**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE CRITICAL WORK OF SISTERCARE, INC., AND THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IT HAS ON PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF BATTERED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THE MIDLANDS.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is grateful for the outstanding work of Sistercare and the vital assistance the organization provides some of our most vulnerable citizens; and

Whereas, in 1972, groups of concerned citizens in the Columbia area met to discuss ways to meet the pressing needs of battered women, and in May 1978, the Columbia YWCA board of directors voted to support efforts for a formal program of services for abused women and their children in the Columbia vicinity; and

Whereas, by 1981, Sistercare, Inc., was established as an independent organization with funding from the Junior League of Columbia, the South Carolina Department of Social Services, and the United Way of the Midlands, and with contributions from local churches, civic organizations, and individuals; and

Whereas, later that year, Sistercare, Inc., opened an emergency shelter in Richland County in a house rented from the Columbia Housing Authority, and by April 1982, a City of Columbia grant allowed the purchase of a permanent 24‑bed shelter; and

Whereas, in 1994, Sistercare opened a critically needed 20‑bed shelter in Lexington County, and a third emergency shelter opened in 2004, designed to house up to sixteen persons and accommodate domestic violence survivors requiring extended stay; and

Whereas, by 1998, Sistercare opened satellite offices and placed counseling staff in Fairfield and Newberry counties to provide greater access to critically needed services, and in 1999, a satellite office was opened in Kershaw County; and

Whereas, with the assistance of a three‑year grant in 2002, Sistercare established a transitional‑housing and support‑services program for disabled domestic violence victims; and

Whereas, Sistercare seeks to increase safety for battered women and their children by offering emergency shelter at confidential, secure locations in Lexington and Richland counties; to help domestic violence victims become self‑sufficient, free of family violence, and responsible for themselves and their children; and to raise awareness and educate the community about domestic violence and the services of Sistercare; and

Whereas, programs currently offered to the community by Sistercare include three emergency shelters; individual, group, and child counseling; food, laundry, clothing, and transportation; crisis intervention, counseling, and support for up to a year; a crisis telephone line twenty‑four hours a day seven days a week; training for victim‑service providers; education for civic, faith‑based, and professional groups; and court advocacy; and

Whereas, over the past year, Sistercare has served 8,501 battered women and children; 488 domestic violence victims and their children sought safety in its emergency shelters, and 8,013 abuse victims received Sistercare’s community‑based services; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly applauds the work of Sistercare for providing shelter and services and advocating for abused women and their children in Richland, Lexington, Kershaw, Newberry, and Fairfield counties, and its work to prevent domestic violence through community awareness and training. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and commend the critical work of Sistercare, Inc., and the significant impact it has on promoting the welfare of battered women and their children in the Midlands.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Audrey Brown, President of the Sistercare Board, and Nancy Barton, Executive Director of Sistercare.

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