable more health centres, including those in outlying regions, to be covered.

By the time the project concluded in November, a total of 1635 pre- and post-natal parents (67 males and 1568 females) had participated in awareness sessions held at 38 health centres in 5 regions.

The final project report is available on our website.

**Strengthening Policy Frameworks and Social Services, Public Education & Advocacy to Reduce Gender-Based Violence Project (31/12/07-31/12/09)**

**Funded by UNIFEM as administrator of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women** The objective of this project is to make a significant contribution to the reduction of gender-based violence in Guyana by: working to strengthen the legal and policy framework through participating in the development of new sexual offences legislation and taking the lead in developing a protocol for front line workers to effectively implement relevant legislation, strengthening social support services through training of front line workers, including the police on the dynamics of gender-based violence and how to effectively implement relevant legislation by delivering quality social support services, and advocacy and awareness to change public attitudes by a national media campaign against gender-based violence and outreach sessions with target groups.

Project work proceeded largely according to plan during 2008, apart from with the police, from whom it proved a challenge to obtain the necessary approvals and cooperation.

The proposal, grant agreement, monthly M&E reports and narrative and financial reports to UNIFEM are available on the website.

**Gender-Based Violence Reduction Project (1/4/08-31/3/11)**

**Funded by the Women's World Day of Prayer - German Committee**

The objective of this project is to educate and empower both males and females to adopt peaceful and non-violent means for resolving conflicts in their lives. Its aim is that through community-based initiatives awareness about gender-based violence and its root causes and initiatives for resolving these issues will be developed and that as a consequence the level of violence against women and girls will be reduced.

The project is based in four communities: Den Amstel in Region 3 and Good Hope, Kaneville and Covent Garden in Region 4.

Work began in April and proceeded largely according to plan throughout the rest of the year.

The project documents (application, project description, agreement & project implementation schedule) are available on our website, as are monthly M&E reports.

**Pickney Project**

**In collaboration with EveryChild Guyana**

The Pickney Project was launched on 22 September in the community of Pattensen near Sophia, where the work of the project is being conducted. This is the first project of its kind in Guyana – a collaboration between NGOs and community-based organisations and individuals, and it was evident from the turnout of at the launching that it has the support and the commitment of key persons from the community and other NGOs.

The name Pickney has generated much interest: a name grounded in the African heritage of Guyana, and used widely in rural areas, many found it refreshing that the name had been chosen for a project to directly benefit children.

It is intended that by the end of the project the following objectives will have been met:

- 1) Increased awareness of child protection on the part of parents, caregivers and the general community through community-based public education
- 2) The police respond to reports of child abuse in a professional manner which ensures that victims are not further exposed to abuse
- 3) Health care providers and teachers have increased capacity to detect and intervene in child abuse
- 4) Increased access to psycho-social support including child friendly counselling and court support for children abused and at risk
- 5) A network established of organisations – faith-based, community-based, youth groups, governmental and non-governmental - that work to support child protection and rights

The challenge of removing corporal punishment from homes is a big one, but since the project launch, there has been no criticism of this objective, which is a welcome indication that there is a community willing to change with appropriate interventions.

Full details of the project and updates are available on our website.

### **The Shelter**

Shelter operations continued to be supported by government funding (the \$5m approved in late 2007 and our annual government subvention) throughout 2008 and the continued services of a full-time professional counselor were made possible with funding provided by UNICEF, who kindly agreed to our request for a further 12 month's support when the first agreement expired at the end of October.

Additional government funding for 2009 (\$8m) was approved in August 2008.

The manager and relief manager were supported by the shelter committee with input from the board when necessary. Efforts were made throughout the year to identify a back-up manager who would fill in if the manager on duty was required to leave the shelter in an emergency, but without success.

During 2008, 115 female victims of domestic violence/human trafficking and their children were given refuge at the shelter. The length of stay ranged from 1 to 197 days. Shelter intake data for 2006-2008 is available on our website, as is an analysis of shelter data from March 2006 (when the shelter re-opened) to July 2008.

A number of private enterprises continued to make regular donations of foodstuffs and other supplies to the shelter and periodic donations of clothing and other items were also received. Despite drainage problems, some measure of sustainability was achieved with the growing of fruits and vegetables in the garden. The pilot small scale chicken project that had been started in December 2007 unfortunately proved to be not cost effective.

From the end of May until the end of November, Peace Corps Response Volunteer Maura Reap provided invaluable support at the shelter (shelter manager training; developing standardised forms and a curriculum for shelter residents; developing and writing a proposal for a greenhouse project to increase the sustainability of the shelter) and also made significant contributions to our general counselling work (counsellor training, including sandplay storytelling technique; compiling a protocol and reference guide for counsellors, and preparing reports on court support and shelter data).

Our shelter manual is available on our website.

### **OUR STATISTICS**

We keep and regularly update statistics relating to the various aspects of our work and have periodic analyses prepared, all of which are available on our website.

During 2008, 957 people sought our help and we counselled 568; considerably less than the numbers for 2007 (1709 & 739), perhaps due to the reduction in frequency of our radio and PSA broadcasts in 2008 (due to lack of funds), but still significantly more than the numbers for the preceding 5 years.

Since the Crisis Service opened in 1995, we have provided counselling services to over 8,000 people of all ages and ethnicity and up to the end of September 2008 we had conducted public education and awareness work with over 20,000 people across the length and breadth of Guyana.

## **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.

One of the areas in which we urgently need volunteer support is fundraising. We were unable to hold our annual garden party in 2008 or any other large-scale events due to the lack of organisers and helpers. Efforts will continue to be made in 2009 to remedy this situation.

Our audited financial statements for 2008 appear in Appendix II.

During 2008 there was a significant change in the fixed assets of the company as a result of the acquisition of: 2 Dell computers with accessories; 1 NTC computer with accessories; 1 laser jet printer; 1 desk jet printer; 2 filing cabinets and 2 projector screens, valued at a total of \$925,348.

The company did not issue any shares or debentures during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008.

On 28 December 2008, a fire (probably electrical in origin) broke out in the coordinator's room at our Homestretch Avenue office. Due to the prompt and effective response by the fire service, the fire did not spread, but the organisation faced the start of a new year with the challenge of finding the necessary funding to have the offices cleaned and rewired and the fire damage repaired.

In another respect however, the year ended on a good note, with the prospect of a donation of US\$10,000 from ExxonMobil Corporation to be used for repairs & remedial work to our shelter, the creation of additional work space at our crisis centre and refurbishment to enhance the environment for clients and personnel at both the shelter & crisis service.

ExxonMobil indicated that we had been identified as a beneficiary in view of our reputation for high standards in our work and accountability.

**Help & Shelter extends deepest appreciation to all those who in any way assisted us in our work during 2008.**

## Appendix I

The following persons contributed to our work as volunteers and/or staff and project personnel during 2008:

- Petal Baboolall
- Carol Inniss-Baptiste
- Natalya Bobb
- Ruth Clarke
- Dennis Cuffy
- Denise Dias
- Monica Fordyce
- Michael Gillis
- Karen Gomes
- Patricia Gray
- Julian Haynes
- Isha Husain-Singh
- Linda Hustler
- Yvette Joseph
- Margaret Kertzious
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Kevin Massiah
- Patricia Noel
- Renita Noel
- Navindra Persaud
- Yvonne Quintin
- Danuta Radzik
- Parbattie Ranglall
- Hamala Sharma
- Karen Shaw
- Niveta Shivjatan
- Donna Taylor
- Josephine Whitehead

The following persons also served as directors during 2008:

- Patricia Caleb
- Denise Dias
- Afna Garnett
- Patricia Gray
- Isha Husain-Singh
- Linda Hustler
- Navindra Persaud
- Yvonne Quintin
- Hamala Sharma
- Josephine Whitehead