

September 30, 2015

Donations Encouraged For Crisis Center For South Suburbia Throughout October
Supply drive for women's shelter hosted by Town Center Bank

Frankfort, New Lenox, IL - Sometimes, a pair of slippers can be the greatest comfort in the world. Wrapping your feet in warm protection can help you feel at home - and safe.

"Slippers are one of the things we need most," says Kerri Twietmeyer, Development Assistance with the Crisis Center of South Suburbia. "Women make the decision to come here in a flash, usually with no time to pack even an overnight bag. Having slippers on hand, for the women and their children, sends a signal to relax and feel safe - and of course, it's just nicer than walking around in socks or clunky shoes."

"The Crisis Center just celebrated their 35th anniversary of helping women and families in our neighborhood," said Shirley Pirko, Vice President of Town Center Bank. "We decided to help by hosting a supply drive."

During the month of October, both Town Center Bank locations will be collecting supplies for the Crisis Center and ask neighbors to contribute.

"More often than not," says Twietmeyer, "women come with just their purse. Sometimes kids will bring a backpack. To come into the shelter with nothing is so difficult." By providing the basic necessities, the shelter makes it easier to focus on healing and the path to a life free from domestic abuse.

Travel size products are made into packets ready to get women through the night including toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, soap and lotion. Typically, a stay lasts 45 to 60 days, depending upon the resources available to each individual. "Women and their children leave in a state of emergency, and our shelter gives them opportunities to look into resources."

About 200 women and 200 children pass through the shelter each year. Each woman is assigned a case worker, who guides clients to the resources necessary to help break the pattern of abuse and neglect. The Center offers safety, transitional housing, education, and emotional support.

"This is a home," says Twietmeyer, "so the shelter needs the same things that you need at home. There are usually about 45 women and children in the shelter at any given moment. Think top to bottom in your home - if you use it every week, we need it too."

That list includes cleaning supplies, bedding, towels, washcloths, tissue, school supplies, baby food, diapers (mostly sizes 5-6), dishtowels, hair products and ethnic hair products, brushes and large-tooth combs, feminine care products, body moisturizer, deodorant and yes, slippers. With fall and winter approaching, there is also

a need for cough drops, Vick's VapoRub, and other cold and flu treatments. Children's clothing, toys and books, women's clothing, pajamas, undergarments and shoes are also needed. "Our ladies and children select 5 outfits, theirs to keep and take with them when they leave."

Twietmeyer says, "We are so thrilled to partner with Town Center Bank and their customers, employees and neighbors. This is huge for us. All of our services are free, so we depend on the generosity of others to make our work possible. We cannot sustain what we do without gifts in kind; it is the community coming around us that actually allows us to do what we do."

"Up to 66% of women have been in abusive relationships and didn't even realize it. Our Fresh Start program helps young people recognize how abuse starts so gradually, how abusers gain power and control first verbally, and how when they step over a line, it's nearly impossible to regain equality. Domestic violence may look different in different places, but it's everywhere."

Pirko stated that donations can be made throughout October at the Frankfort Town Center Bank, 20181 S LaGrange Road and at the New Lenox Town Center Bank, 1938 E Lincoln Highway during Bank operating hours; Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 6 pm, Friday from 8 am to 7 pm and Saturdays from 8 am to 1 pm. Gift cards and cash donations are also welcome. For more information, call 815-806-7007.

Twietmeyer stated, "Town Center Bank is stepping up and making a difference - helping these women change the path of their lives. This support contributes to the overall well-being of our clients, allowing them to break the cycle and start fresh. We are extremely grateful that Town Center Bank reached out to partner with us. It really does make a lasting difference."

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