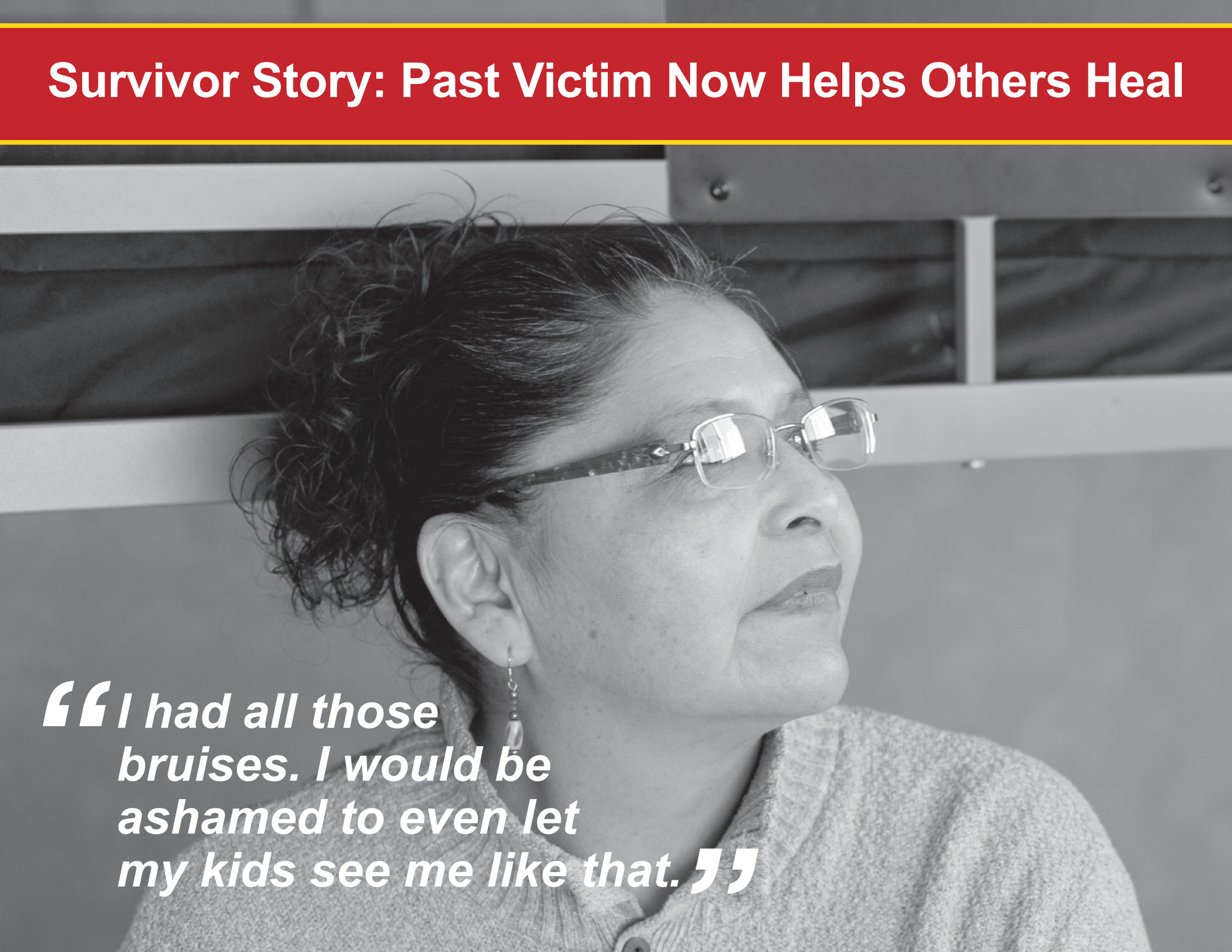




A Safe Place for A New Beginning

Survivor Story: Past Victim Now Helps Others Heal



“I had all those bruises. I would be ashamed to even let my kids see me like that.”

It wasn't until later in life that Shelly's* daughter opened up about what she had seen that terrible night.

Shelly always tried to shelter her children from seeing the abuse, but as it turned out, her then young child witnessed something no mother ever wants her daughter to see.

"[Since we were in a relationship] I didn't know then that him forcing sex on me was abuse," she said. "I was crying when he was raping me."

And her innocent daughter saw it happen.

"My daughter had seen it, she later told me. I said to her, 'I didn't mean for you to see it'," Shelly said, tears running down her face.

For nearly 13 years, Shelly endured a relationship where she was physically, sexually, emotionally and mentally abused by her partner. He regularly hit her in the face, including her jaw and eyes, and on her body. He kicked her nose and broke it into pieces. He split her lips which required stitches. Even while she was pregnant, that never stopped him from hitting, pushing and threatening her.

"He wouldn't let my family come see me, so I was isolated," said Shelly. "I had all those bruises. I would be ashamed to even let my kids see me like that."

But, after every beating, he promised to change and the honeymoon stage would begin again.

"He'd say 'I'm sorry, I'll change' and 'I'll never do it again.' But, it did happen again," she said. "It was like a rollercoaster."

An advocate named Marcy at the Sacred Heart Center (SHC) helped Shelly muster up the courage to leave that relationship behind for good. She helped Shelly file the correct paperwork for a protection order, and settled her into the shelter to have a safe place to stay during the escape.

And one wonderful truth? Shelly has been free from abuse ever since.

Fast-forward a decade and Shelly is now an advocate at the SHC. She is able to be "Marcy" to other survivors. She helps by giving rides to court and teaching fellow survivors coping skills.

Sometimes, it's as simple as offering a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on.

"After I got help at Sacred Heart, I felt a passion for helping other women and children. I know exactly how these women feel."

**Name has been changed to protect victim's privacy.*

Survivors Face Unique Challenges



There are several barriers women – and the occasional man – face when escaping domestic violence. These barriers are intensified when you live in a remote area such as the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

Roughly the size of Connecticut, the reservation holds miles and miles of open prairie with scarce resources. In fact, in some areas it's more likely someone will see a wild animal than another person. Cell phone service is unreliable and law enforcement help could take up to an hour to respond to a call.

With a population so spread out, few communities in South Dakota have domestic violence advocates, and even fewer have shelters. The Sacred Heart Center (SHC) is the only private care facility of its kind within an approximate 80-mile

radius. That's what makes it so important. The SHC could be someone's only hope in a time of crisis.

The population of Eagle Butte, SD, is 1,318 people and 89% of the population is Native American. Statistics show 80% of Native Americans face violence during their lifetime, meaning many reach out to the SHC for help every year.

But, the SHC currently has only four bedrooms to sleep four families at a time. The SHC is forced to place victims in hotel rooms because there is no other option. This is more expensive and does not secure the victims' safety like staying at the shelter.

Put simply, the current SHC shelter is not meeting the great need of victims and more must be done.

Staggering Statistics

- More than **80%** of Native American women and men have experienced violence in their lifetime and more than **33%** have experienced violence in the past year.
- Nearly **34%** of South Dakota women will face rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime.
- Domestic violence is the **4th** leading cause of homelessness among families with children.



Survivor Story: Standing Strong for Those Who Can't

Tracy* looked across the littered trailer to a scene of her granddaughters. The twins, age 11, were crying in the middle of the living room floor. Above them, her partner – his breath smelling sweet from alcohol and his words slurred – screamed at the young girls for coming into the house wearing wet swimsuits. A sunny day at the swimming pool had quickly turned dark.

Tracy had dealt with the beatings, the name-calling, the degradation and the drunken tirades. She tolerated the abuse from her partner because it was toward her. She was the target. But then, in that moment as she watched the twins cry, she realized the abuse was spreading. If she didn't get the girls out, they could be next.

"The relationship was so toxic and I couldn't take it any more," said Tracy. "I had heard of the Sacred Heart Center and knew I could ask them for help."

Help is exactly what Tracy and the twins received. The staff at the Sacred Heart Center provided beds to sleep in, food to eat and a safe place away from the violence they endured for five years. Therapy and counseling sessions were also provided, as well as clothing and other essentials – like toothpaste and toothbrushes – since the trio had left in a hurry.

In a new atmosphere, the twins' grades improved – they

never missed a day of school because the SHC provided them a ride. Tracy made it through her battle with breast cancer. Shelter staff helped her through the paperwork, transportation to appointments and assisted with her rehabilitation after surgery.

It took time, but Tracy and her granddaughters were able to heal both physically and mentally.


"The SHC helped teach me what the real kind of love is, and that I am worthy of it," said Tracy.

A year and a half has passed since that dark afternoon in the trailer. The journey hasn't been easy, but Tracy has never looked back. As new victims enter the shelter, she now has the tools to provide a shoulder or a listening ear, and can serve as a positive example of life after escape. She is a survivor.

And that's something she's very proud of.

"I used to think that I was the one who was messed up, but I now understand [my partner] was projecting all his hate on me. He had the control," said Tracy. "But not anymore. It's been one heck of a life, but I've kept strong. Life today? Life today is really good."

**Name has been changed to protect victim's privacy.*



***“The SHC helped teach me
what the real kind of love is,
and that I am worthy of it. ”***

Current Shelter Shortcomings



The existing SHC shelter is comprised of four small bedrooms, meaning it has the capacity to serve four families at a time. Otherwise, victims must share a room. When the facility is full, victims are also housed at a local hotel.

The staff, consisting of the program director and four advocates, squeeze into two offices. This doesn't provide the needed privacy and essential confidentiality when dealing with domestic violence. A further complication is providing non-residential services in an over-crowded office setting, while providing services to victims seeking shelter. There are no private rooms for training or for victims to meet with outside agencies, such as the police.

There is not enough storage space for staff or victims, including space for food and supplies, rape kits, bedding, diapers, children and adult clothing of all sizes and many other necessary items families have an immediate need for when they escape from violence.

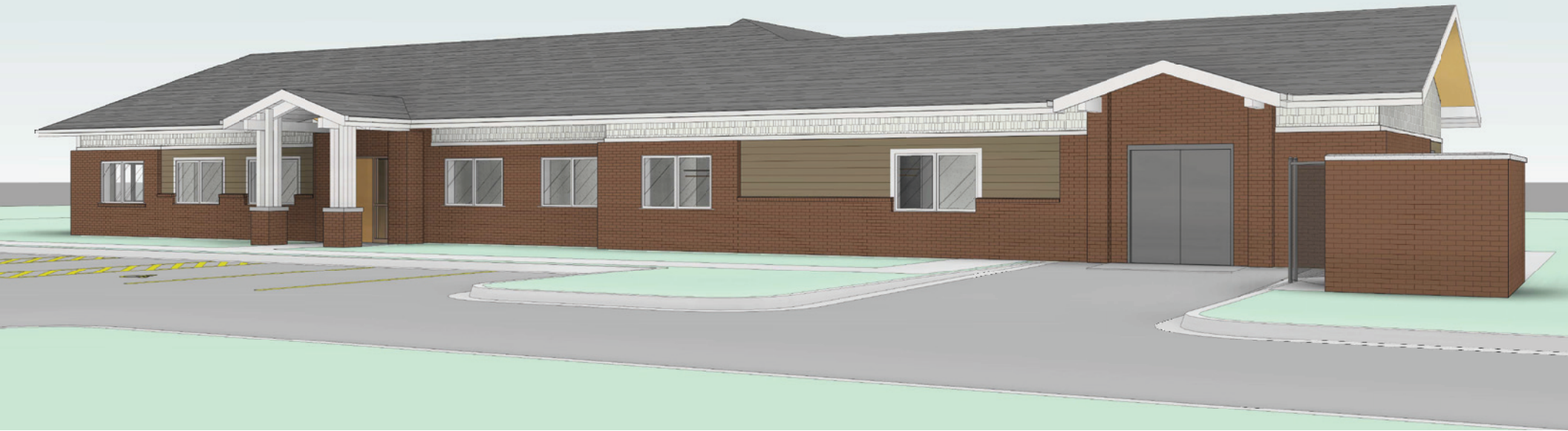
Shared spaces (kitchen, dining room and living room) are small with no windows to provide natural lighting. There's no dedicated play area for children.

The current location is on a highly traveled street in the small community of Eagle Butte, SD.

The Solution: Expand

- Increase the Sacred Heart Center's ability to provide compassionate, non-judgmental care and advocacy through additional space, a better layout and enhanced privacy measures
- Provide a warm, home-like environment to help people heal from trauma
- Larger gathering spaces (common areas) with natural lighting
- More bedrooms providing families with privacy – one private room, five shared rooms and two family rooms
- Two efficiency apartments to accommodate men or families with teenage boys
- Indoor and secure outdoor play areas for children
- Adequate staff offices for greater victim confidentiality
- Meeting space for staff training and victim meetings with outside agencies
- Adequate storage space for staff and residents
- Provide a walk-in soaker tub for severely beaten victims

A New Beginning



The proposed shelter will provide double the amount of space to care for victims of domestic violence and their families.



- The new Sacred Heart Family Safe Shelter will have enhanced security, including a control room monitoring anyone entering the shelter through a locked vestibule and screens for security camera monitoring.
- The facility will be able to serve up to 10 families (eight families in the west wing and two families in the east wing).
- The Bear Necessities Thrift Store will take over the current shelter, expanding their space and efforts.
- There will be a fenced courtyard with a playground and a patio, allowing the families a feeling of safety and security while being outdoors. This will also offer a sense of normalcy.
- Efficiency apartments to accommodate male victims or families with teenage boys will also be part of the new shelter.
- The new square footage will be 10,513 sq. ft. – double the existing shelter.

Dear Friends:

Similar to St. Joseph's Indian School, the Sacred Heart Center is owned and operated by the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of South Dakota. Located in the geographically isolated community of Eagle Butte, SD (population 1,318), our services area covers over 4,707 square miles.

Often, victims come to our shelter with absolutely nothing during the middle of the night. Our goal is to provide **A Safe Place for A New Beginning** by helping victims regain their strength and independence. With help from generous people like you, we provide shelter, clothing, food, childcare, help finding a job or getting necessary job training, education, counseling and so much more.

But, our tremendous needs have outgrown our current shelter. We are currently unable to provide the kind of care these victims so desperately need due to space and service constraints. We must expand.

Won't you consider helping these victims?

While any gift of any size is appreciated, your gift to sponsor a bedroom, an advocate's office or an efficiency apartment will allow us to serve families who have found themselves in dangerous, devastating situations.

You will be making a difference in the lives of victims of domestic violence by giving to the new **Sacred Heart Family Safe Shelter**.

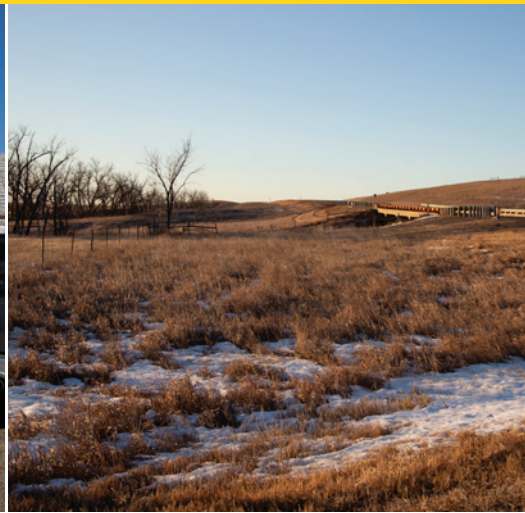


God bless,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory Fisher".

Gregory Fisher
SHC Executive Director

Glimpse into Reservation Life



“ I found out he was being friends with the bartender, and that’s the lady he killed. He stabbed her 72 times ... It could have been me. ”

— Karen*, victim

**Name has been changed to protect victim's privacy.*



Dear Friends,

Since 1982 the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of South Dakota has had an outreach program on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in northern South Dakota for victims of domestic violence. The needs of Native American families facing violent situations have outgrown what our existing shelter can provide. It is under-sized and doesn't allow us to provide the private, confidential care needed for the healing process to begin for victims and their families.

During the last year, 138 victims sought refuge at the shelter while 377 victims were provided counseling or other assistance including transportation, childcare and job training. The average stay at the shelter is a month.

Your generous help is needed to replace the existing facility and allow us to serve 10 families at a time instead of four in a safer, home-like environment.

For many years, we have been blessed with the support of so many in order to carry out the mission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart through St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, SD, the Sacred Heart Center in Eagle Butte, SD, and parishes in the communities of Lower Brule and Fort Thompson, SD.

Together, with your faithful support we can build the new **Sacred Heart Family Safe Shelter** and help Native American families facing horrible circumstances as they flee violent situations.

You can help give Native American families better lives.

St. Joseph's Indian School
Major Gifts Services
PO Box 100, Chamberlain, SD 57325
(605) 234-3383 • 1-800-584-9200
geri.beck@stjo.org



God bless,

Fr. J. Anthony Kluckman, SCJ
Chaplain, St. Joseph's Indian School
and Member of the Board of Directors
of the Sacred Heart Center



“ Your help is needed now as we expand our services for domestic violence victims. They are in desperate need as they risk everything for a chance of a safe brighter future for themselves and their children. ”



– Mike Tyrell, President of St. Joseph's Indian School and Member of the Board of Directors of the Sacred Heart Center



St. Joseph's Indian School

We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

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