

An Open Door
For Victims Of
Domestic Violence

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Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
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P.O. Box 97
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www.gracesmithhouse.org



The programs provided by this agency
are partially funded by money received
from the County of Dutchess

January 13, 2011

James L. Coughlan, County Comptroller
22 Market Street
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Dear Mr. Coughlan:

We have received and reviewed the audit report. We are in agreement with the findings and recommendations of the report. We appreciated the professionalism and support of the Comptroller's office during this audit.

As noted in your summary, we were already in the process of implementing many of these recommendations before the audit. The process of participating in the audit served to strengthen our financial controls and operation.

Some background on the agency evolution. In 2009, the Board of Grace Smith House participated in a strategic planning process with funding support from the Dyson Foundation. As part of this process, the Board identified several operational and strategic concerns. The Board then commissioned an ad hoc task force to develop a plan to address these concerns. The task force met from September 2009 through December 2009.

A new strategic organization was announced on January 6, 2010 at a staff meeting for all agency employees. At that time, the Board commissioned a search committee to find a new executive director, a former executive director agreed to work on an interim basis as shelter director, and an experienced board member agreed to serve as Director of Administration on an interim basis.

The agency immediately began the process of strengthening financial controls and developing comprehensive administrative systems. Several problems were identified and addressed. The agency developed a new Fiscal Policies and Procedures manual to codify the changes going forward.

Key personnel changes were made:

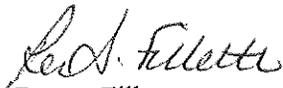
- A new executive director started on June 1, 2010.
- A new position was created for human resources; the human resources manager assumed responsibility for payroll and employee time accounting.
- A new full time administrative assistant was hired to help segregate financial responsibilities and to better manage the many data and record keeping requirements. Previously, the finance

director personally performed all aspects of payments and deposits.

- A new position was created for a Director of Counseling to improve the clinical response to clients. This position was filled by a licensed social worker.

All of these changes were in place before the start of the audit. The audit helped to identify additional problems that we now plan to address.

Sincerely,



Renee Fillette

Executive Director



Mary H. Williams

Director of Administration



Donna Betts

Chair, Board of Directors



Robert Finn

Treasurer, Board of Directors