

# December Newsletter

## When a Survivor Leaves

### Special Dates

- **Dec 8**  
Volunteer Mtg.  
- 3:30pm
- **Dec. 3 -**  
Woodstock  
parade 6pm
- **Dec 4 -** New  
Market drive-  
thru parade  
4:30pm

### Current Needs

- Disinfectant spray (like Lysol)
- All purpose liquid cleaner (like PineSol)
- Laundry detergent
- Dryer sheets
- Individually packaged snack foods

Domestic violence is never an easy topic to talk about, and has been a hidden social problem for many years. One of our goals here at Response is to bring the issues of domestic and sexual violence into the open; problems need to be exposed before they can be solved, so learning about survivors' experiences is an important step. Let's take a look at a typical survivor's experience immediately after they decide to leave an abusive relationship.

"Katrina" is a fictional character who was created from common experiences that our clients frequently have. Details have been changed to protect confidentiality, but the events are all very real and represent situations that we have dealt with in the recent past.

Katrina spent years in a relationship in which her abuser was both emotionally and physically abusive; she left several times, but returned to the relationship for financial reasons and because of pressure from her family to preserve the relationship, since they have 3 young children together. After the last attack which left her bruised and shaken, Katrina was encouraged by local police to contact Response. With their help she called our hotline asking for immediate shelter.

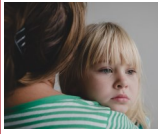
A hotline advocate talked with Katrina and performed a screening which involved a lot of personal questions; these are intended to make sure our services are appropriate for the client. Although answering the questions was difficult, she was relieved to hear that we had space and that she was accepted for shelter. The police stayed at her home until she could gather the items that the advocate suggested she might need: documents, clothing, medications, car seats, and personal items for herself and the three children. Since she had no transportation, she arranged for a friend to bring them to the shelter.

Once at the shelter, Katrina met with a staff member to fill out paperwork and get an orientation to the shelter; her children were all tired and confused, and their behavior reflected that. Luckily there was another staff member available to watch the two older children while Katrina tried to concentrate on the information being given to her while comforting her infant. By this time it was after 4pm and too late to arrange transportation for the oldest child to get to school the next morning; Katrina felt that it was important to keep him in his routine as much as possible, so a staff member agreed to drive the child to Sandy Hook in the morning.

The next day, Katrina met with the child services coordinator to talk about transportation, preschool options for the 3 yr. old, and other needs, such as a supply of diapers, formula, etc. She also met with the court advocate to explore her options about getting an extended protective order, and what to expect from the court system. Although feeling overwhelmed by her recent trauma and the stress of communal living in an unfamiliar place, Katrina is thankful to be in a safe place, with supportive staff to help guide her through the complexities of starting her journey to independence.

# Survivor Story

## Tricia



After a four year relationship which became increasingly dangerous, Tricia was finally able to leave her abusive boyfriend. She had no safe place to go and assumed that she would have to go to a homeless shelter, as she didn't realize that there were shelters specifically dedicated to people experiencing domestic violence. So at age 34, she took her three children, ages 8, 9 and 10 to stay at a DV shelter in her Colorado community until she could figure out the next steps to keep her family safe.

Tricia's boyfriend would often intimidate her, yelling in her face, poking her chest, shoving her, and eventually strangling her. He was verbally abusive to her children as well; the day she saw her son hiding under the bed as the boyfriend yelled at him, she says that something broke in her. She asked herself how she allowed herself to get in that position, and found the courage to call the police to help protect her as she packed to leave.

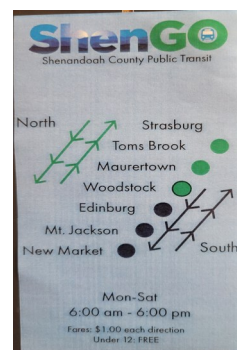
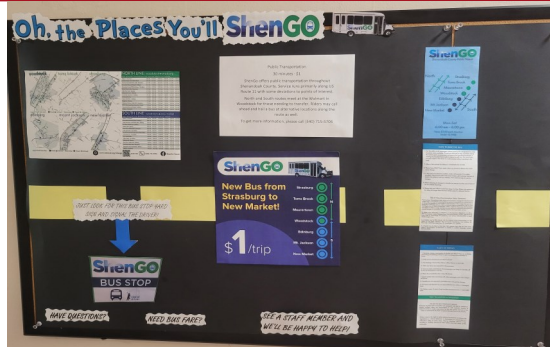
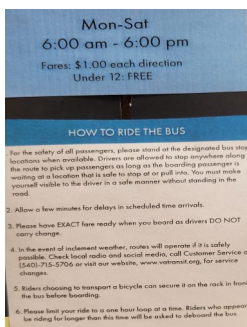
It wasn't that she hadn't thought of leaving before; she had many times, but her abuser would always sense when she was getting close to leaving and would stay home from work, or take her car keys. He let her know that if she left he would find her. He threatened her life and that of her family. Even on their way to the police station Tricia was constantly looking over her shoulder to make sure that he wasn't following them.

The day that she left, the police photographed her injuries and took her statement; two days later they arrested her boyfriend for domestic violence, and she and her children were able to return to their home. They subsequently moved to a different city so that she would never have to see him again.

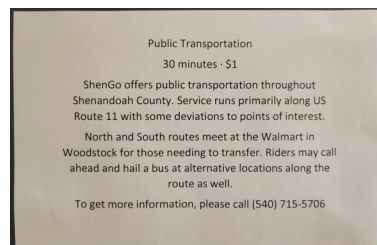
Tricia is now remarried and her children are grown; although the experience affected them all and she doesn't think she will ever be able to put it totally behind her, she is thankful that they made it out alive and had their local shelter as a safe place to go.

# Around the Shelter

## Our bulletin board



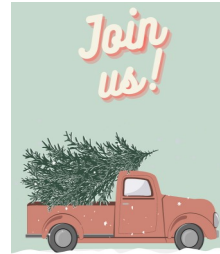
Check out our November bulletin board educating clients about our new transit system in Shenandoah Co.! This has been a much-needed service for a long time, and our clients are so happy it is here!



# Upcoming Events

## Holiday Parades

After taking last year off during the pandemic, we are ready to join the holiday parades again this year! We will be participating in the **Woodstock** parade on Fri., **Dec 3** - line-up at 6pm; Sat., **Dec 4** will find us in **New Market** for their drive-thru parade in the park - arrive at 4:30, parade ends at 7pm. We could use some more folks to join our float in New Market; just dress warmly and festively, and bring your smile as we wave at the families driving past! Let Lynn know if you would like to join us!



## Adopt-A-Family



Just wanted to thank everyone who has participated in our Adopt-A-Family program! We had an incredible response and are able to provide gifts to 38 families this year! Soon every corner of our shelter will be bursting with holiday cheer for families who need a little help. So thankful!



## Moving Beyond Support Group

**MOVING BEYOND**  
An 8-week support group for survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

- Coping
- Boundaries
- Safety
- Support
- And more!

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022  
6:00-7:30PM  
540-459-5599  
sarahh@responseva.org

*\*All Response, Inc. services are confidential and free of charge\**

Spread the word! The new year will bring with it a new support group for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, beginning Feb 9 at 6pm here at the shelter.

The benefits of joining a group of people who have had similar experiences are huge; being able to talk regularly with other survivors helps people to make sense of their feelings, provides support and validation, and decreases the sense of loneliness that survivors often experience. The educational component of the group is vital for providing specific information and resources for those survivors as well. Please help us share this group, whether on social media, in your church or civic organization, in your workplace, etc. If you would like flyers to share or post around your community just email [sarahh@responseva.org](mailto:sarahh@responseva.org) or call the office at 540-459-5599. Thanks for your help!