

December 26, 2012



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Marla R. Johnson**<http://www.sanmarcosrecord.com>**

— Come with me – we’re going to talk to a few of the staff and volunteers at the Hays-Caldwell Women’s Center who are working with the 70-or-so victims we’ll see today. Let’s see what they are doing.

We’ll start off at Roxanne’s House, our children’s advocacy center, where we see Stephanie, our children’s counselor. Stephanie is preparing for a “play therapy” session with an eight-year-old boy we’ll call Johnny. Johnny was sexually abused by his stepfather for about two years before he told anyone about it. He was too scared of what might happen...

Let’s walk over to our Counseling and Resource Center and talk to Whitney.

Whitney is between appointments right now and is getting ready to see a woman we’ll call Soledad. Soledad was sexually assaulted by her neighbor a few weeks ago...

Our last stop is the McCoy Family shelter which is packed to the brim today with 44 victims of abuse, including 31 children. The single women are all rooming together and families have filled up the remaining rooms. It’s been like this lately – there just never seems to be enough room.

We’ll talk to one of our interns, Jacqui, who is helping a woman we’ll call Beth fill out the paperwork for a protective order. Beth has a broken arm after her husband hit her with a baseball bat about a week ago. She is worried about her dog that she left behind when the police came. She hasn’t had a chance to go back and get him. She is hoping he is okay...

We are thankful to have updated facilities to serve the more than 1,500 local victims who come to us each year.

We’re thankful to have good support from our community for people like Johnny, Soledad, and Beth.

We’re fortunate to have volunteers who come and help us stretch our resources and dedicated staff members who step up day after day to meet the challenge.

And we are thankful the thousands of local people who act upon their concern for victims by partnering with HCWC in stopping violence.

There is lots of good work going on here, but we are barely making it – that is the honest truth. I

reached a milestone this year – 20 years as executive director here at HCWC. I can sincerely tell you that it has never been more challenging with growing demand and shrinking government resources.

Please consider a generous gift this year to help local victims of abuse (www.hcwc.org or P.O. Box 234, San Marcos, TX 78667).

Yes, we are all having to dig a little deeper and try a little harder to help more and more people who are struggling, but every day we truly make a difference in people's lives.

What a privilege to know that our efforts are changing the lives of people in our community. Your support is critical. Please join with us again and may you and your loved ones have a wonderful holiday season.

Marla R. Johnson is executive director of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center (HCWC).

The Hays-Caldwell Women's Center has a 35-year history of serving women, men and children in Hays and Caldwell counties who are victims of abuse including family violence, sexual assault and child abuse. All HCWC services are free and confidential.

For more information, visit www.hcwc.org (<http://www.hcwc.org>) or call 396-HELP.

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