



Information Booklet 2003 - 2004

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Organizational History

Bethany House of Northern Virginia (BHNV)

Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc. (BHNV) is an ecumenical ministry, organized to maintain facilities that will care temporarily for adults, primarily women, and children accompanied by adults, coming from destructive home situations, homeless and destitute because of abuse, to assist them in finding employment, and to help them regain their health and dignity.

Bethany House was founded in 1979 as a ministry to battered spouses through the vision of Doris Ward. She was motivated by the absence of diverse independent agencies to handle the problem of domestic violence. There was compartmentalization and fractionalization prevalent in government, which added to its failure to address the issues of domestic violence. Also, there was a lack of legislation on the books for courts to effectively address the issue of battering in a fair manner, and there seemed to be an apparent lack of sympathy toward the issue of battering, which added to the frustration and suffering of those who were victims of abuse.

Mrs. Ward, who had worked in the District of Columbia for many years with families in crisis, was made acutely aware of the crisis conditions in the D.C. Later she was made aware of the limited resources, the lack of shelters and low-cost housing, the overwhelming number of spousal abuse cases not being processed in Northern Virginia. Mrs. Ward realized the urgency for the development of an independent agency. With vision and creativity, she conceived of a plan to help deal with many of the inadequacies facing those in abusive situations. Out of this tremendous need, Bethany House, a shelter for abused spouses and their children was born.

BHNV began by providing temporary shelter and support systems with a person-to-person outreach program for 4-6 months in order to prevent "revolving door" admissions. It felt that if spouses were allowed to stay longer, they would have a better chance to "get on their feet" and enabling the shelter to have a much more cost-effective rehabilitation plan. BHNV has continued its long-term individualized program and has continued to develop its programs and now has four shelters that give an immediate response to the needs of battered spouses and their children. The program has a follow up period of up to two years and a thrift shop, Joseph's Coat, which enables it to better serve BHNV's its clients while they are in the shelter and later with furnishings upon leaving, it also provides funds to support the shelters.

BHNV is now in its 24th year; it is one of the oldest and largest shelters serving domestic violence. It has a proven record of success and accomplishment that are unequaled in this area. Dedicated and skilled professionals and volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure the health, welfare, safety and recovery of each individual. Public sympathy has grown and the media's attention to root issues have created a positive atmosphere in which real gains can be made in attacking the problems of domestic.

Bethany House has pioneered many interventions in shelters that provide long-term care and comprehensive client support services that keep the families stabilized as they

move forward to independent living. It's nurturing and loving care of clients set the highest of standards. No distinction is made between individuals served on any basis – age, gender, race, creed, color, ethnic origin, physical disability or any other distinction.

Organization's Mission and Goals

Mission

BHNV was organized to maintain facilities, which will care temporarily for adults, primarily women, and children accompanied by adults, coming from destructive home situations. These spouses and children are left homeless and destitute because of abuse. BHNV assists them in finding employment, and to help them regain their health and dignity.

Goals

Parents and children who have been victimized by violent domestic situations frequently arrive at BHNV both destitute and disoriented. BHNV provides a structure in which spouses and children can recover from deep emotional scars, and gain skills needed for independent living. Through its Family Assistance Program, BHNV provides shelter to spouses and dependent children in a supervised, supported environment, which mirrors, as closely as possible, independent living. BHNV provides crisis intervention, counseling, workshops, training, parenting skills and group activities for residents. It arranges and provides transportation to appointments, employment interviews and other occasions until clients are able to manage affairs independently. BHNV provides opportunities for networking, fellowship and spiritual connections, which facilitate an inner healing, needed before individuals can become fully self-sufficient and it provides a two-year follow-up program designed to prevent the recurrence of abusive behavior.

BHNV's Goals:

- Maintain a safe and nurturing environment for families who have experienced and been victimized by domestic abuse and violence.
- Access and monitor human services needed by clients who come to BHNV through referrals, Hot Line calls, other shelters and community organizations to help them gain the skills and aptitudes needed to achieve independent living and self-sufficiency.

BHNV provides a structure through which spouses and children can recover from emotional scars associated with spousal violence and abuse, and gain skills needed for self-sufficient independent living. BHNV provides opportunities for family members to assess their need for human services, identify their existing job skills and occupational proficiencies. BHNV also helps determine their need for job training and career counseling, and it ensures a warm and nurturing environment in which family members can transition into independent living and a heightened sense of self-esteem. Empirical data reflect that spouses, particularly those with dependent children, who are economically empowered and become more self-sufficient, are better able to cope with the challenges of everyday living.

BHNV anticipated service outcomes:

- Spouses and dependent children are sheltered in a supervised and supported environment, which mirrors, as closely as possible, independent living for periods of four to six months.
- Clients gain the skills needed to become self-sufficient and to live independently.
- Spouses and dependent children to find, secure, and occupy permanent, affordable housing.
- Clients receive crisis intervention, crisis counseling workshops and special group support activities as needed.
- Clients receive transportation to appointments, employment interviews and other activities.
- Clients have opportunities for networking, fellowship and spiritual connections, which facilitate the inner healing, needed before individuals can become fully self-sufficient (weekly sessions available to all residents).
- Clients participate in a two-year follow-up program designed to prevent the recurrence of abusive behavior.

Bethany House Staff Support

Throughout the year, BHNV staff work with women and children to identify needs, discuss options, and assist in dealing with the many problems that they face. Through our Community Placement component, BHNV assist with the placement of clients in private homes, in apartments, and with other abused spouses who needed to share expenses.

The staff, along with volunteers distributes food and clothing to clients throughout the year. Transportation is provided for families by staff and volunteers to outings, special events and appointments as needed. Legal services, medical, dental and mental health services is provided for clients by legal, medical and mental health professionals at no or low cost to the client.

On-going home visits are conducted by BHNV Staff and Interns. Crisis Intervention services including crisis counseling, in-office interviews and intakes are provided. In addition, staff assist spouses and their children identify and work towards meeting educational, employment, counseling goals, as well as provide life skills training, and assisting in applying and advocating for transitional housing.

Family Assistance Program

Anytime of the day or night, BHNV may receive a call from a victim in crisis. Many calls arrive through referrals and hotlines. Spouses who have been battered and abused and have been convinced by the abuser that they are the problem, come to us confused and in pain, each knowing they must find a safe haven, but too often they do not know where to turn.

The outreach workers along with volunteers and Bachelor and Master Level interns address the client's needs in the following capacity:

Crisis Intervention

Outreach Staff interview victims to personally examine vital questions that unlock the depths to which pain, fear and frustration that have been internalized, and to map initial actions that form the basis of each intervention. It is in these hours of acute vulnerability and suffering that BHNV stands ready to intervene in crises, and to work diligently to protect those who have been victimized in their places of residence.

For those who find Bethany House, we can help them in regaining control over their lives, reviewing their options for the future, and gaining a sense of stability from which they can make sound decisions, which can impact the rest of their lives.

Intake Interview

BHNV's intake process begins immediately to engage each family member in an ongoing process that develops and adjusts specific family development activities to respond to each family's needs. During the intake, Outreach Workers begin the process of psychosocial assessment detailing a history of each client's experiences, health, education, psychological profile (data on depression, suicide attempts, and other indicators of need for more sophisticated care), use of drugs and/or alcohol, employment, financial support and any behavior that may place the client at risk. This process is to identify the root causes of dysfunction in their lives and to assess issues presented by the client. Vital background data is collected in the initial interview and later confirmed.

Once the client is stabilized, the Outreach Staff work to implement customized family strengthening strategies, accessing services and advocating for clients to ensure realization of each individual's educational, vocational, emotional and recreational goals and objectives. Each client participates in setting individual goals that guide their growth and development throughout their involvement in the BHNV's Family Assistance Program.

Physical Support

Bethany House, under its Family Assistance Program, provides crisis intervention, temporary safe housing, food, clothing, emotional support and guidance to spouses who have been physically and psychologically abused, and to their children who accompany them. In addition, BHNV helps to obtain Pro-Bono medical, legal and financial assistance, counseling services for the women and children. BHNV provides an immediate response to emergency needs experienced during life's most trying circumstances.

Educational/Employment Component

This program is employed as BHNV intervenes in domestic crises and as it helps recovering victims on their road to self-sufficiency. Service coordination and integration are primary strategies for change. Skilled Outreach Staff work with each client to strengthen each victim's capacity to exercise self-determination and autonomy.

Career exploration and career counseling are available to clients to help complete their initial assessment; vocational interests, individual aptitudes and competencies are measured. These data are used to identify the need for academic and vocational training as well as other services needed to move clients into jobs in a competitive employment marketplace. Clients along with their outreach worker set and establish reasonable time frames to reach educational and employment goals.

Once employment goals are clearly established, clients pursue job training and placement with assistance provided by staff as needed. BHNV offers a "Work Experience" that responds to the needs of many clients seeking jobs that have not been exposed to positive role models in the world of work, and who lack marketable skills or have little professional experience.

BHNV in collaboration with Fairfax County Public Schools and private sector institutions provide low-cost or complimentary educational programs for BHNV clients of all ages. Coursework in English as a Second Language, Adult Literacy, General Educational Development (GED) certification, tutorial assistance in secondary school subjects and assistance with preparation for Scholastic Aptitude Examinations (SAT's) are also available.

Life Skills Training

Life Skills instruction occurs both inside and outside the shelter environment and is guided by an in-depth curriculum that helps family members acquire and hone skills needed for independent living. The shelters mirror, as closely as possible, the kinds of independent living situations each client will experience after moving into community-based housing.

The goal of Life Skills Training is to provide an arena where all family members feel free to discuss critical issues; share with each other their life's experiences; exchange information and receive much-needed peer support throughout the learning process.

Life skills training includes such topics as: parenting classes, self-esteem building and Assertiveness training, Financial planning and Domestic Victims classes. In addition, the Outreach Staff and Shelter Managers informally work with the clients on time management, diet and nutrition, food preparation, and dealing with the legal system. Schedules maintained in the shelters provide time for meditation and counseling, opportunities for guided reflection on their life. These skills are stressed and reinforced in BHNV's Aftercare component.

Psychosocial Counseling and Development

Past events and experiences have often destroyed hopes, dreams, values and relationships. BHNV understands that clients victimized by prolonged violence, abuse, trauma, and neglect are not likely to heal quickly. Many weeks, sometimes years, pass before those who have suffered the most violent and traumatic forms of abuse can recover and begin to determine the extent to which pain, fear and anger has affected their lives and impacted the lives of their children.

BHNV's Family Assistance Program reaches each individual and family where and how they find themselves; working with the values they have acquired and by which they have lived. Those clients in need of individualized counseling are responded to immediately. Others needing long-term professional counseling are referred to agencies with which BHNV has a history of collaboration. Close cooperation with other agencies increases BHNV's ability to effectively respond to the client's need.

Counselors in collaboration with BHNV Family Assistance Program provide ongoing group counseling sessions and addresses the following: (how to communicate with your child; positive vs. negative discipline strategies), problem solving techniques, dealing with anger; and coping with stress (loss, divorce recovery, coping with depression, grieving process), etc.

BHNV also recognizes that a deep spiritual awareness is desired to enable each client to clearly identify who they are, and how events and relationships have separated them from the people they were created to be, therefore, ongoing Bible Studies are held to address spiritual questions and issues that may arise. The small group activities build inner strength and connectedness needed for independent living.

BHNV Support Services

BHNV helps each client who desires to achieve and maintain a safe, secure and nurturing home environment in which they can achieve a measure of self-sufficient living. Milestones incorporated into each client's family development strategies progressively move them from pain and heartache toward ultimate self-sufficiency. For this reason, BHNV's professional staff does not fit traditional molds of accomplishing work on behalf of their clients. Rather, they are advocates, coaches, motivators and guides who empower clients and their children to accomplish tasks with decreasing levels of staff guidance and involvement. Therefore, the following support services were enlisted to assist with these goals:

[William T. Ward Scholarship Fund](#)

BHNV wants to see every person achieve success because it is committed to helping victims of domestic violence in finding and keeping life-long career-oriented employment. Heavy emphasis is placed on setting achievable occupation and career goals.

In 1996, BHNV established the William T. Ward Scholarship Fund to assist those clients wanting to complete their higher education. Scholarships are awarded once a year through an application process. \$500-\$1000.00 Scholarships are awarded to clients at the BHNV Annual Banquet who are enrolled in an Associate program or Bachelor or Master level program.

Qualified applicants and BHNV outreach workers identify other educational outlets that provide contextualized instruction for academic disciplines, and some funding to help defray the cost of educational services. This approach enables individuals to build academic competencies in specific career areas, enabling our clients to learn faster, retain longer, and find education to be a rewarding experience. While this approach entails more time, the success achieved thus far proves the efficacy of the approach.

2-Year Follow-up and Transitional Housing Program

When families leave BHNV shelters, they are considered to be living independently, but ties to the shelter are far from severed. In reality, the BHNV Outreach Staff retain contact with the clients for a period of up to two years. BHNV makes every reasonable effort to guarantee that each family retains its newfound freedom and those past abusive behaviors and destructive relationships remain parts of the clients' past.

In addition, BHNV, in cooperation with the Lutheran Social Services as well as other non-profit organizations collaborate to provide 2-year subsidized Transitional Housing Programs for residents completing the BHNV Family Assistance Program.

Qualified BHNV shelter clients may be provided with two years residence in the BHNV recently established subsidized Transitional Housing units. Recently, BHNV Treatments begun earlier continue to be monitored. Work conducted cooperatively between client and Outreach Staff earlier in this supportive relationship comprises the key to success. Aftercare can be one of the factors making their ability to live independently with their children possible when new crises arrive.

Graduation to Independent Living

BHNV staff assists in the search for appropriate, safe and secure housing. Through BHNV's thrift shop, articles of clothing, food, furniture, appliances, and household necessities for functional homes are gathered and made available. When available and needs exist, a donated car is made road-worthy to ensure the client will enjoy sustained mobility. When housing, through various sources, is secured, the family moves from BHNV's shelter into the community.

Bethany House Family Assistance Program Outreach – Thrift Shop (Joseph's Coat)

Bethany House operates a thrift shop, called Joseph's Coat. Its purpose is to help provide the financial support needed to assist the women and children living in our four shelters. Another important function of the shop is to provide clothing, furniture, linens, and household items for our clients when they are ready to move into their new housing. It also assists the clients we are serving and others living out in the community during the two-year follow-up period. . The majority of our clients would not be able to furnish their homes if BHNV did not supply these very basic needs. It also stores furnishings for clients until they are ready to make this move.

Through a voucher system, the clients are able to shop for clothing and other necessities on an on-going basis. The shelters are supplied with furniture, house ware and other items as needed. When a client leaves our shelter, we provide household goods, furniture, carpets, beds, etc. The shop maintains a storage room for that purpose. In addition to serving our clients, we respond on an "as needed" basis to requests from other agencies, churches, schools, and individuals providing emergency items.

The Thrift Shop participates in a training program for handicapped students and individuals set up by the Fairfax County Rehabilitation Center. This population includes mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and autistic individuals who want to learn a trade or new job skill. In addition, the Thrift Shop provides students an opportunity to fulfill necessary internships required by certain courses of study and honor societies and others that need to fulfill their community service requirements ordered by the courts. The presence of the Thrift Shop in the community has increased the awareness of the Bethany House ministry and its ability to help those in need. We are very encouraged with the progress of the shop and it's dedicated staff and volunteers.

Community Support

BHNV's outreach to the community is a comprehensive interaction with public safety officials, community leaders, social and human service providers, and religious leaders and individuals who will refer spouses and their children to BHNV for services. Outreach to the community also provides public education and awareness campaigns designed to help equip community leaders to identify and appropriately respond to instances of domestic violence and spousal abuse. Outreach includes trained professionals who respond appropriately to a variety of domestic situations to ensure that emergency services are expeditiously delivered. BHNV works to stabilize the crisis at hand and to ensure that their housing is made safe and secure.

Wherever necessitated by circumstances, BHNV provides transportation for battered spouses and family members to our shelters. Once engaged with victims, BHNV Outreach Staff remain involved with specific families throughout their participation in the Family Assistance Program.

In the past FY 2001-2002, BHNV had contacts with 378 congregations, 120 clubs and civic organizations, 306 businesses, and a substantial number of individuals in the Metropolitan area. To keep our supporters informed, BHNV sends out information on a regular basis. It invites volunteers to assist with our many special events, or to work on a one-to-one basis with families if they choose. Some volunteers plan picnics, dinner outings, and swim parties for the women and children each year, in particular the civic clubs and the congregations.