

December Newsletter

Beating the Holiday Blues

Special Dates

- Dec 4 - Holiday decorating / cookie party 5pm
- Dec 5 - Edinburg parade 5:15
- Dec 6 - Woodstock parade 5:45
- Dec 7 - Strasburg parade 3:45

Current Needs

- Baby monitors
- Canned tuna / chicken
- Laundry detergent
- Trash bags (33 and 13 gal size)

“Ho Ho Ho!” “Merry Christmas!” “Happy New Year!” We see, hear, and say these words so many times during the holiday season, and most of us enjoy basking in the heightened spirit of goodwill during this time. But we need to recognize that not everyone feels that sense of joy at this time of year.

Whether due to the specific stress of the holidays, or because someone suffers from anxiety or depression throughout the year, it is important to be aware of others' experiences in order to be supportive of them. The first step toward helping someone is to know where their distress is coming from; then you may be able to help them cope better with the holidays.

Let's take a look at some of the most common holiday-related stress factors:

- ♦ **Finances** - Although it may not be possible to provide direct financial help for someone else, you can do small things to help. Treat them to lunch if friends are gathering, set a low price limit for gift exchanges or eliminate gift exchanges all together, offer to go in together on another person's gift, offer to drive/carpool to holiday functions, bake a batch of goodies for them to use for their gatherings, etc.
- ♦ **Family conflict** - The holidays may be the only time when certain family members are together throughout the year, and tensions can run high. If you are at a gathering with someone who is struggling, keep an eye out for trouble and run interference if possible. Taking a walk outside, hanging out with the kids, or helping in the kitchen might be a tension-breaker.
- ♦ **Too much to do** - Most of us feel overwhelmed by the busyness of the holidays, so imagine trying to cope with that on top of disabling depression or anxiety. Offering to run an errand, watch the kids for a few hours, have a “wrapping” party together, prepare a dish for whatever event the person is attending... whatever you can do to lighten the person's load is helpful.
- ♦ **Loneliness** - The holidays are a time when it seems that everyone has lots of friends and a wonderful social life; for a person with depression who may have trouble taking part in all of the festivities, it may be helpful for close friends to reach out to them one-on-one or in small groups. Plan a couple of quiet, low-key visits or activities to help them feel included, especially if they are unable to attend the larger functions.
- ♦ **Feeling misunderstood** - Unless you have been in their shoes, it may be difficult to totally “get” what the person with depression is feeling. Letting the person know that you are here for them, love them the way they are, and are willing to listen is a huge gift to give. Don't be afraid to start a conversation with the person about how they are feeling and be prepared to listen with empathy.

In this season of giving, let's remember to focus on giving our time and compassion to others!

Survivor Story

Ashley Judd



It's been two years since the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke, and currently more than 80 women have come forth to accuse him of sexual misconduct. Ashley Judd, a well-known actress and activist, was one of the first women to publicly accuse Weinstein of sexual harassment, thus sparking the #MeToo movement.

Judd is the daughter of country music singer, Naomi Judd; her older sister, Wynonna joined their mother in forming the group, The Judds, but Ashley decided to pursue an acting career after college. That career has spanned more than two decades and includes her leading roles in movies such as *Kiss*

the Girls and *Double Jeopardy*.

It was in the late 1990's that the incident that Judd publicly disclosed happened. As a young actress, Judd was asked to meet with Weinstein for what she thought was a business appointment; when she arrived at the meeting she was sent up to his hotel room where Weinstein made sexual advances toward her such as asking to give her a massage, wanting her to give him a massage, trying to get her to watch him take a shower, etc. Although she repeatedly told him "No, no, no.", he continued with inappropriate sexual advances. Judd finally tried to strike a deal with him, telling him that she might cooperate after she won an Oscar for one of his films; she then fled from the room.

Although Judd told her parents and some other Hollywood folks about the incident, she did not feel powerful enough at the time to confront Weinstein. Over the years, Weinstein continued to remind her of their "agreement", but it wasn't until 1999 when she was at a dinner event and Weinstein began talking to her that she was able to confront him about their "deal". Ever since then, she believes that Weinstein retaliated against her by sabotaging her chances at prominent parts in blockbuster films; *Lord of the Rings* director, Peter Jackson, has said that Weinstein warned him against casting Judd, saying that she was a "nightmare to work with" and should be avoided "at all costs".

In the fall of 2017, Judd was approached by the New York Times reporters who were working on a story of sexual harassment in Hollywood; they asked if she would be willing to break the silence of this sexual misconduct by going on the record to talk about the harassment she experienced. Judd says that she thought about it for a day, and then realized that it was time to break that silence; she was willing to be a named source in their groundbreaking article. As the first woman to step forward, Judd had some fears about what that would bring, but she realized that there is power in numbers and she wanted to enable others who had experienced such harassment to be able to speak openly about it.

Judd filed a sexual harassment lawsuit against Weinstein in January of 2018. Earlier this year a judge dismissed Judd's claim of sexual harassment in her lawsuit, however, he is allowing the portion of the suit that deals with "intentional interference with prospective economic advantage". Although Weinstein has reached a settlement with some of the women who have accused him, Judd is eager to pursue her claims of being blacklisted in court.

"We've just flung the barn doors wide open and the horses have run out", says Judd of the torrent of victims who have come forward about the rampant sexual harassment in Hollywood. "And the joy of the stampede has surprised me. I didn't know it would be so joyous."

Thank you to Ashley Judd for being willing to take the step of opening those doors.

Recap of Events

Around the Shelter

If you have been to the shelter at all recently, you may have seen a porch-full of furniture. NO, we are not starting a thrift store, but we were able to help several in-shelter families to furnish their new apartments! Clients come and go here at the shelter, and we don't always know what their next step will be, but last month several families were able to get their own places, all within a few days of each other.

You may have seen a call out on Facebook for mattresses and bedframes; we have limited storage space here, so we rely on community help when we need items for clients. Please feel free to share any "request" posts like that in order to reach more people. It really does take a village! It took lots of resources and manpower to accomplish, but it is always rewarding to see folks get on their feet again!



Upcoming Events

Christmas Parades



Parade time is almost here! This year we will be participating in Edinburg, Woodstock, and Strasburg parades; we could use people, young and old, to ride the floats, and we especially need folks to walk along and hand out candy and Response swag to the audience.

Here are the details:

Thursday, Dec 5th—Edinburg parade - line-up 5:15, parade at 6:00.

Friday, Dec 6th - Woodstock parade - line-up 5:45, parade at 6:30.

Saturday, Dec. 7th - Strasburg parade - line-up 3:45, parade at 4:30.

Please let Lynn know if you would be able to help with any of these parades - we'll let you know meeting places and more exact times via email. We are looking forward to this wonderful opportunity to reach out to our local communities!

Holiday Decorating Party

Please join our clients and staff on Wed., Dec 4, as we gather to have our annual holiday event here at the shelter. We plan to start at 5:00 with decorating the shelter, followed by pizza and snacks provided by Response. We will then end the evening with a cookie exchange, so bring a few dozen of your favorite cookies and an empty container to gather up a variety of cookies to take home and enjoy. Children of our volunteers and board members are welcome as well, so come on out and bring your holiday spirit with you!

