

# CHOICES



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## UNDER THE RADAR

In January a group called Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting (RADAR) issued a report called "Are Abuse Shelters Helping True Victims?" RADAR describes its mission as "a non-profit, non-partisan organization of men and women working to improve the effectiveness of our nation's approach to solving domestic violence." Their press release claims that they uncovered problems with lax admission policies, discrimination, unqualified staff, and lack of accountability, and that only one in ten persons in domestic violence shelters is actually there because of domestic abuse.

Reading the entire report and several of the source materials cited reveals a far different agenda than claimed in their mission statement. The use of the term "the domestic violence industry" in the report itself is a clue that RADAR aligns itself with groups who have filed lawsuits in several states claiming that battered women's shelters should not receive public funds because they do not shelter men. They are not seeking funds themselves to build shelters for abused men.

The allegation that only one in ten shelter residents has actually been abused is based on the fact that few have visible injuries or request emergency medical services upon being admitted to the shelter. The suggestion that a person who is not seriously injured does not need or deserve shelter is unconscionable. Battered women's shelters' primary mission is safety, and we consider it a success when we are able to assist a woman before the abuse becomes life-threatening. In fact, we accept residents at the Haven who have not been physically beaten but who have been threatened, intimidated, stalked, emotionally and financially abused and isolated from their families and friends. When a woman tells us that her partner punched a hole in the wall next to her head during an argument, or killed a pet, that is a sign that she is in great danger of being harmed herself if she remains in that situation.

Shelters are filled with substance abusers, according to the report. We do frequently see women who use alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism, and we ask them to begin their recovery when they enter the shelter, and we provide referrals to support groups. Elsewhere in the report, shelters who do not admit women with addictions are criticized. It is unclear what solution RADAR seeks.

RADAR also disparages shelters for not asking for verification of abuse, such as a police report. In fact, many battered women never make police reports because they fear that the abuse will escalate if they do so. This is a valid fear because most batterers who are arrested make bail and quickly return home to attempt to coerce their partner into recanting the abuse charge.

The report utilizes conflicting sources to enforce its viewpoint that shelters are poorly administered places where clients are mistreated by staff. As an example, references lambasting shelter management run the gamut from complaining that shelters have abandoned feminist roots to allegations that shelters perpetrate extreme, anti-male feminist ideology.

The charge that shelters coerce women into falsely obtaining restraining orders when no violence has occurred is backed up by an article by a Canadian woman who claimed that three lawyers in her country had advised her to claim domestic violence when she filed for divorce.

Quotes from former shelter residents and employees usually refer to incidents that happened ten to fifteen years ago, and many of these are anonymous. An interview with a "former shelter director" who said she left because the shelter system was corrupt and biased was an anonymous interview conducted by RADAR.

Newspaper stories about shelter staff being fired or arrested for embezzling funds or abusing clients are offered as evidence that the shelter system has no accountability, rather than that those who broke the law were, indeed, held accountable for their acts.

The RADAR report is insidious and threatens to undermine services that save many lives of men as well as women. The number of abusive men killed by their female partners declined by 60% over a five year period according to a Department of Justice



report in 2000. This indicates to us that increasing awareness of shelter services, and legislation such as the Violence Against Women Act (also abhorred by RADAR) have given battered women alternatives that allow them to rebuild their lives.

Tri-Valley Haven is committed to providing

the best services possible to survivors of abuse. This includes male survivors. Although we do not have a shelter for battered men, men utilize our crisis line, legal clinics, counseling services and homeless services, and we can provide a motel voucher if a man must leave his own home for safety reasons.

*Together we build a world without violence.*

*Vicki Thompson  
Associate Director*

## FRIENDS OF THE HAVEN

### HOLIDAY DONORS SPREAD CHEER TO THE COMMUNITY



The Haven extends grateful thanks to everyone who contributed to our holiday gift and food distribution programs. This year we served over 3,500 individuals. This was the biggest holiday program in our history, and the generous support of many groups and individuals made it possible. Special thanks to the following businesses, clubs, and agencies that conducted gift drives:

Valley Eye Care	Arroyo Seco	Sunset Elementary School
Shepherd's Gate	UNCLE Credit Union	Safe America
DeSilva Gates	Livermore/Pleasanton Fire Department	City of Livermore
First Presbyterian Church of Livermore	McGrath RentCorp	San Jose Schools
Castlewood Country Club	Clorox Corporation	Smith Elementary School
Alameda County Public Health	Zeltiq Employees	Pleasanton Newcomers
Ware Malcomb	Lynnewood Methodist Church	Express Fitness
Safeway	Granada High School	Norbit Security
Pleasanton Moms	California Highway Patrol	Curves of Livermore
Heritage Estates	St. Charles Borromeo	NorCalAirCooled Group
Geeks at Large	Robert Half Associates	Northern America Title Company

A huge thank-you to Share the Spirit, co-sponsored by the Bay Area News Group and the Volunteer Center of the East Bay, for a grant of \$5,000 to support the holiday gift program.

Special thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who joined us at Dublin High School on December 5, 6 and 7 to bake, decorate and package one thousand gingerbread boys and girls and bags of gingerbread babies for our annual Gingerbread Project. Safeway sponsored the bake-a-thon by providing all of the ingredients for our most tasty fundraising event.

### THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES RETURNS TO THE BANKHEAD!

In response to audience demand, we are extending our annual production of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* over two weekends. The popular and provocative play will be at Livermore's Bankhead Theater at 8 p.m. on Friday, February 27, and Friday, March 6, and at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 7. Tickets are available now at [www.bankheadtheater.org](http://www.bankheadtheater.org), at the theater box office, or by calling (925) 373-6800.

We are delighted to announce that the production is being directed again by local theater veteran Eleisa Cambra. Each year's show is different, with

the addition of new monologues created by the author in addition to the original favorites. The cast features a talented group of Haven supporters and staff and local performers.

First performed as a one-woman show in 1998 by Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues* is a funny and poignant look at female sexuality. It is now performed by professional and amateur casts throughout the world each year during February and March for "V Day," a movement to raise funds to end violence against women. All proceeds from the Livermore production will benefit Tri-Valley Haven's domestic violence and sexual assault programs. Get your tickets today!



### TAPROOT FOUNDATION VOLUNTEERS DONATE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

We are once again privileged to have been chosen to be a beneficiary of a Taproot Foundation service grant. The Taproot Foundation recruits teams of volunteers with professional skills such

as marketing, graphic design, web design, information technology, and human resources. These volunteers then work with selected nonprofits on projects ranging from developing a logo to financial analysis, strategic staff development, or developing agency literature and marketing

materials. These projects are worth tens of thousands of dollars and would be beyond the budgets of most nonprofit agencies.

Last year, the Taproot Foundation worked with Haven staff to produce a professional annual report in honor of the Haven's 30th anniversary of service. We use the annual report to introduce potential funders or prospective board members to the

## **PASTA FOR PEACE!**

Enjoy a great dinner at a great price and support the Haven's services at the same time! What more could anyone ask for?

Please join us on Saturday, May 16, for a family spaghetti feed at the Pleasanton Veterans Memorial Building located at 301 Main Street. Pasta for Peace will feature activities and entertainment for the entire family and a silent auction in addition to a delicious

agency. We give it to our donors to thank them and inform them about how the Haven is using their donations. The annual report is available for viewing on our website, [www.trivalleyhaven.org](http://www.trivalleyhaven.org).

This year we are the recipients of a Taproot service grant to revamp our website. Our goal is to make the website more attractive and easy to navigate, and to invite visitors to the site to become personally involved with the Haven. The new Haven website will be up and running by the beginning of summer.



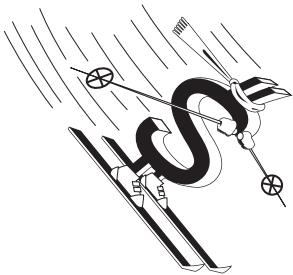
meal of pasta, salad, bread, dessert, and beverages.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children if purchased in advance. The adult price will be \$15 if purchased at the door. All proceeds from the dinner will benefit the Haven.

RSVP by May 9. Please visit our website, [www.trivalleyhaven.org](http://www.trivalleyhaven.org), for a reservation form, or call our community building at (925) 449-5845.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

### **WORKING TOGETHER TO SURVIVE THE RECESSION**



As you may suspect, the Haven has been particularly hard-hit by the current economic crisis.

We have sustained cuts from government funding sources, individual donations are only about half what they were

last year, and competition for foundation dollars is fierce at a time when foundations are making fewer grants because their own donations and investments have been greatly reduced.

At the same time, local citizens are turning to us in record numbers for shelter, food and supportive services. More than 3,500 people utilize our food pantry each month and received gifts and food from our holiday programs. In fiscal 2007-08 Shiloh, our domestic violence shelter, had 369 residents, and the number of residents at Sojourner House, our homeless family shelter, was over 100 for the first time since it opened.

Our priority is to continue to provide services to those in need. When it became necessary to cut staff hours, senior management took the largest cuts, up to 20%, in order to maintain as many direct service hours as possible. We have learned that some shelters in other areas are accepting fewer clients and modifying their contracts with state funders in proportion to their funding reductions. The Haven has never reduced services, and we regard that move as a last resort.

Most of our annual \$2 million budget is for staff salaries and benefits. These are not extravagant; many of our staff work part-time, and all who have medical benefits pay a portion of the cost. Our operating expenses are primarily for rent and maintenance of our facilities, utility costs, office equipment, and program supplies. It is for these costs that it is most difficult to obtain funding. While the staff at our domestic violence shelter is fully funded, albeit at reduced hours, there is not enough money to pay the utility costs for the 30-bed shelter and staff office plus the telephone bill for our 24-hour crisis line, cleaning supplies, and office supplies. These costs total more than \$60,000 each year.

We understand that many of our supporters are also experiencing hard financial times, and we appreciate the fact that most have continued to make donations in whatever amount they are able. It is the support of the community that has allowed us to meet the needs of that community for over 31 years. At this time, we would like to suggest some creative and low-cost ways to help the Haven continue to provide those services:


- Throw a house party and invite attendees to make a contribution to the Haven. Haven staff members are available to speak at such gatherings, and to show our agency video and answer questions.
- Combine resources with a group of people from your work, place of worship, school, club, or other group and have a drive to provide a month's worth of printer paper, household paper products, or other needed items.
- Have a garage sale and donate the proceeds to the Haven.
- Sell unneeded furniture, appliances or other items on the internet and donate the proceeds to the Haven.
- Ask if your employer has a plan to match your donations.

For more information, or to plan an event, please contact Vicki Thompson or Christine Dillman at (925) 449-5845.

# FYI

Call (925) 449-5845	Domestic Violence Group/Sexual Assault and Incest Groups
Call (925) 449-5845	Individual Counseling
Call Flora, (925) 449-7889	Support for Parents of Children Ages 0-5
Call Mike, (925) 449-5845	Legal Clinic Tuesday/Pleasanton, Thursday/Livermore and by appointment
Call Jean, (925) 449-5845	Volunteer Training
Call Darlene, (925) 449-5845	Self-Defense Training / Community Education
Call (925) 449-1664	Food Pantry
(925) 449-2510	Homeless Services
Call (925) 449-5842 or (800) 884-8119	24-Hour Crisis Line / Shelter Information / Sexual Assault Advocacy

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