



by Terri Lackey

SAFEPLACE PROTECTS WOMEN AND CHILDREN



We all learned the story of Moses' precarious beginnings in Sunday school. To protect him from death at the hands of an evil king, his mother placed him in a basket on the banks of a river, and his sister, Miriam, stood watch until someone found him and took him in.

Moses is not the only child who has benefited from the goodness of others. Even in today's society, children need protection from "evil kings," and SafePlace in Olympia, Wash., does just that.

"SafePlace children's program advocates for children and teen victims of domestic and sexual violence, providing them safety at our shelter," said Thomasina Cooper, development director at SafePlace.

Thanks to your gifts to Women of the ELCA grants program, you also provide that protection by helping make some of SafePlace services for children available. In 2013, a \$5,000 grant was awarded to SafePlace for its children's program.

A non-profit organization serving as the only advocacy agency and confidential shelter for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in its county, SafePlace helped 244 people in 2012, 85 of whom were children, Cooper said.

"By the time someone comes to our shelter, they are pretty desperate for assistance," she said. "Nobody wants to go to a shelter."

Cooper said most of those who appeal to SafePlace for help have "very little income. Ninety percent last



HELPING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Inez Torres Davis, Women of the ELCA's director for justice, oversees the Women of the ELCA grant process. Your gifts to Women of the ELCA make healing programs like the one at SafePlace possible.

Torres Davis said a grants committee evaluates each program to determine which will get funding. All have as a main purpose helping women and children. In 2013, \$68,000 went to 27 projects—20 domestic and seven international. That's about \$9,000 more than awarded in 2012, she said. It is the sup-

port of programs like these that is at the core of the purpose of Women of the ELCA, making a positive difference in the lives of women and children, she said. You too can make a difference by sending a designated gift to the grants program of Women of the ELCA. For more information about grants, visit the Web site at www.womenoftheelca.org and click on the tab, Our Work.

The next round of grant proposals will be accepted between December 15, 2013, and February 15, 2014.

The SafePlace staff demonstrating how the work they do is intertwined.

year were below median income.” Before they finally turn to SafePlace, many “often stay with their friends on a couch or live in their cars. Sexual assault is the leading cause of homelessness among women and children.”

Founded in 1981, SafePlace operates 24-hours a day and is available to support survivors through crisis intervention, advocacy, and helping them with a plan to stay safe. It offers free and confidential services to people who have experienced all forms of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

“We value survivor autonomy and safety. Our goal is to empower survivors to make their own decisions about their relationships and lives, provide them with options and resources, and to be a sounding board for those in crisis,” Cooper said. In her nine years of working for SafePlace, Cooper said she has seen “quite a few

success stories.” Women of the ELCA grant money is helping SafePlace run its children’s program for kids between the ages of two and 18, Cooper said. Employees at SafePlace never call it a shelter in front of the children, she said. “We call it the house.”

“The children have witnessed their mothers become disempowered. That has a terrible impact in many, many ways,” Cooper said. “We also help mothers who feel disempowered reclaim their parenting skills.”

SafePlace works to stop the cycle of violence, identify safety plans for the children, and “just help them feel safe.

“At SafePlace we want to break generational violence completely,” Cooper said. “We know that might be Pollyanna, but that’s our goal.” 🌿

Terri Lackey is managing editor of Gather.

Women of the ELCA 2013 Domestic Grant Awards by Synodical Region



(above) SafePlace Executive Director, Mary Pontarolo with Rev. Suzanne Appelo, of Gull Harbor Lutheran Church.

(below) Playing with blocks, a SafePlace advocate guides a rescued child through role-modeling healthy non-violent communication.



Anchorage Faith & Action–Congregations Together (1A) \$5,000

Health Care Access, Anchorage, Alaska
Empowers women to address health care in Alaska, specifically access for senior women through Medicare and Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

SafePlace (1C) \$5,000

Children's Program, Olympia, Wash.
Provides advocacy to child and youth victims of domestic and sexual violence residing at the emergency shelter and support to help mothers reclaim their parenting.

Black Women for Wellness (2B) \$2,000

Kitchen Divas Program,
Los Angeles, Calif.
A nutritional health program that demonstrates healthy cooking options through interactive classes where community chefs prepare healthy foods and participants incorporate to achieve healthier lifestyles.

Survivors of Torture, International (Survivors) (2C) \$3,000

Healing the Scars of Torture Endured by Women and Children, San Diego, Calif.
Continues specialized medical care and case management filling gaps of service to these women, children, and families. Asylum seekers are not eligible for employment, medical benefits, or other social services while they await the outcome of their asylum cases.

First Lutheran Church (3A) \$3,000

Hope and Healing Retreat for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Bottineau, N.D.
Offers survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault an opportunity to come together in a safe and nurturing environment for emotional and spiritual healing.

Lutheran Domestic Violence Initiative (3H) \$3,000

Domestic Violence Education in ELCA Congregations, Shoreview, Minn.
Works with Faith Trust Institute to fulfill its goal of developing a replicable model and resources that address the issues of domestic violence in congregations with a goal of providing a safe place to all members.

Lakota Lutheran Center, Inc. (4A) \$1,950

Cultivating Lakota Women Leadership for Persons with Disabilities,
Scottsbluff, Neb.
Establishes advocacy workshops and training for women to help people who are disabled and differently abled in their daily lives.

Central American Martyrs Center/Su Casa Catholic Worker (5A), \$2,550

Hospitality Program, Chicago, Ill.
Offers transitional housing to homeless Spanish-speaking families who are survivors of domestic violence.

Lutheran Social Service of Illinois (5A) \$3,000

Prison and Family Ministry,
Des Plaines, Ill.

Supports and defends families by helping fund buses to transport children to visit their mothers in prison.

Lutheran Church of the Reformation, (5J) \$3,000

Infant Safe Sleep Ministry,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Designates a "safe sleep champion" to be trained to hold events within the church and its impoverished neighborhood with city.

Public Health Partnership of Licking County (6F) \$3,000

Cervical Cancer Screening Initiative, Newark, Ohio

Provides free cervical cancer screenings for women ineligible under current programs who are uninsured, low income and/or under age 40 in Licking County Ohio.

PBJ Connections (6F) \$2,000

Empower PEERS Program,
Pataskala, Ohio

Offers equine assisted therapy and learning for pre-teen and teen girls to learn to control behaviors, improve self-esteem, gain insight into their issues, communicate more effectively, and build stronger relationships.

Brazilian Immigrant Center (7B) \$3,000

Domestic Workers Project of Fairfield County, Bridgeport, Conn.

Through organizing, advocacy, education, leadership, and capacity building, joins immigrant workers and their families in the fight against economic and social marginalization by working to create a more just society.

Maternity Care Coalition (7F) \$2,000

MOMmobile at Riverside Correctional Facility, Philadelphia, Pa.

Provides support and services for incarcerated pregnant and parenting women, many of whom have a history of trauma.

Israel's Creek Lutheran Parish (8F) \$1,500

Community Partners, Delaware, Md.

A collective of rural churches that partners with schools and neighbors to feed students and families living below the poverty line. Also provide household items and affirming activities.

Saint Nicholas Lutheran Church (8G) \$2,500

Elementary School (Remedial) Reading Day Camp, Huntingtown, Md.

Day camp pilot program that helps Title I students, grade 1-3, in need of remedial reading skills.

Cabarrus Coop Christian Ministry (9B) \$2,000

Mother/Children Housing Ministry, Concord, N.C.

Provides housing, tools, and support to empower single mothers with children to move beyond homelessness towards independence.

Ruth House (9B) \$1,800

Ruth's House at Play!,
Washington, N.C.

Provides playground equipment for Ruth's House. This equipment will allow women and children to socially interact with one another in a safe, fun, and loving environment.

Appalachian Helping Hands (9D) \$2,000

Bible Promises Health Kits for Women, Greenville, Tenn.

Offers hope and health care for women affected by poverty in Appalachia.

Lutheran Services of Georgia, Inc. (9D) \$2,500

Empowering Refugee Women through Education, Atlanta, Ga.

Empowers recently arrived refugee women to gain life skills to successfully assimilate into the U.S. culture.

2013 International Grants by Country



Highland Support Project, Cusco, Peru, supports women in rural areas through its knitting project.

GHANA

Baako Ye Project, Inc.

Medical Program of the Baako Ye Project **\$2,000**

Provides healthcare services to reduce maternal and infant death, teenage pregnancy, malnutrition, and disease including HIV/AIDS in an impoverished area of Ghana within 32 rural communities.

INDIA

Rural People Development Society

Prevention of Tuberculosis from Cotton Industries and Alternate Employment **\$1,500**

Emphasizes prevention and control of tuberculosis among women workers of cotton industry through orientations, counseling, and referral services to hospitals while encouraging and supporting alternate employment.

KENYA

Pamoja Group

Abused Women's House of Care and Hope **\$2,000**

Attempts to alleviate the psychological and mental stress and suffering experienced by women who live in abused marriages and are constantly beaten by their spouses.

PERU

Highland Support Project

Andean Women Knitting Hopes **\$3,000**

Improves the position of poor, Quechua-speaking women in the rural areas near Cusco, Peru, through the knowledge and sustained practice of their citizenship and economic rights.

PHILIPPINES

Friends of Alouette International

Centre for Abused Girls—Food for Body and Soul **\$2,500**

Provide sustainable healthy food, income, life skills training and total well-being by building and stocking a henhouse and providing daily hygiene packs and spiritual reading for the girls.

ROMANIA

Ratiu Foundation for Democracy

Not for Sale—Choose for Your Own Sake **\$2,000**

Addresses human trafficking by providing literacy and gender based violence education to at-risk women, including survivors who receive medical support to prepare them for rehabilitation.

UGANDA

Foundation for Uganda Women Development

Ferrocement Water Harvest for Women and Well/Spring Protection **\$2,000**

Provides a sustainable supply of clean water for drinking, cooking, and washing hence water security, hygiene, and sanitation in 60 poor families.