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Prescott shelter celebrates one special year



By Lisa
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Kathryn Bulman felt hesitant when she first came to the Prescott Area Women's Shelter.

"I was scared at first, but after a while I loved it," Bulman said. "They helped me get started on my GED and find work."

Bulman came to the shelter with her 3 1/2-year-old son, Avontae, after having complications living with family and not having anyone else to rely on in the area.

Bulman stayed at the shelter for three months, while she worked on her goals of completing her GED, finding work and eventually going to college to become a nurse.

"They told me about all the resources in the area, which really helped," Bulman said.

Bulman and her son recently moved into an apartment with another shelter graduate and her two young daughters.

Successes like Bulman and the other 53 women who have left homelessness behind for stable living situations make their work worthwhile, said Erika Stone, program outreach coordinator for the Prescott Area Women's Shelter.

Since its opening one year ago this month, on Feb. 2, 2009, the shelter at 336 Rush St. in Prescott has helped 133 women and 12 children. The Prescott Area Women's Shelter remains the only shelter in Prescott that provides emergency services to homeless women and their children, Stone said.

"In the past year, we've seen people from all walks of life," Stone said. "Women who've lost their homes through foreclosure, women who have lost their jobs and women who need to get out of tough situations."

The shelter, with 12 beds for adults and a few beds for children, opens each day from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. the next morning. Each day, seven to 10 women eat dinner at the shelter, take showers, receive clothing and hygiene products and work with a case manager on their goals to live independently and connect with resources in the community to accomplish that.

"We provide much more than a bed and a hot meal," said Carmen Frederic, director of the Prescott Area Women's Shelter. "We help them set goals, connect them with resources in the community, and provide them with support to make them feel they are part of a family and part of the community."

The shelter recognizes the nearly 100 volunteers who help its staff of four provide services, including the [City of Prescott](#), which helps provide funding, and the many companies and community foundations that helped make their first year a success.

Home Depot and Lowe's donated many appliances to the shelter, and Southwest Behavioral Health helps residents take care of their mental health needs. Other major sponsors who provide ongoing support include The Margaret T. Morris Foundation, The UPS Foundation, Kiwanis Club, The Yavapai County Community Foundation and the Soroptimist International of Prescott, Frederic said.

After helping as many women and children as they can this next year, the shelter would also like to buy their building, Frederic said. Currently, the shelter is renting out the front of the building.

"We want to eventually expand into that space to provide shelter for a couple of families," Frederic said.

A family that used up all its resources, including a hotel voucher that let them stay for three days, came to the shelter earlier this year.

"We could provide shelter for the woman and her children, but her husband would have to stay at the men's shelter in town," Stone said.

"Currently, no family shelter exists in Yavapai County, but we see need for one," Frederic said.

Many women helped by the shelter come back to volunteer, Stone said. Many also keep in touch to let them know how they're doing.

The shelter welcomes new volunteers, especially those interested in helping overnight from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., Frederic said.

People interested in donating items to the shelter are encouraged to check out their wish list at www.prescottshelter.org, or call the shelter at (928) 778-5933 to set up a time to drop off donations.



Matt Hinshaw/The Daily Courier
Kathryn Bulman sits on a bed she once called home for three months in 2009 on Tuesday afternoon at the Prescott Area Women's Shelter. The Shelter celebrated its one-year anniversary on Feb. 2.