

# Women's Shelter of South Texas

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February 4, 2013

Nueces County Commissioners Court  
Attn: Theresa McLemore  
Nueces County Courthouse  
901 Leopard, Ste. 302.03 303  
Corpus Christi, TX 78401-3697

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FEB 4 - 2013  
Nueces County  
Commissioners Court  
Administration

FAMILY  
PROTECTION  
Fee Report

Dear Judge Neal and Commissioners,

In accordance with the Family Protection Fee Contract between the Women's Shelter of South Texas and Nueces County for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, the following final report is provided detailing services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Nueces County and utilization of county funds to support these services. The entire funding amount of \$4,527.11 was spent on family violence and child abuse prevention, intervention, counseling, and shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence and their families. The agency wants to again express appreciation for the support of Nueces County in our work on behalf of victims of domestic and sexual violence in our community.

In 2012, the Women's Shelter of South Texas marked 34 years of service to the community. The agency continues to identify and serve adult and child victims each year. From October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, 2,249 adult and child victims were served. All services are provided at no cost to victims. Service delivery is emphasized for victims from rural and underserved areas, victims who are minorities, victims with disabilities, and victims with limited resources. From October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, 77% of clients self-reported as Hispanic, 24% of clients reported a disability, and 89% of adult clients reported an annual income of under \$15,000. To most effectively address the population of South Texas, all services are available in English and Spanish.

The Women's Shelter of South Texas was founded in 1977 by a small group of volunteers with the goal to provide safe shelter and a crisis hotline for victims of domestic violence in the South Texas area. The agency was the third such organization formed in Texas to address this vital need. The agency is the only private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization specifically designed to serve adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence across a twelve-county region of South Texas, which includes Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, and San Patricio counties. It is the mission of the Women's Shelter of South Texas to prevent and ultimately end domestic violence and sexual assault in South Texas. The agency's vision is a South Texas free from domestic and sexual violence.

The agency strives to meet the increasing needs identified across the counties served by the agency with a focus on prevention to end the often multi-generational cycle of abuse. All individuals and families requesting services are provided crisis services with no waiting list. The agency serves both residential and non-residential clients at the shelter facility in Nueces County. Outreach offices in Bee, Jim Wells, Kleberg, and San Patricio counties provide services to victims in the eleven surrounding counties served by the agency.

The agency's Shelter and Supportive Services Program provides essential core services at no cost to victims including:

- Shelter/Safe House (65 bed) for women and their accompanying children, including the provision of clothing, food, and personal items for each individual and family
- 24-hour toll-free Crisis Hotline
- Crisis Intervention to reduce the immediate effects of trauma due to abuse
- Individual and Group Counseling for adults and children
- Case Management: individualized service planning, referrals to resources including employment, housing, educational opportunities, medical care, and childcare
- Youth Services: mentoring for school success, counseling, play therapy for young children, recreational activities, and summer activities
- Legal Advocacy: assistance regarding the criminal justice system, obtaining protective orders, crime victims' compensation, court accompaniment, and legal aid referrals
- Rape Crisis Services: crisis intervention, hospital accompaniment, and counseling
- Rural Outreach Services provided in eleven rural counties and in rural Nueces County: safety planning, peer counseling, information and referral, community education, emergency shelter transportation, and legal advocacy through outreach offices located in Bee, San Patricio, Kleberg, and Jim Wells counties

Nueces County funds were utilized to provide the following within the Shelter facility in support of victims of domestic and sexual violence:

- Food for adults and children residing in the emergency shelter
- Utilities and maintenance of the emergency shelter
- Counseling services for primary and secondary victims
- Partial support of staff salaries for agency staff

Community Education is provided with events conducted to raise awareness of domestic and sexual violence and to assist in identifying victims who may be in need of services. In 2012, prevention education was provided for audiences including law enforcement, school children of all ages, parents' groups, and civic organizations with 403 events conducted reaching 9,937 participants. Violence Prevention activities have also been incorporated into agency initiatives as community-specific risk and protective factors are being assessed and prevention activities developed and conducted primarily in school settings and with youth mentors.

The goal of the Women's Shelter of South Texas is to address the needs of those experiencing trauma due to domestic or sexual violence and to provide quality services, safety, and stability to victims and optimize their choices so they may achieve and maintain violence-free lives. The agency is marking 35 years of on-going service to the community in 2013. The Women's Shelter of South Texas is successful in reaching more victims in need of services and support due, in part, to the generosity shown to the agency by the Nueces County Commissioners Court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Wilson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Frances Wilson  
President &CEO

Women's Shelter of South Texas  
Agency Information October 2011-September 2012

Total clients served: 2,249 (1,255 Adults; 994 Children)

Gender of clients served: Female 76%; Male 24%

Residential clients served at the shelter facility: 757

Total non-residential clients served: 1,492

Note: multiple clients receive both residential and non-residential services

Client Type:

Clients served for Domestic Violence issues: 1,616 (71.9%)

Clients served for Sexual Assault issues: 126 (5.6%)

Clients served for both Domestic and Sexual Violence issues: 500 (22.2%)

Major referral sources:

- Family/Friend – 28.7%
- Previous Client – 16.1%
- Social Services – 14.8%
- Self-referral – 8.6%
- Police Department – 8.5%

Service Delivery information:

- Number of clients who participated in individual counseling: 2,180
- Number of clients who participated in support groups: 345
- Number of clients who received legal advocacy services: 1,430
- Number of safety plans developed: 2,156
- Number of clients who received information and referral regarding community resources: 2,033
- Number of clients reporting improvement in mental, emotional, or physical health due to services: 2,067

Demographic information:

- 77% of clients served self-reported as Hispanic; 5% Black; 14% White; 4% Other
- 24% of clients reported a disability
- 89% of clients reported a household income of under \$15,000.

Client statistics related to abuse:

- 458 clients reported that a child saw abuse or domestic violence
- 525 clients reported that the police were called due to a domestic violence incident
- 439 clients reported that they witnessed domestic violence as a child
- 161 clients reported that they were abused during pregnancy

Counties served by client percentage:

Aransas County – 1.6%; Bee – 7.9%; Brooks – 1.2%; Duval – 3%; Jim Wells – 7.6%; Kenedy – .1%; Kleberg – 10.2%; Live Oak – .8%; Nueces – 48.8%; San Patricio – 14.7%. Other counties – 4.1%

(Note: clients can indicate additional counties as their home counties, however all services were provided within the twelve-county region the agency serves).

The following outcomes are monitored on a continuous basis by the agency in order to determine the most effective ways in which to assist victims in achieving and maintaining safe, healthy, and violence-free lives. Evaluation of Services forms are provided to clients who complete the surveys on a voluntary and confidential basis. The agency's leadership team reviews survey results at least quarterly to identify best practices, identify any issues that need to be addressed, and provide for continuous quality improvement to the programs and services conducted by the agency. From October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012:

- 95% of clients reported increased feelings of safety due to services received
- 97% reported that their children's sense of safety increased due to services received
- 98% of clients reported that counseling services assisted them
- 86% of clients reported decreased feelings of isolation due to services received
- 93% of clients reported increased awareness of community resources and options
- 89% reported that legal advocacy services assisted them
- 96% reported that youth staff were supportive of their children's needs
- 95% reported an increase in awareness of the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence
- 92% of clients reported an increase in their children's awareness of the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence.

Clients are provided the opportunity to comment on the programs and services conducted by the agency as part of the Evaluation of Services process. Following are comments received from October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012 by clients receiving residential and non-residential services through the shelter facility in Nueces County:

- The Women's Shelter is the main thing that serves a purpose in my life. If it wasn't for the services, I don't know what would happen to me. I have learned thing about myself that I wasn't aware of, and it has helped me get through difficult times. Because of the services I am a changed person. Thank you."
- "The counseling that I received helped in more than one way, it made me realize that I am a person with rights and feelings; especially my self-worth. I honestly would have kept living my life very confused and feeling unwanted. I believed that I would have passed this on to my daughter and she would have grown up with a lot of problems. Thank you so much."
- "I am more aware of my actions and how I handle things. I have learned to help myself through the community resources available. I have grown personally and feel safe and respected here. I am more aware of people with violent behaviors. I love this place."
- "Thank you for all you do with women and children. It's great to have a place for my children to lay their heads without worry."
- "Thank you for the knowledge and support you give each client. I truly believe my life will change soon."
- "I just want to thank you. I didn't know there were people who could help me. Thank you for this start. I feel I can move forward and put the past behind me."

Nueces County  
Women's Shelter of South Texas  
Agency Information October 2011-September 2012

From October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, 1,105 adult and child victims served by the Women's Shelter of South Texas (49% of all agency clients) resided in Nueces County.

Residential Clients:

- 757 clients resided in the emergency shelter facility in Nueces County
- 528 clients seeking shelter resided in Nueces County prior to staying in the emergency shelter
- 300 adults and 263 children received counseling services
- 301 clients received legal advocacy services
- 505 safety plans were developed
- 292 children and youth participated in organized activities provided through the Youth Services Program
- 519 clients received information and referral to community resources

Non-Residential Clients residing in Nueces County

- 577 clients received non-residential case management services
- 658 adult and child victims received counseling services
- 405 clients received legal advocacy services
- 548 safety plans were developed
- 575 clients received information and referral to community resources as non-residential clients

Community Education and Prevention:

During this time, 180 community education events were conducted in Nueces County (42% of education and prevention events conducted by the agency). Prevention and education events reached a total audience of 4,828 adults and youth in Nueces County. 64% of attendees were adults and 36% were youth. These educational sessions were provided to local school districts, mental health professionals, medical professionals, law enforcement personnel, social service providers, substance abuse professionals, human resource professionals, parents, judicial professionals, military liaisons, and organizations serving underserved populations.

Volunteerism:

Volunteers contribute to both direct services for clients and special projects to maintain and enhance the shelter facility. From October 2011 through September 2012, 62 volunteers provided a total of 7,448 hours of service. In Nueces County, these activities included child mentoring through homework assistance, parenting classes, victim advocacy, answering the 24-hour crisis hotline, providing support and hospital accompaniment to sexual assault victims, and youth-centered activities.

Attached please find a letter from an adult client residing in Nueces County.

To Whom It May Concern,

I know that I was brave enough by taking the first step by leaving an domestic situation that was not only mental abusive and violent but also sexually. The fear of being older and leaving with nothing was the toughest obstacle that I have had to overcome. Although hard and scary I managed to gather enough strength to just walk out not knowing what was to come and how I would do anything.

Although, I have known about the Women's Shelter I had no clue as to what if anything would be offered to me. Walking through those doors the first time opened a new life for myself. I have found strength in myself that I did not know I even had. Healing words and encouragement that I have not had in many years helped me make it through one day at a time. I find myself stronger and looking forward to my future for the first time in many years. With the kindness, thoughtfulness, and guidance from the Women's Shelter I am ready for a new start of independence. With the financial help from the Women's Shelter I will be able to concentrate on opening yet another door. This opportunity will help in allowing me to hold my head a little higher and allow me to enjoy pride in myself that had eluded me for such a long time.

With this opportunity I plan on not only finding my independence and security within myself, but also stepping out another door. My hopes are to find a part time job that allows me to create a positive routine and even more self respect. I know my road in life has not been my fault, or at least I am learning that. My goals for myself is self respect, independence and finding joy in everyday activities in life. I plan on living my life to the fullest, but with well thought out plans and goals for myself and my future. For the first time in a very long time I feel like I have one.

Thank you so much for your time, attention, kindness and care you have shown me.