



Natasha has two children, ages 6 and 3. Her mother was mentally ill and physically abusive. She never really knew her father. Natasha was attracted to the first man who was nice to her. At first things were wonderful. He bought her gifts and took her out to dinner. She married him when she was 19; he was 29. Shortly after the marriage his attitude changed. Her husband would criticize everything she did. Natasha tried to keep the house looking nice and make meals that he liked, but he always found fault with something. Even after her first child was born the abuse continued. Her husband might come home in a rage and beat her. Most of the time she never knew what made him angry. One night he threw her down the stairs. When she was in the hospital, the doctor was very kind and asked her if she had ever been abused. This physician referred her to Safe Haven's shelter.

Once in the shelter Natasha felt supported by the counselors. Slowly she began to regain her self-esteem and confidence. She had never been allowed to work, so she applied for state benefits. Her shelter counselor helped her apply for medical insurance for herself and the children. The six year old was enrolled in our local school. After three months in the shelter, Natasha was able to get a subsidized apartment. She now has a job in retail and her younger son goes to daycare. Her dream is to become a pharmacist and plans to work on her degree once her son is in school full time.