



2009 Annual Report



Dear Friends of Fresh Start,

When the economy falters, it is the families living on the edge who feel the impact most keenly, both emotionally and financially. Sadly, the economic downturn inevitably raises the rate of domestic violence incidents. Thus, 2009 was an especially challenging year for many families fleeing homes filled with terror and abuse.

Thanks to our great staff, Fresh Start served more families while having fewer financial resources in 2009. We were in a position to make a real difference to 125 women and their children trying to rebuild their lives following an abusive relationship. Thankfully, we did not have to place anyone on a waiting list for our services! Many families were able to break free from their abuser's violent control. That's a huge feat by any measure, especially when you consider the extraordinarily tough economic situation these women faced, many of them on their own for the first time in their lives. We are proud of the many goals accomplished by the resilient families we have come to know so well!

Fresh Start is also pleased to acknowledge significant strides in how we served and whom we served, collaborating with other social service agencies to provide vital programs and new support systems to families affected by domestic violence across central Indiana. For example, we presented financial literacy classes to participants at Prevail of Hamilton County and WINGS domestic violence shelter.

In addition, our staff facilitated character building workshops to at-risk youth at the John Bonner Center. These community outreach programs continue to thrive and grow as we present on-site workshops to new agencies throughout central Indiana.

The community continues to support our efforts as well. In December 2009, we were the honored recipient of the WISH-TV "Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers" award.

2009 was a busy year as we evaluated our organization's mission, strength and capacity. As a result, the Fresh Start Board of Directors created a new two-year Strategic Plan that will successfully guide our organization's mission and purpose in the coming years. We are excited about the transformative growth ahead for our organization and those we serve!

As always, YOU are at the heart of our ability to serve domestic violence victims in need. We continue to be honored and grateful for your ongoing support and commitment to the families we serve.

Judith House

Judith House
Fresh Start Executive Director

Lauren Windle

Lauren Windle
Fresh Start Board President-elect

Furniture/Household Items



When domestic violence survivors leave their abusive relationships, they often leave with just the clothes on their back. Most don't have the money to purchase furniture and other items they need to set up a new household.

Through our Furniture/Household Items Program, Fresh Start helps families begin again by providing furniture, household items, food and clothing. All goods are provided free of charge through generous donations. We also have a truck so we can provide delivery when needed.

In 2009, 81 families received furniture and household items from Fresh Start through 183 in-office and home deliveries.

"Jan's" Story

The greatest feeling since leaving was the first time that I unlocked the door of my apartment and walked in. I shut the door behind me and realized that this was my place and I didn't have to worry that my abuser was going to come out from behind the door to choke me . . . I am breathing a lot easier and I finally feel safe.

I am on Social Security disability and have no other income. Fresh Start has helped me out in many ways. When my food supply gets low, Fresh Start delivers more food to me. One month, I had to choose between paying my rent and paying for my medication. Fresh Start paid my rent so I could purchase my medicine.

Whenever I have something that is weighing heavy on my mind, I can call Fresh Start and they are there for me. Fresh Start has given me a "fresh start in my new life."

Employment and Educational Assistance

The overarching goal of Fresh Start's Employment and Educational Assistance Program is to help domestic violence survivors gain employment and educational opportunities in order to financially support themselves and their children.

Experience has proven that employment is first among three key factors in helping domestic violence victims achieve self-sufficiency and remain independent from their abuser (housing and transportation are the other two). Approximately 50 percent of the women referred to Fresh Start are unemployed or under-employed, or they have recently suffered a job loss due to the upheaval caused by leaving their abusive environment.

Providing employment assistance was especially challenging in 2009 because we served more clients but secured fewer employer referrals due to the economic downturn. Several clients entered our Employment Program due to layoffs, company shutdowns and shortened hours.

In 2009, Fresh Start's Employment and Educational Assistance Program served 62 clients. At the end of the year, 42% were employed or continuing their education.

"Dawn's" Story

When I was in my abusive relationship, it was horrible. My abuser physically and mentally abused me on a daily basis. He made me feel ugly. For a long time, I refused to look in the mirror because I felt so ugly. When he kicked me down a flight of stairs and I injured my back, he refused to help me get up or even to call 911 to get me help. I had to lay on the floor until I could pull myself up. That was when I made the decision to leave him.

I have been in the Fresh Start program for two years. Fresh Start has helped me in so many ways. I've received employment assistance, furniture, clothing, food, household items, rental assistance and transportation.

If I'm having a rough day, I can talk to the staff and they always make me feel much better. Fresh Start means so much to me. This is the first program that I have been involved with that actually does what they say they are going to do. They have helped me feel good about myself.

Life after leaving my abuser has been wonderful! I don't have to live in fear anymore. Most of all, I love myself. I can look in the mirror. I no longer feel ugly.

Direct Client Assistance



Recognizing the financial hardships many people have been facing as a result of our nation's economic downturn, Fresh Start received funding from the Community Economic Relief Fund and the Domestic Violence Network to assist clients with rent, utility bills, groceries, childcare expenses, bus passes, gas cards, car repairs and medical expenses.

For many, the temporary assistance kept a roof over their head, food on the table, prevented disruptions in utility service, and ensured that transportation and childcare were obtained.

In 2009, Fresh Start provided \$20,000 in direct financial assistance to survivors of domestic violence.

Financial Literacy Workshops

Often, domestic violence victims depend on their abusers to manage their financial affairs. Fresh Start offers a financial literacy program to address money management issues. Entitled "A Fresh Financial Start," the workshops teach domestic violence survivors the basic skills necessary to take control of their own financial lives, including how to budget money, balance a checkbook and establish and maintain good credit.

Fresh Start facilitated nine Financial Literacy sessions for 41 participants in 2009.

Youth Empowerment



The horrors of domestic violence become permanent memories for many children who witness the abuse. National statistics report that 3.3 to 10 million children are exposed to domestic violence annually.

The parents Fresh Start serves nearly always voice a concern for their children's well-being and the impact family violence has had on them.

Fresh Start's Youth Empowerment Program supports these children in a safe, nurturing way. It helps them learn new skills, make new friends and develop a support network with each other.

In 2009, Fresh Start:

- *provided character-building workshops to 28 at-risk youth. The sessions focused on issues relating to self esteem, conflict resolution, trust, bullying, goal setting and team building.*
- *distributed information promoting conflict resolution, anti-bullying and dating violence awareness to 500 local high school students.*
- *distributed school supplies to 30 children.*

"Linda's" Story

When I was living with my husband, I was scared, stressed, confused. He was mentally abusive to me and my two children. I felt overwhelmed.

I feel at peace now that I have left my abuser. I am no longer afraid. There are times that it can be financially stressful, but I feel safe.

Fresh Start has helped me stay afloat. They have kept a roof over my head and food on the table. They have helped me with bus passes so I could get myself and my children back and forth to school. When I was finally able to get a car and it needed repairs, I didn't have the funds to get it fixed. Fresh Start was there for me again.

We Gratefully Thank and Recognize Our 2009 Donors

Platinum (\$25,000 +)

The Empowerment Foundation

Gold (\$10,000-\$24,999)

Community Economic Relief Fund Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation

Silver (\$5,000-\$9,999)

Elizabeth Beck Foundation Domestic Violence Network

Bronze (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Lynn Broaddus Mechanical Contractors Progress
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Christopher and Ellen Clapp Target Foundation
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Friends of Fresh Start (\$1-\$999)

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GoodSearch	Bonnie Nash

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Friends of Fresh Start (In Kind)

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Michelle Peed	Norman Weeden
Denise Porter	Leta Willhouse
T. Proctor	Chuck Wise
Denise Randall	WRTV6 Fan Club

In Appreciation . . .

. . . of Doug House, our truck driver and mover who worked for Fresh Start for 12 years delivering furniture and household items to our clients.

In 2009, Doug was forced to quit Fresh Start due to medical problems. Thank you Doug for your years of service!

In Memory . . .

. . . of Chris Meyer, our furniture mover, who passed away suddenly. Our thoughts and prayers remain with his family.

2009 Financials

Revenue

Contributions	
-individuals	\$ 43,661
-businesses	\$ 3,035
Grants	\$114,676
Interest	\$ <u>0</u>
Total Revenue	\$161,372

Expenses

Program Services	\$146,924
Administrative	\$ 25,472
Fundraising	\$ <u>1,876</u>
Total Expenses	\$174,272

Net assets at the beginning of 2009	\$ 39,226
Net assets at the end of 2009	\$ 26,326

Fresh Start Board of Directors

Lauren Windle, President-elect

Chris Stump, Treasurer

Susan Lawson, Secretary

Christine Ball

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Adriane DeRose

Craig LaFuse

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"Helping Victims Become Victors"

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