

Annual Report

2010



Safe Haven Shelter
for Battered Women

Mission: We provide safety for women who are battered and their children, and work to end violence against women.

Safe Haven Shelter Staff

Susan Utech, Executive Director
Beth Elstad, Finance

Shelter Program

Janet Olson, Shelter Supervisor
Celesta Jackson, Receptionist
Dale Minkinen, Maintenance
Mavis McDonald, Cook
Maude Dornfeld, Community Education
Hilary Hintsala, Follow Up Advocate
Dawn King, Women's Advocate
Jessica Adams, Women's Advocate
Karen Evanson Women's Advocate
Marion Whiteman, Women's Advocate
Denise Lewis, Women's Advocate
Libby Bergstedt, Office Asst./
Volunteer Coordinator
Jennifer Davey, Women's Advocate
Mona Peterson, Children's Advocate
Jean Anderson, Women's Advocate

Family Justice Center/Legal Advocacy

Beth Beagan, Manager/
Legal Advocacy Supervisor
Heather Hartwig, Legal Advocate
Jeannie Ward, Self-Sufficiency Counselor
Margo Colomb, Legal Advocate
Tara Haynes, Legal Advocate

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

We bring you the 2010 Annual Report with a mixture of pride in our accomplishments, gratitude for those who have done so much for our organization and in memory of Cathryn Curley, a founder of Safe Haven Shelter for Battered Women and Director of the Family Justice Center, who died unexpectedly in October of 2010.

Safe Haven Shelter is the largest direct service agency serving domestic violence victims in Duluth. In 2010, our staff and volunteers served 1740 unduplicated women and children.

This report highlights continuing and improved services which enable us to make a difference for the battered women in our community. Whether they received validation in one of our many support groups, follow up through the Pathways Program, the help of an advocate by their side in court or a listening and supportive ear during a crisis call, women and their children's lives were touched and improved by our work.

As we move forward in tough economic times not only for our organization but for the vulnerable people we serve, we are grateful for the talented and dedicated staff, hardworking volunteers and generous friends and supporters that make our accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

Susan Utech, Executive Director

In Memory of Cathryn Curley



On October 14, Safe Haven Shelter held our Annual Fund Raising Luncheon, and asked Mary Ness to say a few words about Cathryn. Three Hundred people gathered at the Greysolon Plaza, and as Mary spoke, a picture of Cathryn, Abby and Liza was projected on two big screens.

This is my colleague and friend Cathryn Curley, and her daughters Abby and Liza. Cath was one of a handful of women who started the Duluth shelter in 1978. Two days ago, she died.

When Cathryn and her friends heard about women who were being hurt, who were afraid – women who felt trapped in their fear because back then there was nowhere to go, no shelters, no help or services.

They didn't simply say "What a sad story," they didn't just **feel** bad. Cathryn and her friends took a look at this huge, overwhelming and complex issue of domestic violence and said "Let's do something about it."

As the Dalai Lama said "It is not enough to be compassionate, you must act."

This was not a consortium of professional helpers with big budgets, fancy degrees and power resumes. These were women, some of them who had been battered, some who had moms, or aunts or friends who had been battered – and all of them knowing it could have just as easily been any one of them driving around with three kids in the car and a few toys and clothes that they were able to grab on the way out the door stuffed in garbage bags in the trunk. It could have as easily been any of them not knowing where to go to be safe.

I picture violence against women as this enormous, hairy, destructive, monster – and then there is tiny Cath and her cohort who look so puny in comparison.

But these incredible women are passionate and fierce and tenacious and they launch themselves onto that monster problem and cling there, determined to wrestle it to the ground.

They were idealistic, some would say naïve, and they were in for a wild ride.

Because as they started to work with women they realized that the problem wasn't just the violence, it was also about misuse and inequity of power. It was about poverty and racism and all of the other hard realities of women's lives.

In spite of these challenges they had still had the courage to commit themselves to doing what they could.

And just look at what they accomplished. Families now have a safe haven, there is a safe place to go.

Good job, Cath.

For some time in the early days Cathryn handled the finances of the organization. My understanding is that their first bookkeeping system consisted of a shoe box where they would throw receipts. This is, when they remembered to. They had a lot to learn and they **did** learn. It wasn't long before they helped shape the Duluth Model and people all over the world looked to them as experts.

Cathryn traveled to Russia to support women in Petrosavodsk who were starting a shelter and later she went to Kenya to collaborate with women working to end violence against women. She was repeatedly invited to go to Washington, DC to read Violence against Women Act grants and make funding recommendations.

Cath was dedicated to her work. She was caring and funny and sometimes stubborn. She never, never lost her compassion or her willingness to act on behalf of the women she worked with.

For the last several years Cathryn coordinated this fundraising event. She did men's non-violence groups as well as groups for women. She was a great leader to the legal advocates in her role as Director of the Family Justice Center.

Her curiosity and authenticity gave Cath the ability to connect with just about anyone. She valued her relationships and those relationships made her a more effective advocate. She had great relationships with cops and court workers and other systems people. And those of you who know her would agree she had the best laugh.

Cathryn gave her entire adult life to creating safety for women. She wanted to change the world for her daughters, Abby and Liza, who love their mom so much and are so proud of her. She wanted to create change for your daughters and my granddaughters Eleanor and Norah, and for all the other women and girls in our lives.

And this change is for the boys and men too. Cathryn believed that a more equal world, a world without violence, would free us all to be our best selves.

Today, I hope you will join Cathryn in moving past compassion into action.

***The audience rose to give Cath a standing ovation.**

Shelter Program, Women's Program

The Women's Program provides battered women and their children with 24-hour emergency shelter, food, and clothing, personal advocacy, and a safe environment to explore their options. Advocates work closely with the women, connecting them to available resources in the community including economic assistance, medical services, education and employment opportunities, and permanent housing. In 2010, our 39-bed shelter served **274** unduplicated women and **241** children.

This year, Safe Haven Shelter experienced a **95.4** percent occupancy rate; meaning 95.4 percent of the year the shelter facility was full. This is the highest figure experienced in our 32-year history and attests to the crucial role we play in providing shelter for battered women in the greater Duluth Community.

The Women's Program operates a crisis-call line 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Advocates answered a total of **715** unduplicated calls in 2010.

Keeping women safe is always a priority. Each woman, with the help of an advocate, creates a personalized safety plan and receives a 911 cellular phone upon arrival and before departure of the shelter. A personalized safety plan includes simple measures a victim can take to ensure that her safety needs and wants are met. Eighty-eight percent of women surveyed upon exiting the shelter said they learned new information on how to keep themselves safe from their abuser.

"When I came to Safe Haven, it was the first day of my new life."
-Shelter Resident

Anna's Story - Ten years passed before Anna made the most important decision of her life—to get help. She arrived at Safe Haven with just a few bags; whatever she could pack before her abuser returned to the house that they had shared. Most of the items consisted of clothes belonging to her three children. Anna knew it was time to save herself and her family. There was no going back.

Before arriving at the shelter, she spent her days cooking, cleaning, and taking care of her family and boyfriend, with whom she eventually had one child. His violent actions began only months into their relationship, when Anna refused to let her paychecks support his drug addiction. Countless arguments quickly escalated to violent beatings. Choking seemed to be his favorite. Often during these violent eruptions, he would hold Anna to the ground and mock her cries for help. Ashamed, Anna kept the abuse hidden by avoiding friends and family.

Despite his apologies and promises to stop, the abuse carried on and only worsened. The frequent beatings, degrading name-calling, death threats, rape, and constant humiliation continued on and off for the next ten years. Nothing she could do was good enough for him and his incessant need for money and power kept him around.

Anna's repeated attempts to leave her abuser only perpetuated his anger and provoked his possessive, controlling, and jealous behavior. Obeying his orders became her only option in keeping her children and herself safe.

When Anna began meeting regularly with a social worker for other needs, it did not take long for the truth to come out. Her social worker referred her to Safe Haven to escape her abuser once and for all.

The first few nights at the shelter, Anna and her children barely left their room. The memory of his face, his smell, and his touch frequently flashed in her mind. He haunted her dreams. Anna's children would cling to her side day after day; frightened to be in the bedroom alone and afraid their father was going to find them and force them to go back home.

"We have lived in hell for so long."

As time progressed, Anna and her family began to feel

some peace. Through support groups and talking with the advocates, Anna was able for the first time to open up and really tell her story. She learned that it was only in her nightmares that the abuse persisted – It was no longer her reality. It took ten years for Anna to distinguish between the two.

Safe Haven is helping Anna get her life back on track. “The staff here is wonderful. No one has done anything even close to what Safe Haven has done for my children and me. Being here has helped us grow so much, inside and out.”

Our advocates assisted Anna in filing an order for protection against her abuser. Each day her family’s immediate needs are taken care of and Anna attends all the support groups she can. The shelter also communicates with the children’s elementary school, where they receive counseling and are doing very well in their course work. Anna plans to leave the shelter and relocate away from her abuser.

Safe Haven will not be the end of Anna’s path to recovery, but rather the beginning. Here she has found hope and knows now that she can live the life her and her family deserve.

“Thanks to Safe Haven we can live again, we know what life is.”

Day One® Services

Safe Haven Shelter is a participating organization in Day One® Services, a collaborative effort to connect women to domestic violence services across the state of Minnesota with one phone call.

Safe at Home

Safe at home is an address confidentiality program by the Secretary of State that allows victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or others who fear for their safety to establish a confidential address. Safe Haven Shelter is one of two organizations in all of St. Louis County that can provide this type of service. Four women applied for the Safe at Home Program in 2010.

Shelter Program Children's Program



The Children's Program includes basic care needs, childcare, parenting time, and referrals to community organizations and schools. We provide children with individual time and offer support groups to children 7 to 17 years of age. The group enables children to express feelings openly as well as facilitates as a venue to educate children on topics such as self-improvement, healthy relationships, career choices, safety planning, and emotional expression.

The Children's Program provides a safe environment to teach healthy boundaries through daily play and interaction with other children. The program engages the children in interactive activities to further their motor skills, cognitive, and emotional development. Volunteers offer school aged children after school tutoring where they can receive additional support.

In 2010, we had **241** unduplicated children stay at the shelter.

David's Story- David came to the shelter in the fall of 2010. His mother had been in an abusive relationship for many years and David witnessed it all. The two of them entered our shelter determined to make their lives better.

While David's mother worked on getting their lives on track, our child advocates worked closely with David. They enrolled him in middle school and gave him all of the school supplies he needed. David even joined our after school tutoring services.

However, a few weeks passed and David's grades began to slip. He became disengaged from his schoolwork and continuously forgot to bring his assignments home for tutoring. The binder he carried was stuffed with half completed assignments or at least the ones he had not yet lost.

Concerned, our advocates talked with his mother and explained to her David's situation with his schoolwork. The reason behind his lack of focus and motivation became clear. David was finding it difficult to be the new kid. He was not adjusting to living in a new city

and even more so, living at a shelter.

Safe Haven's child advocates knew David was capable of doing better and therefore took the initiative to meet with his middle school teachers, the school counselor, the family in transition coordinator, and David's mother to devise a plan that allowed David to be successful in school.

The Children's Program continued with the tutoring and assisted David in keeping his binder and homework organized. They provided folders and notebooks for all of his classes and a new planner to write down assignments.

Tutoring continued everyday until his mother found an apartment and they left the shelter. During David's stay at the shelter, he was able to improve his grades to the B level. Proud of his accomplishments, David keeps in touch with the advocates at the shelter and is happy to share with them how well he continues to do in school.

Pathways Program

Follow-up with ex-residents is a priority at Safe Haven Shelter. The Pathways Program allows us to remain in contact with women who might have otherwise remained disconnected with the advocates at the shelter. We found that women who maintain contact with Safe Haven are more successful in staying away from their abuser and moving forward to achieve future goals they set for themselves.

The Pathways Program continues its success through an incentive system, in which each participant receives a cash reward after completing a self-identified goal or “contract.” Participants have the opportunity to create up to 100 contracts. The program encourages goals aimed at accessing safe and affordable housing, finding a job, finishing high school, obtaining a GED, and addressing their personal health.

The Pathways Program places emphasis on honing important lifelong skills such as goal setting, communication, decision-making, and time-management. We issue a reward for completing goals, but more importantly facilitate the development of trusting relationships.

Of the 64 women who began the program in 2010, nine completed 100 contracts, while 20 participants remain active in the program into 2011. Completing all 100 contracts is a huge success for the women as it translates as self-sufficiency, independence, and ultimately freedom from domestic violence. Women often come back to share their recent successes.



Stacy's Story – Stacy left her abuser of 3 years in June of 2010. Fearing for her life and in need of safety she came to our shelter.

By keeping herself safe at the shelter, Stacy was able to look for permanent housing and work with women's advocates to find steady employment. She also wanted to eventually get her GED.

Like so many other victims of domestic violence, Stacy struggled with thoughts of going back to her abuser. It was difficult for her to remain positive and focused on the things she needed to do for herself to better her own life. She had become so used to having somebody to answer to, she lacked the ability to set goals and to be confident in her own decisions.

The support she received by participating in the Pathways Program was exactly what Stacy needed. She met with her advocate twice each week and was able to talk about her fears and weaknesses – wanting to quit school and work and go back to her abuser. Over time the two developed a trusting relationship. Each week her advocate provided the reinforcement Stacy was looking for – that she could go forward in life on her own.

Stacy is now living independently in the community, free from her abuser. Establishing trust and maintaining a support system with the advocate allowed Stacy to remain free from violence. She continues to stay connected with the positive resources she needs to maintain her independence. Stacy stays in contact with Safe Haven to this day and appreciates everything the Pathways Program has done for her.

The Pathways program offers the support women need to stay violence free.

Support Groups

Support groups offer women emotional support and provide guidance during the healing process. The Women's Program offers daily support groups at the shelter for all shelter residents. These include: **Morning Meditation Group** which utilizes the work of Melody Beattie in, "The Language of Letting Go," **Monday Parenting Group** with Diane Mozel, weekly therapeutic **Writing Workshop** by Shelia Packa, our local Poet Laureate and lastly, **Undoing Domestic Violence Group** with Martha Coltvet.



Safe Haven also offers **Community Support Groups** held at the Family Justice Center (FJC) every Monday and Wednesday evenings. Community Support Groups encourage women from the community and those staying at the shelter to come together in a supportive environment to discuss and share their personal experiences. This year, three support groups were offered weekly at the FJC and served **58** unduplicated women. In total, **354** women attended support groups offered by Safe Haven Shelter.

Undoing Domestic Violence by Martha

My support group begins by breaking down the dynamics of domestic violence. We talk about the power and control wheel, which lists the most common behaviors or tactics used against women. The discussion progresses to the concept of the self. I teach survivors that our reactive behaviors as a result of domestic violence are often times self-destructive.

Old behaviors that were once useful for survival are typically unproductive outside an abusive relationship. I teach women new ways of thinking and discuss with them better ways to cope and handle their emotions. As a group we work on shaping our behaviors to act in our best self-interest. We also honor survival in this group and learn from each other's personal experiences with domestic violence.

I see success in the group when there is growth in self-esteem, patience, trust, and in caring for other residents.

The group process I use is very important to women recovering from domestic violence. It is here that a woman can find her public voice, often for the first time. When a woman is able to see the reality of her experiences through acceptance, she creates an opening for positive change.

The women here at Safe Haven are my heroes. Thursdays are my favorite days and I am so proud to be able to spend time with the women here each week.

Martha Coltvet

"If it weren't for the compassion, support, and caring of everyone here, I probably would've went back." - Shelter Resident

The Family Justice Center

A Program of Safe Haven Shelter

The Lake Superior Regional Family Justice Center (FJC) continues to serve the greater Duluth community as a one-stop shop for women in abusive relationships. The FJC includes a wide range of services and programs available, serving victims of domestic violence community wide. In total, staff and professional partners at FJC responded to **1,164** new incidences of abuse, advocated and supported **948** unduplicated women, and completed over **6,700** activities. Services and Programs include:

Legal Advocacy Program

The program is comprised of 3 full-time staff. Legal advocates follow up on every arrest, assist clients with orders for protection, and accompany women to both civil and criminal court. Advocates work closely with the criminal justice system and various public and private organizations which include the Duluth Police Department (both patrol cops and investigators), City and Court Attorney's, Social Services, Victim Witness, DAIP, PAVSA, Probation and several others. In 2010, the FJC Legal Advocacy Program served **758** clients. Staff assisted in **354** protection orders, followed up on **290** arrests, prosecuted 304 offenders, and attended **466** court hearings.

Support Groups

The FJC offers three support groups at the center facility. This year the FJC collaborated with PAVSA to offer a new support group for clients who are also victims of sexual assault. We also redesigned an existing weekly support group to include a Spiritual Direction component.

Children's Program

The FJC offers childcare services to enable clients to effectively attend appointments, engage with staff and partners, attend hearings, and meet with referrals. In 2010, there were **134** instances of childcare at FJC. We have also been interacting with moms to understand children's needs and to discover ways in which their children can be supported.

Partner Services

The Family Justice Center serves as a co-location to other local agencies whose services focus on the at-risk demographic. This year, the FJC collaborated with area mental health agencies to offer Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) to clients. Partners we worked with this year attended **284** appointments in the fields of housing assistance, legal aid, psychotherapy, mental health services, and spiritual direction.

Monthly Wellness Clinic

The monthly Wellness Clinic features a primary care physician, nurse, pediatrician, intuitive bodywork, healing touch, and salon services. All practitioners are professionals in the community who volunteer their time at FJC. Over the course of the year, collectively there were **158** visits with the wellness practitioners. In collaboration with the Women's Health Center, clients of FJC received free lab tests, such as STD, pregnancy, and pap smears. In addition, the nurse provides free birth control, prescribes non-narcotic medication and assists women in navigating their health needs.

Lynn's Story- Lynn was with her abuser, Larry, for about a year. The abuse started from the very beginning. It was not only the physical violence she experienced, but also the verbal abuse that brought her pain to a whole new level. Larry would constantly tell her he was going to gut her and slit her throat. He would pin her down and not let her leave and strangle her until she blacked out.

Larry was investigated for involvement with a murder. He would describe to Lynn in detail how the victim was killed and would tell her she was next. The abuse she was living with became so overwhelming that she attempted suicide. He had found her shortly after, stood over her and kicked her in the ribs to wake her up. He told her this was not the way she was supposed to die—that he was going to be the one to kill her.

Lynn was receiving help for mental illness when she heard about the Family Justice Center. Lynn received assistance in filing an Order for Protection for her safety. An advocate walked her through the paperwork, attended the hearing with her and with this help she was granted the Order. She also received assistance in finding safe and stable housing away from her abuser.

Lynn's comment to staff was one of gratitude. She is so thankful to have heard about our services at the Family Justice Center. She couldn't believe how much support she had felt during the legal process and was glad to have the feeling of security come back into her life—she now has a dream and a promising future.



Community Education Program

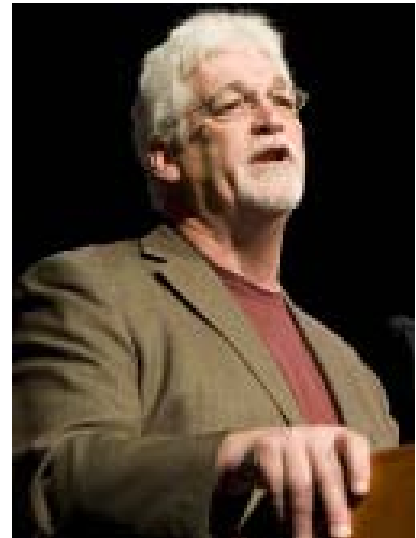
The Community Education Program works to enact social change by raising awareness about domestic violence in the Duluth Community. It provides volunteer training and information about the array of services offered by Safe Haven Shelter. The Program focuses its efforts on the prevention of domestic violence against women and strives to promote healthy, violence-free relationships through educational presentations. In 2010, 96 presentations were given to 4680 people.

The primary focus of our efforts this year was prevention work on Duluth's college campuses. Partnering with Men As Peacemakers, the Minnesota Men's Action Network, Arrowhead Youth Soccer, Northland, the College of St. Scholastica (CSS) and UMD, we were able to bring former all-pro defensive lineman with the Baltimore Colts, Joe Ehrmann, to Duluth to conduct a series of presentations. Using his athletic background as a springboard, Mr. Ehrmann teaches communities and athletic programs to use sports as a way of raising healthy boys and girls who are caring, dedicated to serving others, and well equipped to build strong relationships with others. In Duluth, Joe Ehrmann gave eight presentations to 2500 college students and educators.

"Each man and every coach must start challenging the social norms that define manhood and hold other men and players accountable for their behavior toward women,"

– Joe Ehrmann

The presentations were only the beginning. Joe Ehrmann's presentations spoke to and developed a foundation for peer education groups. Our Community Education Coordinator helped train a peer education group at CSS, called Patron Saints of Vigilance, providing education and leadership in shaping the campus environment. The groups will help shape the way college men and women think about their intimate relationships and their interactions with the opposite sex. It is a small start, but the goals are to change the college culture and thereby the post college culture and the way men and women interact—promoting healthy relationships. The project can continue to be replicated in other campuses as well.



Volunteer Services

The Volunteer Services consists of four main roles: volunteers, interns, work-study students, and professionals. Each plays a significant part in the success of our organization. We train volunteers to work in all areas of the organization such as advocacy, childcare, office assistance, fundraising, cleaning/maintenance, kitchen help, campus activism, prevention strategy and research.

In 2010, Safe Haven Shelter experienced an increase in the number of committed volunteers. Since 2009, the volunteer program decreased its number of volunteers serving our organization, but increased the amount of hours served. This indicates that we are seeing a higher rate of volunteers committing more of their time. In 2010, approximately 25% of the volunteers at our organization gave over 100 hours of their time.

In 2010, the volunteer totals were almost evenly distributed between Safe Haven Shelter and the

Family Justice Center. Approximately 45% of the volunteer hours were attributed to Family Justice Center duties. Almost 4,500 hours were served at the Family Justice Center alone. A portion of that total can be attributed to professional volunteers. These professionals gave almost 400 hours of their time to help with things like medical screenings, haircuts, and massage therapy.

All in all, over **140** people volunteered over **10,117** hours in 2010. A large portion of that total result comes from work-study students and college interns. All together, these students volunteered over 5,000 hours of their time at both the Family Justice Center and Safe Haven Shelter.

“Volunteers are here to provide a support service. Services like Childcare allow the other services to be as good as they are.”

-FJC Volunteer

Bobbi's Story – Bobbi Hoyt, a retired school teacher, dedicates her Tuesdays volunteering at the Family Justice Center. She stated that after only six months of retirement she missed being around children and the chance to make a difference in their lives. So she started volunteering. Bobbi enjoys her time in the Childcare center, looking after the children while their mothers are busy meeting with social workers, legal advocates, or utilizing other center services.

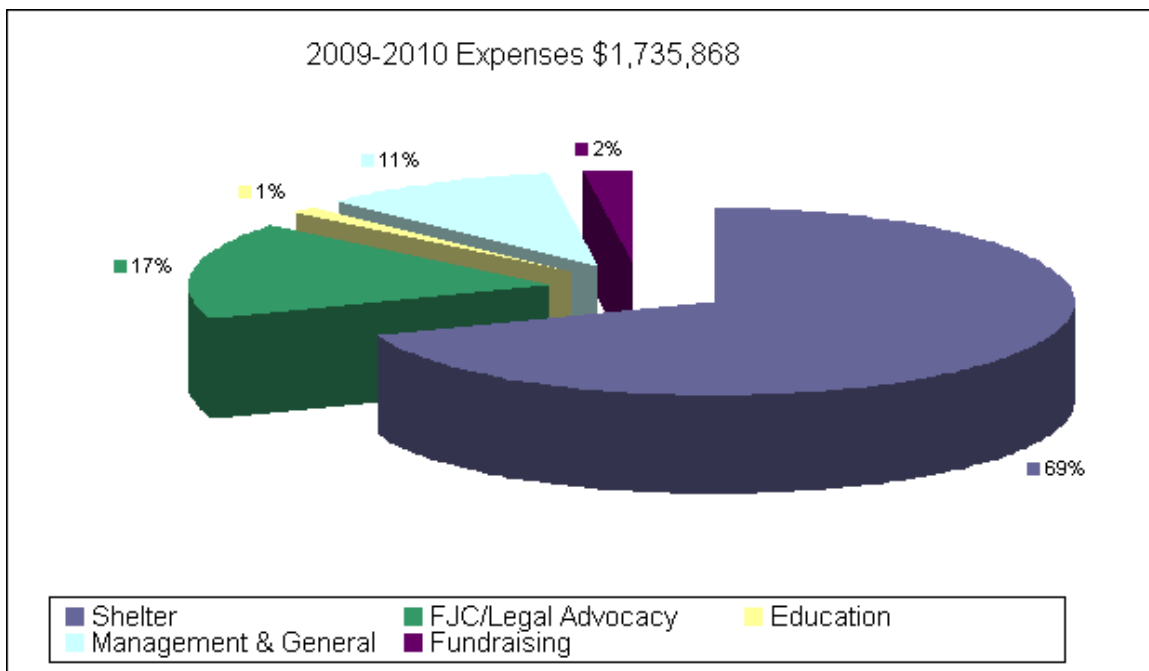
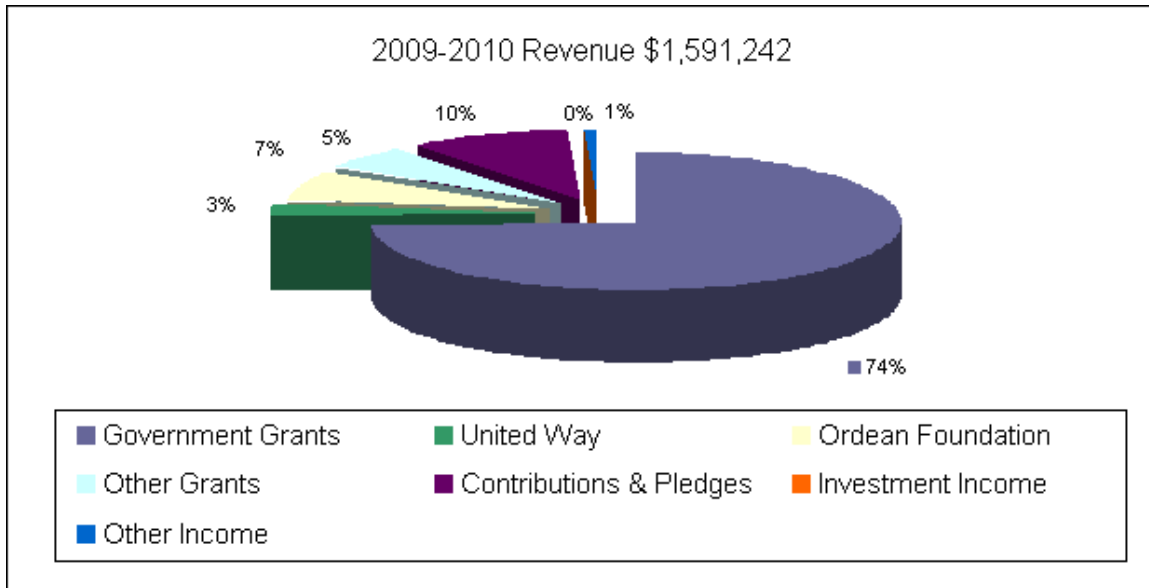
During one of her most memorable volunteer shifts, Bobbi's own professional experience gave hope to a little boy in need.

Bobbi recalled his mother placing the boy – who was about four or five – in her care for the day. While Bobbi played and interacted with him, she noticed the boy had difficulty speaking.

Having taught children of all ages, Bobbi understood how crucial it is for children to have a healthy start in their education, even as early as kindergarten. She stated, “Adults will try to understand him when he speaks, but in school, the other children will just walk away.” Concerned for the little boy during this critical juncture in his life, she notified a staff member and suggested a pre-school screening. Bobbi and other staff were able to connect with the agencies that allowed the screening to be possible. That same day, with the help of an advocate, the mother of the boy made the call that enabled her to enroll her son in the pre-school screening program. He qualified to receive a full year of speech treatment free of charge at the local children's hospital before he begins primary school.

Bobbi credits the success to the teamwork between staff and volunteers at the FJC and the childcare service that allows children to receive the help they deserve.

2010 Income and Expenses



PO Box 3558
Duluth, MN 55803
(218) 728-6481
safehavenshelter.org

The Lake Superior Regional
Family Justice Center
414 W First Street
Duluth, MN
(across from City Hall)
(218) 623-1000

24-Hour Crisis Line:
(218) 728-6481



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