

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Abbott House,

Our namesake (Abbott) comes from Grace Abbott who said, "If I offer you a long hard struggle, I can also promise you great rewards."

Working at Abbott House can be a difficult task. It is difficult for our cooks who alternate holidays so they can cook meals for the girls. It is difficult for the supervisors who regularly stay one, two or even three hours after their shift to talk with a girl who is afraid to go to sleep as memories of the past torment her. It is difficult for the maintenance supervisor who cooks, cleans and comes in on Sunday when the heating system malfunctions. It is difficult for the program director who takes phone calls all hours of the day and night.



Eric Klooz

Why do they do it? Why would someone work more hours for less pay and virtually no recognition? They do it because they care, because they know if they don't do "whatever it takes," no one will.

Each week, there is a supervisory staff meeting that is entitled "Good Enough is not Good Enough." This simple phrase sets the tone for each of us. Every girl that walks through our door will have something difficult to work through. During that period, she will only make it through her troubling times if someone is there with her. We must assist her to make permanent adjustments to her path in life. If we don't, she may never make them.

As the executive director of Abbott House, I am very proud of what this agency accomplishes. However, I also have my difficult tasks. My joy is realized in the girls and the amazing stories that I get to be a part of. My charge is ensuring that we continue to do whatever it takes to help our girls succeed.

Doing what it takes for children is not always doing what is paid for. As you may have heard, there have been many changes in funding for social programs. When programs like Abbott House began in the early 1900s, they were funded totally by the people. Over the years, the government has assisted by providing the majority of funding. Presently, that funding is shrinking.

We have planned for this shrinking funding by establishing a foundation that helps support our efforts each year. As a valued friend of Abbott House, your continued support is vital for our continued programming and pursuit of excellence. When you choose to support our work, you will become a participant in our struggle and reap the great rewards of seeing young lives changed forever.

Sincerely,

Eric Klooz, Executive Director

Accreditation Raises Abbott House Service Level (continued from cover)

"As a well-established, long-standing agency, it is always good to have a measuring stick," Klooz said. "This process forces organizations to continue to move forward in the struggle to provide whatever it takes to provide premier services for children and families."

Completing the process of becoming accredited was the culmination of months of work by the staff of Abbott House. It was also a requirement to continue to receive federal funding to serve children in South Dakota.

Abbott House Girls Don't Escape Child Abuse

Thousands upon thousands of children are abused or neglected each year. They are defenseless against those who hurt them.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than 1,400 children died as a result of abuse in 2004 – or more than two out of every 100,000 children in the United States.

Identifying a need to do something to protect innocent children, Congress passed the first federal child protection legislation, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), in 1974.

While the legislation has been amended numerous times over the past 30 years, most recently in 2003 by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act, the purpose of the original legislation remains intact. Today, the Children's Bureau is the federal agency charged with supporting states, tribes and communities to provide the programs that protect children.

In the early 1980s, Congress made a further commitment to identifying and implementing solutions to child abuse.

Recognizing the alarming rate at which children were abused and neglected and the need for innovative programs to prevent child abuse, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives resolved that the week of June 6-12, 1982, would be designated as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Week. President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation calling upon government agencies and the public to observe the week with programs, ceremonies and activities.

The following year, April was designated as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since then, child abuse and

neglect awareness activities have been promoted across the country during April each year.

A Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse had its early beginnings as a Virginia grandmother's tribute to her grandson who died as a result of abuse. In 1989, she tied a blue ribbon

to the antenna of her car as a way to remember him and to alert the community to the tragedy of child abuse. In a short time, the campaign expanded across the country, and many people wear blue ribbons each April in memory and honor of those who have died as a result of child abuse.

Having first-hand knowledge of how abuse can affect one's life, the girls at Abbott House help out every year in the community to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month. By raising awareness, the girls are helping themselves and others cope with abuse, and hopefully people will start taking notice of this very important month which impacts most of the girls here at Abbott House.

Much of this information came from the Child Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov.



An Abbott House resident places a blue ribbon on the school to commemorate April as Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Lepke Embraces Abbott House Development Role

Greetings from the Abbott House Development Office! My name is Allen Lepke, and I am the new Development Director, taking over a position and role that has been vacant for seven years.



Allen Lepke

When I accepted this position, with it came a complete career change for me. I view this new opportunity as a challenge, but one that has such a great cause.

Abbott House is a place where girls get another chance to turn the abuse and victimization of their past into experiences they live with, but that do not overwhelm them. Abbott House also provides girls with a second chance at youth – and becomes a place of hope and recovery for them and their families.



Around the House



Girls Learn Life Lessons and Have Lots of Fun at Abbott House

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "It is a happy talent to know how to play."

Abbott House is a place of learning and healing. From the outside it could appear that all of our time is spent in educational groups and schooling. Education is so important, but it is much more than books and classes. It is also about learning healthy and productive ways to have FUN!

Each year, staff from the agency plan, organize and provide experiences for the girls that they will remember for the rest of their lives. Every day at Abbott House is filled with structured time. However, there are also times to relax and enjoy some moments with each other.

One such time occurs each summer as the House gears up for Summer Games. During this two-day event, girls will choose to participate in many different activities. Foot races, long jumping and softball throws are common. Also included are indoor thinking games. By the end of this time, all of the girls have participated, and, in the process, learned that having some fun is an important time for each of them.



Another yearly tradition comes during Halloween. Most people can remember putting on their mask or dressing



up as their favorite superhero, witch or even princess. That is no different for the girls of Abbott House. During the past year, the education director threw a Halloween party to remember in our gymnasium. One of the big hits was the mummy contest where the girls paired up in teams to see who could be the best mummy.

Each year, on numerous occasions, a group of volunteers from a local church plan activities for the girls. If you stop in, you will find the girls crocheting, or learning to sew or doing some sort of art. This activity is extra special because the girls get to have some interaction with others who are giving of themselves and their time. This selfless service is always sure to bring a smile.



Last but definitely not least is Christmas. Of course, the year would not be complete without a visit from good ole Santa. Each year, Santa always finds his way back to Abbott House to spend some time handing out Christmas presents to each of the girls. As the girls wait for Santa to appear, you will hear the Christmas Carols and smell the hot apple cider.



There are many other activities that we work hard to make a part of our education system. On many different occasions, a break in the serious structured programming is just what a young girl needs to further build her relationship with staff members as well as the other girls. It is also the fond memory that may help her develop her own traditions when she graduates and leaves our House.

Memorials, Honorariums and Gifts in Kind August 6, 2006 to April 6, 2007

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Delta Dental of South Dakota
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Dr. & Mrs. William Scheig
Violet Biever's Granddaughter
Mrs. Violet Biever
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Buche
Mr. Evan Tessier
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Tressa Schmidt
United Congregational Church of Christ of Mitchell
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Wanderer's Sunday School Class, First United Methodist Church of Mitchell
William Quinn
Women of Grace Reformed Church of Corsica



abbott
House

Abbott House
P.O. Box 700
Mitchell, SD 57301-0700

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SAVE THE DATE! Celebrate the past and future of Abbott House on August 14th when we host a Business After Hours with the Mitchell Area Chamber of Commerce. The event will honor former Executive Director Ernie Peters, who led Abbott House successfully for 31 years until his death in 2004. Please check back for more details as the date draws near.

Visit www.abbotthouse.org to make your online donation.

Remember Abbott House in Your Estate Planning

There are many ways to remember Abbott House in your estate plan, only a few of which involve any expense or professional fees to you as donor.

You may wish to consider one of the following options:

- Amend an existing insurance policy to add Abbott House as an additional beneficiary, or simply purchase a new one to benefit the girls.
- Visit your personnel office and ask to amend your group life insurance policy or retirement plan to add Abbott House as one of your beneficiaries; or add Abbott House as a recipient if another person precedes you in death.
- Instruct your lawyer to prepare a simple, inexpensive codicil to your existing will, creating a bequest for Abbott House.
- Deed your home to Abbott House and continue to live in it. Your tax savings from the gift may cover the legal costs.
- Leave written or verbal instructions for your surviving spouse to include Abbott House when redrawing his or her will (which will be necessary in any case).
- If you have a sizable estate, let us show you how to create a trust which will pay an annual income to Abbott House for a period of years prior to distributing the principal to your children or grandchildren. The income we receive will create a charitable estate tax deduction.

This technique may allow you to make a substantial gift at a cost as low as five cents on the dollar, and avoid taxes which

might otherwise claim as much as 60 percent of your estate.

There are many ways to benefit Abbott House through planned gifts, some of which will provide you with positive benefits during your lifetime.

If you place Abbott House near the top of your charitable priorities, we hope you will, at a minimum, consider naming us as a contingent beneficiary of your will, insurance and retirement programs.

By remembering Abbott House, we will be able to continue to help emotionally and behaviorally disturbed adolescent girls. If you would like additional information, please complete and return the enclosed reply envelope. Please contact Allen at 605-996-2486 ext.120 or alepke@abbotthousesd.org for more information.

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Spring 2007

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Abbott House is accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services

Abbott House is licensed by the South Dakota Department of Social Services

Abbott House is approved by the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs

Abbott House is a Member of the National Fellowship of Child Care Executives and the American Association of Children's Residential Centers



SUNBEAMS

A Publication of Abbott House

Accreditation Raises Abbott House Service Level

Abbott House has once again completed work to secure accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) for the next four years – the maximum number the Accreditation is awarded. This paves the way for the agency to move to the next level to serve girls and families in South Dakota.

“This is a significant milestone in our agency journey as we strategically move forward to express our mission of providing premier services to girls and families,” Abbott House Executive Director Eric Klooz said. “Full accreditation is affirmation of the high-quality services we provide, the integrity of our system processes and assessment and the confidence and enthusiasm with which we carry out our mission.”

It's also indicative of the strong and consistent support Abbott House receives from partners in the community, region and throughout the state. But getting the stamp of approval from the Council on Accreditation is no simple task.

The agency engaged in a year-long process of assessing current practices, reviewing and researching best practices and then implementing plans for change in any areas that were needed. This process assessed all areas of operation, including governance, financial management, ethical practice, risk management, safety, quality control, residential treatment and foster care services.

The evaluation team found evidence to support all criteria and standards as required by the



Going through the accreditation process ensures the best service and care for Abbott Houses' residents.

council and documented this evidence in Abbott House's Self-Study Report that was submitted in January 2007. During the three-day site visit, the team leader, an executive director of over 30 years, noted the following: “Abbott House is the epitome of what residential treatment should be.”

Abbott House has long been known in South Dakota as a small program that is very good at what it does. Becoming accredited was a logical step for the agency and enhances the organization.

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