

NEWSLETTER



from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

At the end of each year at Noah Project, I think it is the greatest year in our history. At the start of each new year I am humbled at how far we have come and excited for the things on the horizon that will make the new year “the best year ever”! What occurred in 2015 and what is ahead in 2016 is no exception.

Last year we provided services for a record 1,000 unduplicated individuals impacted by family violence, provided 18,335 services, and answered 2,832 hotline calls. Our prevention team provided lifesaving classes to over 30,000 students to build the skills needed to identify the red flags of a dangerous relationship, how to get out of a dangerous situation, and to identify a healthy relationship. We had a busy year!

While our main focus is on intervention and prevention, we cannot ignore the unstable climate we face with state and federal funding sources. To work toward remedying this problem Noah Project established the Noah Project Foundation. The foundation was overwhelmingly blessed with a \$1 million donation to get it up and running. By the end of 2015 we had \$1.7 million in the endowment fund. We firmly believe that working toward freedom from state and federal funding will allow us to provide services that we can presently only dream of and will provide a sense of stability for Noah Project into perpetuity.

Although we work diligently to end family violence in our community, the statistics continue to rise. Through many years of planning and relationship development, we have kicked off the Abilene/Taylor County Alliance to End Family Violence. Through this concentrated and intentional effort we will hold batterers accountable for their actions and develop effective cross systems to address the issue. It is an exciting time in the history of Noah Project.

I know full well that we could not do this work without each of you. The financial commitment you make truly does allow us to provide quality services to those impacted by family violence. Your generosity saves lives!

Leigh Ann Fry

what to **EXPECT**

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noah project legal **DEVELOPEMENT**

The Legal Department of Noah Project has entered a new stage of development and growth. The arrival of a new attorney has seen increased involvement with other areas of service provided by Noah and with the community at large. The idea is to create a community of individuals and organizations committed to ending the scourge of domestic violence.

The Legal Department, has focused litigation on obtaining protective orders and procuring safe and fair divorces for our clients. Each client's situation is assessed on a case by case basis and handled accordingly. Although protective orders and divorces are the primary focus in regards to legal action; that prioritization has not excluded the pursuit of other legal remedies for needy clients.

Child custody and situations where CPS has become involved are other issues that have been pursued. We have been very successful in settling cases through negotiation as opposed to long and unpredictable court battles. Although we do our best to avoid litigation when possible, there is no fear of tilting at any case that would be best resolved by a decision of the court.

We look forward to continuing and building Noah's reputation of intensive and successful representation.

Matthew Mogish, Attorney

program updates:

TAYLOR COUNTY ALLIANCE TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE

“Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God”. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

I am frequently afforded the opportunity to speak to different groups about the work at Noah Project. Following my presentations I offer a time for participants to ask questions. There are certain questions that I know will inevitably be presented to me. One particular question deeply impacts me each time it is asked. As a result, I have made a personal commitment to do everything in my power to cause a paradigm shift like none have seen in the Big Country.

“Why doesn’t she just leave?” or differently phrased “Why does she go back?”

Rather than answer these questions, I choose to use counter questions, “Why is he allowed to brutally abuse her?”; “Why does she have to leave her home, her family, her job, her neighborhood, her church?”; “Why are we not holding him accountable?”

Until the shift occurs where we are holding batterers accountable, we will continue living in a system where the victim is violated and the batterer does what he pleases. Until the shift occurs, women will continue to be forced to return because: he bonded out of jail and threatens to kill her if she doesn’t return, or threatens to hurt her family, or refuses funds to buy food or cancels the children’s insurance.

This year Noah Project has embarked on a journey that can change the face of what we know to be family violence in the Big Country. The relationship formed to create the Abilene/Taylor County Alliance to End Family Violence is a partnership dedicated to “Establish and implement an intentional community response to family violence resulting in cross systems collaboration and procedures, decreased incidents of family violence, and batterer accountability.” Through this partnership Noah Project is working with the Abilene Police Department, Taylor County Sherriff’s Department, Taylor County District Attorney’s Office, Adult Probation, Judges, Child Protective Services, Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Regional Victim Crisis Center, Taylor County Justice of the Peace, Northwest Texas Legal Aid, Office of the Attorney General, Baptist Children and Family Services, New Horizons, and Betty Hardwick to address the serious problem of family violence in our community thereby creating the momentum needed for a monumental paradigm shift.

It will take all of us to get this done. We are better together! If you are interested in this work and want to participate, please call 676-7107. We need you!

Leigh Ann Fry



primary prevention and awareness **PRESENTATIONS**

Primary Prevention provides age-appropriate Character Education presentations for students of all ages and provides training from professional and community audiences. Our Elementary Curriculum is designed to build character traits and establish a system of positive influences to help youth deal effectively with life and avoid becoming involved in negative behaviors.

Our Middle School Curriculum is designed to present students with the tools they need to build a culture of safety and address presenting issues within their school environment. Our High School Curriculum may be facilitated as a series of lessons or as a one-time lesson.

These lessons focus on the dynamics of dating relationships and Noah Project's Services. We have served students in the following school districts: Abilene, Albany, Anson, Baird, Breckenridge, Cisco, Clyde, Haskell, Jim Ned, Merkel, Paint Creek, Rule, Stamford, and Wylie. Our community presentations are presented to educators, parents, law enforcement, community members, and other professionals to aid in recognizing, preventing, and reporting abuse, bullying, and violence. As a whole our aim is to help prevent victimization, bystander behaviors and spread community awareness about interpersonal violence.

Fiona Smith,
Primary Prevention Director



advocacy **PROGRAM**

Noah Project's Shelter and Advocacy programs strive to empower clients by equipping them with education and information. Noah Project offers a full calendar of classes, programs and services for both shelter and outreach clients. Every week Noah Project provides informational Life Skills Classes, Domestic Violence Support Groups, Parenting Support Group, Chemical Dependency Classes, DV 101 classes, Bible Study, Financial Empowerment Classes as well as Advocacy, Therapy and Legal services.

Recently, two unique community programs have been developed. One is a four week educational class presented to women incarcerated at the Taylor County Jail. The class topics are DV 101, Effects on Children, Protective Parenting and How To Build Resiliency. On the last day of class there is a graduation ceremony and each participant receives a certificate of completion and in-depth information on Noah Project services.

The second program is a collaborative effort between Noah Project and the Attorney General's Office to ensure women are receiving child support safely. Each month a Victim Advocate meets with victims of family violence prior to their child support hearing to discuss victim rights, options, services and safety planning.

For our children we serve at Noah Project we offer Tutoring, Kids Club (children's support group), Advocacy and Play Therapy. Currently we are planning for the summer which is always an exciting time for the children at the shelter as there is an array of fun field trips and shelter activities each week.

Sheilah Maness
Advocacy Director



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