Alana’s Story from our Spring Appeal

Her entire life revolved around a bus schedule. It wasn’t always like this. Alana recently left her husband because the abuse became intolerable. When she realized her young children were seeing this happen, that was the breaking point.

Her days now began at 5am. After breakfast, she walked half a mile to the bus stop with her two children to get them to child care. It took two buses and three transfers to arrive there, then she took two more buses to work. At 4 pm she repeated the whole routine. Her days were so exhausting and she felt as though she was barely managing to keep it all together.

Every day she worried about her schedule; if buses run behind, she’d be late picking up from daycare, and there was a financial penalty for that. She worried about where she and her children would sleep at night; they were homeless and staying with a different friend every week. Alana knew that she needed a better paying job, but with only a high school diploma she had limited options, and she could only work weekdays between available child care hours. Alana was scrambling with nowhere to turn.

And then, she found HEARTH. “HEARTH was the transition that my children and I needed to become whole.” HEARTH provided a program with a safe place for Alana and her children to stay so that she can finally go back to school! “I was able to cut back my hours at work so I could enroll in school to become a medical assistant. My days are more manageable because they no longer revolve around a bus schedule.”

HEARTH provides on-site services that allow moms like Alana to focus on school and spending time with her kids. “My son now attends Early Head Start here, and my oldest will be starting Kindergarten this fall and the school bus stops here! But, the most important service has been working with their Direct Services Coordinator, she helps me stay safe and is teaching me how to budget money and schedule my day. I finally feel like I can breathe!”
A Safe Place Matters

A letter from our Executive Director:

Judy Eakin

“If it’s that bad, why doesn’t she just leave?” “I am so frustrated, she doesn’t deserve this, why won’t she leave?” “He is clearly abusive; I just can’t understand. Why does she stay?”

Hi,

I wish I had a simple answer to these questions, but sadly, it’s not a black or white response. There is a lot of gray. I know that this is a difficult subject for many people to talk about, but I would like to offer you some insight into why it takes so much strength to leave an abusive relationship.

**Love** - This might seem odd to you, but many times a person still loves their abuser. Think about it, you wouldn’t just fall in love with someone who is abusive from the start. Often times, an abusive partner is overly sweet and charming at the beginning of a relationship. They shower their partner with gifts and compliments. This changes over time and when the abuse starts, the victim has already fallen in love with their abuser. The victim continually hopes for the best and truly believes that the abuser will change. The abuser feeds into this hope by fluctuating between kindness, abuse, and apologies. **Did you know** that on average it takes someone seven times to actually leave an abuser for good?

**Guilt** – Many times a victim feels guilty over splitting their family up. Their abuser may have other underlying issues that they blame on their victim. The victim will feel guilty for upsetting or leaving their abuser, because they think that their abuser needs them.

**Family Pressure** – I once had a friend tell me about her abusive partner. Her mother’s exact words to her were, “you drive a BMW, how bad can it be?” Family pressure to stay with an abuser who is successful or with whom a victim has children makes it more difficult to leave a dangerous situation.

**Financial Pressure** – Many times an abuser holds all of the financial power. This could include controlling all the finances. The victim may have no access to bank accounts, credit cards, or other financial resources. This makes it almost impossible for a victim to leave. Another strategy is to ruin their victims credit by taking out bills and credit cards in their name and then refusing to pay them. Interfering with a partner’s ability to maintain employment is an additional risk. The abuser will hide car keys, provide no money for a bus pass or gas in the car, or even harass their victim at their workplace, thus forcing their victim to quit their job. Lack of financial resources does not allow for many choices for a victim of domestic violence. They fear homelessness, food insecurity, loss of their children, and more, because of this type of abuse. **Did you know** that up to 50% of homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness?

**Threats and safety** – This is one of the BIGGEST reasons people don’t leave their abusers. People are quick to suggest PFA’s (protection from abuse orders) and while they are important, in some cases they create increased risk by escalating the abusers anger and need for power/control. **Did you know** that an abuse victim is most likely to die immediately after leaving their abuser? Between 50% and 75% of domestic violence homicides happen at the point of separation or after the victim has already left their abuser.

**Children** – Many moms will not leave an abuser because they believe all of the problems mentioned above will affect her children. A mom puts off leaving for fear it will ruin her children’s lives. Many times we hear that a mom has only left because she realizes the domestic violence has started affecting her child’s life.

At HEARTH our goal is not only to help families become economically self-sufficient, but to educate the public about issues that impact our clients. I hope this was able to provide you some important information. **If you or someone you know is struggling with an abusive partner, please visit our website for more resources.**
HEARTH’s Signature Events

We had a great year and raised over $30,000 for our families! Thank you to all of our amazing Vendors!
11th Hour Brewing Co., Liberty Beer, Devout Brewing, Butler Brew Works, Mindful Brewing, East End Brewing Aurochs Brewing, Southern Tier, Spoonwood Brewing Co Sobel’s Obscure Brewery, Vecenie Distributing, Penn Brewery, Grist House Brewing, Noble Stein Brewing Cellar Works Brewing, Independent Brewing, Threadbare Cider and Mead, Full Pint Brewery, Rhinegeist Brewery, Founders Brewing, New Belgium Brewing, North Country Brewing Co. First Sip Beer Box, Sam’s Beer Outlet, Mezza Luna, Pizza Pronto, Moe’s Southwest Grill, Pretzel Crazy, Laurel Linens, House of 1000 Beers-Warrendale Craftwork Kitchen, Baked True North, BreadWorks Bakery Creekside Springs LLC., MaxxBooths, Philly Pretzel Factory Bell View, Popped Envy, Mac’s Donut Shop, & Giant Eagle We can’t wait to see you all next year!

Interested in joining the ‘Hops for HEARTH’ committee?
E-mail Morgan Ceschini at mlceschini@hearth-bp.org

Thank you to our sponsors!

Presented by: Rycon Construction, Inc.
Thursday, June 20, 2019
Longue Vue Club
The event is SOLD OUT!

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Presented by: Allegheny Financial Group

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Presented by: Allegheny Health Network and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

To volunteer, sponsor, or participate in these upcoming events, please contact HEARTH Special Events and Development Coordinator, Morgan Ceschini at mlceschini@hearth-bp.org or 412-366-9801 ext. 12
Tickets:

$25.00

Early Bird Special Tickets will increase to $30 after June 13th.

Only 14 tickets left.

First come, first served. If purchased at the gate, they would be $49.99. They are good any day in the summer when the park is open.

The Art of Wine & Food Pre-Event

Wednesday, August 8th, 2018 @Hartwood Restaurant & Whispers Pub

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

6:00PM Light Appetizers & Wine Sampling

6:30PM Program Begins

7:00/7:30PM Dinner Reservations

*Cash bar

“Learn how to help HEARTH and become a part of this signature fundraiser that has been around for 17 years.”

Please RSVP to Special Events Coordinator, Morgan Ceschini at mlceschini@hearth-bp.org or 412-366-9801 ext. 12 by August 1st!

*if you plan to stay for dinner, please let us know and we are happy to make reservations for you

Amazon Smile

Don’t forget your “amazon smile” for HEARTH by making your amazon purchase through www.smile.amazon.com. Choose HEARTH as the charity of choice and the agency will receive 0.5% from your purchase. So quick. So easy. Why not?
A letter from our Board President:

Mike DiChiaizza

In this issue you heard from our Executive Director, Judy about why it is so hard to leave an abusive partner. Many of us know someone who has been or is currently in a dangerous relationship. We often want to do all that we can to help someone out of a threatening situation, but in order to do that, it helps to understand the obstacles that can get in the way.

A person may want to and may be ready to leave, but there are many hindrances that will occur making an already difficult decision more painful and more challenging. Consider that many abusers not only isolate their victim from family and friends, but they may also isolate them from the outside world. They will control when and where they go somewhere, who they talk to. This leaves a victim feeling like they cannot make any decisions without their abuser’s permission.

Lack of resources or space available at local shelters. As Judy mentioned in her letter, most times a victim of domestic violence has also experienced financial abuse. Many shelters fill up quickly and without a space and limited finances, a victim won’t leave, especially when they have a child. Often times a mother will continue to withstand the abuse so that her children do not end up on the street.

Other barriers to leaving include a lack of marketable skills or post-secondary education. This means that jobs that pay enough for a mom to be the head of her household are unattainable unless she holds some type of training. With an abusive partner controlling their every move a victim cannot go back to school even if they wanted to.

Finally, a victim of domestic violence may not know where to turn and has no knowledge of options available to them. They are afraid to search online or to ask for fear of their abuser finding out. They may not have anyone to advocate for them or they fear for their friends’ and family’s safety in addition to their own.

How could anyone overcome this?! I know it seem particularly daunting, but there is hope. There are resources out there, I know this because HEARTH partners with many of them within our own community. We look to our partners at shelters and domestic violence centers to help families get safe. After they are safe from the abuse, HEARTH then works with families to stay safe. Our program works to build up a moms’ independence so she can financially and emotionally support her family on her own. This month we celebrated moms.

We shared cute photos, told inspiring stories, and lifted them up. But, many times we overlook the obstacles it took to become successful. We celebrate our moms by helping them succeed, but we also need to understand just how difficult it was for them to get here.
Get Involved at HEARTH!

**Do you have volunteer interests?**
Projects can include cleaning the inside and outside of the building, organizing hearth store, apartment storage, etc.

Those interested should contact Jessica Monahan at jimonahan@hearth-bp.org or call (412) 366-9801.

**Looking to make a difference in a child’s life?**

HEARTH is looking for volunteers for our Monday Night Child Care sessions. Timing is usually from 6:45 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. twice a month. Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. Clearances are required for volunteers 18 and older. There is an orientation prior to the start of volunteering. You can choose how many Monday’s you are able to attend!

**Interested in touring our facility?**

Please contact marketing and corporate relations manager, Tara Maziarz at least 4 days prior to the tour date to be scheduled. Contact: trmaziarz@hearth-bp.org or 412-366-9801 x.3913

Monday, June 10, 2019 - 6 pm
Thursday, June 27 - noon
Thursday, July 11 - 6 pm
Wednesday, July 24 - noon
Tuesday, August 6 - 6 pm
Tuesday, August 27 - noon

**Interested in joining HEARTH’s Young Professionals Board?**

Join us on August 22, 2019 at Wigle Whiskey’s Distillery in the Strip District for a short presentation and a meet and greet with some current young professional board members!

Please RSVP by August 15th to Tara Maziarz at 412-366-9801 ext. 13 or by e-mail at trmaziarz@hearth-bp.org.
HEARTH was thrilled to be the winner of $10,000 from Project Beauty Share’s #BeautyWishes2019 campaign with Influencer Taylor (@ThaTaylaa)! Not only did we win $10,000 to help change families’ lives, but the visibility from this competition also increased awareness for the need for transitional housing nationwide!

We had so many community members and partner organizations promote and vote for us and we are truly grateful! We were also lucky enough to have a visit from Taylor and The Project Beauty Share team this past April!

We love our community! #PittsburghPride #CityofChampions

HEARTH LOVES Twelve 27 Salon and here’s why!

On the first Saturday of every month this year, 10% of all service sales are donated to HEARTH in addition to donations from the Salon’s delicious cocktails!

During the month of May anyone who brought in body wash, Kleenex, or African American hair products for HEARTH moms received a complimentary toner treatment.

They are coming to our facility to provide free haircuts for our women and children.

To date Twelve Twenty–Seven Salon has raised over $2,000 for the families at HEARTH!

To learn more about the salon or to book an appointment for HEARTH, visit their website by clicking here!

HEARTH’s Young Professionals Board is once again partnering with a Pittsburgh favorite, Mad Mex!

The dinner is $35 and includes many of your Mad Mex favorites (give us all the chips and salsa!) Don’t miss out on this exclusive event, limited spots available!

Date and Time:
Tuesday, July 9, 2019 at 7 pm

Location:
Mad Mex Shadyside—click for directions
220 S Highland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
THANK YOU for your continued interest & support!

Contact us:
Phone: 412-366-9801
Web: www.hearth-bp.org

Social Media: click the icons to follow us!
Or search us @hearthpgh