

A New Lease and a New Life



Victims of sexual assault can now break their rental lease without paying a penalty.

Image used with permission by Texas Association Against Sexual Assault.

Imagine you were sexually assaulted in your apartment or in the apartment complex in which you live. How could you possibly heal and move on while living where the rape took place?

Just over a year ago, Texas passed a Lease Termination Law that allows a sexual assault victim, or parents/guardians of a sexually-assaulted child, to break a rental property lease without any financial penalty. If a sexual assault occurs in the victim's complex or rented house, he or she can break a lease without owing future rent or fees for ending a lease early.

Texas Property Code 92.0161 is an expansion of a previous code, 92.016, passed in 2005. The codes protect victims of family violence and sexual assault

when they need to move to be safe and avoid harming their credit and rental history.

"It is true that landlords should not have to sacrifice income when a perpetrator commits a sexual assault," noted HCWC Executive Director Marla Johnson. "However, our entire community benefits when we work together to ensure safety."

Any sexual assault victim, even if she or he does not file a police report, can give 30 days' notice with any one of the following:

- court-issued protective order
- paperwork showing medical or mental treatment from a licensed provider
- rape crisis center verification of services rendered

In Hays County, 35% of residents rent, higher than the national average of 33%. In Caldwell County approximately 30% of the residents rent. In San Marcos, a majority of residents, almost 70%, rent instead of own. These renters are mostly students at Texas State University.

According to the Center for Disease Control's **National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey for 2010**, nearly 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime and almost 80% of female victims experienced their first rape before the age of 25. Not surprisingly, the recent 2010 Census reported that 42% of San Marcos' population is 18 to 24, a prime age for a sexual assault. Last year, HCWC provided services to 407 adult victims of sexual assault, 35% of whom lived in San

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A New Lease... (Cont.)

Marcos. While most of these clients were abused at an earlier time in their life, some would have benefited from this option for safety.

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HCWC staff has taken advantage of the lease law to help a few clients. Jennifer James, HCWC Advocacy Program Director, recently helped a young woman who was raped in her San Marcos apartment. The victim did not feel safe and wanted to move. She asked Jennifer to accompany her to see the apartment manager. Jennifer’s testimony as all that the apartment manager needed to break the lease without penalty.

“It was the first time I had dealt with this law,” noted Jennifer. “Even though it was a large complex, the manager had never heard of the law, but she was very willing to comply. It was a relatively smooth transition.”

The Lease Termination Law has a few restrictions. You can-

not break your lease if you wait six months after the assault. The law only recognizes leases, new or renewed, that were signed after January, 2010. The law does not affect a tenant’s liability for delinquent, unpaid rent or other sums owed to the landlord before the lease was terminated by the tenant.

Landlords and property managers are fully responsible for understanding and complying with Chapter 92 of the Texas Property Code. However, this is not always the case. Kelli Howard, staff attorney with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, says that landlords still do not always comply.

Legal Aid has advised clients who followed the law and gave



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their landlord proper notice and a copy of their protective order, but were still charged rent and fees to re-lease when they moved out. The law requires that all leases include a paragraph of tenants’ rights under the laws, but not all landlords do this.

“Survivors need this law so that they can move on with their lives and find a safe place to live. When a landlord doesn’t follow the law, it creates another barrier; another economic reason for a survivor to stay in an abusive relationship,” Howard said.

Regardless of what a lease states, the law is the law. Regaining a sense of choice and control is crucial for anyone who has experienced the total loss of control that is at the core of sexual assault. Breaking a lease without penalty and moving to a new, safe place gives a victim that sense of control. Please contact HCWC for information on this important option for victims of sexual assault and family violence. 🌿

SHINING A LIGHT FOR OTHERS

Volunteer Kristina Frederick wants to give back because she's been there.

Kristina completed volunteer training in Spring of 2010 and began regularly taking HEARTeam shifts soon after. Since September 2010, she has logged more than 1,203 hours on HEARTeam. At HCWC's 2011 Annual Meeting, she was given a 2011 Changemaker Award for her service.

Tell me about yourself. I live in Kyle, Texas with Kevin Yandell. We have a mixed family of three children. I have a son Brett, 18, and a daughter Chelsea, 16. Kevin has a daughter Makenna, 10. For the last nine years, I have worked as a Supervisor for the State Office of Risk Management. I love my life, even though I've gone through some rough patches. I have a very strong core group of friends and family that I love and count on to get me through the hard times. I have an even stronger faith in God that allows me to conquer anything that comes my way. My family attends services at The Journey United Methodist Church in Kyle, and I absolutely love it.

Why did you want to volunteer for HCWC? I was married in my senior year in high school. As I put it now -- I was young and dumb. The marriage was not a success. After six years, I realized that I would no longer allow myself to be physically or mentally abused. When I left, it felt like I

had no one to offer me help dealing with family violence issues. I told myself that when I got stable and felt that I had something to give, I would help others. I never want another person to feel so all alone.

Tell me your volunteer role at HCWC. I work with the HEARTeam who provide crisis intervention to sexual assault victims at hospitals. I love feeling like I can be there for someone in their roughest hour. It's so important to let them know that they are not alone. I can listen, hug and offer advice. I tell them about the services that HCWC can offer them, even a safe place to stay until they can get back on their feet.

How do you fit volunteering into your schedule? I have a very busy schedule. My family is always on the run. At the end of every month, I take a look at my calendar and block out 3-8 days in the next month. That way, nothing else is scheduled during my volunteer times.

What should a new volunteer expect to find at HCWC? I don't see many people at HCWC because I go to the hospitals. Sometimes, I volunteer for a weekend event or the auction. I keep in



HCWC volunteer Kristina Frederick loves to go antiquing, especially in Roundtop twice a year. She is shown here at the Junk Gypsy Prom. Kristina also enjoys scrapbooking, working on her family tree and entertaining at home.

touch through e-mail and phone. Staff always welcomes me. They have such good energy for our clients.

Anything else you would like to add? I love being a part of HCWC. It is not about me though. It is about the people we help, and that is why I am a part of this agency. It's about helping others in a dark time in their life and I can only hope that through me they might see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I am now very stable and have a loving relationship with an awesome man. I could not ask for a better life than what I have right now. 

DON'T MISS THE AUCTION-MAY 19TH

Shop 'Til You Drop to Help Victims of Abuse

Do you want to have a good time AND help others? We invite you to attend HCWC's 28th Annual Auction, our biggest fundraiser of the year held on May 19th at 6 p.m. at the LBJ Student Center Ballroom at Texas State University in San Marcos. We are amassing a treasure trove of silent and live auction items including a ride in a bi-plane, deer hunt package, hot air balloon ride, jewelry, antiques, collectibles, original art, trips and more! Once again, legendary Black's Barbeque will provide dinner for guests to enjoy between bidding.

Last year we raised over \$60,000, and we hope to raise even more this year to make up for government budget cuts to our agency. Tickets are \$25 per person. All proceeds from tickets and auction sales will fund direct services for victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse. A portion of your donation may be tax deductible as allowed by law.



In 2011, Amy Lockhart (left) and Katie Schick eyed the jewelry.

You can help!

Attend, donate auction items, bid high... ..and Become a Sponsor!

Call Glenda Muñoz at (512) 396-3404 x 248 to get involved.



Carolyn and Hollis Burklund were enthusiastic bidders during last year's live auction.

All auction sponsorships are publicly acknowledged in the auction program. Additional privileges include:

PLATINUM (\$2,500) receives listing on a large display banner at the event, 16 admission tickets, reservation for two tables and priority placement (must RSVP).

GOLD (\$1,500) receives 16 tickets, reservations for two tables (RSVP).

SILVER (\$1,000) receives 8 tickets, reservation for one table (RSVP).

BRONZE (\$500) receives 4 tickets, reservation for ½ table (RSVP).

COPPER (\$300) receives 4 tickets.

BRASS (\$150) receives 2 tickets.

LEGACY OF EMMETT MCCOY

By Marla Johnson

Emmett McCoy passed away in January at the age of 88. He and his family first invested in the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center in 1984 at the urging of their son, Dennis, and daughter-in-law, Cindy when they built a family violence shelter to serve our community. Although the McCoy's were very generous to so many in our community, Emmett was very humble and insisted that their gift be anonymous. It wasn't until 1996 when the McCoy's built a Counseling and Resource Center to serve victims of abuse not staying in the HCWC shelter that Emmett and his wife Miriam agreed to let us share with others about the support they had provided. In later years, the McCoy's purchased the building for Roxanne's House, our children's advocacy center, and invested \$1 million toward the building of a new shelter opened in 2009 which has been named the McCoy Family Shelter in their honor.



Left to right: Grant Nunnely, Kristen Nunnely, Kyle Nunnely, Scott Nunnely, Cindy McCoy, Brenda Remme, Emmett McCoy, Kaare Remme and Miriam McCoy posed in 2010.

Mr. McCoy has been such an inspiration to me personally and it has been an honor to work with him and his family to make sure local victims of abuse had the services they needed. In the last 28 years, over 25,000 local victims have received critical services in HCWC facilities provided or supported by the McCoy family. Lives have been changed. Children, women, and men have been saved from death and trauma. It is staggering to think about the impact his life has had on others. We are all so fortunate that he chose to live his life the way he did and that he has blessed our community with such a hard-working, generous and inspirational family.



Philosophy

Physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse of one human being by another is unacceptable.

The Hays-Caldwell Women's Center believes that all abuse diminishes or prohibits the full expression of life and growth that is every person's right.

Mission

The purpose of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center is to create an environment where violence and abuse are not tolerated in the communities we serve. The Center will provide education, violence prevention services, and crisis intervention to victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse. We will seek the support and resources necessary to achieve this mission.

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HCWC Happenings

Building Hope Phase II Complete

THE MOVE INCREASES OUR CAPACITY TO OFFER SERVICES.

In January, staff moved into the new Roxanne's House/Center for Community Partnerships. The two programs' staff doubled up to allow counselors and many of the advocates to work in the same building while the Counseling and Resource Center was under rehab work that included construction of a Donation Center. Counselors and advocates returned to the newly refurbished building in March.

To give hopeful blessings to the new campus, we organized a "Foundation of Hope" event in December. Board members, partner organizations and supporters wrote special messages on the foundation before the carpet was laid.

The completion of Phase II of our Capital Campaign will increase the number of child abuse victims we can serve by 25%, and the improved technology for forensic interviews will help ensure more successful prosecutions of child abusers. With space for expanded volunteer and internship services, we can expect a 75% increase in direct services to non-residential clients. The new donation center will ease donation drop-off and pick-up and improve coordination of distributing these donations to our program services. Last year, before completion of Phase II, our services increased by 17%. Now, with completion of Phase II, HCWC needs program funds more than ever.



Board member Frederick Rucker, Board President Donald Lee and HCWC Resident Counselor JoAnn Casarez confer on strategic planning at the March 3rd Board and Staff Retreat.



Caldwell County Commissioners issued a proclamation supporting Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month as will Hays County and cities. Left to right: John P. Cryler, Precinct 1, Fred F. Buchholtz, Precinct 2, HCWC intern Cecilia Actis, HCWC Primary Prevention Coordinator Maria Quinn, Joe Roland, Precinct 4 and Neto Madrigal, Precinct 3.



Board Member Emeritus Cathy Supple came to the "Foundation of Hope" event to add her blessing.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, an annual campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence. **April is also Child Abuse Prevention Month**, a time to recognize that we can each play a part in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and families in our communities. HCWC is planning many awareness activities throughout Hays and Caldwell counties. For more information, please see our website calendar page at www.hcwc.org.

Advocacy Training

Spring Advocate Training wrapped up on February 15. We had a large class of interns and volunteers, along with three new staff members. Subway Sandwiches donated three deli trays

for a Saturday class, and Costco in Schertz donated a gift card to cover some food costs. Intern Queiantin Jones filmed the classes and will produce DVDs to use in the future for participants to view when they miss a session.



Future Advocate Training class dates: Summer session begins on June 11. Fall session begins on September 10. If interested, please call Kate Shaw at (512) 396-3404 x222.

Front row (from L-R): Kelton Dorsey, Kelley Ibarra, Cecilia Actis, Summer Ahmed, Brandy Banks, Queiantin Jones
Middle row: Garrie Borden, Eddie Reyes, Jacquelyn Dunning, Kendra Butler, Lindsey Daniels, Vanessa Paulini, Scotti Stroud, and Nathalie Jorn
Back row: Deborah Ford, Gabriella Laurel, Christina Seby, Lynn Bernhagen, Brooke Bernhagen, Derick Turner, Amy Huebel, Chris Wilkins, Sarah Tinkham, Jessica Bradfield
Not pictured: Tania Rodriguez, Renee Perez, Stacey Minor

How You Can Help!

Donate Money in a variety of ways. Give securely online at www.hcwc.org. Send a check in the enclosed remittance envelope. Donate via your workplace giving program. See if your company matches donations.

Donate Gift Cards from HEB, Target and Walmart to help new clients shop for clothes and essentials like gasoline. Gift cards help new clients shop for essentials like gasoline to drive to work, over-the-counter and prescription drugs, food, clothes and school supplies for their children. For more information, please call Ashley Rios at (512) 396-3404.

Donate Gifts-In-Kind

- Sani-wipes and baby-wipes
- Disposable diapers, sizes 4, 5 & 6
- New women's underwear
- New women's pajamas, all sizes
- Gently used or new bath towels
- Gently used twin sheet sets
- Toddler girl clothes, 2T to 5T
- Teenage girls' jeans, junior sizes
- Children's snacks for lunchboxes (goldfish, pudding cups, juice boxes, etc.)
- New sneakers and casual footwear for teenagers and women, sizes 5-10
- Four armchairs for child abuse forensic interviews
- Gently used Mattresses for our clients leaving the shelter

Before bringing above donations to HCWC, please call Victoria, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (512) 396-3404. She will let you know if we still need the item(s) and where to drop them off.



(Above) Our supporters' donations to the Adopt-A-Family Program helped 36 families shop for their 63 children during the holiday season. We also gave each mother a gift basket filled with special hand-picked items for our clients. In total, 99 needy victims of abuse had a happier holiday because of generous donors.





P.O. Box 234
San Marcos, TX 78667-0234

24-hour HELPLine: (512) 396-4357
If Out of Area: (800) 700-4292
Office: (512) 396-3404

E-mail: info@hwc.org



Presents.....

28th Annual Auction

Saturday, May 19, 2012 at 6 p.m.

LBJ Student Center Ballroom
Texas State University– San Marcos

Admission \$25
*BBQ Dinner,
Silent & LIVE Auction,
Cash Bar & Free Parking*

Visit www.hwc.org
Or call (512) 396-3404
for more information

Bid on Trips, Jewelry, Antiques, Artwork, Gift Certificates & More!!

All proceeds from the auction are used to provide services to local victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse in Hays and Caldwell counties.

Save the Date!