



Photo by Mark Vlen

As part of the renovations, some of the windows at the Womenspace transition house were replaced to bring them up to code. The Womenspace shelter has provided refuge for more than 500 women and their children who were abused in relationships.

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with him more effectively, she said.

"He's a lot more confident. He's not afraid of me like he was when I was living with (Bob)," she said.

"(Gregory's) life went from very stable to very unstable, and now it's becoming stable again."

Fleming added that she is more patient and understanding with Gregory as well. "You're just a pest, you're a pain in the butt" — that's how it was. Now it's, "hey, I love you, kid," she said.

Fleming is one of thousands of women who have received the opportunity to take more control of their lives through the services of Womenspace.

The Womenspace shelter can house up to 15 women and their children, while the transition house, once renovation is complete, can accommodate five women and their children on a longer-term basis, said Abbie Smith, Womenspace assistant director.

"It's one of the first transitional housing programs in Lane County," Smith said. "It's breaking new ground for the low-income housing program."

A leading cause of homelessness, she said, is domestic violence coupled with a tight housing market. Almost half of the number of battered women

have no income of their own, which leaves them with few options other than dependency on the abuser, she said.

The transition house also will offer a support center that will be open to the community, she said. When renovation is complete, the house will be wheelchair accessible as well.

The Womenspace shelter is in its 13th year, and it is the area's only emergency shelter specifically for abused women and children, Smith said.

In 1988 the Womenspace shelter provided temporary refuge for more than 500 women and their children, and the transition house already has assisted about eight other women, Smith said.

She added that the Womenspace crisis line (485-6513) received more than 6,000 calls last year.

The nonprofit agency is sponsoring its 11th annual Lap-a-thon fund-raiser Feb. 24. In addition to an annual spring auction, the Lap-a-thon is one of Womenspace's biggest money-makers, with a goal of \$15,000 this year, Smith said.

Participants will gather pledges for every lap the participant can swim, run or walk in one hour. The Lap-a-thon will be held at several locations, including the University, the Amazon running trail and Lane Community College, Smith

said.

Men as well as women are encouraged to participate in the Lap-a-thon, she said, as a way to act against domestic violence. "This is one of the great ways men can get involved," she said.

Lap-a-thon sponsor packets can be picked up at the University Recreation and Intramural office, 103 Gerlinger, or by calling Womenspace at 485-8232.

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