

# Domestic Violence End The Silence

## Local beacon of hope appoints new Director

**We all have** things to be proud of, and things we're ashamed of. As a man, I am ashamed that one in three women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. That, in 2014, one hundred and thirty two women were murdered in Texas by an intimate partner. That 185,817 incidents of domestic violence were reported, with 468 of them reported by Henderson County law enforcement agencies.

But I am also proud to live in a community where there are people tackling domestic abuse head on. We are lucky to have the Family Peace Project (FPP) in Henderson County.

The FPP is one of those beacons of hope for victims seeking guidance. The organization provides shelter, assistance navigating the legal system, counseling, peer support, classes, accompaniment to appointments and court hearings, Crime Victim's Compensation assistance, a 24 hour hotline, sexual assault services, assistance with emergency clothing and household items, and much more.

FPP staff are specially trained to assist victims and help propel them into a bright future that is healthy and free from violence. The majority of staff have their own stories of triumph and their journeys are a testimony to what life can be without the shadow of physical and sexual abuse.

I want you to sit back, close your eyes, and take a deep breath. What if you or someone you love was one of those statistics? Where would you go? How would you break free and keep their or your family safe? How does one overcome the vast array

by James Robertson

of obstacles that constantly pop up in the struggle to start over?

You might be thinking that's a lot of questions. Imagine these questions and the dozens more that flood through the mind of a domestic violence victim regularly. Many victims are so isolated from friends and family that they often aren't aware of the resources and help that is available to them right here in East Texas. This keeps victims trapped in the throes of abuse.

The FPP's newly appointed Director Mary Farmer is one of those testimonies. In October of 2015 she shared her experience in a Good Housekeeping article. In that article Mary told readers how she fled her ex-husbands abuse over and over.

One time she fled to her sister-in-law's home and hid in a bedroom closet as he arrived, crying to his sister about being worried about her because he didn't know where she was. Just days before however, he had smothered her with a pillow until she saw spots.

She felt bad for him and she returned home. From there, the abuse would gradually intensify over 15 years during which she would be gagged, tied up, beaten, stripped, chased with a car, held at gunpoint; threatened with knives.

It may seem unfathomable to some that anyone would return to such an environment but it takes an average survivor at least five attempts to escape for good because of the influence an abuser has on their victim. Mary wasn't finally be able to escape

her hell until her eighth attempt at the age of 33. Mary's story is much more lengthy and horrifying than we can discuss here. You can read the entire story at Good Housekeeping here: <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/inspirational-stories/a18716/escaping-domestic-abuse/>

On October 15 the FPP will be hosting a new fundraiser event called the Annual Designer Purple Purse Bingo at the Athens Country Club from 10am-2pm. Individual tickets for the event are \$40 which includes lunch and 3 bingo cards. A reserved table for 8 can be purchased for just \$475, which includes a luncheon, 3 bingo cards per person and one bottle of wine for the table.

To become a sponsor of the Purple Purse Bingo event, purchase tickets, or get more information please contact the Family Peace Project office at 903-677-9177.

There will also be door prizes, local vendors on site, purse models, entertainment during lunch, and great information about how to stop family violence.

In conjunction with this event the FPP has been selected by the Allstate Foundation to be a part of their on-going efforts to end domestic violence. The Allstate Foundation Purple Purse Challenge is a fundraising competition where charities benefiting domestic violence survivors compete to raise the most money, with the top teams winning grand prize cash donations from the Allstate Foundation.

This campaign launched on Wednesday, September 28, 2016 and runs through Tuesday, October 25 at 2pm ET. The top five organizations will win a grand prize and there will also be a bonus challenge each week where charities can win extra cash for their cause.

As you can see, 2016 has been a year of tremendous change for the FPP. But one thing remains the same, the mission of assisting those who feel trapped in the darkness of domestic violence. The Family Peace Project is an amazing resource that not every county has. It's mission is one we should be proud to stand behind.



MARY FARMER

*October 15th, 2016*  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

FAMILY PEACE PROJECT  
**DESIGNER  
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[www.FamilyPeaceProject.org](http://www.FamilyPeaceProject.org)



OCTOBER 2016

