

Easter opportunities

Springtime at the Laurens County Safe Home

By Judith Brown

Staff Writer

In addition to the many Easter activities available for fun and for spiritual significance, there are also opportunities to assist others going through difficulties, including help for children who find themselves at the Laurens County Safe Home during the Easter holiday.

With a large number of young children, the Safe Home staff and its supply closet are feeling the pinch.

"In a 48-hour period last week we had several families come in with a total of eight children, all ages seven and under," said Dawn Ardel, the director of the county's non-profit abused women's shelter.

Most of the young children are toddlers, and while the Safe Home is well-stocked with smaller diapers, their larger toddler sized diapers and overnight pull-up types of disposable items are almost depleted. Typically, there would also be a need for clothing for the young children but a couple of regular volunteer groups are covering the clothing needs.

"We are really low on size 4 diapers and overnight pull-ups sizes 3T and up, and this will likely continue because for a woman to go through the process of getting a restraining order and child support and finding a safe apartment, it usually takes a minimum of 60 days so we will be facing this for awhile," Ardel said, explaining that children who have never had a problem with bedwetting sometimes begin to experience it when uprooted from their homes and regular schedules.

Being right here before the Easter holiday, Ardel said, means there is also a need for Easter items.

"They won't need candy but we need Easter basket toys like sidewalk chalk and bubbles and balls," Ardel said, "simple outdoor toys where the moms can play with their toddlers and very young children outside since the weather is so nice right now."

Other items needed include paper products, such as paper towels, paper plates as opposed to styrofoam plates, healthy snacks and drinks, such as juice boxes for the children, which can be important for keeping the spread of germs at bay in a multi-family kitchen.

The Laurens County Safe Home is the only abused women's shelter for women in Laurens County, and it also serves women in Saluda and Abbeville. While it's not unusual for any non-profit to go from relatively slow to very busy all at once, there is often a spike in the numbers of women and families who seek help from the Safe Home during the spring.

"Often families will do a little better in February and March because they have a quick economic windfall from

getting their taxes back, but by April, that money is gone," Ardel said. "Financial reasons alone are not typically a reason for abuse but financial control is a very real form of abuse, and when money is low, it can add to increased stress if an intimate partner is already abusive."

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month and, Ardel said, sadly, there is often a strong link between child abuse and intimate partner abuse.

"If we can help prevent child abuse, then long-term, we can help prevent intimate partner abuse," Ardel said. "If you're a child and the person you love the most also hurts you, it becomes so much more likely to eventually become an abusive partner or a victim of intimate partner abuse, because abuse from the one who loves you is what you have experienced."

The Laurens County Safe Home assists women who are being abused, and they work hand in hand with agencies who also handle child abuse.

For information about the services provided for women in the shelter or those who remain at home, call 864-682-7270.

For those who would like to assist with the children at the Laurens County Safe Home, donations can be delivered to the Safe Home's benefit thrift store, Our Little Shop, located at 1500 West Main Street near the Laurens Bi-Lo in the Western Plaza Shopping Center. Our Little Shop is open Tuesday through Saturday.

For the remainder of April, *The Laurens County Advertiser* will also accept donations for the Safe Home during regular business hours, Monday through Thursday until 5 p.m. and on Friday until noon. See the ad on page 6 for more details.

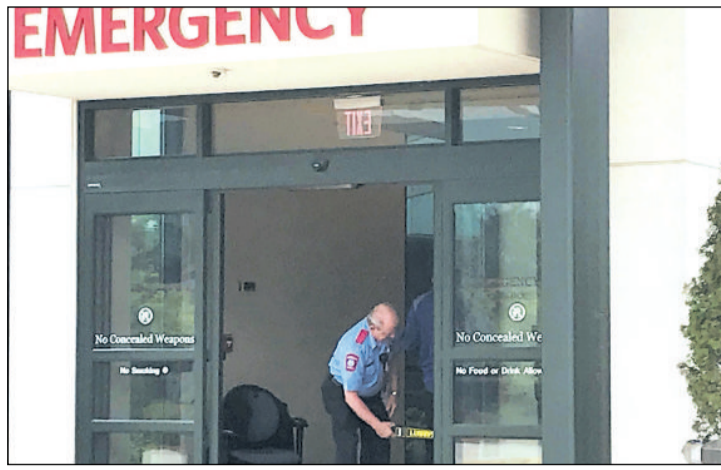


Photo by Judith Brown

ADDED PRECAUTIONS — A Greenville Health Authority officer uses a metal detector wand to scan an Emergency Department visitor Thursday morning.

- Shooting -

(Continued from page 1)

Another call to Laurens County dispatch assured Duncan that the gunman had been apprehended, and she was told the officer coming to escort them out was a Laurens County Sheriff's Office deputy. The department had responded in force to secure the crime scene until SLED came to take over the case.

Afterwards, Duncan's one relief was that deputies told her the Greenville Health Authority Police officer was hit in the shoulder but he would be fine. Now she is saddened that violence has marred a

hospital she's always considered as a safe spot and felt especially bad for the staff there.

"When I got home, I thought about the medical staff who work so hard every day and had to care for this man who had just put them in harm's way, and now they are facing this new fear," Duncan said. "I'm grateful for our nurse who was a hero, and the hospital staff and how they handled it and the sheriff department who were everywhere. I don't know what but something needs to be done to make them feel safe."

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Better Health Together

GHS & Palmetto Health are now Prisma Health!

Vascular Screening Fair

April 22-26, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. daily • Laurens County Hospital, Vascular Lab
 Take advantage of this opportunity to have several preventive screenings done under one roof. Early detection of issues identified by these screenings can protect you from stroke, aneurysm and peripheral artery disease. The cost is \$40 per screening. Call 864-454-8272 to schedule an appointment.

Stroke Camp

April 26-28 • Unicoi State Park Lodge, 1788 Hwy. 356, Helen, Ga.
 This weekend offers stroke survivors, their caregivers and family members an opportunity for support, socialization, relaxation and education in a beautiful setting. Activities are tailored for stroke survivors. Cost: \$125/camper. Register at strokecamp.org. Learn more at 864-455-8848.

Diabetes 101

Thursday, May 9 • 10-11 a.m. • Laurens County Hospital, Women's Life Center
 This free class offers practical tips for those with diabetes, including meal ideas, lifestyle changes and products that help manage the condition. No registration required. Learn more at 864-885-7654.

Diabetes Support Group

Thursday, May 9 • 5:30-7 p.m. • Laurens County Hospital, Women's Life Center
 Those with diabetes are invited to learn from others with the condition and from monthly guest speakers. Free; no registration required.

Unless noted otherwise, registration is required for each event. To register, learn more or see a schedule of events, visit prismahealth.org/upstateevents.

PRISMA HEALTH



The City of Laurens Spring Festival

SATURDAY,
 APRIL 20
 10 a.m.-Noon

NEW LOCATION!
LAURENS YMCA
 410 Anderson Drive Laurens

Easter Egg Hunt

By age groups
 (Ages 1-10)

- Bounce House
- Fun Games
- Crafts & More!



For more information call 681-7275 or email: LaurensPRD@yahoo.com

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