

Building Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place

A New Beginning. A Safe Future.



A CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

What is A Safe Place?



I am often asked, "What is the one thing that keeps me awake at night?" The expected response is either funding or legislation, and while

these are important, they do not compare to the concerns surrounding the absence of safe shelter and transitional housing for victims of domestic and intimate violence.

How many women will not be with us tomorrow? How many mothers, daughters, and friends did not survive the last 24 hours at the hands of their perpetrator or abuser? This is what keeps me up at night.

Living every minute of your life in fear—even while sleeping—and constantly worrying about the safety of your children is overwhelming. The ability to believe in yourself to make a difference has been extinguished with the repeated message that you are not worthy of anything better and that abuse is what you deserve. Imagine if you lived this way, and if you believed there is no way out. The women who come to us are fighting for their survival and that of their children. They long for a life of hope, trust and security. Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place will provide a vital resource on the path to independence, and your help is needed to meet the need.

Please join me in creating a community of safe transitional housing that will not only provide safety but the time needed to develop the complement of skills for independent living. Together, we can change the face of domestic and intimate violence in our community.

Together, we can provide hope for a better future.

Susan Curfman, MA, CCC
CEO/President, COMTREA

For many of us, our home is the safest place we know, a personal sanctuary where we can retreat and relax. For victims of domestic violence, though, their homes are not havens. Their homes are cocoons of fear. To escape the abuse, battered women and men, and their children, need a comprehensive program of education, therapy and counseling, court advocacy, and above all, a secure environment.

They need A Safe Place.

A Safe Place is a division of **COMTREA**, a not-for-profit comprehensive health center.

Our residential program, the only emergency shelter for domestic violence in Jefferson County, provides services to meet the immediate needs of its residents, whether the domestic abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, or the destruction of property or pets. While staying at A Safe Place, victims learn to break the cycle of violence through individual counseling, support groups, education, and comprehensive parenting, fitness and wellness programs. Over time, and through work with a variety of providers who offer their services with dignity and respect, residents replace their feelings of dependency with self-sufficiency. They learn to build their self-esteem, and work on assertiveness, communication and decision-making skills. They receive assistance with nutrition, budgeting, housing options, job searches, and career planning, in addition to full medical, dental, and mental-health services. Because every resident is unique, our program offers individualized plans that coordinate all services, providing the optimal opportunity for each person to be restored to wholeness.

Adults aren't the only victims of domestic violence. Children who grow up in abusive homes frequently learn violence as an acceptable means of resolving conflict and exerting control. These children are likely to become victims or perpetrators as adults. A Safe Place offers assistance to these youngest victims, through counseling, recreational activities, child play therapy, and art therapy. A Safe Place can even protect the family pet; a Pet Protection Program ensures domestic animal safety, too.

A Safe Place empowers residents and their children to rise above the pain of domestic abuse and begin a new, safer and healthier life, where they can transform from victim to survivor.

A Safe Place: By the Numbers

Domestic violence affects
1 in 4 women
regardless of age, race,
religion, nationality, educational
background or economic status

A Safe Place has been empowering
victims of domestic abuse for over

30 years

In 2016....

A Safe Place offered
5,717
nights of safety

510

Individuals educated
about domestic violence

A Safe Place received
1,758
hotline calls

A Safe Place provided

890 hours

of children's therapy
and group counseling

and **1,109**

hours of individual
therapy for women

A Safe Place
staff assisted
1,041
women with obtaining
legal services

Staff at A Safe Place provided

4,113 hours of social service/case
management, including medical assistance



Mary's Story



Mary Daniels lived for years with an abusive husband. She suffered in silence, her fear keeping her behind closed doors and away from those who loved her. Finally, this warm, loving and dedicated mother, daughter, sister and friend, was determined to improve her life and the lives of her two children. She and daughter Lexi, 10, and son Brody, 5, left her abuser and secured a restraining order against him. The restraining order wasn't enough. Mary's estranged husband waited for her outside of her work on August 3, 2010, and brutally stabbed her multiple times. She was 30 years old.

After her murder, Mary's friends and family learned of the great need for additional safe housing for women and children escaping violence. They learned about the need for more awareness and education about domestic abuse. Then, they turned their grief into action. They partnered with COMTREA to raise the funds necessary to build another safe house. This safe house would be the final, transitional step after the shelter of A Safe Place. They would name it Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place; it would be another step to save women suffering in abusive relationships from the same fate as their beloved daughter, mother and friend. This committed group of loved ones also focuses on community outreach and education, sharing Mary's heartbreaking story whenever they can.

The man who killed Mary was convicted on November 9, 2011, of first degree murder and armed criminal action. He was sentenced on December 9 of that year to two life terms without the possibility of parole.

Mary's loved ones hope her story doesn't end with just the conviction and imprisonment of her abuser. Mary Daniels meant so much more than a court order and a trial, and they hope her life and tragic death serves as a catalyst to help others in need.



"By raising awareness, we strive to prevent another family from experiencing our tragedy. Helping other families begin anew is a wonderful way to keep Mary's memory alive."

—Sylvia Daniels, Mary's mother

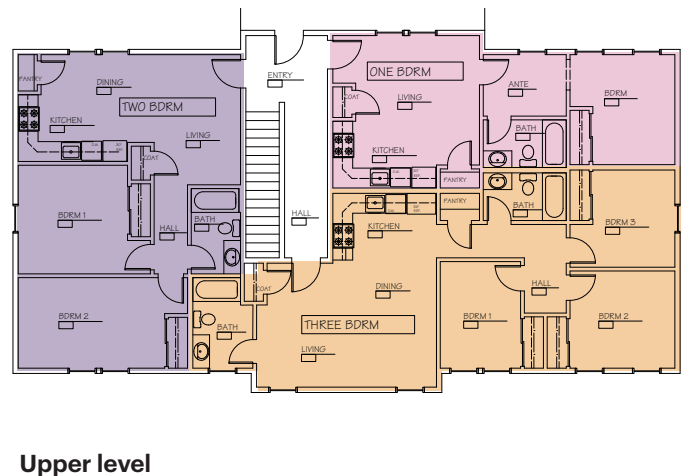
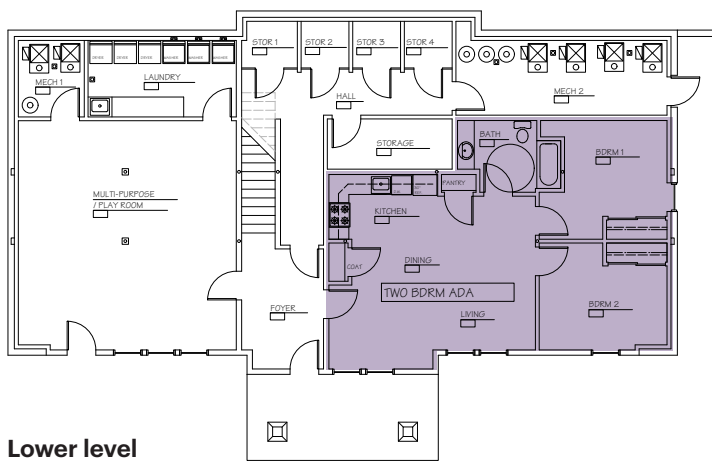
Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place

Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place will be a transitional housing program, the next vital component of the continuum of care for all victims of domestic violence and their children after leaving a domestic violence crisis shelter.

This component includes a self-empowerment program, where residents identify their own issues and challenges. Advocates will be available to listen to their joys and their struggles, while helping them work on achieving their goals. Advocates are aware of community resources that survivors may find helpful in making their own way towards independent living, and can provide additional information and suggestions that might be helpful as residents make their own decisions about what is best for them and their families.

Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place will include four housing units: a one-bedroom apartment, 2 two-bedroom apartments, and a three-bedroom apartment. Residents may stay for one to two years while families work to transition to independent living. When they leave, survivors will be empowered and can truly sustain themselves and their families without returning to abuse.

In 2016,
939
families were referred
out due to A Safe Place
shelter being at capacity



Why do we need Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place? A Survivor's Story

Over a decade ago, much like Mary, Angela made the decision to move from victim of domestic violence to survivor. A Safe Place helped her along her path to health, safety, and freedom. She shares her story here, along with her thoughts on the importance of transitional housing as the final step necessary in the process of gaining independence.



In 2004, I was involved in a custody case due to domestic violence. I worked with A Safe Place to create a plan that would allow me to get out. During my stay at the shelter, I received more resources and support than I could have ever imagined. My healing process began, and I was finally gaining back confidence and peace I had lost so long ago. My girls also had a safe place where they could talk about their experiences and find healing.

When I left the shelter, I couldn't afford a new place to call home. I had to go back to a former residence known by my abuser. Shortly after I moved, he broke into my home and assaulted me and my best friend, threatening both of us with a knife. Thankfully I escaped without injury, but my friend was hurt. The police came and I filled out yet another restraining order.

Because I didn't feel safe staying there with my children, I was forced to move in with my family. I did not want to burden them and I feared for their safety, but I had nowhere else to turn. If I had access to transitional, safe housing after my stay at A Safe Place, I would not have been assaulted again, or placed my family at risk.

A Safe Place played a huge role in my journey to freedom from the abuse. I am where I am today because of the services they provided me at such a crucial time in my life. I have since moved on to a successful career, safe home life, happy family, and healthy marriage. If transitional housing had been available, I know the next step in my journey would have been less traumatic. The continued safety net of A Safe Place would have given me the additional leverage needed to confidently take those steps back into society. Had transitional housing been available, it would have given me the opportunity to safely establish the financial stability and structure needed for a fresh start. Transitional housing allows survivors to prosper while still feeling safe.

I hope that other women find the strength and courage to leave their abusers, and that, with your support, they have the resources and the time to safely gain full independence and stability.

Building Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place

What is the price you pay for safety? How much would you give to make sure your mother is safe and healthy? How about your daughter, your sister, your best friend?

We need your help to make Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place a reality. We need your help to build the resources necessary to foster an independent, healthy future.

Our first goal is to raise \$750,000 to complete and furnish the first home at Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place. This first home will help four families transition from the emergency shelter to independent living, free from abuse and fear, for one to two years.

The need goes well beyond the first house, though. \$3.5 million will complete the entire project of four units, enabling sixteen women and their children the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

These homes will continue to give hope far into the future; as each woman moves on to her own house, empowered and able to sustain herself and her family without going back to an abusive situation, the unit will be refreshed for another survivor looking to secure her independence.

Please consider donating to Mary's House of Hope at A Safe Place. You're building far more than a home. You're building hope for a strong, safe, independent future.



Due to privacy issues, the picture shown is an artist's suggested rendering.

COMTREA/A Safe Place
227 Main Street
Festus, MO 63028-1952
636-232-2339