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WE'RE CONNECTED

The Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund is a component fund of The Greater St. Louis Community Foundation and a member of the Women's Collective Giving Grantmakers Network, a growing, nationwide group of more than 30 organizations similar to our Fund and with more than 6,000 members altogether.

Why We Give - Lydia's House



Catch the Spirit

SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS
WOMEN'S FUNDSM

Celebrating Ten Years of Giving 2016

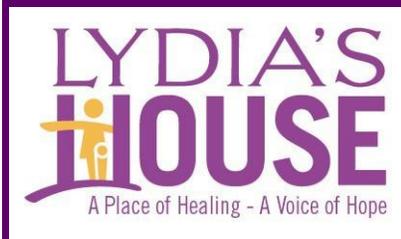


Why We Give - Grantee Profiles

Because giving is at the very heart of Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund, we felt it was important to share stories about those who are impacted most by the generosity of our members.

Because October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we selected a second grantee who helps survivors of domestic violence. We hope you enjoy the piece, and are inspired by these real life impact stories.

A Time to Heal



Lydia's House
A 2016 SOS Grantee

When he ran into the house for the first time, his eyes lit up when he saw the toaster on the counter.

"Mom," the little boy said quietly, "we can finally have toast again."

Most of us take toast for breakfast for granted.

But if we couldn't have it, if violence in our home prevented us from having the most basic things that make our days livable and enjoyable, we too might covet this simple luxury.

"When a family comes out of domestic violence you just don't know the whole situation, and you don't know how much has been taken away," said Karen Kirk, executive director of Lydia's House. "When the women and children first step into the home that we provide them sometimes the most special words come from the children. **When you see how important the tiny little things like that are to these children because the things have been taken away for so long, it's heart-breaking some days.**"

The staff and donors of Lydia's House work every day to provide those little things, and a safe, confidentially-located home to women and children who are domestic violence survivors.

The nonprofit, a 2016 Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund grantee, provides 45 women and up to 80 children with transitional housing for up to two years.

While shelters can give domestic violence survivors immediate, safe placement, transitional housing gives the women and children more time to regroup and get back on their feet in a safe environment.

Since its founding in 1995, **Lydia's House has served more than 850 women and children**, Kirk said.

Domestic violence victims are referred to Lydia's House by shelters, hospitals or law enforcement. Each client is assigned a Lydia's House women's advocate who stays with them throughout their two year-stay and helps them connect with resources such as employment, education, food pantries, clothing and childcare.

"Any resource a woman or a child needs that has been a victim, we can get them to that resource," Kirk said.

The \$15,000 grant from SOS will be used for transitional housing and these types of support services for the women and children, Kirk said.

For a woman who has spent so many nights awake because she is afraid for herself or her children, those "safe bed nights," are priceless.

"When I go home at night, I know that there are women and children who are able to sleep safely through the night - that they haven't been interrupted by violence in the household," Kirk said. "When you think about it as a mother, your child needs a good night's sleep to be able to learn and grow at school the next day."





1 IN 4 WOMEN WILL EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME.
Lydia's House provides 45 fully furnished apartments where our families can find refuge, safety and support.

Lydia's House staff also works to help break the cycle of abuse. For those survivors who have long suffered in abusive situations, this means learning about healthy relationships

"Many people who live with domestic violence don't know what a healthy relationship is," Kirk said. "By educating them, we're breaking that cycle of violence not just for the woman but also for their children."

When the women and their children leave Lydia's House, they can receive follow-up services for up to one year.

"The most important thing for women and individuals who are victims of domestic violence is the need to recognize the red

flags that tell you something's wrong in a relationship and not ignore those," Kirk said.

Lydia's House staff conducts community events to spread awareness of domestic violence and educate women about the signs. They place info cards in restrooms and distribute them to law enforcement. The cards display the National Domestic Violence Hotline - **1- 800-799-SAFE**.

"The scary thing about domestic violence is that **one in four women** will be affected by it in their lifetime but it's almost the most under-reported crime," Kirk said. "It covers all ethnicities, all income levels."

Written by Bethany Prange of 618 Creative for Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund.