

Shelter Our Sisters: a home of their own

TEANECK - Shelter Our Sisters (SOS), an organization which houses and counsels battered women and children, has found a home of its own in Teaneck.

The 15-room house, which was formally opened in a ceremony last Wednesday, currently is offering temporary shelter to 23 women and 17 children. The organization was able to buy the building outright with federal funds funnelled through the Community Development Program. Sandy Ramos, founder and director of SOS, said that the problems and needs of abused women and children have not diminished in the 12 years of the organization's life.

"The doors are open 24 hours a day, and we get many referrals at night. Usually when people come here they quite upset. We have counselors on duty at all times to care for them. We help women become stronger. Some of them do go back. We let them make up their minds. I'd like to think that after

just one night here, even if a woman returns to her husband, that she'll go back a stronger person. We offer support, and we help people establish themselves," Ms. Ramos said. "I ran SOS from my home for eight years, then we moved into rented facilities. This house belongs to the organization. We have a lot of room here, and we all work together."

Residents of SOS pitch in with cooking and chores. The director said that it costs the center just a few dollars a day to feed and care for the women.

"There are those who can donate while they're with us. But we've never turned anyone away because they had no funds. On the average, women usually stay with us for two months," the director said. "We have a director, a program coordinator, a senior counselor/social worker, a weekend and evening counselor, and a psychologist."

"We had a school for some time, but

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