

YOU'RE INVITED **Anniversary Open House**

For nearly 27 years, Crosswalk has been the only emergency shelter for teens in Spokane County.

With your support, we now serve 1,000 teens each year, providing: three meals a day; an on-site school; a recreation program; and, of course, an emergency shelter.

Please join us Thursday, April 12 from 5-7pm for an open house and dinner. Everyone's welcome—whether you're a long-time volunteer or donor or you're just curious about what happens at Crosswalk or want to learn how to get involved. We hope to see you there!



An Education in Giving: Teachers' sorority goes above and beyond



Members of Alpha Delta Kappa—Alpha Nu teachers' sorority support the efforts of Volunteers of America in myriad ways. Here (left to right) members Donna Roloff, Vickie Kennedy, Glea Trulove, Arlene Helsing and Linda Carr help distribute books to children in need at the annual Christmas Bureau.

The local "Alpha Nu" chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa teacher's sorority has a special relationship with Volunteers of America, and it all started with furnishing an empty apartment.

ADK's 50 members—both working and retired teachers—had always made donations as a group to local charities. But years ago, when they received a request to help prepare an apartment for a woman moving out of the Hope House emergency shelter into her very own apartment upstairs, something changed. They weren't just writing a check—they were creating a home.

"We all realized how fulfilling it was to give of ourselves—which even included husbands helping with the remodel and use of their trucks to haul items we'd collected," recalls member Tana Carosella. "We ended up doing two apartments! We have found it so much fun to be together to clean, organize and then have lunch together and celebrate. Even the members who are currently teaching and raising small children always find time and energy to contribute in some way."

Since then ADK has been a force for good in all our programs. The group holds an annual Christmas Auction and then uses the funds, along with items gathered by their members, to support nonprofits in need throughout the year. Their mighty Altruism Committee, led by Arlene Helsing, designates a different agency to help each month of the year. One month they might give 30 handmade aprons to the Cheney Food Bank, the next collect diapers

An Education in Giving, cont.

for Alexandria's House, the following month they might knit slippers for women at Hope House women's shelter.

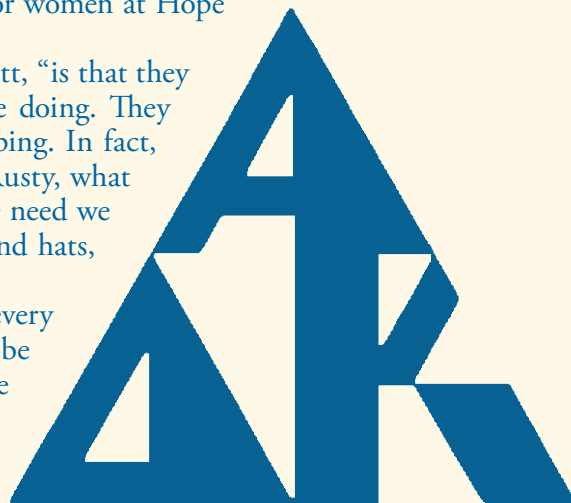
"The cool thing about ADK," says Hope House director Rusty Barnett, "is that they don't just drop off the donation. They always ask how the women are doing. They are genuinely concerned with the well-being of the people they are helping. In fact, whenever I run into one of the ADK women someplace, they ask me, 'Rusty, what do the women need right now?' They're like a sleeper cell—anything we need we can call ADK and it's here in an instant—quilts and blankets, gloves and hats, hygiene items and more."

At Volunteers of America, the support of ADK can be seen around every corner: the group funds the annual Crosswalk graduation party; they can be counted on to fill at least two tables with smiling faces at the annual Hope House Fashion Show fundraiser; ADK members serve on the planning committee for our annual *I Remember Mama* event (see back page); and they can be called upon to clean a mess with husbands in tow—they'll even bring their own vacuum cleaners.

One of their biggest contributions is managing and staffing the books Volunteers of America distributes to families in need at the annual Spokesman Review Christmas Bureau. ADK member Tana Carosella has spearheaded the effort for many years. Beginning in March, Tana recruits other ADK members to help order, count and sort books (as many as 20,000 each year!). Under the leadership of ADK president Susan Mattoon, the group often chips in some of their funds to help purchase books when needed.

Then, during the 12 days that the Bureau is in operation at the Fairgrounds, Tana arranges volunteers to staff the book giveaway. These dedicated teachers spend weeks selecting the books and sorting them by topic and grade level, prepared to help parents in need choose the perfect book to give each child for Christmas. They even stick around to help pack up any extra books that remain when the bureau closes.

"Things like the Christmas Bureau book project would be nearly impossible without the women of Alpha Delta Kappa," says Volunteers of America president and CEO Marilee Roloff. "In that way, groups of dedicated, compassionate people like theirs are like a safety net for us. When we need something they show up—almost before we know we need it! These are amazing, no-fuss, can-do women. They have blessed so many lives."



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Would you like to help those in need but don't think you can?

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HOLLY'S STORY: HOW PROJECT SAFE PLACE CHANGED MY LIFE

Holly is the Host Home coordinator at Project Safe Place in Coeur d'Alene. Having a safe place to run instead of running away can change the course of a frightened teenager's life. How does she know? She once was that teenager...

It's kind of amazing how one small interaction can change a life so drastically. In this case, I'm talking about my life in 2003. I was 16 years old. I was the girl who wore her hair in her face so she didn't have to look anybody in the eye. You see, I felt so anxious and exposed all the time that I even wore extra layers of clothes just for a little more protection and security. I didn't let anyone near me. And beneath the surface, I was being eaten alive by a constant state of fear, depression and anxiety.

My family really struggled—my mom was physically disabled to the point of being bedridden and clinical depression kept her from being able to really be there for us. My dad wasn't around much because he was working all the time to make ends meet. And my brother, who is epileptic, also suffered severe and unpredictable emotional disturbances that included violent, uncontrollable outbursts of anger—often directed at me. We all lived together in a two-bedroom, single-wide trailer. Everyone was overwhelmed. I was always afraid that my mother would hurt herself or that my brother would seriously hurt me. My whole life felt unsure and unsafe.

And like so many teens who feel overwhelmed and unsafe, not knowing any better, I thought that my best option was to run away. Luckily for me, I had read about Safe Place in a resource guide at school. I felt so desperate and I knew Safe

Place was somewhere I could go for help. Even as I sat there in front of the staff sobbing, I felt safe and warm. They were so kind to me. For the first time in a long time I felt like someone actually listened to me. I talked to them for a while and later went to sleep on a soft bunk bed. It was the first time I had felt truly safe in a long time.

It was years ago but that one night changed the direction of my life. From that moment on nothing in my life was the same. Case workers from Child Protective Services came to Safe Place to interview me about my situation. That same day, with my parents' permission, I went to the foster home where I would live for the next year and a half—a ranch in Athol where they bred and trained horses. Their home was clean and safe and my foster family treated me with caring and respect.

My life was suddenly stable. My new situation allowed me to stop just surviving and begin to live my life. I began to see a different way of living. I earned my GED and got a degree from North Idaho College. During that time, I learned that my life was not out of my control—it was what I made of it. Now, thanks to Safe Place, I have a loving husband and beautiful son. My relationships with my parents and brother are strong and healthy. So many people and organizations have helped me along the way, but it all started with Project Safe Place.



Project Safe Place helped Holly and her family repair their relationships and find stability. She's pictured here, at 16, with a horse she met while in foster care. Years later, Holly now helps other teens every day as a PSP staff member.

When I was a teenager, Project Safe Place changed my life. Now I am in a position to pass that gift on to other teens in trouble—whether their homes are unsafe, they are struggling with their grades or being bullied at school. I've been working at Project Safe Place since 2010 where I am currently the Host Home program coordinator—helping shelter youth in emergency situations like mine—and I also help out in the drop-in center each night. Project Safe Place gives youth a place to take a deep breath and get whatever is going wrong headed in the right direction. That's something that changes lives. I know first hand.

WHAT IS Project Safe Place?



Safe Place provides immediate help and supportive resources for Kootenai County youth in crisis. The heart of the program is the Safe Place drop-in center (201 E. Harrison in Coeur d'Alene) open Monday through Friday from 2:30 to 6:30pm where we offer: access to caring, responsible adults; nutritious meals and snacks; safe after-school activities; a clothing and food bank; crisis intervention; mentoring and more.

You may also have noticed the yellow-and-black Safe Place signs displayed on hundreds of businesses and community buildings throughout the Coeur d'Alene area, signaling that youth can access immediate help and safety inside.

Safe Place provides a refuge where youth can go help rather than running away from home by also offering a 24-hour help line (208.676.0772), a host home program offering emergency shelter when needed, and various outreach programs in local schools—all to keep North Idaho kids safe.



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You made these smiles happen. And, this Mother's Day, you can do it again.

These are just three of the more than 120 senior and disabled women who attended the *I Remember Mama* luncheon last Mother's Day.

When you sponsor a "Mama" to attend the luncheon you ensure that a woman who would otherwise spend the day alone has the opportunity to enjoy the kind of gifts, flowers, food and companionship we all wish for our own mothers.

Just \$25 allows a woman who would otherwise be alone on Mother's Day to be chauffeured to a gourmet lunch, showered with gifts and flowers and most importantly to receive the kind of companionship that we all wish for our own mothers on this special day.

And not only does your gift make a difference for these special women, it also makes a great Mother's Day gift for someone special in your life. When you sponsor a "Mama" in honor or in memory of your mother, grandmother or other loved one, we'll even send a card on your behalf.

It's as simple as returning the enclosed form or visiting www.voaspokane.org/MothersDay2012.

WORKING WONDERS

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