



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter Home Awarded a \$20,000 Grant for Family Support Programming

HANCOCK, Mich., Nov. 4, 2016 – The Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter Home (BKGSH) received \$20,000 from the Portage Health Foundation (PHF) to offer Family Support Coordinator programming to victims and children of domestic violence in Houghton, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon counties beginning this fall.

The BKGSH applied for funding under PHF's mental and behavioral health RFP this past summer. Earlier this year, PHF undertook a series of health forums focused on the topic of mental and behavioral health (MBH). The goals of these forums were to develop collaborative input, prioritize healthcare needs, and build consensus toward innovative interventions and solutions to address the MBH needs within our communities. At the conclusion of these forums, PHF earmarked up to \$100,000 for RFP applications that focused on MBH programming.

With this grant, the BKGSH has hired a Family Support Coordinator who will (1) raise awareness of and utilize collaborative services for domestic violence victims, (2) provide specialized support to families experiencing domestic violence from the time of the initial crisis through the rebuilding of their lives, (3) be available to resident and non-resident children by providing a safe and supportive environment and facilitate enrichment activities, and (4) develop positive parenting skills for domestic violence victims.

Mary Niemela, Executive Director of the BKGSH, said, "Children are often thought of as the 'Silent Victims.' They rarely are asked about the situation. Ninety percent of children who live in violent homes are aware of the abuse happening in the home. We really feel a need to have a staff person be available at the shelter to work with the parent, be that advocate for the children, and be available for outreach services. We are grateful to be receiving this grant to be able to fund this part-time position with hopes of receiving additional funding from other sources to continue this much needed service."

About the Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter Home

The Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter Home, founded in 1980, provides a variety of support to domestic violence victims and their children in Houghton, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon counties including temporary shelter, counseling and support groups, information and referral services, outreach to law enforcement and prosecutors, victim advocate services, and transportation to the shelter for victims.

About the Portage Health Foundation

The Portage Health Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that receives and contributes charitable donations, which support the health needs of the community through enhanced philanthropy and community collaboration throughout Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon counties.



Chelsea Goodreau/PHF

L to R: Hilary Anderson, PHF Grants Management Coordinator; Kevin Store, PHF Executive Director; Connie Greenleaf, PHF Executive Assistant; Mary Niemela, BKGSH Executive Director; Susan Hallwachs, BKGSH Family Support Coordinator; and Mari Buche, BKGSH Board Treasurer.

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