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## Your January Newsletter

It was 40 years ago this month, on January 10, 1979, that My Sister's Place started the first Domestic Violence shelter in DC! Over the last 40 years, My Sister's Place has been a refuge for thousands of women and children fleeing their abusers. **While we have much to celebrate, the need for MSP's transformational programs continues to grow.**



One of MSP's goals this year is to expand our **Reaching Independence through Survivor Empowerment (RISE) program**. Through RISE, survivors who are ready to transition out of emergency shelter receive rental assistance, mental health support, financial education and other supportive services. Through RISE, survivors and their children gain the critical independence they need to escape their abusers.

**The 40 Year Anniversary Celebration will raise funds to expand RISE to even more families so they can rebuild their lives and thrive.** Save the date for May 14 - more information to come! If you would like to support MSP as part of the Donor Leadership Circle for the event, please email Mercedes Lemp, Executive Director, at [mlemp@mysistersplacedc.org](mailto:mlemp@mysistersplacedc.org).

**Toshira Monroe** (pictured above) has worked at My Sister's Place for the past five years in many capacities, including a serving as a residential coordinator, administrative staff, the Citywide DV Hotline Supervisor, Shelter Program Manager, and she was recently promoted to Program Director. She has been instrumental in reevaluating and amending program policies and procedures to meet service best practices and grant compliance. She works closely with community stakeholders and partners and is a member of the Department of Human Services Housing Learning Collaborative Trauma Informed Service Group, The DC Domestic Violence Housing Continuum, The DV Housing Task Force, and The OVSJG Victim Assistance Network (VAN) Outreach Committee, Youth Committee, and has recently been appointed to the VAN Leadership Counsel. It is her contributions not just to MSP, but to the DC domestic violence community as a whole, that led the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence to honor her at a recent staff meeting. It is because of the work of our great staff, dedicated volunteers like our Advisory Board, and the amazing support from our donors, that MSP continues to thrive and provide critical programs.

We thank you all!

The My Sister's Place Team

## Meet MSP's Advisory Board

We are excited to welcome our new **Advisory Board** members. They are all passionate about our mission and each brings a unique set of valuable skills to support our work. We are honored and grateful that they have agreed to be part of MSP.

**Jenny Brody** has practiced family law in Washington, DC for more than ten years. As the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project, from 2008 to 2016, Ms. Brody provided legal assistance to hundreds of domestic violence survivors in Civil Protection Order cases, as well as in divorce, custody and child support matters. As a member of the DC Superior Court Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Panel, Ms. Brody represented children as a court-appointed Guardian ad litem and also represented adoptive parents in adoption petitions. Ms. Brody has devoted substantial time to improving the court system, as a participant in the DC Superior Court Domestic Relations and Domestic Violence Implementation Committees. She is a recognized expert in domestic violence and family law issues, presenting numerous training programs in these areas for lawyers, judges, social workers, medical professionals and domestic violence advocates.

**David Collins** spent 20 years working in finance for corporations such as Gannet, Cemex and Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. With his father, he started the John Collins Foundation ten years ago and has worked with such organizations as the Boys and Girls Club of Pinellas County Florida, United Way of Tampa, and various other non-profits. He became President of Foundation last year and has served on several nonprofit boards as well as committees. He has supported, and been affiliated with, MSP for almost five years, providing financial and advisory support.

**Rebecca Carr Rizzo** is a special counsel in the employment law group at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. Rebecca regularly counsels clients to ensure compliance to avoid litigation and investigates and defends clients against discrimination, harassment, retaliation and whistleblower claims. Her clients include nonprofits, large corporations, startups, government contractors, restaurants, hotels and universities. Frequent areas of counseling include internal investigations, disability accommodation, protected leave, FLSA compliance, noncompetition agreements, restructurings and reductions in force, difficult terminations, and employment policies and procedures. Frequent areas of litigation include claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation and wrongful discharge under discrimination and protected leave laws; whistleblower claims in various industries including restaurant, healthcare, and nuclear; wage and hour claims; and employment contracts. Rebecca also currently serves on the Advisory Council of Collegiate Directions, Inc.

**Mazen Yacoub** served as MSP Board Chair for almost ten years prior to stepping down and joining the Advisory Board. Outside of MSP he has worked as an independent healthcare management consultant. His clients include top tier consulting firms, Federal and State healthcare agencies and private sector healthcare provider organizations. His areas of expertise include policy, business strategy, healthcare payment reform and program implementation. Mazen teaches graduate level public health policy and management at The George Washington University Milken School of Public health.

**Aspasia Xypolia** joined the MSP Advisory Board in 2018 to support the organization's vision of identifying pathways to permanent, stable housing for the domestic violence survivors it serves. Aspasia's professional experience has informed her belief that access to safe and affordable housing is the first step toward helping individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency. Since 2016, Aspasia has worked as a Senior Project Manager for the Mid-Atlantic office of The Community Builders (TCB), a national, non-profit, mission-driven developer that aims to build and sustain strong communities where people of all incomes can

achieve their full potential. Prior to joining TCB, Aspasia worked as the Director of Development at a community-based organization, formed by refugees, in Boston, MA.

**Help us support families fleeing domestic violence **DONATE TODAY!****

