



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Delivers \$300,000 to Build Domestic Violence Shelter

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GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that she has secured \$300,000 to allow Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes to build a domestic violence shelter in Seneca County. This has been a longtime priority of local advocates, law enforcement officers, and community leaders. This summer, Lori McConnell, of Waterloo, was murdered by her abuser. This tragic event highlighted the need for a local shelter. Senator Helming has worked with Lori’s children to deliver this critical funding and bring a shelter to our region.

“As a community we have come together and said enough is enough. We will not stay silent, and we will do everything possible to keep those who have been abused safe. To break the cycle of domestic violence, victims need a safe place they can go with their children to rebuild their lives. Our community pulled together after the murder of Lori McConnell, and as State Senator, I made a commitment to do everything possible to ensure that a shelter would be built to honor Lori’s memory and to prevent future tragedy. The development of this shelter is a direct result of the work of so many people, including Lora Bennett and Ryan and Matthew VanDoren, the children of Lori McConnell; Seneca Falls Police Chief Stuart Peenstra; Seneca County Sheriff Tim Luce; Undersheriff John Cleere; Chief Deputy Kipp Goodman; Safe Harbors Executive Director Marisa Rube; and Generations Bank CEO Menzo Case,” Senator Helming said.

Safe Harbors Executive Director Marisa Rube, “It takes tremendous courage for victims of domestic violence to leave their abuser, and when they do so, they put themselves and their families at greater risk of harm. Thanks to Senator Helming’s incredibly generous contribution and the immense support from the community, we will soon have this desperately needed resource to help victims overcome one of the biggest hurdles they face – a safe place to stay while they start to

rebuild their lives free of violence.”

Undersheriff John Cleere, who is also the Safe Harbors Vice President, said, “The efforts of concerned citizens, Senator Helming, and the dedicated staff of Safe Harbors have made the shelter an impending reality. The benefit to the victims of domestic violence, the criminal Justice system, and our communities is inestimable.”

This important funding will be used to develop a domestic violence shelter for women and their families that will be located in Seneca County and that will serve Ontario, Seneca, and Yates Counties. Currently, these three counties are among the six counties in New York State that do not have a domestic violence shelter. Every county should have a domestic violence shelter, and this is the first step toward giving abuse victims access to safe housing. Without a shelter in their community, victims often have to leave their communities, families, and jobs to find safe housing. This creates additional stress and oftentimes prevents victims from getting the help they need. To learn more about Safe Harbors, please visit <http://shflny.org/>.