

Dear [FirstName],

Seven doors of safety

Liv's* 10-year-old can still get panic attacks when he's not inside Sheltering Wings. You see, his father abused both him and his mom. As a result, the boy has been suicidal and even homicidal, hospitalized for the seventh or eighth time the day after he and his mother arrived at the shelter. So now, when they come home to Sheltering Wings, they regain their sense of safety by counting the doors between their abuser and themselves.

"First is the abuser's front door, then the Sheltering Wings locked gate. Next, there is an external door and, finally, four internal doors to my son's room," Liv counted. "Seven doors he can't use to get into our territory. Seven doors of safety.

"The moment we're here and the gate clicks behind us, it feels amazing."

A million paper cuts

"Growing up, I had the idea that domestic violence was a woman being beat up. But that's not how it was for me. I heard once that it's like death by a million paper cuts, and that's really what it's like – little things that don't matter a lot individually, but when you add them together, it's horrific," Liv said.

For a long time, Liv thought she was the problem. A devout Christian, she'd been told time and time again that she needed to forgive. "So I forgave and forgave and forgave. Being at Sheltering Wings has helped me realize forgiveness doesn't mean things get to go on. Forgiveness can mean someone is forgiven but not allowed back in again. You can shut the door. I don't think I would've realized that if I'd been anywhere else," Liv said.

She and her son talk to therapists and take classes at the shelter. One, called Embracing Empowerment, made a lightbulb turn on in her head.

"It helped me recognize the different forms of abuse. I had never heard the term 'gaslighting,' and I'd never known about religious or financial abuse. I thought it was all just physical, but abuse comes in so many shapes and colors. You think it's you or just a rough day, but when you get to the end, you start thinking, 'Where were the good days?' And even if there were good days, every day needs to be a safe day."

For the first time in her life, Liv said, she has hope. She plans to become a therapist so she can help others who are enduring what she's experienced.

"Now is a new chapter of sunshine and so many possibilities."

As a supporter, you have helped close doors between abusers and victims ... and open doors to safety, security and self-reliance. Every day, desperate people like Liv and her son come to Sheltering Wings searching for help. So many fear they'll end up right back where they were. Will you give again to keep the safe doors closed and the hopeful doors open?

Yours in Christ,

a Mushby

Cassie Mecklenburg, Executive Director

P.S. You can watch Liv tell her own story at shelteringwings.org/seven-doors



Yes! I want to ensure Sheltering Wings is there to help families for years to come!

TO DONATE ONLINE visit shelteringwings.org/seven-doors

	Please use my credit card to make a monthly tax-deductible donation of:					
	\$100 Other		\$500		\$1000	
	I cannot give monthly at this time, but would like to make a one-time tax-deductible donation via my credit card of: \$					
	I've enclosed my check #					
Please charge my credit card \$						
	Visa	N	1C	Disco	ver	Amex
Cre	edit Card	d Numl	ber:			
Exp	o. Date (MM/Y	Y):	/	CVV_	
sign your name						
ado	dress					
city	1			sta	te	zip
ph	one					
em	ail				HART A	

* Name has been changed.