



Starting life from scratch

Client recipe to rebuilding healthy life

She never expected a part of her life journey would include domestic violence or a homeless shelter. She never expected to become a part of the statistics others read about. She did not know what to expect either when she first stepped foot into a shelter at Bethany House of Northern Virginia (BHNV).

“The [BHNV] shelter was not what I expected,” said Gabriella, a BHNV client. “I expected bunk beds everywhere.”

Gabriella thought when her case worker pulled up in the parking lot they might be making a stop to see someone, not pulling up into the place she would live for the next several months with her children. The house was in a regular neighborhood, and it looked like a normal home, not the institution she was expecting.

“I thought she was kidding,” Gabriella said.

When Gabriella stepped inside the shelter, her fears about shelter life began to subside as her case worker led her to her own private bedroom.

“When I came [to BHNV] I had no experience of self-worth, nearness to God or how to raise my children,” Gabriella said. “I used to lie about my personal life because I was afraid to disappoint people.”

Anger was a problem for Gabriella. She had experienced violence and anger from her abuser, discovered her children had also been abused, became a homeless mother with children, and despaired of escaping her persistent abuser. Gabriella had anger within her and found it hard to control.

Not only was it difficult for her to manage her anger, but now she was starting life all over again from scratch.

“It was embarrassing to ask [BHNV] for gas money after owning my own business,” Gabriella said.

Despite the challenges, Gabriella has embraced the help BHNV offered her.

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Bethany House of Northern Virginia is a non-profit, faith-based organization serving women and children who are homeless and destitute as a result of domestic violence.

Our CFC Code is 89071. Our United Way and CVC Code is 8268.

Starting from scratch: *Client recipe to rebuilding life*

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Photo Illustration

“I didn’t know if I could make it and thought I was going to break down,” Gabriella said. “But Bethany House told me to hang on.”

BHNV walked alongside Gabriella as she rebuilt her life.

“Bethany House has been the greatest experience ever,” Gabriella said. “Now I know how to be calm and peaceful. I can go any place and not explode. I know how to be a human being.”

Gabriella has learned parenting skills, how to cope with her anger, and how to move forward.

“I know how to be more calm with my kids, how to talk with them, and deal with their problems and anger,” Gabriella said. “I have self-confidence and know how to talk to people for a job. I understand more about God and I respect myself more.”

Her life has been turned around.

“When I came [to BHNV], there were gloomy days everyday,” Gabriella said. “It was like there was a film on them, but now so much weight is off me. I can see the light [through] the trees now. I couldn’t have done it anywhere, but here.”

Through the support of the Family Assistance Program staff and counseling, Gabriella has a new perspective on life.

“God wanted me to become what I am now,” Gabriella said. “I love myself without needing someone else to love me.”

BHNV holds great significance to Gabriella.

“Bethany House means a lot of things to me,” Gabriella said. “It’s a place where I can learn how to be at peace more than with my own family. It’s the first time people really cared for me and I won’t mess it up. This isn’t a shelter – it’s a home.”

As Gabriella looks to the future, she can smile.

“I can make it on my own,” Gabriella said. “I know God will help me. I’m not afraid.”

Gabriella is working to complete her GED before she starts her full-time job in January.

“This isn’t a shelter—it’s a home.”

- Gabriella, BHNV client

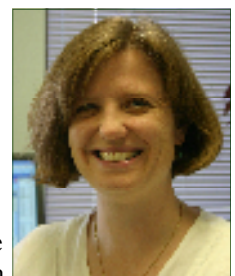
A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Winter is almost upon us. Even a few days of chilly weather in between crisp fall days bring that message home. As we move from summer into winter, we find that our needs change just as quickly as the weather.

The donation of new or gently used comforters, quilts, and blankets is greatly appreciated. We give these items to our families when they arrive at our doors, and we let them know they can take them with them when they leave. The blankets serve a dual purpose—they meet a physical need by helping our clients stay warm through several months of cold weather, and they meet an emotional need as they allow our families to bring something familiar with them into new homes and new lives.

Please help us this holiday season with the donation of comforters, quilts and blankets. We have the greatest need for twin-size covers, but we accept all sizes. (And if you want to play Santa, comforter sets which include matching sheets, are *highly* sought-after Christmas gifts!)

Of course, we still need to pay our heating bills, so a cash donation in any amount is also welcome. A donation envelope is included for your convenience. On behalf of our families, I thank you for your generosity and support. God bless you this season of cheer, and I wish you a Merry Christmas!



Catherine Hassinger,
BHNV Executive Director

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

Peeking into the lives of staff

Tamica Wakefield: Behind-the-scenes woman



Tamica Wakefield, BHNV Staff

She is the first face you see smiling at you when you walk through the office door. She is the pleasant voice at the other end of the phone when you call the office. She started out volunteering and ended up a hired employee. A mother of five and lover of helping out others, she has found her niche at Bethany House. Let's meet the woman behind the desk.

1) What brought you to Bethany House?

The opportunity came from a program called Job Links. When they gave me the description/mission of BHNV I was so pleased to join.

2) What does Bethany House mean to you?

When I think of BHNV, I think safe haven— Heaven's angels doing God's work.

3) What is your role at Bethany House?

I am the Administrative Assistant.

4) Why did you choose to work at Bethany House?

At first I was a volunteer. Then later when I saw what BHNV does and that it is a true, honest non-profit, I made up in my mind that no matter what I did I would always keep BHNV a part of my life. Whether I am paid for it or not, the real payment for me is to see these women succeed and become closer to God. Later on in my volunteering I was offered a position and, of course, I accepted, and to this day I love what I do.

5) What are your duties?

Maintaining the office, directing those in need to the right place, and making sure to have a kind, open heart/voice/face when they call or come into the office.

6) As the first person to greet people or answer the phone, does that impact the way you do your job?

Everyday when I enter these doors I think about that. I strive to always be that voice/face of hope. I want to be courteous and a pleasant face/voice someone will feel comfortable with.

7) What do you hope to be doing 5 years from now?

I plan to have furthered my education in counseling for women and children who have been battered.

8) What is your most memorable experience working as an administrative assistant so far?

Every time there is a call for help or a client visit of accomplishment, it always stays on my mind.



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FANNIE MAE HELP THE HOMELESS 5K WALK

BHNV will celebrate 30 years of serving women and children who are homeless because of domestic violence this November by participating in the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walk.

The Fannie Mae Walk occurs each year and is a way for nonprofits across the DC Metro area and

Northern Virginia who serve the homeless to raise both awareness and financial support. This 5K (3.1 miles) walk will take place Saturday, November 21, 2009 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Registration opens at 7am and the walk begins at 9am.

Sign up online at www.helpthehomelessdc.org and select Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc. (VA042). All of the registration fees (\$25 for adults, \$15 for youth) go directly to BHNV.

Also, if 150 show up to walk on behalf of BHNV Saturday, November 21, 2009, Fannie Mae will give an additional \$2,000 to BHNV!

After the walk BHNV will have a tailgate celebration. Support BHNV by registering online and join us to walk. If you are unable to make it, but want to join us as we celebrate 30 years, call Jennifer at 703-658-9500 to sponsor a BHNV staff member in the walk!



Photo Illustration

5 WAYS TO HELP THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

You can make a difference by purchasing:

- 1) Gift cards to grocery stores (\$25 or more)
- 2) New blankets
- 3) New sheet sets
- 4) Laundry detergent
- 5) Toothpaste



"For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me."

- Matthew 25: 35, 36

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PRAYER VIGIL HELD

Joining together with Christians across all denominations, Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc. (BHNV) held its second annual domestic violence prayer vigil Tuesday, October 27, 2009.

The prayer vigil is a time to raise awareness about domestic violence and intercede on behalf of those impacted by domestic violence. BHNV, a Christian nonprofit, collaborated with NOVACO and The Time to Fly Foundation, two Christian nonprofits working with domestic violence victims, to sponsor this event.

“It is important that we understand the scriptural response to violence.”

- Catherine Hassinger, BHNV Executive Director

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and BHNV joined together with members of the Christian community in Northern Virginia to offer a united prayer and hope on behalf of those impacted by violence in their homes and in their most personal relationships.

“As members of the local Christian community, it is important that we understand the scriptural response to violence,” said Catherine Hassinger, BHNV Executive Director. “So that we may better understand how to respond to and intercede for victims and their families.

“We thank our pastors for joining with us to better understand what the Word of God has to teach us about the destruction caused by violence and the need for healing in our homes and in our nation.”

BHNV believes through Scripture that prayer is the most powerful gift one can offer a fellow human being. Whether a prayer of longing in times of distress, a prayer of petition to correct wrong behavior, or a prayer of praise to thank our loving and merciful God, we can lift our prayers to a God who makes all things new.

Gathering in the chapel of the First Baptist Church of Alexandria, participants heard from pastors on various issues surrounding domestic violence. Four local pastors participated in the evening’s program: Rita Thompson of The Triumphant Church, Danell Perkins of Grace Covenant Church, King Rhodes of His Church International Christian Center, and Don Davidson of First Baptist Church of Alexandria.

The highlights of the vigil were the song and testimony offered by Pat Fairfax, a domestic violence survivor. Special music was coordinated by Joel Harder of First Baptist Church of Alexandria.

Last fiscal year, 212 women and 272 children received emergency and crisis intervention assistance from BHNV. Twenty-six women and 37 children received shelter and transitional living services. Fifteen women and 12 children participated in life skills activities and 20 women received individual counseling.



Photo Illustration

A Compassionate Response to Domestic Violence

1. **Listen** carefully and without judgment.
2. Help the victim **recognize the abuse** and how it contradicts the Bible.
3. Help the victim **see hope** in Christ in a hopeless circumstance.
4. Encourage the victim to **seek help**.
5. Make it clear to the victim that you want her or him to be **safe immediately**.
6. **Accept your role** to show love and concern to the domestic violence victim.
7. **Pray** for God to bring healing as you walk alongside the victim.

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