

Fall 2010

*Eliminating domestic violence one family at a time*

# BETHANY HOUSE GAZETTE

*of Northern Virginia, Inc.*

## FINDING HER WAY through the maze



Photo Illustration

**A**driana was captivated by the medical field. For two years she pursued a medical education, but when she came to America her medical education came to a crashing halt. In order to flee a violent marriage, Adriana found herself flipping hamburgers and taking drive-through orders at a local fast food restaurant to provide for her five children.

“I had no skills when I came to Bethany House,” Adriana said. “Working at [a local fast food restaurant] had very bad work schedules. And with five kids, it was very hard to deal with.”

Adriana was finding it difficult to pay bills on minimum wage and knew this job would not be sustainable for her family’s needs.

When Adriana entered Bethany House’s program, she was assigned to a case worker to help her navigate through the system of resources available to her as she worked toward self-sufficiency. Her case worker suggested she enroll in a Certified Nurses Aid (CNA) program. After being accepted and much schooling, Adriana is fulfilling her once deterred career path.

“I get better pay, have a better schedule, and get benefits,” Adriana said. “I like the medical field and I like my job. I get to keep doing what I like to do.”

For the past five years, Adriana has kept the same job she secured as a result of the CNA program and is happy to be working there.

Bethany House helped Adriana find her way through a maze of perplexing situations, emotions, and people.

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# FINDING HER WAY THROUGH THE MAZE

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“Bethany House means a place where I found warm hands,” Adriana said. “At the time I was very confused about becoming independent. Bethany House helped me to look to God and I found hope.”

During her stay at Bethany House Adriana’s perspective changed.

“Bethany House gave me hope and helped me realized God is here,”

Adriana said. “When I started to fill my spirit, I started having hope and strength. When I left Bethany House, I just kept doing what I was doing there – looking to Him.”

Counseling was instrumental in taking steps toward healing for Adriana.

“[My counselor] listened to me and understood my situation,” Adriana said. “She helped me let go.”

During Adriana’s time at Bethany House, she benefited greatly from parenting training.

“Bethany House helped me cut out rules and schedules,” Adriana said. “They helped me make my kids more secure and set boundaries. My kids’ behavior started to improve.”

Adriana’s children are moving toward healing and continue to receive regular counseling to help them process through the trauma.

“When they are more mature they’ll understand why they have so many insecurities and anger inside,” Adriana said. “They were powerless, but now the situation isn’t changing; [it is stable]. I have hope because God is in charge and I know they’ll be successful as adults.”

As she reflects upon where she was five years, and where

she is today, Adriana gently holds her beaded cross necklace the color of a blossoming violet in the spring.

“When I came to Bethany House I was frustrated and sad,” Adriana said. “I was in a dark place and all I could see were my problems. Now I can see farther – [Bethany House] helped me see God and help.”

With this ability to look to the future with hope, Adriana hopes to become a Registered Nurse (RN).

Adriana has found her way through her maze of domestic violence.

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“Now I can see farther—Bethany House helped me see God and help.”

- Adriana, Former Bethany House Client

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## WORDS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: HOUSING OPENS UP

Great news! As you know, the housing market has been tight for months—too many months. This has affected our families’ ability to move out of BHN’s emergency shelters and into their own homes, safe and free of abuse. However, the housing market seems to have improved this summer. In August alone we saw three families move into transitional housing programs where they will be able to stay for up to two years.

Waiting on a home can be tough. It’s emotionally exhausting, and our families have really been challenged to practice patience (and more patience) as they wait. But what a celebration we all share when the good news comes through! Never-ending smiles and sometimes tears get passed around with the announcement of a new home. One of the blessings that Bethany House gives to our families as they leave is a new home “starter kit.” A starter kit includes any of the common household items that you or I would use in our own homes—cooking utensils, pots and pans, dinnerware, flatware, linens, towels, and so much more. These items can be expensive, especially when you have to buy them all at once.

Of course, the blessing of a home starter kit is only possible because of generous donors such as yourself. We have exhausted much of our new home supplies this summer. Would you help us to stock up on some much needed items for our families so we (and you) can continue to bless them as they leave Bethany House? These items remain a testament to our families that an entire community gathered around them to support them as they moved toward healing from trauma. If you are able to donate *new* household items, we can receive them at our office. Or perhaps you could offer a contribution in the enclosed envelope which would allow us to purchase these items for our families. Any contribution is appreciated. Most of all, please continue to pray for us. To our merciful God, we give thanks!



Catherine Hassinger,  
BHN Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Hassinger".

# Male volunteer proactive in addressing domestic abuse

**W**ith a unique passion for the cause and heart of service, Jason Hsieh has allowed creativity and service to flow hand in hand. From serving on Tuesday nights with the children to devoting a weekend to help paint the office or formulating new ideas to raise both funds and awareness, Jason has faithfully served women and children at Bethany House.

## Why did you want to volunteer at Bethany House?

I wanted to see how domestic violence shelters operate and how such a place incorporates the Gospel into its outreach. It's also good to be around the professionals so I understand helpful and not so helpful ways to talk about the issue. Also, most people who are interested in addressing domestic violence are understandably women. By volunteering, I gain a sense of how men can be more proactive in addressing this issue.

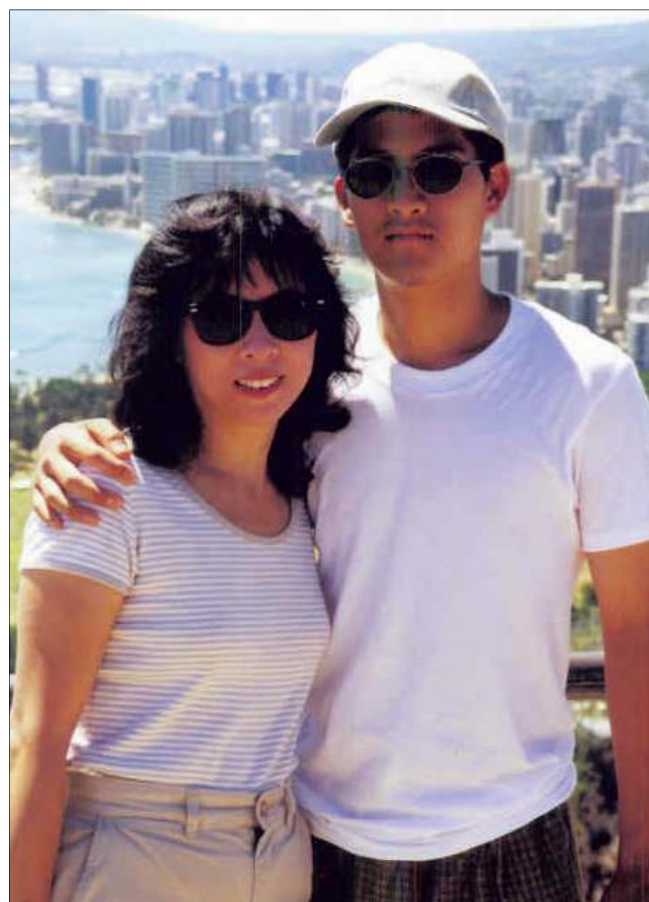
## Why is the issue of domestic violence important to you?

I grew up witnessing domestic violence. When I was young, my brother and I didn't think much of it. It was just a part of our lives. But when I was a teenager and started getting interested in girls, I imagined what it would be like if these women had abusive husbands. I hated that thought and confronted my father about his behavior. This wasn't easy because he was a good father in many other respects. I wasn't a Christian at the time, so I praise God for allowing me to see that abusing women is not acceptable.

Of course, this issue offends a holy and just God. Domestic violence makes a mockery of what God intends for marriage and indeed any human relationship on so many levels. You're talking about hurting someone made in God's image as the most obvious. But the deep issues of why men are violent – insecurity, misplaced priorities, wanting to call their own shots, all make a statement that God is not real.

## What were your goals in planning fundraisers?

The fundraisers provided opportunities to bring attention to the issue to other church members. Since the majority of participants in the basketball tournament I organized were men, I specifically chose Bethany House as the beneficiary so that the issue could be highlighted



**Posing for a picture** —Volunteer Jason Hsieh and his mother spend some quality time together.

more to this population. I'll be sending out emails to tournament participants with links to interviews on how the Gospel addresses domestic violence, as well as writings I hope to do.

## What does Bethany House mean to you?

It's a place where I hope abused women and their children, through hearing the Gospel, can make sense of and interpret the horrors they are facing, and respond by living in a God honoring way as they are fueled by the hope of the cross.

## What have you learned from volunteering?

Victims of domestic violence often look and act just like anyone else. Sometimes it's obvious, but many times you can't necessarily tell they are victims from outward appearances. So it's important for churches to provide open and welcoming environments for everyone to discuss trials in their life.

## What was a memorable volunteer experience?

On a few occasions, the kids have entered the playroom crying like there's no tomorrow. I love being able to calm them down and let them know they are in a safe place. After a few times, these kids start to remember you and say they want to see you next time. Given the trials they are in that's great to hear.

## 5 WAYS TO HELP THIS FALL

*You can make a difference by purchasing:*

- 1) Gift cards to grocery stores (\$25 or more)
- 2) Rice cookers
- 3) Dishware sets
- 4) Twin-size comforters
- 5) Glass and plastic cups



# VOLUNTEER DINNER: *Celebrating impact in communities*



Volunteers at Bethany House have one thing in common: a desire to see lives healed after experiencing the devastating effects of domestic violence.

“Bethany House is a safe haven for women to heal, regroup, gain new skills, and a new direction with the blessing of Jesus,” said a current volunteer.

On Tuesday, August 10, 2010, Bethany House held its annual volunteer appreciation event to celebrate the difference volunteers made this past year.

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“Bethany House is a safe haven for the women and children. Bethany House offers hope and love, most importantly by showing them our Father’s love.”

- Bethany House Volunteer

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“The services Bethany House provides is incredible,” said another current volunteer. “I can see the effect your services have on the women and children. It’s an honor to be a part of this organization.”

Local businesses showed their appreciation for the impact volunteers are making in their community by donating gift certificates, food, dessert, and drinks. Over 20 organizations donated to make the event possible. The donations totaled more than \$1,800.

Last fiscal year (July 1, 2009—June 30, 2010) non-professional volunteers provided over 1,000 hours of service valued at \$21,711.04. Professional volunteers provided over 649 hours of service valued at \$55,526.

Four volunteers were recognized for going above and beyond in their service this past year.

**Alejandra Galindo** received the award for *most volunteer hours served*. Alejandra has served as a Development Assistant, Children’s Life Skills Worker, and Helpline Worker.

**Kathryn Rizzardi** was recognized as the *most committed volunteer* for her faithful volunteer work at Joseph’s Coat Thrift Shop for the past five years.

**Jeanette Bellamy** was given the *most dedicated* award for revamping the Children’s Life Skills Program and rallying volunteers together for better impact.

**Jason Hsieh** was honored with the *most diverse service* award for his willingness to serve in any way and for his leadership in raising both funds and awareness.

## Numbers served and Helpline calls last fiscal year increased

The demand for services from Bethany House has not abated this past fiscal year which ended on June 30, 2010.

The number of Helpline calls received by the Bethany House Helpline increased by 84%. Bethany House provided assistance to 389 women and 497 children through the Helpline.

Bethany House was not able to provide housing to all our callers, but was able to be the first line of defense by giving out referrals, being a listening ear for those in crisis, and/or providing resources to those in need.

Bethany House was able to provide emergency shelter and supportive services to 33 women and 47 children. The transitional housing market is starting to open up and enable families to move more quickly through our program (closer to 4 to 6 months rather than 6 or more months).

Each month, women and children attended two group counseling sessions and two life skills classes to help recover from the trauma.

Each week, women received both individual counseling and case management to facilitate in taking positive steps toward the future.

CFC Code #89071 United Way & CVC Code #8268

6121 Lincolnia Rd. Ste. 303 † Alexandria, VA 22312  
703-658-9500 † [www.bhmv.org](http://www.bhmv.org)