

# PASSAGES



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



## April, a month of empowerment



By: Crystal Rose, Sexual Assault Advocate

April should be an empowering month for all survivors of sexual assault. It's our time to "take back the night" and encourage other survivors to move on with their lives and let themselves be happy again. We can't give our abusers any more power over us. The true reason for sexual assault is to gain power and control over a victim, and what better way than to violate someone sexually. This month let's all take a couple extra minutes of our time to celebrate the survivors that we know in our lives and encourage the people who struggle every day to move past the flashbacks and nightmares and low self-worth the assault has caused in them. If you are a survivor and would like to receive help in your healing process or know someone else who does, give River House a call. Our services are free and the more positive support you have in your lives the easier it will be to become whole again.

The most important thing to remember is that you are a beautiful person and deserve to be treated well and you deserve to be loved the way you want, and cared about as a human being and not taken advantage of. Remind your loved ones of this and never stop supporting them in this process. After an assault a person can become very depressed, isolated and scared. That is why it's important to believe them and help them work through this so they don't feel like they are all alone in the world.

If you are a man in this sexualized world we live in today you can play a huge part in gender equalization by being a role model to younger people, especially boys, and practice mutually respecting others. As parents of kids growing up in this culture let's take time to teach our sons and daughters what it's like to go on a date and the appropriate things to do and say. Our kids will never ask! So, include these types of things in your heart to heart talks with your kids, you know the birds and the bees talk we all love to have with our tweens...

So, again if you have questions or would like to take advantage of the services River House has to offer, please don't hesitate to call and ask to speak with an advocate (888) 554-3169.

*A woman walks alone down a dark, deserted street. With every shadow she sees, and every sound she hears, her pounding heart flutters and skips a beat. She hurries her pace as she sees her destination become closer. She is almost there. She reaches the front door, goes inside, collects herself, and moves on forgetting, at least for tonight, the gripping fear that momentarily enveloped her life. This and any number of other scenarios could happen anywhere last night, last year, or even 100 years ago, even in rural Michigan.*

That is why.....

## River House and Kirtland TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



April 5th, 2011, the community gathered at Kirtland to Take Back the Night. Speakers for Take Back the Night were Crystal Rose and Jerry Boerema

## Another Successful Clothesline Project



The T-shirts hung in 3 of our 4 COOR counties this year. They kicked off Sexual Violence Awareness month at Kirtland for Take Back the Night, April 5-8th.

Then moved to the Ogemaw County courthouse for Crime Victims week April 11th-15th.

They finally ended in Crawford County for the final 2 weeks April 18th-29th at Grayling Mall.

Thank you to everyone who helped support the Clothesline Project this year.

Pictured at left: Clothesline project at Kirtland Community College

# MSHDA COUNSELING AT RIVER HOUSE



By: Jim Smith, MSHDA Counselor

The last several years have taken a toll on all of us, both emotionally and economically, both nationally and right here at home. Many of us have friends or neighbors who have lost their jobs and even their homes to our economic woes. Some of these unfortunate families have been reduced to moving in with friends or relatives and an unfortunate few have even been forced into living in their cars or even in tents in the woods.

In August of 2010, River House Inc. initiated a MSHDA approved counseling program designed to inform clients of the foreclosure process and the various alternatives available to them. This counseling is intended to aid clients to either retain their homes, or if retention is not possible, to assist them in moving on with their lives in the most advantageous manner possible. The stress that comes from the threatened loss of one of life's three necessities can be overwhelming to the extent that the homeowner becomes physically and emotionally immobilized. The Foreclosure Prevention Counselor is trained to help the distressed client understand their alternatives and to develop an action plan to move forward towards a solution. In addition the counselor is able to provide other forms of assistance through referral to other agencies within the human services arena.

River House currently has three trained and certified MSHDA Foreclosure Prevention Counselors on staff. These Counselors are also able to deliver other MSHDA programs such as Home Ownership Counseling, Pre-Purchase Counseling, Credit Repair and Budgeting Counseling and Home Maintenance Counseling. In most cases these programs are available to the client at no cost.

More information regarding these services may be obtained by calling (989) 348-1649.



## It's So Hard to Say Goodbye....

May you always have walls  
for the winds,  
a roof for the rain,  
tea beside the fire,  
laughter to cheer you,  
those you love near you,  
and all your heart might  
desire.

-Irish Blessing

In our last newsletter we talked about the many changes that are going on around River House and the communities we support. We have one more change to report. River House Executive Director, Kriss Goodroe will be leaving River House at the end of May. She is starting her own private practice in West Branch. Although she will be greatly missed, we will not lose her completely. River House will carry on and we are looking to the future with our new Executive Director.....to be introduced in our October newsletter. So, to our Mama Bear Kriss we would like to say; we love you, we will miss your cheerful face around our table, but we wish you the BEST of luck.

# River House hosts 8th annual High Tea and Silent Auction May 5th, 2011

All proceeds benefit River House, Inc.

Speaker: Erin Kelly

MC: Lynne Ruden

Singer: Kristina Comer

Thank you to all who attended, donated and volunteered. We couldn't have done it without you!



Joanne with her tea staff

Joanne and company, all volunteers, diligently work behind the scenes to deliver a yummy and enjoyable evening for River House guests.

## Tea Time

By: Joanne McConnell

As a young child I remember mom taking an afternoon break to have a cup of tea. In my cup she would have a little tea with milk, then would pour it onto a saucer to cool. I would be able to sip it from the saucer. Now this method is considered a no-no. Being the oldest of 13 children, I felt honored to have this special time because as the children continued, this special time was eliminated from her busy day. When living in Port Huron as a young adult I would invite my senior neighbor over for tea/coffee. It was an enjoyable hour of conversation. When asked what flavor of tea she would always say, "I'll have hot water with a little milk please". After moving north, my life was very busy, so I did not take the time to really enjoy a cup of tea for about 15 years.

About 15 years ago I was invited to a tea and fashion show. The presenter brought her own tea cups and tea pots. I enjoyed it so much I was hooked from then on. As part of my nursing/patient care, I took Sister Jean's (Umlor) "Guided Imagery Therapeutic Touch" classes. I found these modalities were very effective to relieve stress. At the same time, I was searching for more information on the history and art of tea. I found that tea and relaxation was a great fit; it lowered my blood pressure and helped the rest of my day. I now subscribe to 2 tea magazines and have several relaxation tapes I use. There is an art to taking tea, as I found in my readings. The Chinese are very strict in this process. The English version, which I do for the teas for River House, is my favorite; as it is more formal.

In my travels I have gone to tea fields in Kenya, taken tea with their workers. Done tea in Vancouver, Melbourne, Australia, as well as the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, among many others. On cruises I try to do at least one tea. "Doing tea" does not have to be at special places. Taking time in your hectic day either alone or with a friend/family member can be a welcome break. That cup of hot tea with a goodie (cracker, fruit, piece of cheese), let's you unwind. Letting your body and mind take time out will refresh you and give a little boost for the rest of the day. We owe it to ourselves.

~Your "Tea Lady"



# In the words of a Survivor



Inscription at the bottom of the painting reads:

While coloring the birds orange, our most unfavorable color, it's time to fly away once again.  
 We move to the grass that makes us think we're going.  
 Now up the volcano to reflect on all the past eruptions of our lives - hurt and pain - time to put the past behind us once again.  
 Then we move to the browns of the branches, they represent all the roads we have traveled.  
 Eventually, all the leaves will fall to the ground.  
 And finally, we go to the land and color it yellow for all the special people that we are - now settled!

## Lost Innocence

Anonymous

Looking back on a time and place  
 Seeing a child's innocent face  
 Knowing that things aren't as they appear  
 For inside she cries silent tears  
 Deep inside she is filled with pain  
 She feels dirty and full of shame  
 Innocence lost at a very young age  
 Locked this child in a pain filled cage  
 There is no freedom or escape  
 From the fact this child was raped  
 While the guilty man is roaming free  
 This child is sentenced to eternity  
 Eternity locked away with all this shame  
 She can't help but feel that she was to blame  
 Even though common sense says it was not her fault  
 She can't seem to help from having these thoughts  
 What ifs' keep running through her mind  
 She keeps going back to those moments in time  
 If there isn't something different she could have done  
 Why didn't she scream or at least try to run  
 Fear kept her frozen to the spot  
 While this grown man did what he should have not  
 Shame and fear made her keep the silence  
 Kept her telling anyone about the violence  
 The thing that is shocking beyond belief  
 Is that this child could not get any relief  
 The same thing happened again and again  
 The first one was just how it began  
 More than one man did his worst  
 None of them caring about the child they hurt  
 After the first time was it easy to tell  
 Was it her pain and shame they could smell?  
 With every touch a part of her died  
 Now she is in a prison that has no gate  
 Every one of them sealing her fate

# Making Technology our Friend

By: Kimberly Vaughn-Hart



Picture: Courtesy of Shelter House

Technology, typically, at least for me, is a love/hate relationship. In today's society it is a staple, possibly more popular than sliced bread. Technology is everywhere we go, from the cities into the country and it is everywhere we look. Most doctors have a technological means for keeping medical records, most college students attend at least one online class and most students in general now are more comfortable with technology than they are with pen and paper.

One of the most difficult things for people in crisis is to know where to turn for help. We hear that over and over. The COOR counties, as well as the Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) are working in conjunction to develop, what we hope, is a rather needed connection called 2-1-1.

In South East Michigan United Way coordinates 2-1-1. According to their website 2-1-1 is a multi-lingual, comprehensive information and referral service available 24/7/365. Its database contains more than 20,000 programs and services such as after school programs, senior care services, medical and prescription assistance, credit counseling and mortgage foreclosure assistance, and housing and utility resources. Individuals can also call 2-1-1 to be connected to volunteer opportunities in their area.

To date 2-1-1 is only up and running in South East Michigan, but they are working on getting into the Northern regions of Michigan. We, here at River House, hope to see this technology thrive, because in today's technological mindset, this is where victims are getting the help they need. We are optimistic in bringing this system to Northern, rural Michiganders, and although still in it's infancy the surrounding Human Services community seems to be hopeful that this will help many families.

We have also embraced the technology age with Facebook as well as our own River House website ([www.riverhouseinc.org](http://www.riverhouseinc.org)). We have been able to attain volunteers, monies, and donations through these sites as well as giving very valuable information to those who need it. Thank you to all those who assist at keeping these up to date, as well as making sure all forwarded messages get to the right place. We may never see the person that is behind the number on our pages, but with a job well done we know we are a mighty adversary to Domestic and Sexual Violence.

## Congratulations to our new volunteers!

Diane Allen, Julie Donley, Danna Frasier, Amy Inzina, Renae Jurgess, Marianne Pahssen, Beverly Preston, and Carrie Rasmusson.

We are proud to have you aboard. Give Kim a call for dates and times you will be available to volunteer.



Must be:  
Compassionate  
Empathetic  
Good Listener  
Hard Worker  
Open Minded

Be a River House volunteer, the rewards are priceless.  
Benefits are beyond measure.

If interested please contact:  
Kim Vaughn-Hart  
989-348-3169  
volunteer@riverhouseinc.org  
Or fill out an application on our website,  
www.riverhouseinc.org

**River House, Inc.**  
**is going green!**



If you would like to receive  
**PASSAGES** via e-mail, and are not  
currently doing so, e-mail us at:  
**office@riverhouseinc.org**



You can also find the newsletter at:  
**www.riverhouseinc.org**



Volunteer Appreciation dinner 2011: A fun time had by all! Thank you to ALL River House, Inc Volunteers!  
**WE APPRECIATE YOU!!!**

## Board Members

**John Thiel, President**  
**Marv Myers, Vice President**  
**Annette DiPonio-Graham, Secretary**  
**Tim Hagen-Foley**  
**Rev. Elizabeth Chace**  
**Jen Sieszputowski**



**Amanda Thiel**  
**Judith Olsen**  
**Cynde Kochensparger**  
**Vicki L. Nunn**  
**Jeanne Cardinal**  
**Mary Beth Wakulat**

***Specific items (in new or like new condition) which would be helpful:***

Bus Tokens for Crawford County Transit Authority  
Bus Tokens for Roscommon County Mini Bus  
Gas Cards  
Towels and Wash Cloths  
Children's size Clothing (Jeans, Tennis Shoes, Socks, Slippers)  
Children's pajama's (baby through big kids)  
Non-slip slippers  
Underwear, Socks & Sport Bras- new  
Nightshirts one size fits all  
Electric Alarm Clocks (basic)  
Liquid Hand Soaps and Hand Sanitizers  
Laundry Baskets  
Dishes and Silverware  
Paper Towels  
Tall Kitchen Garbage Bags  
Lawn & Leaf Size Garbage Bags  
Bowls with Lids  
Pots, Pans, & Kitchen Utensils  
Drinking Glasses  
Manual Can Openers  
Non Skid Rugs  
Baby wipes  
Diaper rash cream  
Diapers (Large sizes and Pull Ups)  
Spiral Notebooks for Journaling  
Nail Clippers and Tweezers  
Q-Tips  
H E Concentrate Laundry Soap  
Disposable Gloves  
A variety of craft kits or Velvet coloring pictures  
Yarn, embroider floss, needles, crochet hooks, knitting needles



The River House, Inc. website now has Pay pal 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.riverhouseinc.org](http://www.riverhouseinc.org)**

***Books for adults or children may be purchased at Borders book store through [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com):***

"Hands are Not for Hitting" book by Elizabeth Verdick  
"Making the Peace" book by Paul Kivel  
"The Words Hurt" book by Chris Loftis  
"Words Are Not For Hurting" book by Elizabeth Verdick  
"Time to Break Free" book by Judith R. Smith

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