I left my husband to save my life.

He is an oil executive. For many happy years we traveled the world for his job. But once we settled down in Houston he became controlling and violent. He wanted a stay-at-home wife. I wanted to continue my career as a model. I had success in Houston and even won a statewide competition.

The abuse escalated to the point where he actually tried to kill me. In 2014 I left him and came to Seattle to stay with a friend. Everything I owned was in a suitcase.

It felt amazing to be free of fear. But I now had other problems to solve, namely homelessness.

My friend lived in the University District and told me about Elizabeth Gregory Home’s (EGH) drop-in Day Center. I first came to EGH to volunteer. I worked at the front desk, which led to a job that EGH helped me land by providing a letter of reference. Eventually, though, I turned to EGH for even more support since my housing situation was so precarious.

My home changed many times in the last four years: from sleeping on my friend’s couch, to living in a Salvation Army shelter, to sharing an apartment with two other women, to staying in a barebones hotel room. I used to come to EGH at least once a month to check in with Michele Martin, the center’s operations manager, access EGH’s clothing closet, and stay connected to my friends there.

I managed pretty well until I lost my job at Nordstrom after the holidays. After that, I found myself back at the University Lutheran Church (ULC), this time spending my nights in the self-managed shelter run by WHEEL, which is located in the building with EGH. In the morning, we would smell coffee brewing and sometimes bacon cooking; it was so nice to be able to come upstairs to EGH for breakfast. EGH’s meal program made all the difference to me while I was at the WHEEL shelter. Not only did I get a good breakfast, but by also eating lunch there and taking food with me for dinner, I could stretch my food stamps so I didn’t run out in the middle of the month.

EGH also gave me a place to take a shower and wash my clothes. Keeping clean while you’re living in a shelter is difficult; I really appreciate being able to use the shower and laundry facilities at the EGH Day Center.

I know where my life is going now. I have rented a one-bedroom apartment in the International District, thanks to the housing voucher Michele helped me get. My voucher gives me hope that I will never live in a shelter again: It allows me to pay no more than 30% of my income for rent.

Last year I applied for a federal grant for the arts and I got it! This grant will help me start my new career as a writer. I plan to write children’s books, songs, and novels. I will also design clothing and express my creative spirit through interior design.

I also really look forward to cooking again. Michele is taking time to help me get everything I need – pots, pans, and even free furniture. I can select items like new sheets and towels that have been donated to EGH and Michele is contacting donors who have offered furniture and other household items in the past, trying to get me set up in my new apartment.

I didn’t walk a smooth path to this new life. And I will probably run into a few more bumps in the future. But I know that I can always come to EGH for support when I need it. When I publish my first novel I’ll donate some of the profits to EGH because I want them to be there when the next person like me walks through their door, needing help.
Welcoming the Arrival of the Equinox!

The advent of fall marks a shift in focus at EGH. Warm clothing, rainproof coats, and durable shoes tend to top the needs list. Thanks to receiving many generous in-kind donations, we are well-stocked to greet the chill the season brings. If you are among the many who contributed, thank you. If you’re curious about other needs we have for donations, please see the Most Needed Items section of this newsletter.

Gratitude for Volunteer Partners
Each newsletter, I will begin featuring steadfast volunteers who enable EGH to offer a rich variety of services and program options. For this edition, I’d like to highlight the contributions of a duo who faithfully volunteer on a weekly basis.

Elaine Everitt was introduced to EGH by me in 2013 after we connected at a Toastmasters meeting. Upon touring and learning what we offer to homeless women, she decided to share her creative talents. In her words: “I enjoy connecting with women and have learned so much about the challenges they face as a result of being homeless. I am inspired by their resilience. I sometimes think they appreciate sitting and visiting as much as crocheting!”

Kathy Graunke has been teaching alongside Elaine since 2016. She came to EGH after seeing a presentation I did at St. Stephen’s Church. In her words: “I was drawn to volunteer after witnessing the care that is given to each woman who comes to the Day Center: a place to rest in safety, to wash clothes, take a shower, eat a nice meal in the dining room, and get other kinds of support and help. It has been a privilege to be at EGH every Monday for 2 hours and help Elaine teach a crocheting class.”

Status of Adding a Sixth Day of Service
Our staff continues to plan for the expansion of our Day Center’s offerings to include Sunday. The biggest remaining piece of the puzzle is hiring additional staff. If you know someone who might be interested in working with our team, please reach out to me by email at rherold@eghseattle.org for details. Thanks!

Warmest Regards,

Ruth Herold
Executive Director

(L - R) Kathy, Jodie and Elaine

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EGH is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization registered with Washington’s Secretary of State. Contributions to EGH are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.
**United Way of King County
Day of Caring**

On September 14th, we welcomed twelve Nordstrom employees for the annual Day of Caring. Men and women from the Marketing and IT Departments came with smiles, work gloves and plenty of elbow grease. They worked hard, helping to clean and organize our pantry, deep clean our showers, wash our walls and more. We are grateful for them and their efforts to make EGH a welcoming, safe and clean refuge for our clients.

*Thank you!*  

**Carrie Brings Healing Energy to Women at EGH**

As a practitioner of the healing arts, Carrie Lafferty fervently believes in the practices of Qi Gong and focuses on helping people “become more self-aware so [they] can take charge of [their] own transformation.” She brings that goal to her work at EGH, where she leads weekly sessions for women at the transitional house and Day Center, and appreciates the opportunity to help each person heal and find peace. She believes that everyone deserves dignity, compassion and a safe place to live.

Carrie began volunteering with EGH in the fall of 2016 after hearing about the good work of Elizabeth Gregory Home from a friend. She decided to explore how to match her professional skills with the needs of women who might benefit from learning how to take care of themselves in new and more productive ways.

Carrie’s first meeting was with a small group of women who were interested in learning about Qi Gong. Carrie noticed they were hesitant to get started, and recognized she needed to take time to build trust. To facilitate their comfort, Carrie decided to arrive early at each session to talk to participants about the calming, healing aspects of accessing a more peaceful self. Word of mouth has drawn in new participants as the women discuss the benefits of the practices.

For example, one woman who attended sessions had high blood pressure, ultimately finding herself in the hospital for medical treatment. When she returned from the hospital stay, she said, “Wow! These practices have helped me through my health issues. I continued to do them in the hospital, and the doctor said my blood pressure is down.” Another woman noted that she was feeling less reactive in confrontational situations, thanks to Carrie’s guidance.

Carrie recognizes that change is slow, particularly for a population where many members are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She often talks with women about what it means to be mindful, helping them to acknowledge that the trauma and constant challenges they face as a result of being homeless can magnify their issues.

Carrie’s drive to help others has been embedded in her personality since she was young. She attributes this not to any particular teachings, but instead to having suffered the loss of her mother when she was twelve. Wanting to help other people and put healing energy into the world is what motivates her. Gandhi’s message, “Be the change you want to see in the world,” is one she takes to heart and incorporates into all aspects of her life on a daily basis.
**When Planning Your Estate, Please Remember Elizabeth Gregory Home**

When reviewing your estate plans, please consider making a provision in your will for Elizabeth Gregory Home. **Thank you!**

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Stevenson (206) 729-0262 ext. 1006 or estevenson@eghseattle.org.

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**Most Needed Items**

Thanks to you, we are able to provide hygiene and clothing items that women who rely on EGH’s Day Center need. Our top needs this quarter are:

- Backpacks
- Waterproof Shoes
- Sweaters and Jackets
- Rain Coats and Ponchos
- Sweatpants and Sweatshirts

**Thank You!**

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**GO PAPERLESS**

Email us at info@eghseattle.org and type “Go Paperless” in the subject line.

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**Employer Matching Gifts**

**You May Be Able to Double Your Gift to EGH Through an Employer Matching Gift**

Many Seattle area employers match contributions made by their employees to nonprofit organizations. To learn if your company has a matching gift policy, please ask your HR representative. Below is a list of some Seattle companies that match gifts made to charities:

- Adobe Systems Inc.
- A T & T
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Fnd
- The Boeing Company
- Cambia Health Solutions
- Kaiser Permanente
- Hewlett-Packard
- Intel
- Microsoft Corporation
- PGE
- REI
- Safeco Corporation
- Starbucks
- Symantec
- T-Mobile
- U.S. Bancorp
- Wells Fargo
- Umpqua Bank

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