

# Heal. Empower. Sustain.

Heal, through shared experiences.  
Empower, by nurturing accountability  
and development. Sustain, through a  
lasting community.

Autumn, 2015



## Recent Activities

- March 23 **PADDLE FUNDRAISER**  
Knollwood Country Club hosted a paddle event raising over \$17,000
- May 2 **PLAY TENNIS FOR PEACE**  
Hosted by College Park Athletic Club, and run by Denise Murphy and Julia Sierks, raised over \$30,000, and generated a lot of fun!!!
- May 28 **100 WOMEN WHO CARE** select House of Peace as recipient of their donation of over \$10,000.
- July 17 **CROYA LENDS A HAND** The clothing storage area is organized by CROYA service.
- October 31 Children from HOP trick or treat at Lake Bluff shops, before attending **Roberti Community House** Halloween party

## A Transformative Model

The House of Peace Shelter is part of a larger Family Wellness program at Most Blessed Trinity (MBT), to provide primary care services for Latina women and children struggling with domestic violence. The shelter is unique because the sense of community within the house is central to its function. The six women and their children who live there share chores, evening meals and common spaces. While most emergency shelters provide shelter for at most two months, a House of Peace resident can stay up to six months. This longer residence allows for trust and healing, and the ability for the women to develop lasting relationships with each other and the larger community.

The shelter provides a variety of programs and services in addition to safe housing, including counseling, ESL and parenting classes, tutoring for the children, help in securing employment and access to legal aid. Once the mother is ready to transition out of the shelter, her post care support comes from Phoenix, another Family Wellness component at MBT that offers a weekly support group. Some of its services include individual and group counseling, and education about available healthcare, legal and safety-net resources. Phoenix has supported over 600 individuals in the past year.

This comprehensive programming is designed to encourage transformative change, a restored sense of dignity, and hope in the future.

## How can you help?

Come join our family and help strengthen our community! We are looking for all kinds of help from organizing the donation room, providing legal support, to helping with field trips for our children. Contact a staff or board member or connect through the website, [www.houseofpeaceshelter.org](http://www.houseofpeaceshelter.org) to explore our needs.





## Leti's Story

Leti arrived with her two children at the House in 2012, afraid, sad, and confused. "I was going through a difficult time, I was being threatened, felt my situation was dangerous. I was frightened and called the church, and was put in contact with Aida Segura. I did not know anything about the House of Peace. I

was nervous and scared but knew in my heart that anywhere would be safer and better for me than to remain in the situation I was in. "

"From the moment I arrived, I felt tranquility and peace. I felt love and security. I felt that the people of the House genuinely cared for

me.' Leti benefited from many of the activities and services. "The retreats were the most healing for me. I was able to spend time with myself and connect with God. They gave me an opportunity to express my worries to

**"I felt love and security. I felt that the people of the House genuinely cared for me."**

God, but also my gratefulness because I have truly felt that He has not left me alone during this difficult, but life teaching experience."

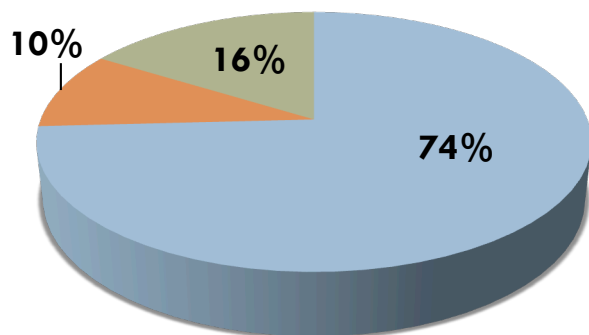
"The Phoenix Group (Family Wellness Program at MBT) has also played a major role in my healing. It has given me an opportunity to

grow as a person and as a mother. I have bonded with other women who have been through similar experiences. The group has been my family, my example, my community. It gives me strength and reminds me that, YES I CAN.'

Leti is employed and continues to support the program. She volunteers at House of Peace activities. "I feel very grateful and I want to show appreciation for everything I learned and, most importantly for the love I received."

## You Make A Difference

We frugally operate the shelter through donations and grants and use volunteers to minimize expenses.



**2014/2015 Fiscal Year Expenses**

- Direct Care Salaries
- Shared (Admin) Services
- Maintenance, Utilities

Includes counseling, legal advocacy, programming & stipends for 24 hr support by community





## Our Outcomes

49 women and 81 children have been provided residence at House of Peace since its opening 4 years ago.

All but one family has sustained independent living through the program.

600 individuals have been supported with counseling, and support services through the Family Wellness program this year.

## Our Staff and Board

Aida Segura  
Executive Director

Vanessa Vargas  
Assistant Director

### Board

Karen Dickmann

Mery Meister

Denise Murphy

Bob Sierks

Julia Sierks

Corinne Stagen Torkelson

Donna Williams

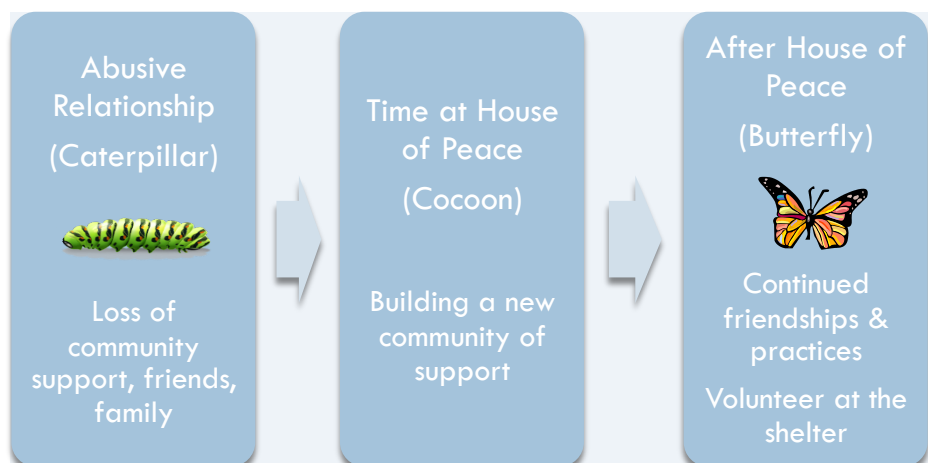
[www.houseofpeaceshelter.org](http://www.houseofpeaceshelter.org)

## The House of Peace: An Inspiration for Other Communities

"In *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman argues that trauma healing is only possible within healthy relationships.<sup>1</sup> She says that survivors need an empowering community of support in order to heal. In the US, the normative community is the nuclear family, but how do survivors of domestic violence heal if that community is a source of the violence and trauma? . . . Only through developing new kinship structures of support will we be able to build communities of healing."<sup>2</sup>

Ashley was recently named transitional director for **Casa de Paz**<sup>3</sup>, a sister community in Cincinnati, which is modeled after the House of Peace and Phoenix program. It started in 2013 as a family center that offers support to Latina families who have experienced domestic violence. It plans to open its own shelter, perhaps by the end of this year. The **Casa de Paz** continues to look to the House of Peace for wisdom and guidance as it prepares to open its own shelter.

[www.casadepazcinci.org](http://www.casadepazcinci.org)



This is an excerpt of an essay by **Ashley Theuring**, who is completing her doctoral thesis on the transformative model of the House of Peace at Boston University. She has spent two years making observations and conducting interviews with residents, staff and volunteers.

Ashley's findings include observations about the ways the shelter provides residents with support structures. First, the residents are largely immigrants and all are victims of domestic violence. Shared traumatic experiences help create bonds between the women. Second, the shelter provides a safe place for the women to tell their stories. Isolation is a common experience in domestic violence relationships. Storytelling helps survivors to realize they are not isolated. Finally the House of Peace becomes a place where women can share the hope of a full, flourishing future.

*The butterfly, painted on the walls of the shelter, is a symbol of transformation and reconnection to everyday life. For House residents, this reconnection is supported by a shared community, sustained by new relationships that continue long after the women and children have transitioned out of the shelter.*

<sup>1</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997) 133.

<sup>2</sup><http://theotherjournal.com/2015/04/20/salvific-communities-and-practices-of-resistance-a-feminist-theological-response-to-trauma/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.casadepazcinci.org](http://www.casadepazcinci.org)



Executive Director, Aida Segura with Lake Forest Open Paddle winners and organizers for the event.

## Give Security and Hope

- ☐ \$500 Give A Night for the whole shelter; it provides shelter and support services for one day (for six families)
- ☐ \$300 Give independence and a new beginning to a family transitioning out of the shelter; it provides refurbished beds, basic furniture and household items for a family's transition
- ☐ \$85 Give a Night for one family; it provides shelter and services for one day
- ☐ \$30 Give hope of a new beginning; it provides emergency move in items, like underwear, and pajamas

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check payable to MBT-House of Peace (Mail to MBT-House of Peace, 450 Keller Ave. Waukegan IL 60085)  
Gifts are 100% tax deductible

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