



2016 Year In Review



**SafeHouse 2016
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Elizabeth Dodd
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Susan Wong
Sheila Harris

Executive Director
Jessica Li





Dear Friends of SafeHouse,

At SafeHouse, we make women stronger, more independent, more able to defend themselves against a world that has treated them harshly. We work with them, one on one, to help them plan for their futures, and then help them execute those plans. We help them find ways to manage their relationships with others, particularly the men in their lives. Individual and group therapy sessions address these issues. Internships allow the women to practice new relationship skills in the workplace. Self-defense classes help build confidence and self-reliance. Sharing cooking, shopping, and other household responsibilities promotes a team work ethic. And group sharing and decision making helps build trust and friendships.

We are honored to be a part of this amazing organization. For almost twenty years, SafeHouse has attended to some of the most invisible and forgotten people in our city – women of all ages who are homeless victims of sexual exploitation. SafeHouse “sees” these women, and has extended them a hand to bring them home and offer them a path to a new life. And so many have walked that path and are now living independent, meaningful lives as a result.

In a time when those who openly denigrate and objectify women still get popular support, we at SafeHouse are galvanized to work harder, to reach further, to include more women in our healing and empowering work. Our newest initiative - SafeHouse on the Streets - extends the reach of our counseling and referral services to women still living on the streets, who face exploitation every day.

As Michelle Obama said during the turbulent, divisive Presidential campaign, when they go low, we go high. At SafeHouse our aim is sky high every day. Thank you for all you do to support SafeHouse.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Dodd
President, Board of Directors

Jessica Li
Executive Director

How SafeHouse has Changed My Life

By: Erica

SafeHouse Graduate, Business Owner, Pastry Chef and Public Speaker

On March 19, 2011, I was arrested and charged with my second DUI. By that time, I was so deep in my addiction that most people would have considered me a lost cause. I remember very clearly being handcuffed to the hospital bed. The humiliation and disgust I felt with myself had hit its peak. I would be transported to jail shortly after and be left to sit in that cold isolated room to reflect on everything.

That day started out like any other for me. I woke up on the couch with a splitting headache and I only needed to roll over and reach down to the floor to grab my bottle of vodka to take the edge off. The shaking and the searing pain would end as soon as I poured that first shot. I had to go on a date with a guy that I had met at the strip club I had been working at, so I got up and got ready. I filled my empty Mountain Dew bottle to the top with vodka, got into the car and headed out for burritos. He asked if I wanted to grab a drink at the Beach Chalet afterward, and so I got back into the car and drove across the city to meet him. When the sun began to set, I had to head out. I had an appointment with a client and then I was to drive to Oakland to pick up my boyfriend from the airport. By this time, I was getting to the point of having a blackout. I remember bits and pieces of the evening, but can't recall the details. I don't remember getting lost in Oakland Hills or driving on the freeway. I remember being in the hospital, but I don't remember getting arrested or doing a field sobriety test. But in the end, I didn't need to remember those things, I think it's better that I don't. I was already such a terrible mess and had been so depressed that any more flashbacks added to the memory bank could have surely put me over the suicidal edge rather than just the brink of it.

When I left Alameda County Jail the following morning, I knew something had to change. I had been looking into rehab for a while and was convinced I'd never be able to afford it. My friends and my boyfriend were certain I wasn't an alcoholic and didn't need to go, but I knew differently. My mom, my step dad, and most of my close relatives all suffered from addiction of one kind or another. I had known for a long time that I needed help, but I just couldn't bring myself to

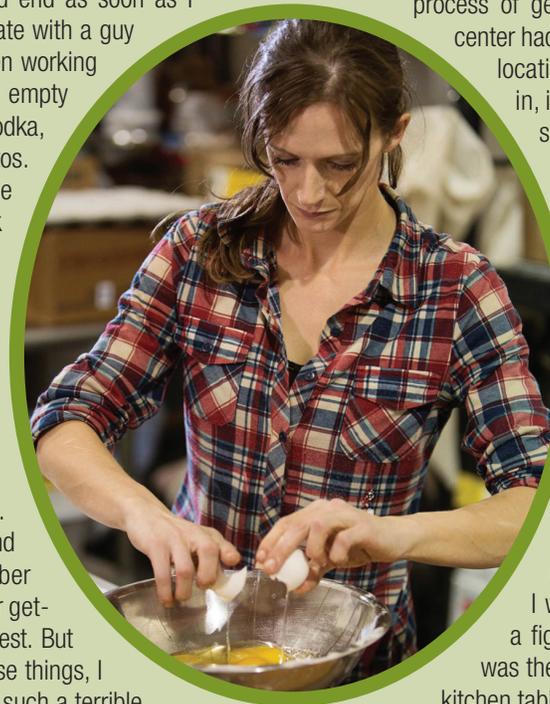
take that leap. Alcohol was the one thing that kept me from going insane. It was the one thing that made all of the pain go away.

I had a few friends in the AA community six months prior to this debacle and I had actually attempted and sustained sobriety for four months before my inevitable relapse. I called on a few of those friends to help me get into a program. A local treatment center was my first stop. For eight months, I suffered through the detox, I took the classes, I met with my therapist and my case manager, and I hated every minute of it. I wanted to be sober, but I didn't like the process of getting there. During my stay, the treatment center had a big move. They sent the women to a new location and turned the location I was currently in, into a co-ed center with a detox. It was a much smaller facility, so unsurprisingly, they made an announcement that anyone with six months or more time there had to move out of the house and hopefully into a transitional living situation.

The first time I walked into Safe House, I knew it was the right place for me. They only bring in up to 10 women, and the atmosphere was inviting as well as the staff. It was difficult initially because after being at the treatment center for eight months, I had to start over. It was very hard to get me out of bed or to get me to participate in the scheduled activities. I was still very depressed. I remember having a fight with my roommate the first few weeks I was there and cutting myself while hiding under the kitchen table. That was the last time I've done that.

After a couple of months adjusting and making friends, things started to get a little bit better for me. I reached a point that I was able to start looking for work again, and with the help of SafeHouse, I found a job at a local chocolate company. I spent three years at Dandelion, and during my time there was promoted multiple times and given equity in the company. Had I not been given the guidance or the support, I may have never gotten that opportunity. I also had a very tumultuous relationship with my mother and the rest of my family, which with the support of the staff, I was able to make smart decisions that eventually led to reconciliation.

continued on page 3



“ *The first time I walked into SafeHouse, I knew it was the right place for me.* ”

Opened in 1998, San Francisco SafeHouse is a 501(c)3 non-profit transitional housing program that provides a clean and sober living community to homeless women escaping prostitution, sex-trafficking and sexual exploitation. SafeHouse was founded by Rev. Glenda Hope and Sister Rosina Conrotto of the Sisters of the Presentation in response to a series of brutal murders and assaults upon prostituted women in the mid-1990s. It is one of few programs of its kind in the United States.

SafeHouse empowers women to live independently, learn new skills, and find employment during their 18-month residence. Ten women at one time are housed in the 24/7 confidential facility. SafeHouse staff provides guidance through the women's recovery from alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, abuse from childhood, and other traumatic situations. During our program, the women receive therapy, intensive case management, participate in

recovery programs, learn money management, return to school, find employment and housing, and ultimately live independently and become self-sufficient.

Our new initiative SafeHouse on the Streets expands our services to include providing case management, groups, and referral services to homeless women still seeking a safe place to heal, including the over 30 women on our wait list. The referrals would include helping these women secure housing, domestic violence services, drug addiction treatment, and therapy to this vulnerable population of women.

SafeHouse board & staff can only continue this work with a wide community of friends and could not do the work we do without community support. Thank you to all those that have supported and impacted the lives of women of SafeHouse for going on two decades, we hope to continue the SafeHouse legacy far into the future and appreciate your continued support.

THE PROBLEM

100% of SafeHouse women are survivors of some form of **sexual exploitation**, for many the exploitation started when they were children

100% of SafeHouse women were **homeless** or marginally housed prior to coming to SafeHouse

... Continued from page 2

I could go on and on about the stories and the situations and give examples of all of the many different times that someone at Safe House made a difference in my life, but ultimately, what really had the most profound effect on me is the undeniable and extreme amount of belief they had in me. I remember the first time I sat down with Glenda during one of our financial meetings. I told her about my dream to build a pastry business that employs women in difficult situations; one that would help them build their resume and get them back to functioning in society. She never once shot down my dream or my ideas. She truly and honestly believed in me and so did the rest of the staff. That dream is still alive today and is moving forward. It may be happening slowly, but it's definitely happening. I don't know that I'd

still be as motivated or even would have ever started the process had I not had so many people standing behind me and supporting me the way they did.

Today, I am 5 years 7 months and 5 days sober. Even after my graduation, SafeHouse has continued to provide support to me when I need it. I have a dream to give back to SafeHouse one day. I hope to be a part of the amazing force that does so much to change every life that walks through that door. I have faced some of the most difficult challenges life can throw your way over the last couple of years and had it not been for this wonderful place, I might just be waking up and reaching for that bottle of vodka right now.

THE HOPE

Of the women currently at SafeHouse

50% are gainfully **employed**

30% are pursuing **educational goals**

10% are seeking **vocational training**

10% are **giving back** to their communities through
volunteer opportunities

100% are **grateful** for the opportunity to heal



Learning Opportunities

By: Janice

Residential Counselor at San Francisco SafeHouse

I grew up surrounded by strong willed women. For example, my hero, my grandmother was left to raise 12 children alone when my grandfather was murdered in the 1970s. The pain she felt from losing her husband never lessened but she raised her children the best she could and was considered the rock of our family. She taught me to always help others and how to be a better person. After high school, I joined the work force. Unfortunately, I didn't have a great experience. After years at a job I was forced to quit due to sexual harassment that was not properly handled by management. It was a low point in my life and I felt alone. I hated the feeling of loneliness and not knowing how to cope with my emotions. Eventually, I sought help and began my process of healing.

During my healing, I decided that I wanted to be there for others who felt alone, but didn't know how to go about it. That is when I met Toni Eby, the current Operations Manager at SafeHouse. She told me about SafeHouse and the philosophies SafeHouse believes in. I was inspired by the work that was being done and wanted to be a part of the organization so when I heard about a Residential Counselor position, I applied. Unfortunately, I didn't have the experience necessary so I started to volunteer instead to gain the experience. From the moment I stepped into SafeHouse to start volunteering, I knew I had a new path in life. I was inspired by the women instantly. Everyday, when I left, I counted the days until I would return to volunteer again.

From the first day, all of the staff encouraged me and offered assistance so I could make my goal of being a Residential Counselor a reality. They told me about trainings I could take and answered any questions I had. I took a training and became a certified sexual assault counselor and started to work on a crisis line. Eventually, I gained enough experience and was offered the Residential Counselor position. It was honestly one of the best days of my life. Being a Residential Counselor has been so rewarding and I have learned so much. Life has been cruel to the SafeHouse women and sometimes it is hard hearing their stories about what they have gone through. The trauma they have experienced is unfathomable and can lead to many bad days. However, seeing the strength and determination



these women possess always amazes me. They are constantly working on themselves and even giving back to the community.

The women have also taught me many things. I have learned secrets to cooking, how to knit, about different faiths and cultures. Every shift is a new learning experience. Improvements are constantly being made and the women are always challenging themselves. The best part is when one of them attributes their progress to feeling safe and being in the program. SafeHouse will always be special to me, and the staff is always trying to find ways to better the program. Staff meetings consist of trainings of ways to better assist the women. However, for me the best part of SafeHouse is the women. They have so much wisdom and knowledge in the world. I feel lucky to be able to work with them.

" From the moment I stepped into SafeHouse to start volunteering, I knew I had a new path in life. "

A Call to Action

By: Arieann

Social Activist & Residential Counselor at San Francisco SafeHouse

On the issues that impact the people we serve and the ways that we can stand together to change the systems that affect marginalized communities.



drugs and alcoholism, criminality, social and economic instability, racial profiling, mass incarceration and a penal system that lets us know every day that you are guilty until proven innocent. There has been a plague spreading through the underbelly of our inner cities, back streets, and through the outskirts of our neighborhoods that criminalize the homeless, the sexually exploited, the drug addicted, and the mentally ill.

My strongest hope is to unite people from various backgrounds and experiences to share in one common goal: to help and assist women and people of color without invalidating their experiences. We can do this by building trust and bridges back into their communities, through second chance work programs, higher education, empowerment groups, increasing income through benefits, therapy, permanent housing and a platform to have a voice and be the change they want to see. We call out to people of all ethnicities, faiths, and socioeconomic backgrounds to reach out and live up to a higher purpose of selflessness. This mission will take all of us side by side with those that are less fortunate than us to move toward the greater good of ending poverty and homelessness in San Francisco. This is what we need to move all of God's people into the promised land. You can help by connecting with like-minded people from your communities, organizations and churches. Step out on Faith and deliberately step out of your comfort zone to connect with other people and social groups.

Together, we can rally against policy created by our local government officials, and special interest groups that keeps this never ending cycle of victimization amongst poor and marginalized communities of color in place. We the people, with all of our diversity, can do something courageous and un-orthodox by doing more than just sounding the alarm on the harm that has already been done. We can also put forth comprehensive resolutions and turn them into policies to address these real life issues that affect us all. When we recognize it is not just a minority issue but a human issue, we might have a shot at the emancipation of humanity.

*m*y journey is one that comes from a place of knowing what it is like to feel spiritually broken and bound to the policies of a great nation, a nation that has done nothing in the wake of its crumbling infrastructure of inconclusiveness.

As a black woman, I have the same desires as any other sane woman with children: to watch them grow up and reach their full potential as productive members of society. My hope is that they defy the statistical norm of insufficient educational access,

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Donor Highlight



Calvary Presbyterian Church

An interview with Scott Nagelson, Church Representative

Calvary has been a longtime supporter of SafeHouse dating back to 1998 when it first opened. Their support helps to fund some of our most vital programs, and their generosity and loyalty during the holidays continue to delight the women of SafeHouse year after year.

Why does Calvary give?

I think our Presbyterian & Christian belief system tells us that we should use all of our resources to do what we can for the community around us. This is particularly to work for the betterment of those who are in distress or who can use assistance. As a church, our goal is to allocate a percentage of our budget each year in grants and then try to blend that with volunteer opportunities for our congregation.

What are the most important community issues?

We have spent a lot of time in the recent past thinking about and discussing internally where we want to focus our efforts. Our theme is **Breaking Cycles of Poverty**, and the ones nearest and dearest to our hearts are the ones that deal with communities that are downtrodden, discriminated against or who have not gotten a lot of attention from society. Those are the areas we really want to focus our resources on.

What are some of your connections to SafeHouse?

When I think of SafeHouse, two people come to mind. One is Glenda Hope who founded SafeHouse. At Calvary, we think the world of her. The other is Chef Erica who is a graduate of SafeHouse and owns her own catering business. She is a wonderful person and has greatly enhanced our coffee hour with her treats.

How do you support SafeHouse during the holidays and throughout the year?

Calvary likes to contribute in many ways, not only in financial support but in volunteering efforts as well. During the holidays, the congregation collects items and the senior group stuff stockings for the women. This year the youth are volunteering to put together toiletry & food bags for the SafeHouse homeless outreach efforts. Calvary also gives grants to support SafeHouse's programs throughout the year.

Thank you friends of SafeHouse

As our year comes to an end, and we celebrate the many successes at SafeHouse, we would like to acknowledge and thank a few of our key supporters who have contributed large gifts to the success of the program throughout the year. In addition, we would also like to thank the multitude of loyal donors who contribute to SafeHouse year after year. Our work is only possible through the loyalty and generosity of a wide community of friends like you.

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Unitarian Universalist Church
UPS Foundation
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THE FUTURE

Of the women who graduate
from SafeHouse

100%
move into a stable form of
long term housing

95%
are employed, going to
college
or have a
steady income

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 TV'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



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