

# *PASSAGES*



*April is Sexual Violence Awareness  
Month  
Remember to wear your Teal Lapel Pin!*



## **The Clothesline Project**

To honor survivors of personal violence such as rape, battering, and child sexual abuse, River House, Inc. is sponsoring a Clothesline Project.

Traditionally doing the laundry was considered to be women's work. In years past, women have spent a lot of time communicating over the clothesline, confiding in each other and seeking support. In 1990, a women's group in Massachusetts wanted to create a statement drawing attention to the problem of violence against women. The idea was to have survivors and their friends and family document their experiences on a t-shirt that would be hung up on display. River House is using paper t-shirts.

Each person's experience is different and that's why it isn't only the survivor who creates the shirt. Family and friends also have their own unique experiences.

The t-shirts create a powerful statement, and they help the survivors to understand that they are not alone and most of all creating a t-shirt promotes healing.

The shirts will be displayed at events such as the High Tea and local agencies in the four county service area for viewing.



*River House, Inc.  
High Tea  
and Silent Auction*

*Thursday, May 7, 2009  
4:00 pm — 7:30pm  
St Mary's Catholic Church  
708 Peninsular Ave, Grayling  
\$35.00 per ticket*

For ticket information. Please contact  
River House, Inc.  
989-348-3169  
[officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org](mailto:officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org)



**River House to Host  
Volunteer Appreciation Event**



River House will be hosting their annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on April 16th. National Volunteer Week is April 19th - April 25th. St Mary's of Grayling has donated their facility. Volunteers will be honored for their dedication to the survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence and homelessness in Crawford, Oscoda, Ogemaw and Roscommon Counties.

Volunteering is an important component in the operation of the shelter and its services.

Volunteers help in several capacities, they lend an ear, help with transportation, sort donations, help with shelter maintenance, give spiritual guidance and assist with fund raisers. There is a place for everyone to volunteer.

**Anyone interested in volunteering at River House may inquire at 989-348-3169 or [www.riverhouseshelter.org](http://www.riverhouseshelter.org)**

## From the Desk of River House's Financial Coordinator~

Larry Hufnagel

**ALERT:** While the economy struggles and Washington injects money into companies to starve off bankruptcy, River House carries on as usual. Finances are tight with us, however, we continue to fulfill our mission with the funds we receive from federal grants, corporate grants, private donations and fund raising activities.

The economic stimulus package that was recently passed by congress may add additional funds to our bottom line which would enable us to continue current programs and expand our outreach efforts. Domestic violence, sexual violence, and homelessness know no boundaries and are just as prevalent today as they were in the past.

We continue to explore new ways to fund raise, run operations and cut costs to maintain financial stability. River House had applied for the Michigan Homeless Shelter/Food Bank Nonrefundable Tax Credit status but was denied because of the scope of our services.



The excellent staff work hard each day to aid our clients and provide the best possible service to all they meet in their daily duties. They do it with a smile on their face, positive attitude in their mind and a loving feeling in their heart.



*Vicki Nunn has been a River House volunteer since 2007. She is on the River House Board of Directors and volunteers in the shelter working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence*

Spring is on its way. April is the beginning of a new season, a chance to start over.

April is also National Volunteer Month. How often have you thought about donating your time to a worthy cause only to get caught up in your own busy schedule and never get around to actually doing it? It happens to everyone.

When I was in high school, my sister and I volunteered at a local nursing home. We would go once a week and visit the elderly, bringing bookmarkers that we made and other little goodies. I never got over how pleased the folks were to see us. While I truly enjoyed my time as a volunteer, my life and other priorities got in the way.

Soon, my sister and I were busy raising our own families and volunteering was directed toward our children. Cub scouts, 4-H, and all the typical groups children get involved in was where I spent my energy. My husband was the leader for our daughter's Girl Scout troop because there was a need. We felt Scouting was so important in a child's life that we could not sit back and hope someone else would fill the gap.

Our children are grown now, scattered across this great nation of ours. But the call for volunteers is still here. Every day someone needs a helping hand. It could be your friend, your neighbor, or someone in your community, people without the resources or the knowledge of services available to help them.

One of the "hidden" ailments of this country today is domestic violence. Also known as intimate partner violence,

## Volunteer Spotlight



it has no bearing on your income or social position in the community. Domestic violence has no boundaries

Assisting people in recognizing their potential and seeing the satisfaction and joy in their faces when they become conscious of the idea of empowerment and self-determination is what motivates me to be a volunteer at River House, Inc. The advocates at River House work tirelessly trying to bring awareness to the public of the devastating effects domestic violence has on women and children trapped in a lifestyle they feel helpless to change. And they work just as diligently with these survivors to prepare them for a new, violent-free life.

River House represents a new beginning. It brings hope to many who feel they have nothing to look forward to. It saves lives and creates the possibility of a new future for many women and children caught up in the brutality of domestic violence.

It does not take a lot of time. Whether you volunteer a couple of hours a week, or even one or two times a year, the impact on those in distress is immeasurable. It also improves your own self-esteem. Seeing the results of assisting others toward a better life brings pleasure and satisfaction into your own life as well. And the organizations you help out with are so grateful.

So I challenge every one this year: Volunteer. Do it for your community, do it for yourself. But, as the Nike slogan suggests, "Just Do It!"

## One Woman's Story

*The following story was written and submitted by a River House client. The name has been withheld for confidentiality purposes.*



I have come to realize everything we as people experience, happens for a reason.

I stayed at River House for the complete 90 days you could stay. Honestly, going to River House was the best thing I could have ever done.

Since I was 16 years old, I have been bouncing from place to place. Then I became pregnant at 19. I was in an abusive relationship when the guy found out and thought it was his. I stayed for a while thinking it was best for the baby. After I came to River House I found out that I was further along than I thought, so I was completely relieved knowing it wasn't his.

All of the advocates at River House helped me so much and are still there for me if I need them. Being at River House helped me to become independent and move into my own apartment. So now, thanks to the help of River House, I have some stability for me and my baby.

Something I learned was that in order to move forward you must be able to let go. My life has been far from easy, but I realize that everyone has their own struggles and that there is someone who has it worse off than me.



## The Holidays are over but.....

Thanks to a few special groups and the kindness of our community, Christmas was extra magical for many of our area families this year.

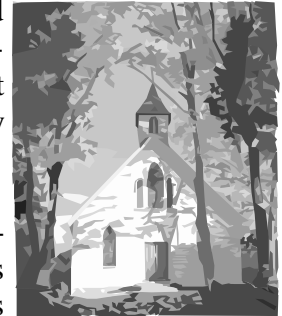
The 4th grade classes at Grayling Elementary made "Giving Tree" ornaments for children and families in our service area.

Local agencies such as the DNR and DEQ as well as the Criminal Justice Program at Kirtland and many other generous donors put smiles on many children's faces Christmas morning.

There is much generosity and compassion in our area even in these tough economic times.

## Area Agencies Recognized for Teamwork in the Fight Against Sexual Violence

Without the assistance and referrals of many local agencies, River House would not be able to provide necessary services to its clients.



Each year to show our appreciation River House sends

cookies as a "Thank

You". This year the cookie recipients will be the host site agencies in the Crawford, Oscoda, Ogemaw and Roscommon Counties.



There is a responsibility for all of us to keep our communities safe. Through education and prevention we can break down the factors that lead to violence. Without the assistance of other agencies in our community this task would be almost impossible.

We are truly grateful to have the host site agencies as part of our team in the fight against domestic and sexual violence.

## Mailing List

We are updating our mailing list. If you are not the person listed on the label or would like to receive our newsletter electronically

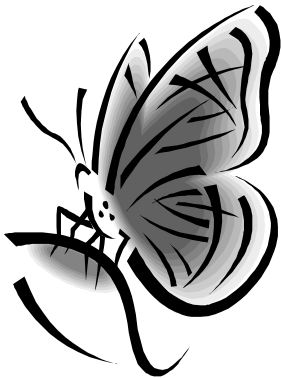
please contact us at 989-348-3169 or



[officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org](mailto:officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org)

## Mercy Ministry Project Grant Awarded

*Rural Counseling and Advocacy Services*



Who of us is not talking about the impact of gas prices on our day to day living? For a moment, imagine you are in an abusive relationship and need to talk to someone. The closest domestic violence service provider is some 60 miles away. Persons in these situations call River

House, Inc. daily asking for support and counseling.

River House, Inc. received a Mercy Ministry Project Grant for Rural Counseling and Advocacy Services. The grant is made available through the Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Detroit. This is the fourth such that River House successfully received from the Sisters of Mercy. Each grant project has further enhanced services and the shelter facility.

The new grant offers River House a continuing means to serve hard to reach clients in the four counties of Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda and Roscommon. Each week a River House Advocate is in the three outlying counties for individual counseling and Healthy Relationship Groups. In 2006-2007, 551 outreach clients sought either counseling or group services. In addition to providing these outreach services, educational presentations will be offered to alert the community of local domestic and sexual violence resources.

These activities will increase the safety and empowerment of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our communities. Kriss Goodroe, Director, commented "We are grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for their continued support of our work in rural Northern Michigan."



## Denim Days to Support the fight against Sexual Assault

Several employers will have their staff participate in denim days as an awareness activity during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.

Area agencies will have their staff donate to

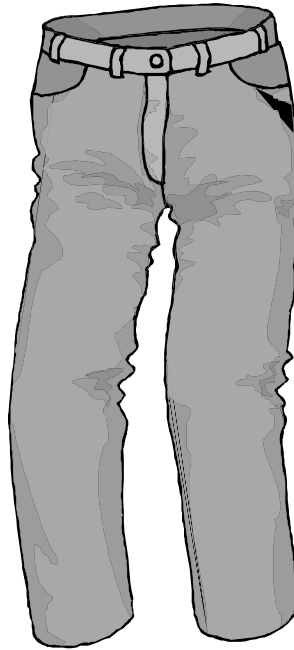
River House to wear denims at the office for a day.

Denim Days began in Italy in 1992. An 18 year old girl was picked up by her 45-year old driving instructor for her very first lesson. He took her to an isolated road, pulled her out of the car and forcefully raped her. Threatened with death if she told anyone, he made her drive the car home. Later that night she told her parents and they

helped her to press charges. The perpetrator was arrested and prosecuted. He was convicted of rape and sentenced to jail.

He appealed the sentence and the case made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Within a matter of days the case was overturned and the perpetrator released. In a statement by the Chief Judge, he argued "because the victim wore very tight jeans, she had to help him removed them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex."

Enraged by the verdict, within a matter of hours the women in the Italian parliament launched into immediate action and protested by wearing jeans to work. This action motivated the California Senate to do the same and spread to the Executive Director of Peace over Violence and "Denim Day" was born.



# Special Thanks to our Sponsors!



Michele Steffey, R.Ph./Owner

500 N. James St. • Grayling, MI 49738-1714

989-348-2000 • Fax: 989-348-6007 • Toll Free: 866-215-8627

*Caring Beyond Prescriptions*

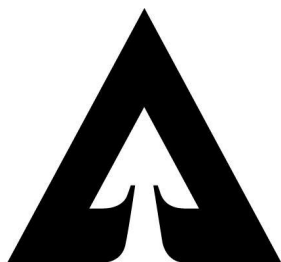
Mon. - Fri. 9:30 am to 6 pm • Sat. 9:30 am to 1 pm

The logo for Mercy Hospital Grayling, featuring a stylized cross and the text "MERCY HOSPITAL GRAYLING".

**MERCY HOSPITAL GRAYLING**  
Partnering with **MUNSON HEALTHCARE**  
A Member of **TRINITY HEALTH**

1100 E. Michigan Ave., Grayling, MI 49738 (989) 348-5461

[MERCYGRAYLING.COM](http://MERCYGRAYLING.COM)



# Weyerhaeuser

The logo for Rowe Professional Services Company, featuring a stylized bridge or arch structure.

**ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY**

*Large Firm Resources. Personal Attention.<sup>sm</sup>*  
Call us for all your surveying and engineering needs.  
**(989) 348-4036**

**Marvin E. Myers, PS**      **John H. Rauser, PS**  
403 Huron Street, Grayling, MI 49738  
[www.rowepsc.com](http://www.rowepsc.com)



Part of the Michigan landscape for over 90 years. To learn more, visit one of our 129 locations across the state or call us at 1-800-867-9757.



**CHEMICAL BANK**  
MEMBER FDIC

[CHEMICALBANKMI.COM](http://CHEMICALBANKMI.COM)

## PayPal

The River House, Inc. website now has PayPal capabilities. If you wish to make a donation using paypal, click on the DONATE button associated with the fund of your choice. The website can be found at [www.riverhouseshelter.org](http://www.riverhouseshelter.org)



*Roberta Eckert Chrispell*  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

(989) 366-8177

FAX: (989) 366-9067

3225 W. HOUGHTON LAKE DRIVE

HOUGHTON LAKE, MI 48629



Gerald Gertiser,  
MSN, CS, FNP

Monday - Friday 9 am to 7 pm  
Saturday 10 am to 4 pm

P.O. Box 393

1200 North Down River Rd.

Grayling, MI 49738

Phone: (989) 348-7400

Fax: (989) 348-6268

**HART**  
PONTIAC GMC BUICK

**PONTIAC ACTION**

**GMC**  
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE™

**BUICK**  
The New Symbol For Quality In America

**NEW & USED CARS • TRUCKS  
SALES • SERVICE • PARTS**

**345-2571**  
1-800-341-HART (4278) • 3433 W M-55  
(EXIT 215) WEST BRANCH

“On my own, but not alone!”

~Quote from River House Client

## Newsletter Sponsorships

This year River House is offering a new opportunity for giving. We annually publish a newsletter in April and October.

You may want to consider including one or both of these publications in your community development or advertising budget this year.

The newsletters reach over 2000 families in Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda and Roscommon Counties and other parts of the region. All you need to do is provide us with your business card or desired print specifications.

For more information or to receive a sponsorship price list you may call 989-348-3169 or contact us by email at

[communityed@riverhouseshelter.org](mailto:communityed@riverhouseshelter.org)



**Serving Families in  
Crawford County &  
Surrounding Area**

**Since 1941**

**Excavating, Redimix,  
Septic Cleaning,  
and Installation,  
Porta-jon Rentals**

R I V E R   H O U S E   I N C .

PO Box 661  
Grayling, MI 49738

Phone: 989-348-3169  
24 Hr Toll Free Crisis/Support Line:  
1-888-554-3169  
Fax: 989-348-1719

To receive Passages via e-mail, send your request to

E-mail: [officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org](mailto:officemanager@riverhouseshelter.org)



River House, Inc.  
Post Office Box 661  
Grayling, MI 49738  
989-348-3169  
1-888-554-3169  
[www.riverhouseshelter.org](http://www.riverhouseshelter.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
MAILED FROM 49738  
PERMIT NO. 8