Prevention: the Key to Healthy Communities
By Naomi Tucker, Executive Director

As spring appears on the horizon, the Jewish calendar reminds us to re-tell the story of our people’s journey to liberation. We tell the Passover story again every year to understand our history...to appreciate the freedoms with which we are blessed today...and to learn how to make things better in the future.

This message is the essence of what public health educators brought to the medical profession years ago: that the best way to cure illness or heal pain is to prevent it in the first place.

The first priority of all domestic violence programs is to help those in crisis—responding to the immediate aftermath of abuse, and helping women and children rebuild violence-free lives. But we would be remiss if we were to only respond to the devastation, and not seek a cure to the problem. For that reason, the battered women’s movement of the past 35 years in this country has organized itself as not just a provider of social services, but also as a movement for social change: a campaign to eliminate the root causes of domestic violence.

Toward that end, prevention has always been at the forefront of Shalom Bayit’s mission. It is our vision and our responsibility to reach people before they come to us as clients. That’s why we provide community education, raise awareness, train clergy and community leaders, help congregations develop abuse prevention protocols, and always make sure that we are reaching young people as well as adults.

Prevention is the reason we bring healthy relationships education to the places where people first begin to think about or enter into relationships, like schools, summer camps, youth groups, Hillels and college campuses, and young adult groups. It is why we train rabbis, therapists, and other support people to recognize warning signs, provide skilled premarital counseling, and know how to talk with someone who may be at risk.

Prevention is also the essence of our parent education workshops, where we help parents foster open dialogue with their teens about relationships.

Talking to teens about relationships is like talking to young children about 911: it can be hard to broach the subject, yet it is critical to their safety that to learn how to protect themselves.

They need to know what to do in an earthquake, or if they get lost in a shopping mall. Advance preparedness is a form of prevention. So, too, is skill-building: learning to set limits or resolve conflict. Just as we teach “no hitting” to toddlers or body boundaries and “stranger danger” to preschoolers—the same is true for talking to teens about relationships. We may be uncomfortable; we may think it’s too early. But if we wait, teens may already be experimenting in a new field with

(Continued on page 2)
On Sunday, April 6th a group of 50 Shalom Bayit supporters and food fans gathered in downtown Palo Alto to cook up a gourmet storm. Chef Jim Wimborough of the acclaimed Evvia Estiatorio restaurant led a hands-on, how-to cooking demonstration while guests rolled up their sleeves and donned aprons to dive in to the culinary extravaganza. From grilling sea bass to making ravioli and Evvia’s own “spanatiropita,” the experience of creating the dishes ourselves alongside the chef was almost as extraordinary as getting to sit down together afterwards and feast upon our creations.

Gathering around a table to create and enjoy delicious food has always been a cornerstone of Jewish life. Together, we eat...celebrate...share our oys and joys...build community...And look toward a healthy future for all. Warm thanks to our sponsors, all our guests, event chair Kate VanZanten, auction chair Carol Platner, and most especially to the generous and talented crew at Evvia for creating such a terrific event and successful fun(d)raiser!

Together we raised over $6,000 to benefit our new Peninsula counseling office, services for battered women, and prevention programs for teens and adults. Compassionate Cuisine also honored supporters Holly & Jeff Ullman for their generous gift towards the opening of our Peninsula office.

(Prevention, Continued from page 1)

no compass to guide them. The time to talk with them is now: in small ways, leaving the door open for more conversation when they need it. If all of us had that chance, we could avoid many mistakes made in the course of our lives. As parents, we have to move past our fear of scaring young people with a tough subject, and instead know that preparing them to prevent danger is a necessity, and a gift of love.

In a similar vein, Shalom Bayit prepares clergy to help young couples and individual congregants guide themselves towards relationships that are strong, healthy, and free of abusive dynamics. With fifty rabbis serving on our Rabbinic Advisory Council, our prevention messages reach a wide audience.

Inside this issue, you can read about some of Shalom Bayit’s prevention efforts throughout the community—our teen program, new initiatives to reach young adults; training collaboratives between clergy and domestic violence programs; and the many ways that we engage rabbis, congregations and community leaders in raising awareness to prevent abuse in Jewish homes.

Prevention requires all of us coming together to strategize, raise awareness, increase education, and agree on what it means to treat each other with respect. Jewish homes and families are the foundation of our community. To have a healthy, vibrant community we must nurture that foundation—and ensure the sacredness of homes and relationships that are loving and violence-free.

As you gather around the seder table, we hope you will take a moment to honor and recognize those who are still enslaved today—whether by a nation or an individual. The Exodus story is, after all, about a people freeing itself from bondage—escaping the control of a cruel and violent ruler. It is hard to imagine that such cruelty could take place in our modern times. Yet when we look at genocide, human rights abuses—sadly do not have to witness the atrocity of by another. Ask anyone psychologically or their partner: what is the price of freedom? They will tell you that the risks are high; the fear is great; the consequences for fleeing are terrifying. And yet battered women, like the Israelites standing at the edge of the Red Sea, do somehow take that leap of faith and run for their lives. As Passover calls us to act as if we ourselves had gone forth from slavery to freedom, so can we all for one moment place ourselves in the shoes of a woman piecing her life back together in the aftermath of abuse. Including this thought at your Passover seder brings battered women and their children one step closer to freedom. Thank you.

May Passover bring the blessing of freedom for all.

Join our DreamBuilders Campaign

Each year a group of Shalom Bayit community supporters contributes to our fundraising efforts as part of the DreamBuilders Campaign. We’d like to invite you to become a DreamBuilder, and join the team that is sustaining Shalom Bayit’s programs to end domestic violence. All you have to do is pledge to raise or donate $1,008 to this year’s campaign. You can make the gift as an individual or organize a group of friends to contribute together.

Anyone can be part of DreamBuilders. You don’t have to give at this level on your own. Take up a tzedakah collection at your synagogue, book group or school. Ask 10 friends to each give $100. Make a monthly pledge of $84. Ask your employer about matching gifts, and organize co-workers to contribute. Whether from one person or a group, a DreamBuilder gift of $1,008 takes a battered woman one step further on her journey to freedom—and leads teens towards healthy relationships in their future.

The DreamBuilders team will receive special recognition in our newsletter, and will be invited to attend a private donor reception.

We are here for women, children and teens only because you are here for us. When you make your major giving decisions this year, please consider Shalom Bayit. Thank you!
Donations received December 2007 - March 2008

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**Grants of $10,000 and greater**
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Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin & Sonoma Counties
Mount Zion Health Fund
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund
Walter & Elise Haas Fund

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**Volunteers**

Kacie Borquez
Marilyn Hoffmann
Simon Levi

Thanks to the many individuals, businesses and organizations who make our programs a success.
Any omissions are unintentional.
Shalom Bayit Launches Project SHIRA

**Strengthening Human service & Interfaith community Responses to Abuse**

Project SHIRA is Shalom Bayit’s interfaith effort to help non-Jewish communities and institutions develop culturally competent practices for responding to abuse. We do this in two ways: by educating local non-Jewish human service agencies (such as battered women’s shelters) about the needs of Jewish women who may seek their support, and by training clergy of all faiths on responding to domestic violence.

With the support of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Shalom Bayit will now be able to hire our first community educator to lead these efforts. In its first year Project SHIRA will provide three clergy trainings, and reach out to Bay Area shelters for battered women with our Jewish and interfaith frameworks of abuse prevention.

Our Jewish-focused response strategies have inspired great domestic violence organizing among other faith and cultural communities. Over the years, our model has been a catalyst for those communities to examine social problems like domestic violence from the lens of their particular cultural or religious context.

From that vantage point, many non-Jewish religious groups and minority communities have used our core concepts to consider how their own culture can address abusive relationships. Domestic violence cuts across all demographics, and the types of violence that occur in abusive relationships are consistent across cultures. But the way that women perceive what’s happening to them, the barriers they face in seeking help, and the response they receive from their community, can all be shaped by cultural and religious values.

Project SHIRA’s training and outreach will build faith communities and congregations’ capacity to respond to domestic violence. It will also increase the cultural competency of existing human service providers to successfully serve Jewish clients. We have already made important strides towards these goals with two clergy outreach events held in February: a Santa Clara county clergy conference on domestic violence (in collaboration with the Support Network for Battered Women) and a national interfaith clergy training in San Francisco (with the Federal Office of Violence Against Women and Marin and a national interfaith clergy training in San Francisco (with collaboration with the Support Network for Battered Women).

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The group was co-facilitated by Marjorie Swig, MFTI and Shalom Bayit counselor Aliza Rothman, MFTI. It was wonderful to have Marjorie’s passion, experience, and involvement on this level with the women of Shalom Bayit. Thank you Marjorie! We would also like to thank our amazing Kohn intern, Laiah Idelson, who coordinated outreach efforts throughout Marin County. The Marin group was made possible thanks to generous support from the Jewish Community Endowment Newhouse Fund and our many sponsoring agencies (including the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, Congregation Kol Shofar, Congregation Rodef Sholom, Family and Children’s Law Center, Marin Abused Women’s Services and the Osher Marin Jewish Community Center). Next fall our regional support group will be taking place in San Francisco. Please call Aliza at (866) SHALOM-7 for more information.

**MARIN GROUP A SUCCESS**

*by Aliza Rothman*

This fall/winter 2007-2008 Shalom Bayit held our long-awaited support group in Marin county. The group was a haven for Jewish women healing from abusive relationships. Through the group, women found concrete tools for gaining strength amidst the trauma they experienced, regaining self-confidence and self-esteem, and moving from crisis to wholeness—helping them to become active, healthy and engaged members of the Jewish community. Each participant reflected on feeling validated and understood by other women with similar life experiences. During the group we had the opportunity to light Chanukah candles together, to sing and share our stories and our strengths.

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**Love Shouldn’t Hurt**

*The Youth Program at Shalom Bayit*

**Love Shouldn’t Hurt** workshops reach adolescent and young adult Jews (ages 11-21) in the greater Bay Area with abuse prevention and healthy relationships education. From January-March 2008, we have already reached over 450 teens, parents, and educators. Since 2002 over 2,800 youth have participated in our workshops. Last year we debuted our long-awaited national curriculum on Jewish teen dating violence prevention. Since then we have sold over 50 copies around the world. In addition to purchasing the curriculum, communities can request training and assistance from us in implementing Love Shouldn’t Hurt. Zephira Derblich-Milea (Youth Program Coordinator) recently traveled to Houston, Texas to train facilitators to lead Love Shouldn’t Hurt workshops. It is such a blessing that this crucial prevention program is now reaching Jewish youth in many communities across the country.

This year The Hadassah Foundation awarded Love Shouldn’t Hurt a planning grant to develop additional abuse prevention programming for college campuses, parents of teens, and young adults. If you are part of a college, young adult, or parent activity group please call us to find out how you can get your group involved in our efforts.

Many thanks to The Hadassah Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation & Federation of the Greater East Bay, National Council of Jewish Women (San Francisco and Contra Costa Sections), the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund, and Verizon Wireless for providing vital support to bring Love Shouldn’t Hurt to Jewish Communities everywhere.
When I started working at Shalom Bayit three years ago, I knew I would have the opportunity to impact the lives of others. I had no idea how much my job would impact my own way of thinking and interacting in the world.

As the Youth Program Coordinator, I have the opportunity to talk with young people (6th grade through college) about what they want in relationships and how to help prevent dating and domestic violence. In our Love Shouldn’t Hurt workshops teens talk about how each one of us may be affected by domestic violence – personally, or through someone they know.

In the last year a situation arose which reminded me that I, too, am not immune. A group of my women friends and I took a weekend trip to our friend’s house in the mountains. On Sunday we were all sitting outside schmoozing when my friend Sharon* said, “I hate how guys always have to make all the decisions in relationships.” As someone who has been trained to recognize warning signs of abuse—and because I know that abuse is ultimately about one person’s attempt to control another in a relationship—this was a red flag to me. In a healthy relationship, one person doesn’t make all the decisions. So I wondered about Sharon’s motive for this comment; it saddened me. I began to recall controlling behaviors I had previously witnessed from Sharon’s ex-boyfriend David,* who was my friend as well. Sharon’s offhanded comment in that moment confirmed my suspicions that David had been abusive to her.

I immediately felt the need to address the passing comment. I told her that I didn’t think that “guys have to make all the decisions,” and asked her and my other friends if they would be willing to talk about it. Using an exercise I do with teens, I grabbed a piece of paper and a marker and drew a heart with the words “Healthy Relationship” in the center. I then asked everyone to think about one person’s attempt to control another in a relationship—this was a red flag to me. In a healthy relationship, one person doesn’t make all the decisions. So I wondered about Sharon’s motive for this comment; it saddened me. I began to recall controlling behaviors I had previously witnessed from Sharon’s ex-boyfriend David,* who was my friend as well. Sharon’s offhanded comment in that moment confirmed my suspicions that David had been abusive to her.

By the end of our brainstorm, our Healthy Relationship Heart was covered with everything from respect to independence; and other friends had joined our discussion. Towards the end of our conversation, Sharon disclosed to us that David had abused her during their relationship. Our discussion made such an impression on everyone there, that our host took the Healthy Relationship Heart and posted it on her refrigerator for all passers-by to see. This experience made me realize two things. 1) This is a topic my peers really want to address. They had so much to say and I could tell that they didn’t want to end the conversation. 2) To be true to my commitment to make changes in the world, I couldn’t just stop with talking to my friend who had been abused. I knew I needed to address my friend who had hurt her. After weeks of talking with Sharon, speaking with my colleagues at Shalom Bayit about how I might safely talk to David, and writing down my thoughts on what I was going to say to him, I confronted him. Without disclosing anything Sharon had said to me, I pointed out things he’d done that I had witnessed, that I thought were not okay. I gave him examples, told him how I felt, and suggested places he could get help. His response: he laughed at me and denied that he had ever done the things I had seen.

At the time this occurred, David had already been stalking and harassing Sharon constantly—one moment blaming her for everything, and the next begging her to come back. For months after I confronted him, he harassed me too—with nasty emails followed by apologies; by spreading lies about me amongst my friends; and by calling Sharon to tell her I’d brainwashed her into leaving him (she had already left by the time she admitted the abuse to me). Confronting someone with whom I had been friends with for the past several years is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Yet if I had to do it all over again, despite the bullying and harassment, I would still speak my truth. Now, not only does David know that his behavior is unacceptable and needs to be changed, but my other friends and my family know that I am not one who will stand idly by.

If this situation had arisen three years ago, my actions would probably have been different. But through my work at Shalom Bayit, I have come to see the only way to effect true change is by ensuring that actions follow our words: standing behind what we believe to be right and just.

This personal experience inspired me to do more work with my peers. Most people my age didn’t have the opportunity to see a Love Shouldn’t Hurt workshop as teens. Nobody ever asked us “What do you want in your relationships,” and most of us weren’t told what we could do if those needs weren’t being met.

This year, thanks to a planning grant from The Hadassah Foundation, we are developing programming to educate young adults about healthy relationships and preventing dating violence. I am looking forward to sharing my experiences with my peers in the Jewish community. In the words of Rabbi Tarfon, “You are not expected to complete the task, but neither are you free to avoid it.” (Pirkei Avot 2:21)

*names changed for safety

Talking It Out With Young Adults
by Zephira Derblich-Milea

Youth Program Coordinator at Shalom Bayit.
SAVE THE DATE
Shalom Bayit Fall Events

Sunday, October 12th ~ 2-4pm
May Our Homes Be a Shelter of Peace
Community gathering in the sukkah in honor of battered women
Berkeley

Sunday, November 9th
Shalom Bayit Annual Benefit
Docent tour and reception
at the new Contemporary Jewish Museum
San Francisco

Please join us!
For tickets, sponsorship opportunities & more information: (510) 451-8874

Everyone has the right to be...
SAFE AT HOME

Come schmooze at the ballpark with us!
Bringing your family and friends to join Shalom Bayit
at the San Francisco Giants game for Jewish Heritage night.

August 25, 2008
5pm - Dinner / 7:15pm - Game
Reserve your tickets now! (510) 451-8874.

Wish List
Microwave, small fridge, laptop computer,
TV & VCR/DVD player, phone cards,
gift cards (to Safeway, Albertson’s, or
Trader Joe’s), Kiddie couch, toy box,
Mezzuzot

Don't forget to bring us
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You will be helping to provide 911
emergency phones for
battered women, and raising funds
for Shalom Bayit too!

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Please send your gift to “Tides Center / Shalom Bayit”
at PO Box 10102, Oakland 94610
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