

Termin So., 30.11.14 17.00 Uhr

Englische Katholische Kirchengemeinde St. Marys Liederbach  
Wachenheimer Strasse 58 in Liederbach

Pastor ALKER, Mrs. DOUNAGH, Mrs. BEMBXx,  
thank you for having me here tonight.

As Pastor ALKER already introduced me, my name is Petra Vogel-Jones and I am a social worker at the women's shelter in Hofheim as well as a board member for the Association 'Frauen helfen Frauen MTK e.V.'. We all are very grateful to your church for funding our Christmas presents effort this year.

Frauen helfen Frauen MTK e.V. (Women Help Women Association of the Mainz Taunus Kreis) was founded in 1985 with the goal to bring domestic violence against women and their children into public focus. Furthermore Frauen helfen Frauen wanted to offer concrete and practical help to affected women.

Therefore in 1986 our counseling office and in 1987 our women's shelter were opened.

Both facilities are in Hofheim.

For protection the address of the women's shelter is kept secret.

Women come to our counseling office, when they are in a difficult and distressing situation in their life, similarly to those who seek the protection of our shelter: domestic abuse, separation, disagreements on custody and the right of contact and of access as well as economic problems. The number of consultations has been rising continuously, which is why we are by now at the limit of our capacity.

The women's shelter has 24 open spots, which are allocated to 10 rooms with different numbers of beds.

Our shelter is usually fully occupied; hence our utilized capacity ranges between 75 and 85 percent.

Since we grant the women and their children a basic level of privacy, no more than one woman (and her children) is placed in an individual room.

Often requests to stay at the shelter exceed our capacity.

In 2013 we could **not admit 232 women and 205 children**, in 2012 **256 women and 232 children**.

In this year the number could be even a higher since we had extreme difficulties to find apartments for our residents.

Women who we cannot admit are either transferred to other women shelters or other temporary arrangements are found. For most women this situation however is less than satisfactory.

How do women and children come to us?

They either call the women's shelter or our on-call service themselves – we can be reached 24 hours a day!

Or they are forwarded to us by the police, the youth welfare service, hospitals or other institutions.

When fleeing out of a life threatening situation, women often arrive at the shelter without money, identification, clothes or other necessary objects, including things for their children.

Other women are able to prepare their escape. But also in these cases many things must stay behind in their former home.

The escape out of a situation of domestic abuse is especially wearing on the also affected children. In most cases they are happy to finally escape this stressful setting.

On the other hand they have to leave their home, their room and their toys as well as friends behind.

Therefore we try to cushion the impact of this often times upsetting departure by laying a stuffed animal on their beds at arrival.

During their stay at our house we continue to give the children presents for birthdays and holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

Besides we offer other social-programms for the kids: for exempel special playing groups, helping advice at school homework or trips to playgrounds or other interesting locations in the area.

Especially the donations of many people enable us to give these presents.

People such as you and your church: who give a gesture of connection and empathy to the women and unsettled children of the shelter.

We want to thank you very much in the names of the women and children as well as all workers of Frauen helfen Frauen e.V.

If you want to additionally support our work, you are invited to turn to our homepage for further information on the topics and projects of our association. You are also welcome to take home some of the information brochures, which I have laid out for you.

Last but not least: In the spirit of the season I want to wish you a happy thanksgiving.

Thank you for listening to me.

Have a wonderfull evening.