



# Alive & ALERT *alive*

## Alternatives to Living In Violent Environments

FALL 2009

### Special points of interest:

- *ALIVE's "Nights of Safety" program has experienced a large increase in demand for services. In just one month, we provided 500 Nights of Safety. In FY2008/09, ALIVE provided 2,000 Nights in the entire year.*

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### Former Client Reaches Out To Help Another Victim

ALIVE is always so gratified when we receive e-mails or letters from former victims who update us on all the good things going on in their lives. One such client is "Kate," who sent pictures of the home she and her new husband recently finished building for their retirement.

Unfortunately, Kate's story was not completely good news. While things are going well for her, she also reported on her efforts to help a woman she knows from work. There was something about "Dee" that Kate recognized from her own experience that led her to believe Dee was being abused. Every day Kate

asked Dee if she was all right, and one day, Dee began to cry and tell her story. Kate could tell she was embarrassed at first but as Kate responded with the understanding that only a survivor of abuse can have, Dee opened up more.

After an especially bad weekend for Dee, Kate decided to go a little further. She wrote a note letting Dee know she was there if she ever needed anything, and she attached information about ALIVE.

Dee cannot take the information home, obviously, and has to be careful at work because her husband is employed at the same company. However, she now knows she has a

friend in Kate, and whenever she is ready to call us, ALIVE will be here for her. We are so grateful to people like Kate, who assist us in reaching out to those in need of our services, letting people know ALIVE can help.

Unfortunately this summer, shelters and domestic violence agencies across the area have experienced an unprecedented demand for services. ALIVE is no exception. The recent economy has not made the situation any easier, but we continue to focus on helping the families who come to us. It is our mission and we are committed to achieving it.

### ALIVE Anticipates Increased Need in Adopt-a-Family Program

With the kids just getting back to school, the holiday season is probably among the last thoughts occupying the minds of many families. Here at ALIVE, though, we have experienced one of our busiest summers ever. In the month of July alone, we provided more than 500 Nights of Safety. With such an increased demand for services, we also anticipate a greater need for

donor groups to help provide a special holiday season for all of our client families needing assistance this year through our Adopt-a-Family program.

Client enrollment begins in October, but if you, or your office, family, book club (you name it!) think you would be able to help fill the wish list of one our client families, we would love to hear from you.

Please call Elizabeth at (314) 993-7080 and ask her to place you on the Adopt-a-Family list.

When enrollment is complete, we will match your group with a client family and provide you with their wish list. You purchase and wrap the gifts, and we'll coordinate deliveries to the families. It's that easy!

## Franklin County Office Marks a Successful Decade of Service

Franklin County Prosecutor Bob Parks probably said it best: "I've worked for 10 years in Franklin County without ALIVE and for 10 years with ALIVE. I don't want to go back to the old way." He echoed the sentiment of everyone who gathered at Chico's Mexican Cantina in Washington to celebrate ALIVE's 10th anniversary of providing services to the Franklin County Community.

The event, held on June 25th, brought together members of ALIVE's staff, Board, and Franklin County Advisory Committee, along with former clients,

elected officials, and representatives from local law enforcement. Sheriff Gary Toelke served as Honorary Chair and emcee for the evening.

In addition to Sheriff Toelke and Bob Parks, speakers included ALIVE's Executive Director Erin Ercoline, Brian Nieves, Missouri State Representative for the 98th District, and former ALIVE client Joel Cracchiolo. Joel's story captivated the audience as she shared with them how ALIVE helped her and how much it means to her.

While Joel is just one person, we know

that in 10 years, ALIVE has helped hundreds of Franklin County residents, and we could not do it without the community's support.



**Sheriff Gary Toelke addresses the group gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of ALIVE's Franklin County office.**

## ALIVE's Good Work Recognized With Grant Funding

ALIVE is always grateful when the community shows its appreciation for, and support of, ALIVE's work by honoring us with grant funding. In recent months, ALIVE has had plenty to be grateful for. Boeing Employee's Community Fund honored ALIVE's Children's Treatment program with a \$4,000 grant and St. Louis Cardinals Care fund has awarded \$2,000 for children's supplies and equipment. Target Corporation granted \$3,000 to ALIVE's "Nights of Safety" program.

The Franklin County Community Resource Board allocates county tax dollars earmarked for mental health services. In late August, the Board awarded more than \$46,000 to ALIVE to expand its Children's Treatment program in Franklin County. The grant will allow ALIVE to hire an additional part-time children's therapist to provide counseling and case management to children referred to the program by the Juvenile Office. Laura Sexton, the attorney for the Juvenile Office, reached out to

ALIVE about collaborating because she sees domestic abuse frequently overlooked as a root cause of the problems in the children with whom she works.

This grant and the collaboration with the Juvenile Office will allow ALIVE to double the number of children it is currently counseling in Franklin County, and we are excited to be able to extend our services to so many more families as we work to achieve our vision of ending domestic abuse.

## Third Party Events Help ALIVE Meet Mission, New Supporters

ALIVE wishes to extend heartfelt thanks to several organizations who have taken an active role in helping to educate the community about the work we do and to raise much-needed funds to benefit our programs and services. In recent months, associates of the local Macy's call center held a picnic on their patio and raised nearly \$400 for ALIVE. Members of an "Independent Living" class offered by

the Lindbergh School District raised more than \$500 for ALIVE through a service project they conducted.

Meanwhile, on August 25th, Onesto Pizza and Trattoria in South St. Louis City held a Summer Soiree featuring wine from local wineries and food made with locally-grown ingredients. Proceeds from the event benefitted two local nonprofits, ALIVE and the

South Side Day Nursery, which provides daycare for low-income families.

Behind each event was one or more individuals who know about ALIVE's mission and took it upon themselves to tell their co-workers, classmates, or neighbors and friends about it. Ending domestic abuse really is a community-wide effort and we are so grateful to all of you for spreading the word!

## "Nights of Safety" Fills Critical Need in Tough Times

Imagine if you were living in a home where you feared for your safety. You never knew when your spouse or partner would lose his temper, or get drunk, and start to hit you. What if you had a child? Where would you go? These are the kinds of situations and the questions facing clients who come into our "Nights of Safety" program on a daily basis. These clients, usually women, know they need to find a safe place to stay, but because they often live in poverty and have few, if any, friends or family they can rely on, their only option is to seek assistance from a domestic violence shelter.

It sounds simple enough. You call a shelter and they will help you arrange transportation to get there and, for several weeks, give you a place to live and meals. They will assist you in finding a job and getting your own place to live. But what do you do when you call the shelters in your area and find out that each and every one of them is full today and will likely be full not only tomorrow, but also next week? You have no idea how much longer you can remain safe in your home. What do you do?

Luckily, here in the Greater St. Louis area, clients seeking shelter have a resource to turn to when all of the

area's traditional shelters are full. ALIVE's "Nights of Safety" program provides emergency shelter through motel placement until a family can get into an area brick-and-mortar shelter or make arrangements to travel to a friend or relative in another state or a shelter out of the area.

While local traditional shelters have a specific number of beds allocated for adult women and a specific number for children, ALIVE's program has greater flexibility. When a traditional shelter does have openings on a given day, they are often still limited to accepting an adult woman who has just one or two children. Because each family is put up in their own motel room, ALIVE can provide shelter to a mother regardless of the number of children she might be bringing with her. In addition, male adults and older adolescents, who might be a primary victim of abuse or who simply wish to accompany their mother in leaving the home, can stay in the "Nights of Safety" program when a traditional shelter might have rules against it.

ALIVE's "Nights of Safety" program, which began by using volunteer safe homes, has been the flagship of ALIVE's programs since we were founded in 1983, but this year has

been quite a challenge. In ALIVE's 2008/09 fiscal year, we provided just over 2,000 "Nights of Safety." In the first five months of this fiscal year, ALIVE has provided more than 1,700 "Nights of Safety". Katie Robinson, "Nights of Safety" Coordinator, attributes the increased demand for services to the challenging economy. "Other times, women might have family or friends who could take them in. Now, people are losing jobs and can't help their friends the same way. As a result, women in shelter have fewer resources to call upon. If they do get into a traditional shelter, they are staying there for longer periods of time, which means our clients in the motels are not able to move into those shelter spots. This summer, there just hasn't been the turnover that we normally see."

### How You Can Help

A gift of \$150 will cover a family's stay in a motel, food, transportation, and other necessities for two days. A gift of \$525 would offset an entire week's stay in the program.

The program is also in need of diapers and non-perishable food items. Micro-wavable items or cans with pop tops are especially helpful. No refrigerated items please! Thank you for any help you can provide our clients right now.

## Welcome To Our Newest Board Members



**Jacqueline Ward** joined the Franklin County Advisory Committee and Board of Directors in May. She works for the

Special School District in St. Louis County but resides in Franklin County, which makes her uniquely knowledgeable about both of the communities in which ALIVE has an office. Jackie is a survivor of domestic

abuse, which gives her insight into what our clients are facing on a daily basis. In addition to her volunteer work for ALIVE, Jackie is also raising twin daughters and pursuing a Ph.D. We are so glad Jackie has decided to make us a part of her very full life!

ALIVE also welcomes **Marlene "Marti" Kelly** to the Board. Marti joined the Board in July. She works

for the Girls Scouts of Eastern Missouri and looks forward to assisting ALIVE's efforts to reach out to and educate teens about domestic abuse. She holds degrees in Marketing and Communication and has experience presenting anti-violence programs to students in the St. Louis area.





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## Tee Up For ALIVE!

As the days start to grow cooler, it's often relaxing to spend the day on the golf course! Come join us on **Thursday, October 8, 2009**, when ALIVE holds its 13th Annual Golf Tournament and Dinner Auction. The event starts with registration and a boxed lunch at the pavilion of the Norman K. Probststein Golf Course in Forest Park.

The tournament begins with a shotgun start and the day ends with a tantalizing barbecue buffet dinner and both silent and oral auctions. All proceeds from the event benefit ALIVE's programs for victims of domestic abuse.

An individual entry fee is \$175. Corporate sponsorships are also available. Visit the Upcoming Events page on our website [www.alivestl.org](http://www.alivestl.org) for more information on sponsorship benefits and other details. Registration can be made online, by mail, or by calling (314) 993-7080.

## Annual Report Now Available

ALIVE's Annual Report for FY2008/09 is now available at [www.alivestl.org](http://www.alivestl.org) on the "Annual Reports" page. If you are unable to access the report online, you may request a hard copy by calling Regina at (314) 993-7080.

## ALIVE Staff

Susannah Altesman, *Crisis Intervention Specialist/Court Advocate*  
Cathy Covington, *Crisis Intervention Specialist/Court Advocate*  
Claudia DeRiemer, *Adult Counselor*  
Erin Ercoline, *Executive Director*  
Jennifer Gadsby, *Adult Counseling Coordinator*  
Roselyne Hazard, *Adult and Children's Counselor*  
Jeanne Oberdan, *Children's Counseling Coordinator*  
Regina Przetak, *Development Director*  
Katie Robinson Westre, *Nights of Safety Coordinator*  
Susan St. Leger, *Adult Counselor*  
Rachel Visocan, *Adult Counselor/Crisis Intervention Specialist*

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