

# WORDS FROM IRIS

*People within the Iris Service Area generously respond to our needs.*



Every day, people support Iris by providing funds, donations and spirited morale boosts - all needed to continue the struggle against domestic violence and to provide assistance for all victims - men,

## Adopt-A-Room Program Ongoing for 2018

Transform a Room - Transform a Life



January, 2018 saw Iris kick off its 4th Adopt-A-Room program for the Iris safe house shelter. The last Adopt-A-Room program was held in 2015-16 and resulted in several rooms of the safe house being renovated and refurbished.

However, water damage from the August 2016 flood and "old age" have combined to leave several of the residential rooms needing an upgrade. As a result, Iris is kicking off 2018 with its Adopt-A-Room program to raise funds specifically designated to renovate rooms needing repairs in the shelter.

**Merrill Lynch** employees kicked off the Adopt-A-Room program by adopting two rooms through funds raised by their local employees. Merrill Lynch employees will be descending upon Iris on March 24 to rehab, renovate and decorate the two rooms for survivors.





### **Iris names Jane Schoen Director of Development**

Jane Schoen has been named Director of Development by Iris Domestic Violence Center and is being called upon to help establish and implement long term vision for Iris. In her new role, she will work to build relationships for Iris within the community and implement a clear fundraising strategy for Iris.

Specifically, she will oversee and manage Iris volunteer and donor relationships, individual and corporate giving, fundraising and special program events. Jane will also be working with the Development Committee of the Board of Directors on its annual fundraising event. Jane joined Iris in June 2017 as operations manager and helped manage the Christmas Adopt A Family program a huge success due to the work of Iris and the generosity of the community.

Jane has lived in Baton Rouge for over 30 years and is the proud mother of three sons, Brad, Hunter and Drew.

Also answering the call is the **United Methodist Church** by funding the purchase of new chest of drawers for several survivor rooms and replacing damaged furniture no longer usable.

The ladies of **Delta Sigma Theta**, longtime supporters of Iris, have once again adopted the family room solarium in the shelter for the cause. Delta Sigma Theta members will be working their magic in the solarium on Friday, March 23 in conjunction with their national meeting held in Baton Rouge that weekend. The solarium is a busy room at Iris where families gather to watch television and socialize. The Deltas will be redecorating the solarium as they have done on several previous occasions.



**If you want to help out Iris and the survivors that we serve, consider adopting a room. For information on the Adopt-A-Room program or to make a contribution, please contact Director of Development Jane Schoen at 389-3002 or email her at [jschoen@stopdv.org](mailto:jschoen@stopdv.org).**





## Iris welcomes new Directors to Board - elects 2018 officers

The new year brought new faces to the Iris Board of Directors with the selection of **Ericka Queen, Veronica Mark and Christen Clark** to the board. Ericka is employed with Trace Security as a customer service manager. Veronica is an assistant district attorney with the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's office. Christen is a real estate agent-buyer specialist with Keller Williams Red Stick Partners. The selection of these new members to the Board of Directors brought the total number of board members to 16.

In 2017, Iris welcomed four new board members: **Seth Irby**, a business consultant with Emergent Method in Baton Rouge; **Patti Freeman**, a domestic violence unit supervisor with the EBR Parish Sheriff's office; **Lt. Shona Stokes**, a police lieutenant with the domestic violence unit of the Baton Rouge Police Department; and, **Susan Karimiha**, a research assistant at LSU.

The new year also brought about a new slate of officers for Iris. **Jude Melville**, President and CEO of Business First Bank, was elected president of the Board while **Heather Folkes-Givens**, Human Resources Manager at Guarantee Restoration, was named Vice-President. Elected Treasurer was **Tommy Pittenger**, in charge of New Client Acquisitions for Malham Leverage Group while **Patti Freeman** with the Ascension Parish Sheriff's office will serve as secretary of the board.

In January, the Iris Board of Directors engaged in the first of a series of long term strategic planning discussions designed to better translate its mission and values into actions with measurable goals, strategies, initiatives and programs. The February meeting of the Board was held at the Iris safe house where board members toured the the facility, observed operations and met with Iris staff members.

Two more planning and training sessions are scheduled for the board in the next 60 days designed to address basic board responsibilities, staff/board role differences, board-agency communications and further develop long range strategic planning goals.

Outgoing Board President **Melanie Fields**, chief prosecutor for domestic violence cases with the district attorney's office, was thanked for her years of service and leadership to Iris.



## Iris Partner Spotlight - Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank



**The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank** was organized in 1984 to help address a poor economy in Baton Rouge as an outgrowth of Urban Ministries Coalition. The downtown churches and social relief agencies, all members of the Coalition, had noticed three times the usual number of people coming to them seeking assistance. From that humble beginning, when the Baton Rouge Food Bank began distributing food from the parking lot of Victoria Baptist Church, it has grown larger and moved to a small house, to a warehouse, to an even bigger warehouse and finally, to their current home at Fraenkel Center.

As a member agency with the GBR Food Bank, Iris relies upon the Food Bank to assist in its mission of serving survivors of domestic abuse and their families. At Iris, we provide 3 meals a day - every day - to resident survivors at the safe house. That's a lot of food to procure, store, prepare and serve. In 2017, Iris served approximately total of xxxxx meals for the year. Without the assistance and cooperation of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, delivering meat, produce, canned goods and other food items to the shelter, survivors and their children would go to bed hungry and the mission of Iris to provide emotional support at this difficult time in their lives would be that much more difficult.

The job of serving all those meals has been made easier with Iris team member, **Patricia Dunn**, our new Food Services Manager. Ms. Dunn, was a volunteer at Iris, whose work ethic and boundless positive energy were so impressive, she was offered the position of Food Services manager when she demonstrated she knew her way around the kitchen.

With assistance from Gloria Anderson and the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, Iris has implemented a new cross training regime for all employees which includes the development of new operating procedures for the kitchen and food service area. Based on best practices, the procedures address procurement, storage, preparation and disposal of food items at the shelter, all in accord with federal and state food safety regulations.

Iris relies upon the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and appreciates their recognition of the work of Iris and commitment to our mission. The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is a great community asset and Iris appreciates their partnership.



**Patricia Dunn and Jan Schoen with Iris tour the GBRFB food warehouse.**





## Monica Alfred named Community Outreach Education Director (COED) at Iris

Monica Alfred, a four year employee at Iris, was named Community Outreach and Education Director and tasked with expanding and presenting much needed information about domestic violence and explaining the various resources available to its victims. Executive Director John J. Price and Ms. Alfred are currently developing new presentations and domestic violence training sessions on several topics about the nature of domestic abuse and relationship violence in the hope of preventing domestic violence rather than simply serving its survivors. These trainings and presentations are now being scheduled by individuals, groups, employers, civic associations, churches and schools in an effort to educate the public about domestic abuse and how we should confront it before it occurs and claims another victim.

In a presentation to the freshman and sophomore class at Southern University, the focus was on healthy dating relationships and how to spot the warning signs of an abuser or an abusive relationship. Social workers at Woman's Hospital learned of their role as health care providers in recognizing signs of abuse and offering referral services to those needing assistance. In April, a training has been scheduled at Capital Area Human Services. This May, with the roll out of the new Iris website, individuals will be able to select from a topic menu and schedule a presentation or training directly from the website.



Over the years, Monica has assisted countless survivors of domestic abuse working as both a legal advocate and the manager of non-residential services. **Contact Monica to schedule a presentation or training at (225) 389-3002 or emailing [malfred@stopdv.org](mailto:malfred@stopdv.org).**

## EBR sees record number of deaths in 2017 from domestic abuse and relationship violence

In 2017, domestic violence claimed the lives of 14 people and led to more than 5,000 arrests in East Baton Rouge Parish according to District Attorney Hillar Moore. It's a problem he says should be preventable.

The number of deadly incidents in the parish doubled between 2016 and 2017, accounting for 19 percent of all homicides in 2017, a year that already held the record for the most murders in the parish.



Many domestic violence cases involve an escalation of prior incidents, the report notes. In at least 10 of the 14 fatal incidents last year, there were previous reports of domestic violence for the people involved. In one case which resulted in a death, the abuser had three previous arrests for domestic abuse battery between 2014 and 2016.

Other law enforcement agencies also reported grim news. The Baton Rouge Police Department made approximately 4,000 arrests and the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office made approximately 1,000 arrests in domestic violence cases last year. Both agencies have detectives who work exclusively on domestic and dating violence incidents, Moore said.

## Deven Hampton - Local Youth Awarded Eagle Scout for Iris Project - Donation Bins



Deven Hampton was awarded his Eagle Scout merit, the highest advancement rank in Scouting, after fulfilling the necessary requirements in leadership, service, and outdoor skills.

Deven selected Iris for his project and originally presented a project calling for a canned food drive. After meeting with Executive Director John Price, the project dramatically changed to planning, building and construction of an Iris donation bin, a far more challenging project. Deven met the challenge - and then some - by constructing two bins which he then delivered to Iris for permanent placement in the community.

Executive Director John J. Price attended the ceremony where Deven received his honor and Iris is currently looking for placement locations for the donation bins. Job Well Done Deven!



## Iris names Leslie Malveaux as Director of Non-Residential Services.



Leslie Malveaux, Sr. Case Manager, has been named the Director of Non-Residential Services for Iris. Leslie is a graduate of Child Southern University in Child Development and studied counseling in graduate school with Walden University. She has been a nationally certified advocate since April, 2016 following her graduation and has been with Iris for over 2 years. Leslie will bring her dedication and love of service to this position and we know she'll do great things for Iris and the survivors that she serves. Congrats Leslie.



## Iris to expand on Domestic Abuse Prevention in 2018

In response to the alarming increases reported with domestic violence in 2017, Iris will initiate a new focus and strategy aimed on prevention of domestic violence. Iris will continue to respond to the needs of victims who have already experienced domestic violence providing needed services as we have done for 37 years.

However, in 2018, we also hope to initiate a new primary prevention strategy designed to stop domestic violence **before it starts – before individuals ever become victims of perpetrators.** To do so, we intend to address the root cause and condition that make domestic violence possible. Once we view domestic and relationship violence as a public health issue, and treat it as such, we are called upon to collaborate with others from diverse sectors including health, education, social services, justice, policy and the private sector.

For Iris, we hope to provide relevant information to the public so that it may fully understand the problem, the danger and the impact of domestic abuse and relationship violence. Identifying the “who”, “what”, “when”, “where” and “how” of domestic abuse, is critical to preventing it.

Through an ambitious and expanded public information presentation and training schedule, Iris will provide factual information to identify both the “risk” and “protective” factors that determine what either serves to protect people or puts them at risk for experiencing such violence in a relationship. Identifying both these “risk” factors and “protective” factors is a critical to preventing individuals from placing themselves in danger of being abused.

### THE WORK OF IRIS IN 2017

Crisis Hotline Calls Answered	4,395					
Number of Survivors Residential	717					
Total Shelter Nights Provided	16,002					
Unmet Needs for Services	148					
Individual Supportive Counseling/Advocacy	4,664					
Group Supportive Counseling/Advocacy	161					
Protective Orders Issued (Legal Services)	2,231					
	Women	Men	Children	Youth	Not Specified	Total
Non Shelter Services	2,292	356	127	1	27	2,803
Shelter Services	370	4	325	18	0	717