



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Pamela Helming

Senator Helming and Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes Mark Opening of 'Home of Roses,' the First Domestic Violence Shelter serving Ontario, Seneca and Yates Counties

PAMELA HELMING | October 3, 2023

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PRESS RELEASE

— *from* —

NYS SENATOR PAM HELMING

Representing the 54th District

At the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, State Senator Pam Helming and Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes announce the opening of **Home of Roses**, the first domestic violence shelter serving Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties.

Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties were previously three of only six counties in New York State without a domestic violence shelter. The shelter is located in Seneca County.

Senator Helming secured a \$300,000 New York State grant for the shelter which was also supported by over \$650,000 in donations from community members and businesses.

Senator Helming said, “This shelter was borne from a massive community effort—from the advocacy of victims’ family members to local law enforcement to business and community partners, and of course, Safe Harbors. People need a safe place they can go to protect themselves and their children and begin to rebuild their lives. Having this resource locally means victims don’t have to leave their community, their job, or their family. They get the help they need, right here. It was an honor to be a part of this project that is already making a difference and bringing needed services to previously unserved areas of our region.”

Marisa Przepiora, Executive Director, Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes said, “It takes so much courage for victims of domestic violence to leave their abuser and start over. It’s terrifying for them on so many levels. The hurdles they are forced to jump through and challenges that they face are tremendous. Having a safe place to lay their head should not be one of those challenges. So many people were involved with bringing this project from dream to reality. Our sincerest thanks to Senator Helming for securing this \$300,000 DASNY grant; to Monica Bertino Wooden, for her \$500,000 private donation; to our community fundraising committee—Kipp Goodman, Kaitlyn Laskoski, Stuart Peenstra, Lora Bennett, Teresa Harris and Tanya Tyler—for doing the boots-on-the-ground work to bring our cause to the public and secure their support; to the Sheriffs and Police Chiefs in each of our three counties for offering their endorsement; to Joe Mull and John Wright for donating their time and expertise to what turned into a four-year project through a pandemic, and for being there every single time we call for help; and to each and every other member of our community who believes in our mission and donated their time or their money to help us reach our goal. If any of these pieces had been missing, we would not be here today.”

Monica Bertino Wooden, community member and donor said, “Every community must have a safe home to protect and support those facing violence and abuse. I’m grateful to help make Home of Roses a reality for the Finger Lakes region.”

Rachel Gregory, Deputy Director of Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes, who has overseen shelter program development said, “I don’t think anyone can truly understand the impact of this shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. Their look of sheer gratitude once they have settled in is unmatched. I have seen people be grateful for things in my life, but nothing like this. It’s a look that only those who have been living in fear for years can express once they are free. This space is a path to hopes and dreams finally becoming a reality.”

John Cleere, Seneca County Undersheriff and Chair, Safe Harbors Board of Directors said, “A safe dwelling offering refuge for victims of domestic violence has long been an unfulfilled necessity for the three-county area serviced by Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes. Having a residence for victims conducive to their safety and well-being has been a local dream shared by social workers and law enforcement alike. Now, with the help of our community, Safe Harbors employees, our partners, and legislators like Senator Pam Helming, that dream has finally become a reality. Senator Helming was involved with the quest to create this necessary resource from the beginning of its inception. The public support that followed for this project was incredible. Senator Helming followed through with securing a large State grant. Fundraising events received fantastic support from our community members. Monica Bertino Wooden, originally from Seneca County, surprised us all with a very generous donation. We are so appreciative for all the support we have received for this vital resource. To all who have been involved with this worthy venture, we are filled with gratitude for your past, present and future support.”

Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes provides confidential services at no charge for individuals, children, and families who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking in Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties. For more information, visit www.shflny.org.

Hotline Numbers

- Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-247-7273
- New York State Domestic Violence 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-942-6906
- National Domestic Violence 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

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