



2018 Year in Review





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“When I entered SafeHouse, it was like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. The staff kept telling me how smart, valuable and talented I was -- and I began to believe in myself again.” – C.A.



Dear Friends of SafeHouse,

This past year has been one of transition, growth, and celebration.

After three productive years, Jessica Li stepped down as Executive Director in January to pursue other opportunities. Jessica was our first permanent Executive Director following the long tenure of Rev. Glenda Hope – very large shoes to fill! Jessica did a wonderful job moving SafeHouse forward, and we are so grateful for her leadership.

The search for a new permanent Executive Director was launched in November and we are excited by the interest shown so far in the position. Pamela Merchant has been serving as Interim Executive Director and will be on board to support a successful leadership transition.

SafeHouse continues to thrive. The SafeHouse model of providing a nurturing and supportive home, coupled with intensive case management services, has proven to be a successful strategy for breaking the cycle of exploitation and homelessness.

2018 saw a record number of women graduate from the program and embark on new lives from a place of healing and strength. One graduate completed her cosmetology certification and has her own chair in a salon. Another has become a fitness and wellness instructor and a third is working as a case manager in a recovery program while attending college full-time. When we reflect on the resilience and bravery of these and the other women who graduated this year our collective hearts soar.

We are proud of our expanding advocacy work to increase awareness about trafficking and the importance of providing gender specific services to women survivors. We continue to lay the groundwork for the Hope Center – a new day program in the Tenderloin which will serve women still living on the streets with our signature case management services.

And, we celebrated 20 years of service to homeless sexually exploited women in the Bay Area. Approximately 300 of us gathered on October 18 to honor our founders and the courageous women of SafeHouse – past, present, and future. The Asian Women’s Shelter, San Francisco Supervisor Jane Kim, and our very own Residential Counselor Sharon Crawford were also honored for their extraordinary contributions to our community.

Thank you for being part of the SafeHouse community. As we move into the holiday season, please consider a generous donation so we can continue this important work.

With warm regards,



Betsy Dodd
Board President



Pamela Merchant
Interim Executive Director

Collaborative Learning

By: Kristen Moore, *Program Director*

When Toni asked me to write an article for the newsletter discussing what is special to me about working at SafeHouse, I stared at the blank page for almost an hour, starting and stopping. The problem wasn't that I couldn't think of an answer, but that I didn't know how to put into words the sense of community and collaboration that has kept me a part of the team for nearly 8 years. As I stared at the blank page before me, one of our residents wandered into my office and sat down to ask what I was working on. I shared with her about the article I was writing and how I was stuck. I didn't share this with

they are wise and intelligent women in need of a safe space to flourish. When we circle together as one community, the synthesis is powerful. So much growth happens in individual and group conversations. Fostering connection that is healthy and authentic allows SafeHouse to be a space where people feel safe to be vulnerable and express their ideas and perspectives and we are all the better for it. I have seen the program change and grow so much over the years, and at the root of this flexibility is willingness to listen and adapt to our ever-changing community. People are not static, and so a program should not be.



her to make conversation but because I genuinely thought she might have an idea to help me move forward. Without blinking, she put the question back to me, "Well, what have you learned from being here?" Before long we were talking back and forth about our experiences at SafeHouse and sharing perspectives about the community we share. As we chatted I realized that the heart of this exchange is what makes SafeHouse unique: that no matter what a person's role is in our organization, from the newest resident to the Executive Director, that we come with respect to one another as collaborators and teachers.

Often in programming, the perception is that the purpose of the staff is to fix, teach and heal clients that are somehow flawed, broken or less than capable. I am proud to work in a place that acknowledges that the people living here are not broken, that

Each person in our community comes to her seat at the table by a different road. While there are common threads in our journeys, we are also diverse in our backgrounds and identifications. For me, this makes for rich and rewarding collaboration. Sometimes there may be disagreement and conflict but more often than not there is compromise and common purpose. In either case, the conversation and the act of coming to the table as partners in progress is at the core. Each person's voice has worth, and none of us could move forward without all of us. I am proud to be part of an organization that lives this value.

As for my collaborator? I wouldn't be surprised if she winds up a coworker someday. I look forward to continuing our work together.



Community Effort

By: Reverend Glenda Hope

All too often, Sr. Rosina Conrotto and I are presented as "the founders of SafeHouse," as if we had together made this happen. The "Cheers for 20 Years" celebration held on October 18th was a chance to look back, remembering so many people who were part of the "founding."

In the Fall of 1996, I was called to perform memorials on the streets for so many prostituted women who had been murdered in San Francisco. Usually, these murders go unreported by the newspapers, but this time the stories were told, raising awareness of the violence against sexually exploited women.

The Board of Network Ministries felt called to establish a safe and healing place for our sisters on the streets, undeterred by the fact that this was far different from anything Network had done before. Six members of that daring Board were present on Oct. 18th, still supporting that early decision. Twelve people were asked to serve on a planning committee. Everyone accepted, key among them was Sr. Rosina. Soon, Ada Chan called to alert us to a building and some money for "transitional housing for single homeless women." Tom Jones and I looked at the property and in 4 days created a program, staffing and funding plan - which won what would become SafeHouse. We needed \$10,000 for remodeling. Kate Monico Klein and Bob Prentice secured that in 2 days, as well as entrée to a contract with the Department of

Public Health, which we still have. Sr. Rosina led the Presentation Sisters into a partnership with Network Ministries, which has endured for 20 years providing vital support in so many ways. Alone, either entity would have struggled to create or continue SafeHouse.

From the earliest days of SafeHouse, individual and congregational support in the form of cash, volunteering, investments, in-kind gifts, and more has made it possible for SafeHouse to grow, learn and continue supporting sex trafficked and exploited women in transforming their lives. Many of those women were present for the Celebration. Two of them were speakers; another was that very night rejoicing in her 15th year of sobriety and the fabulous job she now holds. Another, by dint of hard determined effort, has regained her license and is again working as a nurse. So many others. And still they come with their hopes and dreams of new life. Watch this Newsletter for their stories.

Now: there is a need for women graduating from SafeHouse to find safe, lovely, affordable housing near the support networks they have built up. Do you have an in-law unit, a room, or an apartment you would rent to a Graduate at a righteous rate? I've done that and I couldn't be happier.

SafeHouse is the work of hundreds and hundreds of caring people. Blessings to you for being among them.



Celebrating 20 Years!



Almost 300 of us gathered together in October to celebrate 20 years of service to sexually exploited homeless women in the Bay Area. We were joined by SafeHouse graduates, current residents, staff and board members past and present, donors, volunteers, old friends and new friends. The warmth and excitement in the room was palpable.

Carolyn Tyler, recently retired ABC News Anchor, was charming and gracious as our emcee for the evening. After Board President Betsy Dodd and Interim Executive Director Pamela Merchant welcomed everyone we heard from our Founders. Rev. Glenda Hope and Sister Rosina Conrotto inspired and motivated us to do all we can to support SafeHouse and our women.



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There were few dry eyes in the room after SafeHouse graduates Toni Eby and Erica Land spoke about their life journeys and ongoing commitment to raise awareness about the women still on the streets. And, we were challenged by Toni – who is also our Outreach & Training Manager – and her call to action.

Rev. Glenda Hope presented the *Ambassador of Hope Award* to Supervisor Jane Kim. Supervisor Kim spoke stirringly about her work to help alleviate homelessness and the sexual exploitation of women. Longtime SafeHouse Residential Counselor Sharon Crawford was presented with the *Trailblazer Award* by Program Director Kristen Moore. Sharon shared some of her life’s journey and how it informed her passion for our clients and her important work. Former Board Chair Ada Chan presented the *Community Partnership Award* to longtime ally, the Asian Women’s Shelter, for its outstanding work serving women survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. Orchid Pusey accepted the award on behalf of the Shelter and urged us to do more as a community.

The delightful vocal and piano performance by Rev. Victor Floyd and Kymir Armour rounded out a heartfelt event.

Thank you to everyone who supported the gala and Kristen’s very effective Fund a Need pitch. A very special thank you to our generous donors: Rev. Keenan Kelsey, Rev. Glenda Hope, Betsy Dodd & Jim Boddy, Linda Lee & Harry Chuck, Flexport, the Sisters of the Presentation and the Humphreys Group. Thank you also to our raffle sponsors and the Hilton Hotel, Jackson Family Wines and Lois Peacock. Last but not least, thank you to the Flexport Volunteers!



Onward!

Community Education

By: Toni Eby, *Outreach & Training Manager*



SafeHouse staff are strong believers in being a visible and political ally of sexually exploited women and correcting misconceptions about sexual exploitation. This was one of the things we had in mind when we collaborated to create our 40-hour Human Trafficking Training. In addition, we also wanted to create a space where community partners could learn about working with survivors of trafficking, and practice their skills with role plays. When first thinking about this training, we were struck by the fact that domestic violence shelters were offering 40-hour domestic violence trainings, but no other agencies in the city were providing the 40-hour human trafficking training necessary for gaining the Human Trafficking Caseworker privilege as outlined in the California Evidence Code. It was with

that idea and a lot of research and planning that SafeHouse's Human Trafficking Training was created.

We are proud to say this is the second year we have offered the training, and in that short time we have trained staff members from Glide, Not for Sale, Freedom Fwd, Harm Reduction Coalition, Northern California Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, Department of Public Health, San Francisco District Attorney's Office, Department on the Status of Women, Epiphany House, and many more. While we have just completed our Fall Training, we will be offering the training again in the Spring. For more information check our website, upcoming dates will be posted soon!

More photos from our Celebration . . .



Healing Support

By: Diana Ochoa, *Case Manager*

As a Case Manager, I have the opportunity to work with women who have been trafficked into the United States from other countries, or experienced sexual exploitation in their home country and came to the U.S. to escape. I grew up in the East Bay and spent some periods of my life living in Mexico. The fact that both of my parents are immigrants from Mexico has helped me understand a lot of the struggles my clients face. As a first generation Mexican American, my Mom did not allow me to speak English at home. This is something I have always been thankful for, because as someone who is bilingual, I am able to communicate with people who are monolingual Spanish speaking and understand them better.

Survivors coming to SafeHouse face a great deal of challenges, especially those who are immigrants and monolingual in a language other than English. Yet despite all the barriers they face, they are very resilient. They are given the space and opportunity to gain insight to certain aspects in their life they may have not been aware needed attention, and with guidance and support they are able to overcome all challenges in their path. Much of the support begins in our interactions, I encourage clients to ask for support, and make specific requests of what they need. It is important to provide them with a confidential and a safe space so they feel comfortable communicating with me. Being able to communicate their needs is important since it may be something they struggle with.

I also support our residents in their healing process. Healing looks very different for each individual. Treatment plans must be individualized and centered around the survivor's specific needs and goals. When I begin working with a client we sit down and identify ways they can practice self-care, as well as providing access to resources in their community that may aid their healing process. Most of the women have experienced severe trauma at some point in their lives, and it is my job to remind them to not be so hard on themselves and that healing takes a lot of patience and self-nurturing. One of my early goals is to help the women create their own web of support. This includes, guiding them through obtaining mental health support (something that is often neglected in Hispanic culture), a therapist who speaks the same language as them, and groups where they feel comfortable. This is all essential to beginning the healing process.

As the bilingual case manager at SafeHouse, many of the women I work with need support around working on their immigration status. As survivors of sexual exploitation, they are generally eligible for some type of immigration relief, but this requires that the client visit a variety of different agencies to seek support. I also accompany clients to their appointments, especially if they are scared or nervous. I go with them to lawyer offices, the DMV, dentist appointments, social security office, human services agencies, and doctor's appointments. Case Managers pretty much go anywhere the client might need support and advocacy.

Sometimes this might be the survivors' first experience meeting with a lawyer or going to a dental appointment, which can be overwhelming and nerve wrecking. I try to empower them by reminding them they are doing the best they can, as well as educate them on things that may be new to them.

One example involves a simple visit to the DMV. I had one client where we had to go 7 times just to simply obtain her I.D.! She had recently gotten her name and gender changed legally, and I helped her fill out the paperwork and accompanied her at the DMV, since this particular client experienced a lot of social anxiety and regularly had panic attacks in public spaces. I tried to encourage her to not give up no matter how many challenges, and many times she felt she was being discriminated against and wanted to give up. I encouraged her not to give up but also validated her feeling and continued providing moral support and advocacy.

I know that every client needs support in different ways, so I have to remain flexible and open and also recognize my privilege each day I walk into my office. I must be aware that I might hold privileges that my clients don't and I must be able to be understanding of their struggles whatever they may be. I must also research resources and sometimes visit agencies on my own so I can gain firsthand knowledge on how it treats its clients and determine how my clients might feel visiting that agency for the first time. It is gratifying to have the opportunity to empower and support my community, and work with this amazing group of women.

I love my job and having the opportunity to work with these remarkable women.



Expanding Programming

By: Toni Eby, *Outreach & Training Manager*

San Francisco SafeHouse recognizes that in the age of #MeToo and #TimesUp, homeless women are often left out of the national narrative around sexual exploitation and sexual assault. This is problematic because homeless women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, yet their voices are often ignored. The vast majority of women that come to SafeHouse report experiencing multiple forms of violence including sexual assault, domestic violence, and hate crimes. Listening to the stories that women tell when calling to get on the waitlist and then having to tell them we do not have space available for them is heartbreaking. With the sheer volume of calls, and the lack of available safe shelter space for women escaping violence, SafeHouse staff have become more and more convinced that we are in urgent need of additional programming for sexually exploited women.

When the SafeHouse team was first considering expanding our program, we came up with many different ideas. Some of these ideas were discarded, some were saved for the future, and some evolved over time. For example, our original idea was to have a SafeHouse on the streets, and to provide mobile outreach services to homeless women in various neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. During the planning stage, SafeHouse staff met with community organizations, held focus groups for homeless

individuals, and asked for feedback from our current residents. What became clear during these community meetings and focus groups was the need for a more permanent and structured day program. While we kept the idea of a mobile homeless outreach, the idea for having a permanent day center where women could receive similar services that were offered in the transitional housing program was born.

One of the things that came up a lot when meeting with the community was the void left in services with the closing of S.A.G.E. (Standing Against Global Exploitation) in 2015. Those groups and case management services were integral to those experiencing sexual exploitation, and no other program had stepped up to fill the lack of drop-in day services. With this in mind, our upcoming day program, The Hope Center, was designed to fill this void and offer women a safe place to come during the day and receive comprehensive services. Similar to the transitional housing program, we will be offering intensive case management, groups, therapy, life skills training, housing support, and much more. This space will also house our 40-hour Human Trafficking Training, and our homeless outreach program. The Hope Center will expand SafeHouse's nurturing and healing community, and will be a safe space for homeless sexually exploited women to get the support they need to rebuild their lives.

I came to SafeHouse in December of 2003 homeless, broken and alone. I was an empty shell just trying to survive, yet determined to turn my life around. SafeHouse provided a caring environment where I received counseling and support.

In 2007 while attending school, I began working at SafeHouse. I eventually earned my bachelor's degree and went on to get an incredible job with a top company in my industry.

Today, I live a rich full life filled with loving and meaningful relationships. I will always be so very grateful to Glenda and Sr. Rosina and the women at SafeHouse for their love and support over the last 15 years.

- 2003 SafeHouse Graduate

How Can You Help?

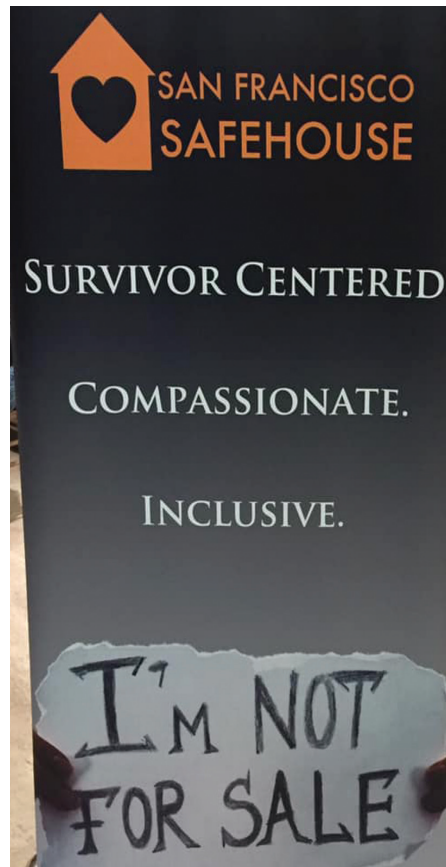
- Make a donation at <http://www.sfsafehouse.org>.
- Send a gift card for Home Depot, Amazon or Costco.
- E-mail us about the volunteer opportunities at info@sfsafehouse.org.
- Go to Amazon.com. Click on Wish List. Search for San Francisco SafeHouse. You will find everything from PJ's to cookware to toothbrushes.
- Have an item on the list or something else you wish to donate? Call or write info@sfsafehouse.org.

SafeHouse accepts very gently used, high quality donations of furniture and household items. We are also always looking for professional volunteers with skills in facility maintenance such as plumbing and electrical or general contractors.

www.sfsafehouse.org



Holiday Time at SafeHouse



Values and Philosophy



Resident Artwork



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