

Shelter is cleared by probe

By Susan Karlin
Correspondent

TEANECK — An advocacy group for battered women will restore full membership privileges to the Shelter Our Sisters (SOS) home in Teaneck now that the state has been unable to substantiate complaints made against the shelter.

The New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, an advisory group that makes policy and funding recommendations to state agencies, had asked officials of the state Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) to conduct an investigation into six complaints concerning how the SOS shelter was run.

An on-site investigation was undertaken and, in a Dec. 18 letter, DYFS Management Team Director Thomas Blatner said officials could not validate the complaints and said he was "satisfied" it was operating in accordance with state regulations.

The shelter's voting privileges in the coalition had been rescinded in September, after SOS offi-

cial refused the coalition access for an on-site investigation. SOS officials said they refused access because the coalition had supported SOS's former executive director in a lawsuit against the shelter. The former director, Sandra Ramos, filed a lawsuit against SOS after she was fired in January, 1986.

Ms. Ramos, who founded SOS, claims the board did not have cause to fire her. Her case is pending before Superior Court Judge Sherwin D. Lester in Hackensack.

Coalition President Beverly Gilbert said her organization does not plan to contest DYFS's findings, and said there have been no other complaints.

Ms. Gilbert would not say who made the complaints, which centered on SOS's requiring counseling for battered women, excluding them from helping run the shelter, insufficient advocacy staffing, and discriminatory admission practices.

SOS is a private, nonprofit group with a shelter in Teaneck for 35 battered women and their children, and three homes that can accommodate another 30 people.



Sandra Ramos
Case pending against shelter