



I CAN'T AFFORD  
TO



**LEAVE**

*barriers to safety*

for Victims of Domestic Violence  
and the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

# From our *executive director*



Dear Friends,

Change is happening all around us. Schools and businesses are closed, people are isolated and everyone is working hard to adapt to environmental challenges. We also know that abusive partners want to maintain control and power over their victims and the uncertainty of so many things in our world right now only fuels that fire.

The Crisis Center has made some recent changes to best protect victims of domestic violence and our staff. We have worked hard to move families out of shelter and community living into Transitional Housing apartments and hotel rooms where they can more easily manage as a family unit and better implement social distancing protocol. Many of you helped make this possible – thank you!

Despite these changes, the cost to operate the Crisis Center's programs remains the same. We have also incurred some unanticipated expenses in keeping people safe. Your support is what keeps us going during challenging times like these.

As we worked hard to relocate our families into alternative housing, I was easily reminded of one of our greatest challenges - the lack of affordable housing in our community. I am grateful for our Rapid Re-housing program which launched last fall. This program is funded by HUD through the Cook County Continuum of Care. It is also a collaborative project with South Suburban Family Shelter. We have already successfully transitioned five families to safe apartments that they can call their own. This program provides 12 additional housing units.

As we all look forward to a more stable future, I want to thank you for remembering the needs of the adults and children we support, and recognizing the barriers they face. For those who attended our recent gala, thank you for your overwhelming generosity. And for those who keep us in your thoughts and prayers, we are forever grateful.

**You are all part of our Crisis Center family and your safety, health and well-being mean the world to us.**

Be well,

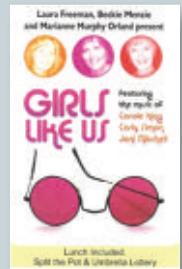
Pam Kosteck, *Executive Director*

## Auxiliary Luncheon Postponed Until June 16

The Crisis Center Auxiliary recently announced that they will be postponing their annual Spring Luncheon, which was originally scheduled for the end of April. The new date will be June 16 and the event will remain at Palos Country Club and will still feature the Girls Like Us trio who will perform the music of Carole King, Carly Simon and Joni Mitchell. Those who have already purchased tickets will be contacted with the rescheduled date and additional information. Tickets for the event are still available.

The Auxiliary has raised over \$130,000 for the Crisis Center and victims of domestic violence over the past eleven years. The Spring Luncheon is the group's largest and most successful fundraiser.

*For more information, please contact Marie Kaminski at 708.359.6800.*



## April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

**We simply could not continue our life-saving work without our generous volunteers.**

Last year, over 200 volunteers donated 46,408 hours saving the organization over \$382,000! Some of our volunteers have been with the organization since its inception in 1979 and they have dedicated their lives to helping victims of violence.

*If you would like more information about our volunteer program, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Deonne Mendyk, at dmendyk@crisisctr.org or call 331.431.9688.*

Over **200** volunteers donated **46,408** hours saving the organization over **\$382,000!**

# An Unprecedented Move

The Crisis Center has always been responsive to the needs of its clients, but never before in its 41-year history have we had to relocate so many adults and children so quickly.

We moved 13 families into hotels and five into Transitional Housing. The moves were made to ensure that families could social distance in a hotel or apartment and not have to share a kitchen, bathroom or living room during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Friday, March 27th, the last three families who were living in the Emergency Shelter were moved into apartments. "The staff worked tirelessly to secure housing, negotiate with landlords, set-up utilities, collect and organize donations and get our families moved," said Pam KostECKI, Executive Director. It all happened over the course of five days.

Donations poured in from so many donors that all of our families got what they needed to start a new life in a new home. "We're in the housing business, but we've never moved so many families so quickly – and so efficiently," KostECKI said. Thank you to all that helped make this unprecedented move possible.



## How is the Crisis Center Responding to Covid-19?

**We are doing our best to minimize our risks and exposure, but we must continue to provide services to clients in need and victims who have nowhere else safe to go.**

Essential staff continues to answer hotline calls, provide food and necessities to clients who are living in hotels, offer court advocacy services, and manage our facilities and operations.

All volunteer services have been suspended and our resale stores are closed.

Families previously living in the Emergency Shelter have been moved into new Transitional Housing apartments or local hotels whenever possible.

We have increased screening and assistance protocol for those who would traditionally be welcomed into the Emergency Shelter.



Counseling is being provided via Telehealth whenever it's safe for clients to participate.

Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing clients are receiving assessments and weekly phone contact.

Our hospital-based Live Safe program is currently suspended and staff are assisting in other areas.

We have a reduced presence in both courthouses and Advocates are working with police departments to serve new victims in need.

Those participating in PAIP classes for abusers are being given assignments to be completed outside of the classroom and staff are checking in via phone.

# Overcoming Barriers to Housing and Fleeing Violence

Susan defines what it means to be resilient.

She lived in a one-bedroom apartment with her abuser and her two children under the age of six. He monitored every call, text and email that she sent and received. She was only allowed to leave her home for short periods of time, which he had to approve. His family members also monitored Susan and reported her comings and goings to her abuser. He controlled all of their money. Susan was a prisoner in her own home, and so were her children, until the day she called the Crisis Center.

Susan made excuses about appointments to her abuser so she could meet with a counselor. It wasn't long before she was referred to Crisis Center's Housing Specialists, Yaniz Rayo and America Lopez, who work in the Rapid Rehousing program.

Rapid Rehousing staff help clients overcome barriers to affordable housing, most of which revolve around lack of job history, poor or no credit, lack of income or poor rental history. Staff work with clients and act as liaisons between client and potential landlords.

"We want our clients to be realistic about what they can afford, and we don't want to set them up for failure. We advocate on their behalf and many times our involvement is the reason why landlords choose to rent to our clients," Rayo said. "We provide a level of assurance and

accountability that the client may not have on her own."

When Rayo and Lopez first met Susan, they knew there would be challenges, especially with communication due to her abuser's constant monitoring. "We came up with secret code phrases and key words. We would use them to confirm appointments or just to touch base on the phone." Looking at apartments was nearly impossible and when they met it was only for an hour because Susan didn't want her abuser to find out what she was doing.

Despite all of the barriers and obstacles, Rayo and Lopez were resourceful and able to help. "We planned a safe exit for her and the children including changing existing bank information, phone numbers, addresses and her kid's school districts," Rayo said. Two days after she signed a lease, she moved into a new neighborhood, and the following Monday her children started a new school.

"The first home visit I had with Susan after her move, she described feeling relieved; like a weight had been lifted off her shoulders," Rayo said with a heavy sigh. "Susan and her kids are safe and where they are supposed to be, and there's nothing better than that."

## Housing's Dynamic Duo

America Lopez and Yaniz Rayo are Housing Specialists with the Crisis Center's Rapid Rehousing program. Lopez spends most of her time visiting homeless shelters and seeking out families who have been victimized by domestic violence. She provides housing resources and does on-the-spot assessments to determine potential success in the Rapid Rehousing program.

Rayo and Lopez are always looking for affordable housing and landlords who will work with the client to secure housing. They also meet weekly with Crisis Center clients to discuss housing options and barriers to independence. Since last fall, this dynamic duo has secured housing for five families with two more ready to move into new homes in the next few weeks.



*America Lopez and Yaniz Rayo, Rapid Rehousing Specialists*

## Peoples Bank

With a smile on her face, Director of Development, Lorri Nagle, recalls the first time she met Alexius Barber and Donna Manuel from Peoples Bank. “I was so impressed by their eagerness to tour the shelter and learn more about the impact we make in the community,” Nagle said. While the bank headquarters are housed just over the border in Indiana, there are three banks located in the Crisis Center’s geographic footprint.

Shortly after their initial meeting, Barber called and said the Crisis Center should submit a request for funding for the gala, which was later approved. Within two weeks, Nagle also got a call and was asked to participate in Peoples Bank Community Days at the Orland Park branch. “We were welcomed with open arms by the staff and community members attending the family event,” Nagle said. Since then, the employees of several branches also chose the Crisis Center to be a recipient of funds collected through their Philanthropic Committee.

“Our relationship is still blossoming,” Nagle said. “Peoples Bank is the epitome of a Corporate Champion. They are connected to the community, promote domestic violence awareness and wholeheartedly support our mission. We are lucky to partner with them and their leadership.”

If your company is interested in learning about the benefits of being a Corporate Champion, contact Lorri Nagle at [lnagle@crisisctr.org](mailto:lnagle@crisisctr.org).



Representatives from Peoples Bank present a check from their employee-driven Philanthropic Committee to Crisis Center Special Events and Engagement Manager, Lisa Molloy (far right).

## Leaving a *legacy*

*Remembering the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in your will or estate plans enables us to continue to provide life-saving services to victims of domestic violence. For more information about leaving a legacy, contact Lorri Nagle at 708.429.7255 or [lnagle@crisisctr.org](mailto:lnagle@crisisctr.org).*



Monthly giving is a selfless commitment to our mission to support survivors of domestic abuse. The Safety Circle provides an opportunity for continued support by making a monthly gift that works with your budget. Members of the Safety Circle can sign up to give a donation of any amount.

**Think of it...for the cost of a \$10 lunch once per week, you can make an annual donation of \$520!**

For more information, please contact Janice Barry at [jbarry@crisisctr.org](mailto:jbarry@crisisctr.org) or call 708.429.7255.

## Neat Repeats Stores Temporarily Closed

We will let you know when our resale stores are open again for shopping and donation drop-offs, but in the meantime, know how much we appreciate your support and understanding.

# Spring Appeal Raises Funds for Emergency Assistance



**DONATE NOW AND YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED BY THE GREER FOUNDATION!**

*Darleen and her three children arrived at the Shelter in mid-February. Her car was packed with necessities, but nothing more. She was instructed to grab only what was absolutely necessary.*

*No one could have ever predicted what would follow in the next few weeks, but thanks to some creative outreach by staff, Darlene and her family are now safely living in an apartment. She received donated household supplies, furniture and bedding, but many of her relocation costs were covered by the Emergency Services Program.*

*When basic needs and safety are uncertain, all other aspects of daily life become nearly impossible to manage.*

**The Emergency Assistance Fund creates new beginnings.**

**Housing**  
average cost = \$1500

**Furniture**  
average cost = \$500

**Medical Supplies**  
average cost = \$250

**Prescriptions**  
average cost = \$150

**Specialized clothing needed for work**  
average cost = \$150

**Transportation**  
average cost = \$50

**Access to legal documents like birth certificates**  
average cost = \$25

## Matching Gift Challenge



Lately, we've all asked ourselves who we would turn to in times of crisis and emergency? Emergency needs are challenging enough for most of us, but they can be devastating for those who are already experiencing a crisis due to a violent relationship.

**Our Emergency Assistance Program helps victims of domestic violence when there's no place else to turn. The fund is almost depleted and there are so many more families in crisis that need your help – especially during this unprecedented time.**

**DONATE ONLINE AT [CRISISCTR.ORG](http://CRISISCTR.ORG)**



## DONATE BY MAY 30th AND YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



I am proud to support victims of domestic violence and the Crisis Center for South Suburbia with a gift of:

\$1,000  \$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

My check is enclosed.  Charge my credit card.

Monthly gift. Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card monthly.

*Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.*

Please charge my  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### PLANNED GIFT

I would like someone to contact me about including the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in my estate plans.

I have included the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in my estate plans.

### MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers offer a matching gift program. If you or your spouse's employer offer this option, please obtain the appropriate form from Human Resources and submit it with your gift.

**Mail your gift to: Crisis Center for South Suburbia | PO Box 39 | Tinley Park, IL 60477 or make your gift online at [www.crisisctr.org](http://www.crisisctr.org)**

# A Record-breaking 'Evening in Paris'

Over 450 people attended 'An Evening in Paris' at the Odyssey on Saturday, February 29th, and more than \$300,000 was raised for victims of domestic violence. Those totals mark the largest crowd ever recorded at our gala and the most successful fundraising event in the history of the Crisis Center.

Special thanks to our Empowerment Sponsors: Deloitte, Exelon and Sturdi Iron, and to all of our sponsors and supporters who contributed to the success of the event. The gala was chaired by some amazing women including Katie Abbott, current Crisis Center board president, and Kathy Waller and Susan Frangella, who have consistently produced successful silent and live auctions for many years. Waller also hosts the In Memory of Mary Raffle which raises thousands of dollars at the event each year.

Several key supporters were honored at the gala. Frankfort resident, Sally Clair, received the prestigious Dianne Masters Award, which is named after the founder of the Crisis Center and emulates Dianne's vision, commitment, and ability to overcome obstacles while creating a brighter future for victims of domestic violence.

The Corporate Recognition Award was presented to Scott Farrow of United Insurance Services and Marie Kaminski was honored with the Volunteer Spirit Award. She is currently a volunteer at Neat Repeats and President of the CCSS Auxiliary.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 27, 2021 as we "stamp your passport" again and travel to Italy!

*Crisis Center Board President and event co-chair, Katie Abbott (left), and Vice-President, Jennifer Kanacki.*



*Volunteers Deborah Bivens (who is also CCSS staff) and Frank Mendyk (husband of Volunteer Coordinator, Deonne Mendyk)*

## Safe Start Expands

The need for educating high school and middle school students about healthy relationships and dating violence is never-ending – and it's the law in Illinois.

The Safe Start program at the Crisis Center is an outreach program that engages students in discussion about dating violence prevention in 20 schools in the South Suburbs. Lincoln-Way East and West are the latest local high schools to welcome our educational and potentially life-saving resource that is taught by two trained Crisis Center specialists.

In February, Safe Start staff held large group presentations at LWE and LWW schools that reached 4,400 students. In the future, the plan is to work with smaller groups, over the course of several weeks, during health classes.

"Students learn best in small groups," said Kristina Zandi, Prevention Coordinator. "In a small group setting students are more apt to open up, ask questions and seek help for their own troubled or violent relationships."

Educating about online or digital violence is a new addition to the Safe Start curriculum. People, especially youth, tend to be less inhibited when communicating through online and social media platforms. "Teenagers are more likely to say cruel or mean things to others when they do not have to witness or see the impact of their words on others," Zandi said. "The more this behavior continues, the more desensitized they get to the language being used and the negative impact it has on others."

Safe Start does not receive any government funding and is supported by donations from individuals, groups and some private foundation grants. The Crisis Center's Auxiliary also makes a large financial contribution to support the program and its outreach efforts each year.



*Crisis Center's Bobby Dunlap often talks to students one-on-one after a presentation, providing resources and helping students stay safe.*

## Shop Amazon Smile!

Do you use Amazon to shop for household supplies, gifts and more? Support the Crisis Center by shopping on Amazon Smile and choosing the Crisis Center as your beneficiary.

## Want to honor a loved one?

Consider a memorial or honorary gift to the Crisis Center for South Suburbia. For more information contact Janice Barry at [jbarry@crisisctr.org](mailto:jbarry@crisisctr.org) or call 708.429.7255 x138.

Connect with us on social media



[www.crisisctr.org](http://www.crisisctr.org)

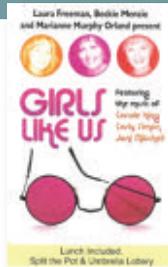
## the Events calendar

### Auxiliary Spring Luncheon

NEW rescheduled date — **Tuesday, June 16, 2020** at Palos Country Club, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. \$45 ticket includes lunch. For more information, contact Marie Kaminski at 708.359.6800.

### Dianne Masters Cup

**Tuesday, August 11, 2020** at Silver Lake Country Club, Orland Park. 18-hole option is \$150 (9:00 am tee-off) or the 9-hole option is \$100 (tee-off at 12 noon). Dinner only is \$50. Sponsorships available. Fun hole contests, raffles and auction. Registration information available soon. Contact Lisa Molloy for details at [lmolloy@crisisctr.org](mailto:lmolloy@crisisctr.org) or 708.429.7255.



Crisis Center for South Suburbia  
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