

Resolve.

Hope.

Success.

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”
Philippians, 4:13

March 1, 2011

Dearest Friends,

These past few years have taught me many things. One lesson in particular that I am happy to share with you here is that there is no road more difficult than that which we walk right now. We are in the midst of a battle far more profound than any of us can know or tell. Here and there, we see glimpses of the significance of this work. In truth, I feel like a small part of a team working on a mosaic. On our work bench is a single, small, piece of glass. And it is but a part of the whole. As I look back and reflect on 2010, on the work we have accomplished, I am so pleased. It is overwhelming.



Truly, our cup overflows. Be encouraged! We are on the very doorstep!! With great anticipation, we're looking to what's ahead!

You, our faithful supporters, have put your hands directly upon the hurt in this community. On behalf of the staff and the Board of Directors, let me give you our thanks. But also, let me pass on to you a word from some of the people we are serving.

It is in them that you get to glimpse the power of this work.

In February of 2010, exactly this time last year, we received a call from a concerned mother whose 11-year-old son was in utter despair. Bullying can be such a force in a young person's life, as all too many of us know. This bi-cultural young boy living in the urban context is a passive young man in every sense of the word. Already in his young life he has had extensive health problems, being taken in and out of hospitals for numerous evaluations and even surgery.

His mother told us that he had tried to take his own life.

After one year of working with one of our therapists, in his mother's own words, he is "a happy boy."

She says, "ever since receiving services at Refuge, he has learned coping mechanisms that help him to overcome those inevitable feelings of rejection." His suffering was so pronounced that it was affecting him physically through terrible panic attacks. She is adamant that "Refuge helped to impact her son so that he can be positive about living his life to the fullest."

In 2008, we began serving this community and finished the year having served just 17 people. In 2009, as we continued to wrestle with our credentialing status at the state and city levels, our services still managed to expand, touching the lives of 70 people. To close 2010, with our credentialing finally clearing its last hurdles, the reports are overwhelming. 125 people were served through direct counseling services last year with nearly 1000 appointments.

We still have a long road ahead, and a lot of growing to do, but we have tested the waters, and we are still swimming!

When we first opened our doors, we were told to “double-book” every appointment, because the understanding was that 50% of our clients would not show up every single day. Over the 12 months of 2010, our “no-show rate” averaged 13%. It is such an encouragement to see how almost 20% of our client referrals (the second highest proportion—behind medical doctors) are coming through word-of-mouth—from active clients who know of our services and are telling their friends and family members about it.



Another client recently relayed to one of our therapists that “You and the civility and the serenity of Refuge made me feel safe for the first time in three years.”

Treading Carefully!!

It is with fear and trembling that we take up this work every day. The cost of failure is frightening, but the value of potential success is virtually limitless.

Though we have seen significant growth since becoming fully credentialed with the city (for more than a year now!!), we are still in a very vulnerable financial state. We want to continue to put our energies into trainings on Parenting, Conflict Resolution, and Depression—things that do so much to help local families.

Based on our projections we hope to increase to at least 1650 appointments for the year. This will not, however, take us to full viability.

Your support is still so precious to us. Without it, there can be no victory!

In Refuge, we have a chance in this deeply challenged community to set good, even great, things in motion that will ripple through many generations to come.

Investment and Perseverance

Open House Celebration

- Our Open House Celebration on December 15 was **greatly rewarding and gives us so many reasons to hope!!** Thank you to everyone for making it such a memorable event.

Strengthening our Staff

- ❑ Michelle Bonilla, our new Intake and Development Coordinator, and Patsy Emery, our faithful volunteer, for the past few months have provided us now with 100% coverage of our front-end systems. **Already, they are making a big difference.**
- ❑ Rachel Vendsel, M.A.R. has taken on more hours with us and is now adjusting to her new dual role of Therapist and Quality Assurance Analyst—**her increased presence will serve to greatly enhance the quality of our services.**
- ❑ In hopes of maximizing our growth for 2011, these were most necessary investments.

Clinical Audit

- ❑ Our first Clinical Audit from the city is now behind us. What a milestone!! As we continue to refine and strengthen our clinical services, I am constantly reminded of the blessing that we have been given in our staff. They have such a heart for this work!
- ❑ In the words of the auditor, he said **“it is clear that this will be a tremendous resource for the city in the future as Refuge continues to grow.”**

Your help makes an enormous difference in this community.
Please give a gift of support today
to make sure these important impacts continue.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth Hernandez, M.A.R.
Executive Director
