

Cairo Women's Shelter, Inc. History

The need for a women's shelter was determined in September of 1981 as the result of concerned people of this community who were alarmed at the scope and incidence of domestic violence in our area. After months of intensive planning and training under the direction of Community Health and Emergency Services, Inc, the Cairo Women's Shelter opened its doors effective March 1, 1982, the same day that the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) went into effect. At that time, there were 75 volunteers performing every task imaginable from building bedrooms at the space donated for shelter by LOGOS - a community ministry, to preparing meals, taking women to court, answering crisis calls, working with children, public relations, community outreach, grant writing, fundraising, training, and recruiting volunteers. In August of 1982, Cairo Women's Shelter received a grant from the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) which allowed for job creation and development, the hiring of staff and the purchase of resources to utilize in our shelter program. We continue to receive funding from ICADV to this day. In 1991, the Cairo Women's Shelter incorporated under its own name.

From its beginnings at LOGOS, the shelter location has changed and expanded as our services continued to grow. In 1984, the shelter facility moved from LOGOS to a residential home with three lots donated by Jerry and Mary Nuremberg. Shelter services continued here until December 2003 when we moved into a newly constructed shelter facility spearheaded by the Glenn Poshard Foundation for Abused Children. Over the years outreach offices were open in response to bringing the need for services out to the various counties we served. This meant that the clients could now receive services at a local county location and not have to arrange travel from the far-reaching areas of Massac, Pulaski, and Union counties to Cairo. Outreach offices were opened in Metropolis in July 1985, Ullin in January 1990, and Jonesboro in October 1990. The Pulaski County office was later moved from Ullin to Mounds in May 1992. As a result of budget cuts, the Pulaski County office was moved into the Cairo shelter facility in July 2004. A generous donation from Harrah's Casino in Metropolis and the vision of the Board of Directors of the Guardian Family Services Center resulted in our outreach office there expanding into a 24-hour shelter facility that offers the same comprehensive services as the shelter in Cairo in April 2001.

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This brief history only captures a portion of the accomplishments and contributions made to our program on behalf of different agencies, groups, volunteers and concerned citizens who in one way or another helped to save the lives of battered women and their children which in turn offered hope for a brighter future. To each of you who have come out to this celebration, we would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU for your support. Because of you, we can proudly celebrate the work and efforts of the Cairo Women's Shelter.



Warren "Buddy" Mitchell (Former Alexander County Sheriff), Jeannine Woods (Cairo Women's Shelter Executive Director), and John Boget (Former Executive Director)



Jeannine Woods (Cairo Women's Shelter Executive Director) is recognized at the grand opening of the Guardian Family Services Center/Cairo Women's Shelter Metropolis location.



Rita Gower (Program Director of Guardian Family Services Center) and Jeannine Woods at the opening of the Metropolis location.



Glenn Poshard (Glenn Poshard Foundation for Abused Children) and Jeannine Woods (Cairo Women's Shelter Executive Director) with the plans for the new shelter facility in Cairo.



State and local dignitaries celebrate the dedication of the Guardian Family Services Center last week. Attending the ribbon cutting are, from left, Tom Margolis of the Illinois attorney general's office, Brad Cole of Gov. George Ryan's office, Metropolis Mayor Beth Ciananani, Guardian President of the board of directors Deb Oldham, Guardian Program Director Rita Gower, Harrah's General Manager Mike Crider, Cairo Women's Shelter Executive Director Jeannine Woods and Metro-Chamber president and executive director Kelly Bailey and Rebecca Lambert.

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