

# WPA's Sarah Powell Huntington House: Reuniting Formerly Incarcerated Mothers with Children

## Women's Prison Association

### MODEL

Sarah Powell Huntington House (SPHH) is a unique residence where homeless women who have criminal justice involvement can reunify with their children. WPA opened SPHH in 1993 to address the Catch-22 that prevents children from returning to parents with inadequate housing, but bars those parents from qualifying for family shelter assistance before children are in their care.

### TARGETED TENANCY

SPHH is a safe, drug-free environment with 24-hour supervision. It is home to:

- 19 mothers whose children are in their custody and
- 18 women who live in singles units and share an apartment with a roommate while awaiting the return of their children.

During this time Huntington House staff work closely with the Administration for:

- children's services
- family court and
- foster care agencies

These services are designed to help women advocate effectively and prepare for reunification. Mothers and children are encouraged to participate in SPHH family outings and onsite services so that the children can become familiar with the staff and other residents before moving to Huntington House.

### SERVICES

Residents participate in workshops focused on:

- housing
- employment preparation
- independent living skills
- parenting skills

On-site programs provided include:

- comprehensive case management
- HIV and health education
- childcare
- individual and group counseling
- academic and recreational enrichment programs

Residents can access individual and family counseling and are encouraged to connect with community-based services including long-term health and mental health services to prepare to begin new lives in their communities. This support helps women to meet their criminal justice responsibilities as well as improve prospects for livelihood, long-term sobriety, stronger family ties, and a healthy and satisfying life.

### SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Total development cost approximately \$3.5 million (2 buildings purchased at \$1.00 each, plus renovation and related costs)
- Capital sources from NYS Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP)
- Operating & Services cost approximately \$1.1 million per year (supported by New York City Department of Homeless Services and private grants)



## WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION

WPA is a service and advocacy organization committed to helping women with criminal justice histories realize new possibilities for themselves and their families. WPA provides direct assistance to approximately 2500 women and their families each year. We offer an integrated continuum of reentry services to criminal justice-involved women in response to five key areas of need: livelihood, housing, family, health and well-being, and criminal justice compliance.

Women who seek WPA assistance frequently cite housing as their primary or most urgent need. Given the significant barriers to affordable housing for women with criminal records, WPA seeks to develop a portfolio of housing options that addresses the housing goals of our clients.

The goal for a WPA client is to lead a drug-free, crime-free life; establish a stable residence; take care of her children; earn a living wage and contribute to the community.

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