

The SHALVA Founders Transcript

DAVID JOHNSON: This is an interview for the Jewish Women's Archive Women Who Dared project. It's an interview with the founders of SHALVA --

(Break in audio)

DJ: The interviewer is David Johnson. The interview is taking place on March 4th, 2003. And the interviewees are Hadassah Goodman, Fayge Siegal, Devora Stern, Shoshie Kahn, Chani Friedman, and Batshie Goldfeder.

(Break in audio)

DJ: Tamara.

TAMAR FRIEDMAN: Tamar.

DJ: Tamar. Right. Can you tell me a little bit about your background and how you grew up and how you came to --

TF: Oh.

DJ: -- begin with --?

TF: All right. I was born in Israel, and I was raised there and I lived there all my growing life until I became an adult and I got married and moved to Chicago about 21 years ago with my husband, who's originally from Chicago. And we lived in Israel for the first part of our married life and then we moved here. And I've been in education, a teacher most of my life. And when I moved to Chicago, I became involved in the Jewish community and Jewish affair-- Orthodox community. And one of the projects I was involved, as a young (laughs) woman, which I'm not anymore --

F: (laughs)

TF: -- is helping out the Daughters of Israel, which is the mikveh association. I don't know if you want me to -- But I think there's other people here much more involved with mikveh that may give you a better background. And one of the projects that they ran was called Shalom Bayit. And Shalom Bayit project was peace and tranquility in the Jewish home, in a loose translation. Which, we did all kinds of things to help people, which, harmony, conflict resolution within the Jewish home.

(Break in audio)

TF: -- personal note that one of the things that prompted me to be interested in this was that one of my neighbors was a wife of a well-known doctor, a Jewish Orthodox woman, whose children were going to the school I was teaching in -- and still (laughs) am involved in. One day I saw them outside in a big snowstorm. He was abusing her in the street. And I just looked out the window. I was on the ground floor. And I just couldn't believe it at first. I thought she fell; he's trying to help her. And then when I saw it, I was like -- I couldn't believe it. That's what got us to think about the idea of -- And the other girl who was working with me, she lives across the street, neighbor of mine. And together, first we were reaching out to help this woman. And we realized the woman did not want help. She wants very much to keep her confidentiality and not to be bothered with anybody knowing anything, et cetera. And then we realized that the problem is not just helping this woman and finding solutions for her, which she wasn't even interested, but learning more about it, finding out why women reject help or are hesitant about getting help and reaching out initially. And how we do it and the fact that it happened within us, amongst us was a big, shocking realization. And that's what really got my interested and involved in helping in that capacity.

DJ: And this was around what time, that you saw --?

TF: This was before SHALVA was -- This was -- What year was SHALVA --?

F: '87?

TF: I would say it was like '84.

F1: And it might have been a little bit earlier --

F: '84.

F1: -- because before, we came together, actually, as a group.

F: We spent a good year getting educated.

F1: We spent a good year-and-a-half, two years, so just getting educated.

TF: Learning about it. Right.

F2: We didn't even know anything about it. It was not talked about. And I believe Jewish abuse is different than, you know, than the non-Jewish abuse. And we just had to learn the differences and learn how to deal with them.

TF: When I spoke to Rebbetzin Weinberg for the first -- This is Tamar. When I spoke to Rebbetzin Weinberg the first time, and she said to me, "I want you to bring together ten women in the community that were willing to give their time and talent and their influence to take this project on."

F: She didn't tell us --

F: She didn't tell us --

F: When I --

TF: I know. She said -- Right. That's right. The first time -- She -- No --

F1: She said, "I have to talk to you about something very important."

TF: Something very important. And but later on --

DJ: And she came to you because you were part of the Daughters of --

TF: Israel. Because we were organizing this. And we --

F1: But she said, "After the lecture --"

TF: Right. We were bringing her in as a guest lecturer. And she did not talk about domestic abuse. She just talked about shalom bayit, which is harmony in the Jewish home and how to achieve it and how to prevent conflict before it happens, et cetera. Which was also, at that time, something that was, you know, just people looking into understanding the dynamics of conflict.

HADASSAH GOODMAN: I don't know what --

DJ: And this is Hadassah.

HG: Hadassah. What I'm remembering is that these programs, which happened, I think, every other summer -- And usually a couple would be brought in. It was usually a well-known rabbi and his wife, who was also known for her own education and --

F: Or doctors and --

HG: Or doctors, right.

TF: Social --

F: Once.

HG: Right, we had some doctors. And the idea was to just enhance the marital relationship. There was absolutely no discussion, thought, public awareness that there were major problems in parts of the community. It was really only within, say, ten years of the general domestic violence movement in the general population. And we actually looked at it -- it was there, it wasn't here. So, for us, this was not even on the radar screen. And she --

TF: Like I've always said, some women were very outraged that we're bringing -- that we're *making* it into a problem. "Why are you" --

F: And (inaudible).

TF: "-- creating a problem?" Right.

F: Just it doesn't exist as a (inaudible)

TF: Right.

FAYGE SIEGAL: Right. This is Fayge. What Rebbetzin Weinberg at the time requested was, "Get these women to agree to stay after the lecture, because I want to talk to them." So the people who were involved, Tamar and Risa, who had run that program, and Devora Stern and I, who at the time were the president of this organization -- and then we called up people like Hadassah, who was always very well known to be involved, especially with Jewish women and, you know, like that, Chani Friedman, who was also very involved in Daughters of Israel, and Shoshie and --

SHOSHIE KAHN: I didn't --

FS: You didn't come in right away? You were not --

SK: I -- no.

FS: -- at that one? We had Rebbetzin --

F: Debbie Keller was there.

FS: Debbie Keller was there, and Craindell Mannes.

TF: She passed away already.

FS: We just tried to -- Edie Davis.

F: You were at the last --

FS: We tried to think of people --

F: We all were (inaudible).

F: And segments of the community.

TF: Right. I remember Edie Davis being there also and --

F: Right.

FS: Who were influential women. And we felt, you know, OK, fine, that meets it. But what had no idea what she wanted to talk to us about. And when she did, I remember some of the people, like Hadassah, were giving knowing glances and others were like, "What are you talking about?" You know? And it was definitely a shock and an eye-opener to most of us, a lot.

DJ: And so can you talk a little more about your own background before this, as an active -- as a woman and --?

FS: Well, I was never an activist. (laughs) The only thing that may have shaped me -- in terms of my parents have always been the kind of people who have many guests at their

Shabbos table, the type of guests who most people are not interested in having at their Shabbos tables. They don't have guests to entertain. They have people who are disturbed and, you know, on the fringes of society, and very needy people at their Shabbos table. And as a child, growing up, I went through stages of being very annoyed with them about it, because we can't ever have a normal Shabbos meal, to finally a realization that, you know, our entire home was like, you know, a sanctuary because of the enormous work that my mother and my father, in his way, were doing, just to take these people in and talk to them and listen to them, even more. So that, I guess, you know, aroused in me an idea of at least that, you know, everyone's got to do something. I could never do what my parents did, and having, on a regular basis, people that they have on a regular basis in their home, because I don't have the temperament to be patient enough -- more impatient --

DJ: And to give the --

FS: -- by nature. And this was something, I think, which made me very impatient -- that we have to, (raps on something) you know, deal with this now -- when it was brought to my attention. And that probably is what kept me and Hadassah, who at this point are the only two -- the originals, who are still hanging in there. (laughs) And we're still on the SHALVA board, and we're not giving up. Everyone else, of course, went off, because their lives became so busy that they -- you know, or they became involved in other things.

TF: There was also the issue that the organization was really taken over --

F: Growing.

FS: It was growing, yeah.

TF: -- growing -- taken over by more professional people who were hired, and that the Federation took it over. So, from a grassroots type of --

FS: The Federation --

TF: -- a homegrown --

F: Didn't take it over but they --

FS: The Federation --

TF: Well, no, no. But I'm saying.

F: The accredit -- yeah, the (inaudible) things.

TF: Yeah, well, but it's -- You know.

FS: Right.

TF: Their baby.

FS: The nature of it changed from a grassroots --

F: That's interesting, that you think that.

TF: Yeah.

FS: -- where like each, you know, individual was so integrally involved in its existence, the way it was in the beginning, to more of a, you know -- I mean, it's a full-fledged agency, you know, with a board, that's very, very diverse -- which was a conscious decision that we made to broaden the scope of the board in order to broaden the scope of the recipients, the clients, you know, the people who get help from SHALVA, and to broaden the scope of our outreach in the wider Jewish community and --

F: Education.

FS: -- who we're going to be able to do fundraising from. So, we definitely have traveled very, very far from our initial group of fifteen -- or ten to fifteen women sitting around Shoshie's kitchen table and the planning out, you know, all the things that we were doing.

TF: I still remember --

DJ: Is that --?

TF: -- we were debating using our phone numbers --

F: Yes.

TF: -- as a safe place --

F: Yeah. Mmm hmm.

TF: -- for us ourselves --

F: Right.

TF: -- to take the women in, because we had no other means. And that was interesting.
(laughs)

CHANI FRIEDMAN: Well -- this is Chani -- I'd like to address something, the thing we -- Actually -- When this organization started, we really felt that we had an obligation, based on what Rebbetzin told us, to address this need in the Orthodox Jewish community. We didn't realize that it existed in the Orthodox Jewish community, and it took a lot of education on our part to come to terms with the fact that it did exist in the Orthodox community. I think the general rabbinate in this Orthodox community was not always friendly to the starting of this and to the publicizing of this. I think Orthodox Judaism is a quiet religion, in the sense that we don't air these kinds of things in public. And I think we were afraid to make it seem like every home had this going on, by making it a whole

hullabaloo. Since we started very, very controlled in the Orthodox community, we had to stay within the Orthodox community, as far as the fundraising and so forth. Once we realized the kinds of services that were needed for these clients and it really started broadening, with rabbinic services, legal services, sheltering services, we realized that this was not such a simple thing to pull off. We maintained it still within the Orthodox community, because the feeling was that the non-Orthodox or those who were a little bit more worldly and modern could get their services in the general world, because it was coming out in the general world. Our feeling was we had to provide the need for those who couldn't get it or who were ashamed to get it. And that's how it started. I think very soon we saw that we couldn't keep funding it and we couldn't keep doing it on our own without the help of the people who were a little bit more entrenched in it or at least were more knowledgeable. OK?

HG: I think -- this is Hadassah -- the other pivotal piece was that we came to realize pretty early on that Jewish domestic violence is different. It has an etiology that's different. It has a symptomatology that's different. And its services have to have some difference. And as soon as we realized that. I think we realized that we couldn't provide service only for the Orthodox community. We needed to provide service -- we had a responsibility to provide service for the entire breadth of the Jewish community. And the fact is that we opened the shelter -- That first year that the shelter was opened, there was exactly a one-third-one-third-one-third distribution of how the services were actually being used. So, one-third of the clients were Orthodox, one-third of the clients were Conservative/Reform, and one-third of the clients were totally not affiliated but identified as Jewish. That was an absolute eye-opener. And from that point on there was no question about which way we had to go. Initially it was just a gut feeling that this is what we had to do. But, you know, Chani -- Our initial idea was this is a problem here in the Orthodox community, this is where we function, this is where our responsibility is. And I think that there was also a naiveté -- certainly on my part -- that there are these few situations; we're going to take care of these few situations --

TF: Once we take care of them -- It was a fire.

HG: -- and then everything's going to be OK. We're going to bring in good education and we're going to make sure that our children are educated well enough so that, when they go into marriage, there will be safeguards to prevent this from happening. And that's what I was --

TF: Well, I want to say that --

F: I think --

TF: -- Tamar -- and just what Hadassah and Chani said, but I think that the fact that this organization started from within the Orthodox community is really what gives it its strength. Because unlike many other services where the Orthodox people need to go outside, even if it's a Jewish agency -- and they need to go out to get the services, they feel a little embarrassed, they feel a little ashamed. The fact that this started from within the Orthodox gives the organization, until today, a tremendous strength and acceptability across the spectrum of Jewish practice, of everybody feels safe going to SHALVA. Even the first director that we hired was Orthodox -- was Sherry, right?

F: Mmm-hmm.

TF: And I think there's very strong involvement from the Orthodox community. And I know you're not Jewish but you need to appreciate what that means, not only for the Orthodox, for the entire Jewish community, that this organization started from a need that was identified within the Jewish women within the most Orthodox core of Judaism, really, I think, a very, very significant factor in the development of SHALVA and the way it fanned out and the way it evolved to be what it is today.

DEVORA STERN: And we started out, really, that the teachers have to be aware, look for signs in children. You know, a child won't talk but you can see certain signs of them.

And we had to start educating teachers and start, you know, giving talks to teachers, so they can start recognizing and they can start trying to do what they can to help a child who's coming from a home where there's domestic abuse. So, we just grew. I mean, we started out, you know, one way and we just kept growing, because there's just so much need from all the different ends that haven't been taken care of and dealt with.

TF: See --

DJ: Say your name.

DS: Oh. This is Devora.

TF: See, many of us are teachers. And, for example, I remember -- Tamar -- was one of the first schools, maybe the first school that SHALVA came in to do an education program was at Hillel Torah.

F: That's right.

TF: Because of my involvement, because of the passion that I felt about it, I felt that the girls, for our family life education -- Until today, we do a lot of stuff that SHALVA has to offer, for the very young members of our society, to make -- I don't know how -- Like you say -- But it does make a big difference, the awareness --

F: Do we have peers --

TF: -- to identify --

F: -- in Hillel Torah?

F: Mmm hmm.

TF: Yes, we have peers in Hillel Torah.

DS: We tried teaching the children how to have conflict resolution, how to deal with -- not to constantly fight out fight but talking to each other, so you can cut down on the amount of violence, and sort of bringing in --

FS: How not to be a bully and how not be a victim --

DS: And that kind of thing.

FS: -- all of the --

TF: Right.

DS: And in the high school level they teach the girls, when they started going out, what signs to look for when -- you know, the --

F: Assertive.

CF: I do that. This is Chani. I teach 12th-graders about dating. I don't know why I'm the world's expert but I --

(laughter)

F: You're the world expert?

CF: And as part of my spiel, I have some sheets that I got from SHALVA, about those kinds of things to look out for. Even on a date they're not necessarily going to come to any physical --

F: But there's factors.

CF: But there are other things. There are --

FS: Controlling.

CF: -- control factors that they should be aware of. And we talk about this. And I do it in a non-threatening manner, but I get it in every year.

DJ: Can you --? To get back to the idea about it started in the Orthodox, can you talk a little bit about your family background --

CF: OK.

DJ: -- and religious background?

CF: OK. I come from Colorado. I was born and raised in Denver. My parents were both community activists. Because in a small community, every person makes a difference. My father was a rabbi, and he was involved in the community. My mother was very much involved in the community. She was president of every organization, I think, the city ever had. She just finished one presidency and the next one called her, and she said yes. They helped start the day school there, and really helped build the community. To this day, my mother, who is in her 70's, *ad meiah vesrim shannah*, is the building administrator in her complex in Florida. (laughter) And she's just -- she's involved with the shul and she makes the cookies on Purim, for *shalach mones*, where they bake for months, you know, and literally as a fundraiser. So, this is, I guess, genetic. There's not much I can do about that.

F: (laughs)

CF: I also am blessed with a very organized way of life, in the sense that I can see the beginning, the middle, and the end of projects. And so, I guess it's just natural, if there's something to be involved in -- And Chicago allows us that involvement. It's a beautiful Jewish community here, where people can make a difference. I think Orthodoxy teaches us that you have your obligations in your family structure and family life and, if you can, you have obligations to a community. You don't just take from the community, but you can give to community. And I really think everyone around this table has that in them,

whether they realize it or not.

F: It's a kind of a situation, being a very good Jewish --

CF: Yes. And very community-minded. For being fairly large, it's pretty amazing how much we know each other. We get involved in different projects, even outside our immediate realm, and we give of our talents. And I think that's really important. I got involved with Daughters of Israel when it first moved here, because I didn't know anybody in the religious community. I worked in a hospital. I'm a medical technologist by my first degree. And I didn't know anyone. And so, my husband said, "Get involved with some groups." And a woman called me and said, "I'll take you to Daughters of Israel," which was the group that dealt with family purity and just the Jewish family as a whole. And it generally entailed younger women, young marrieds, as opposed to the older women. And when you're newly married, there's a big line of demarcation now. There isn't.
(laughs)

F: And we're the older women now.

F: (laughs)

CF: Right. And so, I got involved with that. And literally, I think all of us were in charge of different parts of the organization, up through the presidency. I was the president before. I hooked Fayge into following.

FS: Yes.

CF: And things come up when you're part of a group, especially a woman's group. This fell in our laps, literally. I mean, it was really --

FS: It was --

F: It was dumped.

FS: -- dumped.

CF: OK.

FS: The rest of our --

TF: The thing about it, it would have happened --

F: For us.

CF: It would have happened anyway but --

TF: I don't know if it wouldn't have been us, this exact thing.

CF: It would have been someone.

F: Yeah.

F: Right.

TF: It would have ha--

CF: And I think we felt a tremendous guilt, walking out of there and saying, "We can't deal with this." I think we all knew we had the capacity to deal with it. We just didn't know what to do.

FS: And at the same time, we said, "We can't not deal with it."

CF: Right.

FS: You know?

CF: I think it's to our credit that we did this education, this self-education.

F: Yeah.

CF: I remember the numerous meetings --

TF: Where we had everybody out -- or came from --

CF: -- that, we were just educating ourselves. We didn't even move forward into the next step because we needed to know what are the steps in general. Right? I think that's to the credit of the women in the group. All of us had young children. All of us had husbands who said, "Another meeting? You've got to be kidding."

FS: And those meetings lasted.

TF: Your husband --!

CF: They lasted until -- Well, that's why I --

FS: They lasted until 11:00 --

CF: -- eventually dropped out of the group --

FS: -- 12:00 at night.

TF: Said -- The night.

CF: -- because he just --

F: Took up a lot of --

CF: It took up so much --

F: Went to the meeting and --

CF: -- of our time. And we just didn't come home, I mean, until the wee hours of the morning.

F: One o'clock.

CF: And we were all busy with other things. But I think that --

F: Well, once you had (inaudible), you said --

CF: That's right. And once we knew what the various steps were. And it was like quicksand sometimes. It just -- every time you thought you had a handle on this piece, there was that piece.

F: Yeah.

CF: And that's how it continued to grow.

TF: A sense of overwhelmed.

DJ: How did you --?

F: Yes.

CF: Well, like --

DS: (inaudible) from different organizations to show --

CF: Non-Jewish organizations.

DS: This is Devora talking. We went to visit a shelter in one of the suburban areas here to see what it looks like, to speak to the person who runs it. We would have him coming to our homes to teach us. Because we literally knew nothing about it.

FS: Our first executive director -- this is Fayge talking -- Sherry Dimarsky, was a lawyer. And so, she first -- we got involved with her and she ended up becoming our executive director because she came and she taught us about what an order of protection and what's an injunction and what's a this and what's a that --

TF: We never heard these words before.

FS: -- and what's an advocate and why you need to go to -- Like all these things, she --

F: Well, and, of course --

HG: What was the difference -- This is Hadassah.

FS: Between --

HG: What is the difference between criminal and civil.

FS: Right. And family court, and this and that. And we just had to learn, you know, just all of -- We had so mu--

F: All the legal --

FS: So she really -- Sherry also helped us, you know --

HG: She organized us also.

F: Sure.

TF: Oh, yeah. She was -- Mmm hmm.

HG: I wonder why she's not here. She was so instrumental. And she --

DS: That was later.

F: That was later on.

F: That was later.

TF: Right.

FS Right.

DS: That was a good deal --

TF: That's when we got ourselves together --

DS: That was years later!

TF: -- and voted her in.

FS: No, it wasn't years later.

CF: It was two years -- or --

FS: She was in the --

HG: After a discussion.

F: Oh, yeah.

TF: It wasn't so many --

FS: It was the second year.

TF: Two years.

HG: It was a good two years.

FS: Good two years.

HG: Right. It was a good two years after we opened shelter.

TF: Right.

HG: OK. And we were working before that, maybe a year-and-a-half. So, in that very early (inaudible) and that very early year-and-a-half, in addition to the speakers that we were bringing in, so all -- your house and your house --

TF: Right.

HG: -- there was also the connection that was made. And I don't remember if it was you or Risa who connected us with [Sonny Fisher?].

CF: I remember when Sonny came.

F: Right.

HG: And Sonny was involved in --

TF: I think it was Risa.

F: I think so.

HG: It was a group called Bitachon that had done a needs assessment about Jewish domestic violence in the larger Jewish community. They worked on that for about three years. I think they might have been Federation funded. I'm not sure. I think so. And they had amassed a significant amount of data. And they did no service. They never got to the point of service. And for some reason they petered out. And then, lo and behold, they connected with us. They taught us. And --

FS: Right. They taught everything that they had spent all those years, you know, gathering.

TF: They gave us some of the data.

F: Our --

TF: "Bitachon," by the way, in Hebrew means security.

DS: But I think the difference was --

TF: So that was their --

DS: -- that we in head first. We were action-oriented --

TF: Right.

DS: -- and they were processing --

TF: Research, right.

DS: Yeah, it was very much into that.

HG: I think that --

DS: We didn't process.

HG: Right.

DS: We just went.

HG: I think that, if they had not been there, we probably would have done things backwards, more backwards than we did.

TF: I mean, we did a lot of things backwards.

DS: We did a lot of things backwards. Right.

TF: But it would have been worse.

HG: And there was, in truth, I think a lot of good fortune in our naiveté, because, if we had realized what we were getting into, we probably would not have. I think if we would have been aware even of some of the legal ramifications, then we would have been frightened off.

F: (laughs)

HG: So, a lot of what we did was just because we felt we needed to do it. And so --

SK: I think we were always one step --

TF: Shoshie.

SK: -- Shoshie -- we were one step behind what we needed to do. So, somebody would come in with a need and then we would fill that need. And then they would come in with another need and we would have to fill that. We were just always one step behind. And we would have to learn how to do it. And that's how we figured it out. And then when Bitachon came in and started telling us, "Well, you did what? You did how?" We were feeling kind of mad about it, you know, but --

TF: It was a sense of overwhelmed --

SK: Very overwhelmed.

TF: -- a lot of times. I felt like very overwhelmed. "My gosh, we can't do this! We --" So when we decided to go professional --

(laughter)

F: And when we (inaudible).

TF: -- it was such a sense of relief for all of us. Because --

F: Well, it's a --

DJ: Before you had the facility, where -- or what --?

SK: We basically jumped right into that.

TF: Right.

F: Yeah, that was the best ever thing.

TF: That was the first thing we did. Then we realized we do not --

FS: This is Fayge talking.

TF: -- to have a --

F: One minute. Or one second.

FS: The first thing we did was to organize this huge symposium, to introduce the --

F: The subject.

FS: -- to introduce the subject. We had this --

HG: That was public.

SK: That was after the -- Yeah, first we had rabbis.

F: Yeah.

FS: Well, that was the same day.

TF: The rabbi.

FS: So, what we did was --

SK: Now that won't work until that point.

FS: -- we had this -- Bar-- Well, the first -- We spent a lot of time getting to that point, which was going to be the grand kickoff --

F: Opening.

FS: -- the grand opening of introducing the concept of that, yes, there is domestic abuse in the Orthodox Jewish community. And we did it by inviting this woman, Barbara Harris, out from New York. They didn't have a shelter, but she worked in a shelter.

F: I think -- Yeah.

FS: It wasn't a Jewish shelter.

F: Oh, no?

FS: It was a regular city shelter --

F: Yeah, we (inaudible).

FS: -- that offered kosher food, I think.

TF: I thought it was a safe home. No?

HG: It was connected to a Y in New York, YHCA -- no, YH--

F: YW--?

HG: -- YWHA --

F: H--

HG: -- YWHA. And it was funded by the city, but it was Jewish -- and because it was a YH-- Hebrew Association. It was funded by the city. It served kosher food. And it had a Jewish day school on the premises. And that was the only one in the entire country. And she was Jewish, not Orthodox. But because of the clients that she was working with, she had information and verification. She was sort of the one who said to the city, in a public way, from outside -- In other words, we were just a bunch of women. People thought we were nuts. People accused us of trying to break up Jewish homes, trying to --

TF: Mostly -- Let me --

HG: -- and of being feminists.

TF: Mostly men.

F: Men.

TF: We had a lot of problems --

F: Men.

TF: -- with some of the men.

HG: I mean, we literally walked into the room --

F: (inaudible) abuse.

(laughter)

HG: -- and everybody walked away from us. The outrage was pretty intense. And not only was the outrage intense in the general public, but the Orthodox community --

TF: The rabbis.

HG: -- the rabbinate could not take it in. They couldn't hear it. And I think that part of that was because individual rabbis had been dealing with it one-on-one. There was never any discussion between them to give them any idea that there was really more than just --

TF: A general need.

HG: -- this lady, who must be nuts --

DS: OK, I -- this is Devora -- just want everyone -- Many rabbis never even thought to ask, when they were trying to deal with couples --

CF: Right.

DS: -- "Is there abuse going on?" So as far as they knew, there never was, because they never --

F: Right.

DS: You know, until you pose that question, people are not going to jump out and say, "Hey, I'm abused." If you ask the right questions, you can get answers. And then you can start sifting through the material, what you're hearing and get to the point where you realize there is abuse going down.

HG: There's also a cultural phenomenon that -- And I don't know how it is among other religious groups, meaning non-Jewish religious groups. There's a cultural phenomenon that says that marriage and family are the absolute most important institutions in the community. And it is, to some degree, a message that it is the woman's responsibility to make the marriage work. And so, if a woman is in an abusive situation, her first thought is, "If this is not working, if this is not being OK, it must be my fault." If she goes to the rabbi and he had not been aware or educated, his first response is, "Go home and try

harder." And the cycle of that had no way to be stopped, to be broken. So, if we spoke to a rabbi, it was anathema to say that there is a widespread problem or that it really isn't the woman's problem. It's not because she didn't cook supper right. It's something else.

SK: But we did have one advocate, which was very important.

TF: That's right. It was good.

SK: That was what, I think, helped us get through all that, was because we had one rabbi who was really wonderful -- didn't understand and I still don't think he does.

FS: No, he does. He told me recently that it took him a long, long time until he really, really understood it but he understands it now.

F: Yes, and he's -- Yes.

TF: (laughs) At least he thinks he does.

F: (laughs)

SK: Whatever.

FS: No, he does!

SK: But it worked for us.

TF: It did.

SK: It worked for us. It gave us legitimacy.

TF: And it broke --

DJ: That's what I was going to ask, is how did you get over that?

SK: Yeah. OK.

TF: Right.

SK: He gave us legitimacy. And because he was one of the leaders in the community, then he was willing to come to meeting -- not that he was willing to say, "Yes, yes, yes! This is happening," but he was willing to come.

FS: Which was an amazing feat, gathering all those rabbis together around the --

F: And it is.

F: Yeah.

HG: But that took a huge amount of work.

F: Oh, yes.

HG: Let's go back even a little bit before that. One of the things that happened, probably around the same time that we were still -- Yeah. It was around the same time that we were still in Shoshie and Devora's living rooms.

FS: And Shulamis Weinfeld.

HG: Yes.

SK: Right, Shulamis Weinfeld's.

HG: Was that --

TF: Oh, she's not here.

FS: Did she have a problem with the car?

TF: Oh, really?

HG: There was a group of 15 women who were separated and divorced. And they had a --

TF: Support group.

HG: -- they had a support group. And among these 15 women, a few were divorced. Most were not. And they couldn't get a divorce. In Jewish law, if you can't get a divorce --

TF: If the husband does not give you --

HG: -- if the husband doesn't give you a divorce, you can't date. You could have a civil divorce. You're stuck. And so these women were -- The term is *agunah*, literally means chained. They were stuck. So these women out of the support group were wanting some action. And what we did was pull together a meeting of rabbis. There must have been about six or eight rabbis. But we included in that -- And this was just a very interesting piece of community organization. Now, you know, fifteen, twenty years later, I would say --

TF: Things are totally different.

HG: -- "Oh, I can put a name to what we did."

(Break in audio)

TF: (laughs)

HG: -- I'd do that. And what we did was we contacted the leading financial supporter of each of the rabbis that we wanted contact with. And we explained to them what the situation was.

TF: We suggested.

F: (laughs)

HG: And we asked them to plead. And, of course, these were people that we probably knew.

TF: We knew.

HG: And we said, "You've got to just do it." So, we then had a meeting. It was a neighborhood thing.

TF: That was -- To make clear --

HG: Yes.

TF: -- to David, that rabbis in our community are all men.

HG: Yes.

TF: That might not be a fact that you're aware of, but it was very significant in the way we had to approach.

F: Yes.

HG: And --

TF: They were all men. And they still are.

F: (laughs)

HG: Women in Orthodoxy have always been communally involved, for thousands of years. That's what we do. But always very private, very non-public. And we were doing this different. OK, so we organized this meeting. It was a neighborhood thing. It was in

the small Beis Midrash. What we did was put together four vignettes of the stories of these women who were in the group. And we brought the rabbis and these financial supporters into the room and we had them sit and read the vignettes, right there. And they said, "And this can't be." Some of those vignettes, maybe even all of them -- I don't remember -- all had some aspect of domestic violence in it, of control. The mere fact that these women couldn't get a *get*, a Jewish divorce, was a factor of control. That piece happened somewhat simultaneous to the getting together of this larger group. So once that happened, then we were able to go back to the self-same rabbis, go back to those same financial supporters and say, "We need to have a meeting with all the rabbis, because we're doing this public thing." So there was a lot of one-on-one --

TF: Little steps.

HG: -- relationship building with the rabbis. There was one rabbi, a young one, who is no longer in the city, who was violently opposed --

TF: Oh, my gosh.

F: Oh, yeah!

HG: -- violently opposed.

TF: (laughs) Yeah, OK. And vocally.

F: We all now know why.

TF: Voc--

HG: Yes. Yes.

CF: But he also had a tremendous gift in writing --

HG: Yes.

CF: -- and he wrote. Yes.

HG: And we were worried that he was going to destroy this. And rabbis were afraid to come out. Some of them were afraid to come out. And we had to do kind of talking. We would tell this rabbi that that rabbi was coming.

(laughter)

F: And that's how it was done?

TF: What is it called? Lobbying?

(laughter)

HG: And we would tell the other rabbi that that one was coming. And he'd say, "What about the other one?" "Oh, we're talking to him." You know, it was that kind of --

DJ: This was all after the --

HG: No, this was all --

FS: This was before.

CF: All during that --

FS: All --

DS: This was before -- and --

F: And we did all the nature --

F: (inaudible) of --

DS: -- before the nature of it was --

F: We had -- That's right.

DJ: After the --

FS: No, this was --

DJ: -- Chana Weinberg --

FS: Yeah.

DS: Oh, yeah.

TF: Oh, yeah.

FS: Oh, yeah.

DS: This was --

F: That she started to --

TF: She just --

FS: Everything that we're talking about was af--

TF: -- threw it at us.

HG: Well, this is funny, again. That's what I was referring to when I said that we had this resistance from the community rabbis. And again, Orthodoxy -- at least Orthodox women --are usually not that public about things in general. You want to be public and it's a positive thing, you might have a chance -- but this was a very negative innuendo on our people. And I'm not --

DS: That most people didn't want to touch.

TF: But I want to say something about -- I mean, it comes out like -- I mean, especially for a person like who doesn't know that the rabbis in our community, you know, have the power and the control -- And they do, to a certain sense. But you have to understand that Orthodoxy, in general, it's a harder place to introduce change. Everything new needs to be examined with --

(Break in audio)

TF: -- tools of the past and a tradition, before it could be approved. We don't run into innovations, and very easily, not at all.

CF: I have to also say something in the rabbis' defense, OK? It's Chani. When we undertook this project, it became -- like we were very focused on it and it became all encompassing for us. But to the rabbis it was a very small percentage of the community. And it is --

DS: It still is.

CF: -- a small percentage of the community. And I think they were concerned that this big hullabaloo on this topic would imply that every other house on the block had this. And they did not want that impression. And I think that's true.

F: This was --

TF: That's exactly.

CF: Which is true. And that's where they were coming from. We just felt we had to get it out. That was the only way to bring it to the front and to make it not shameful. That's what we --

TF: We had to be --

CF: -- were fighting for.

TF: Yeah.

F: We called for people --

TF: We had to be forceful about it, but they had to do it their way. There was no other --

F: Right.

DS: All right.

TF: But look --

(Break in audio)

TF: This became part of our community. SHALVA is an accepted and respectable institution. And within the Orthodox community, when other issues -- like child abuse, sexual abuse -- came up, we had the same reaction.

DS: We sure did.

F: Oh, yeah.

TF: It was like nobody learned the lesson here.

F: Well --

TF: Like everybody's saying, you know --

SK: That's again --

TF: -- put it under the rug.

SK: Right.

FS: Right.

TF: Don't advertise it.

FS: Except that I think that as the years have gone on -- Unfortunately, as the evils of the outside world creep into our somewhat closed society, we can't avoid it totally. I think people's reactions to start action is much faster than it used to be.

F: Yeah.

SK: I don't think that it's the evils of the outside world that are creeping in. I think it's been with us forever. I think that, when my father talks about Munkach -- this is Shoshie -- and he talks about the butcher beating his wife and all the rest of them would laugh, because she'd be out in the snow -- they'd say, "Oh, yeah, it's just," you know, "that family."

DS: It happened in the shtetl too.

SK: Well, that was the shtetl.

DS: Yeah, I mean --

SK: You know?

FS: I'm talking more about --

SK: It wasn't the evil --

FS: -- like what Shoshie is.

TF: No, I would think that --

F: But it means --

SK: Well, it wasn't sexual abuse and --

F: And sexual abuse --

SK: -- it wasn't child abuse.

F: -- it existed --

F: It existed.

TF: Abuse existence, right.

DJ: Shoshie, so can you talk a little bit about your background and all that?

SK: I'm from Chicago. And --

DJ: This is Soshie.

SK: This is Shoshie. Hm.

(laughter)

F: (inaudible).

F: Really.

TF: We should tell you about her.

F: Yeah.

DS: It's a Holocaust survivor, which I'm sure --

SK: Oh, right. My parents are Holocaust survivors, which definitely --

FS: Impacted your life. (laughs)

SK: -- impacted my life. Keep going. (laughter) My father is a sole survivor. So that was definitely something that we always grew up with. My family were activists. We lived out of the hub of the community. We lived in a suburb. And so, they started their shul there and they started -- You know, again, like Chani's parents -- Or her mother is the hamentash baker. Well, my parents were the everything in the shul. And we always had very strange people over for Shabbos. But it was fun. It was always a lot of fun. We had a very lively family, a lot of fun. We grew up going on vacations and doing crazy, wild things. My father is definitely not your usual Hasidic person, you know, as we think of it. And so, to do something daring was kind of normal for my family.

(Break in audio)

SK: I grew up and I became a social worker when I went to college. And I was finishing my master's when SHALVA just hit. I was not surprised by domestic violence. I've never been surprised by things that have happened in our community, because I guess I just always assumed that if it's happening in the outside world, part of it is happening in our world. So, when this -- I was called by Risa and Tamar to join and I think it was fairly early. It was after the initial meetings, but I think it was fairly early in the game. I wasn't surprised. And I wanted to go full steam ahead to just open up (laughs) a shelter and start, and (inaudible) --

CF: Well, we looked at you -- this is Chani -- as one of our professionals, one of our outside --

TF: She was a social worker.

SK: That's pretty scary.

CF: Well --

SK: I was all of twenty-four years old, you know? It was pretty --

CF: But you know what?

SK: Well --

CF: We weren't --

SK: -- twenty-seven.

CF: -- that much older, I mean --

SK: Yeah.

CF: -- many of us.

TF: Right.

CF: And our --

TF: And we were like in a --

CF: I feel we --

TF: Believe it or not, we were in our --

SK: It was scary.

CF: -- didn't know anything! That's --

F: Early 20s.

TF: -- 30s --

CF: And suddenly --

F: Yeah.

CF: -- she was like the guru, you know.

TF: -- late 20s to early 30s.

SK: What's that?

CF: And when Sonny Fisher came in --

SK: Yeah, Sonny was.

CF: But this was your field.

SK: Yeah, this was --

CF: I mean, what field did we --?

(Break in audio)

SK: And we used to butt heads a lot, because Hadassah likes to do things correctly
(laughs) --

TF: Oh.

SK: -- and I like to go in and just do. So, we used to always have that argument. And typically, she would have to hold me back from just doing.

TF: Jumping.

SK: Yeah. So, but I think my activism started from -- I was the one involved in going to the shelters and checking them out and seeing how to run them, talking to The Ark, and trying to work out a safe house for the victims who would be coming in. And I just remember doing a lot of work in that arena.

TF: I remember you doing a lot of also community education, going to the suppers for evening. Was it you?

SK: Yes, I did.

F: Yeah.

TF: And I think evenings.

SK: And a lot of speakers' bureau things.

TF: That's when we were trying to reach out and get the support of the non-Orthodox community --

F: Right.

TF: -- where there is a little more money, and also to --

SK: And to help them also.

TF: Right.

SK: Because we knew that it was happening in all aspects of Judaism. I remember fighting with the rebbe, actually our advocate rabbi, and saying, "How could you let this woman go back in her home? This has happened and that has happened." And he'd be shocked. And I'd say, "How can he be surprised?" I mean, he didn't get it. And I couldn't understand how people didn't get it. And I think that's hit me all along, in my whole life, is how come people don't (laughter) get it. You know? And so, I don't know. That was my contribution to it, was just constantly going and going. And I've done that -- I left SHALVA's board because, I remember, a lot of other people were coming in and the flavor of SHALVA wasn't homegrown anymore.

TF: Right.

SK: It became a real organization. And it was too painful.

F: It grew up.

SK: It grew up.

DS: Wasn't our baby anymore.

SK: It was walking (laughs) into adolescence --

TF: It was painful, but it was good.

SK: -- and I figured, "I'm not dealing with --"

TF: It was good.

SK: "-- somebody else's adolescence." You know? I had my own kids, at that point. So, I remember thinking to myself, "This isn't what it was." And it was very painful to let go of our little baby there. But it was good. It was a very wonderful time for SHALVA, because it became a true organization on its own, on its own two feet. And it was fun to watch it grow. So that's when I let go of it.

FS: But we still haven't --

DJ: So, you --

FS: I'm sorry.

DJ: So, it's an Orthodox family you're from but sort of an un--

SK: Unusual?

DJ: And what was it that --?

(laughter)

TF: No! Don't believe about that they --

SK: I wouldn't say it's unusual.

TF: They went skiing. That's the daring.

SK: Oh, no. We went all over. We did -- Oh, my gosh.

TF: They went traveling a lot.

SK: I mean, my father was the kind of -- It wasn't just traveling. He was the type of person that would just break out in song in the subway. Or he would -- You know, he was just an unusual -- On the one hand, he was incredibly Orthodox, a very Hasidic Orthodox, and on the other hand, we used to go to movies every Saturday night and go skiing in Vail, where there wasn't a Jewish person until, you know, Denver. And we always had kosher food. I mean, we were always Orthodox. It was never an issue. But he would always find a way to do whatever he wanted to do, while doing that. So, we would travel for three weeks, all through Europe, with backpacks and things like that. I mean, I was a little kid. It was weird, you know? It was just weird for the time. But it was unusual. And it gave us all this sense of a lot of fun and a lot of laughter and a lot of daring. And so, we were always -- he always said, "Just do it. Just do whatever you want to do." I think his biggest disappointment is that all his daughter-- we're three girls -- and all his daughters are in the helping professions and none of us went out there and saved the world by becoming doctors and lawyers and the real professions, you know, (laughs) not just --

F: Whooh! (laughs)

SK: -- you know, the real thing, not just social workers and nurses and -- You know that story. So, but that's how it was. We were just all taught to go, just go first and think later. So.

DJ: Hadassah, can you -- a little bit about your background?

HG: Oh. I was born and raised in New York. I came to Chicago when I was married. I venture to say I'm the oldest person in this group. When I came to Chicago, it was a -- At least coming out of New York, Chicago was a very small Orthodox community. And I became involved in Daughters of Israel almost immediately. Deanna Broderick.

F: (laughs)

HG: There was one -- I came here, and I knew no one. My in-laws were living here and that was it. And there was one woman in the community whose husband was a friend of my husband, and she would call me every single day.

F: That's nice.

HG: For months and months and months she would call me, just to make sure that I wasn't alone. She was phenomenal. And then when the organization had its, you know, beginning of the year meeting -- And I became involved almost immediately. I think organizational work, for me, was in my blood. My parents were both born in Europe. They came to the United States in the early '20s as youngsters. And I don't know anything about my grandparents' involvement, but my parents were both always involved. My father was one of the early American founders of an international organization called Agudath Israel. And he worked in the late '20s and the early '30s with some very important work that these organizations were doing, and literally on the street corners in New York. And my mother, in her way -- And I grew up in a house where my parents built the mikveh in the community that we lived in. My father was involved, in the late 1930s, with the building of a [bas-yach?], of an elementary girls' school. And they

had no children at the time. This was before I was born. And so that sense of community activism and community building was very much a part of it. I remember growing up and there were meetings in the house and my parents were out nights for meetings. And my mother was involved in a woman's group that, in those days, would collect clothing to send to Israel. And they couldn't send new clothing. Israel was a very, very new country at the time. They couldn't send new clothing, because those were custom rules. We would get new clothes and they had to be washed and they had to be sorted. And, I mean, I have childhood pictures of the clothes hanging on the lines. So that was there, but never in a very conscious way. Only when I look back at it that I realize how much it influenced me. So, I became part of Daughters of Israel and did all the things that one does --

TF: (laughs)

HG: -- as part of an organization. Professionally, I was a stay-at-home mom for a long time. When my youngest was in kindergarten, I started some work, not much, part-time. And then when she was in seventh grade, I began to teach. And I taught high school English for about ten years at the girls' high school here, Orthodox high school. And towards the end of that, I started going to social work school. And --

DS: The rest is history.

HG: That's right.

(laughter)

SK: But you were in school, or you were teaching when this all started?

HG: When this all started --

FS: She was already full--

HG: -- I was still -- school.

F: But you --

HG: I was in school, but I was part-time social work.

TF: You were doing some work for the Jewish Family Service --

HG: No. No.

TF: -- at that time?

HG: No.

TF: Or not yet?

HG: No. I was the co-leader of that group of separated and divorced women. The other woman was a licensed social worker. And I became involved with that -- One of the things that I did as part of the Daughters of Israel was that early on I started teaching brides, before marriage, about the laws of marriage, the laws of mikveh. And --

TF: Premarital counseling. (laughs)

HG: This was -- That's right. This was sex education. It wasn't even -- This was se-- There was no sex education in the schools. There was very, very little sex education between mothers and daughters. But it became -- And this was a very old tradition, that young brides and grooms, separately, would have some kind of premarital education. So, I became involved in that quite early. And from those relationships with these young women, they would often come back after marriage: a question, a problem, you know, just relationships that got built. And I would hear of difficulties. But it was always isolated. There was never this sense of -- And then, once it became public, an American reality about domestic violence, I was able to then put a name to it and say, "Oh, this is

here." So, when Rebbetzin Weinberg came to us and had that meeting, I was already involved with that separated and divorced women's group. I had heard these women's stories. I had also heard incidents from these other women. This was not a shock to me. But hearing it talked about in this kind of way and having the sense that, "Oh, I can't fix it one-on-one. There needs to be a larger, communal organizational piece to it. There needs to be a way of coming together and the strength of the community to actually stand up and say, 'This is not OK,'" that kind of gelled for me at that point. And then we went on from there.

TF: Can I ask permission to leave?

(laughter)

DJ: Sure.

TF: I can share -- There's something --

HG: What happened to Daughters of Israel?

TF: -- you want to ask me before I leave?

CF: They're (inaudible).

HG: Where is it now?

FS: Oh, it's still there.

DS: I haven't even heard anything.

FS: And the Daughters of Israel?

DS: Probably, but they're smaller, maybe.

TF: You know what? How about --?

FS: I'd say.

TF: Yeah.

DJ: Just how do you think your work with SHALVA relates to your Jewish life?

TF: Well, you know, I'm right now serving in the capacity of Judaic Director of an elementary school, about 500 children, preschool through eighth grade.

SK: That's really like an Assistant Principal position.

TF: Yeah. Right. And I think that my involvement in SHALVA has really impacted my work with the young children, all the way through. And I think that I banked on my relationships with a lot of people who are sitting in the room. I always asked for help from Shoshie, from Hadassah, (inaudible) to come and help us educate the young generation towards a better relationship with their spouses and in the home, you know, and handling conflict. And I mentioned some of the programs that we do in our schools and that we brought before there was peers, before there was even an education for the young. We just made it. We brought Sherry in and, with her exuberance, she like kind of shocked our students. (laughs) I remember listening to her. I said, "Do I want my children listening to this? They're so young! They're like only thirteen. Why do they need to know all that?" But definitely I -- You're asking me how my involvement in SHALVA is impacting my --

FS: Life.

TF: That was your question?

F: Mmm hmm.

F: Yeah.

DJ: Well, that was my question.

TF: Yeah. (laughter) No, I thought you -- What was --?

DJ: How it's an outgrowth of your religious background.

TF: Oh, how was --? Explain to me again. How SHALVA was an outgrowth of my religious background? Is that what you're asking, how it --?

F: Mmm hmm.

TF: Well, you know, I never spoke about my background but also, I come from families that, both my grandparents and my parents took great leadership roles in the Jewish community, in times where some people -- you know, some of my family history -- And, for example, my grandfather was a member of the Polish [Sim?].

F: (inaudible).

F: Right.

F: (inaudible).

DS: No, no. (inaudible).

HG: So that women --

DS: And even Shalom Bayis is totally different.

SK: And they're --

TF: So, what?

DS: Yeah. They --

TF: You know, growing up in a family that was also very involved in community and in Israeli society. Think about it. It's a conflict-oriented society. Everything there (laughs) involves conflict --

DS: Yeah, that's true.

TF: -- in Israel. And people are very vocal and very verbal and very physical.

DS: Did you read today's newspaper? It was so cute. There was an article -- Ask me why, at 9:00 in the morning, I had already read this article. But there was an article about the snow that fell in Israel and how it was a reprieve. Because --

TF: Yes. Yeah.

DS: No, did you read this?

F: Mmm hmm.

DS: Because nobody could talk about conflict.

F: Yeah.

DS: It wasn't the first thing on the news.

DJ: On to --

DS: It was the snow. And everyone was playing and laughing.

HG: And there was something about the purity of the white.

F: Probably childhood memories.

DS: Yes.

TF: Right. So. But the funny thing is --

F: Different memory.

TF: -- that I never in my life encountered or was aware of abuse in the Jewish family. Because I have to tell you, it's true that it's part of the community, but it was a very happy, wholesome community --

F: So --

TF: -- we thought. I mean, I grew up as a child and I never felt it. There was no divorce in our community.

F: Very --

TF: If somebody got divorced, it was like --

FS: The biggest tragedy.

TF: Oh, it was --

F: It was a *shonde*.

TF: Right.

FS: And do everything to keep them together.

TF: Right. And -- yeah. And -- right. And, you know --

SK: We still do that.

F: Mmm hmm.

SK: We still do.

TF: Yeah, well, it's not a bad thing to try.

HG: Divorce doesn't have the same (inaudible).

F: I think --

TF: But today we understand that divorce sometimes --

F: Now --

TF: -- is better than --

CF: Yeah, the disposable society.

TF: -- staying together.

CF: Not everyone is disposable.

TF: But the understanding that I grew up with, nothing could be worse than divorce. The worst marriage is better than divorce. OK?

F: Mmm hmm.

TF: And that's, I think, what Orthodox people grew up with. So, when I came here -- And I was like always amazed by the openness of the community here. Because I think when I got involved in SHALVA, I was here maybe five years from Israel, at most. And it was a pleasure working with the Chicago community women, because I felt they were so open and so ready and so ready to move on and make changes. It's something that the society that I came from, it wasn't so understood, and it wasn't so accepted. So, to me, it was really -- I gave the little bit that I had. And this organization would have been just as good as it is today --

F: Oh --

F: Mmm --

TF: -- if I wasn't involved. No, really, really. I have to tell you.

F: And (inaudible).

TF: But for me --

SK: Everybody worked very --

TF: -- I was enriched by my involvement in this organization, on many levels, personal and the professional level. It was a growing experience for me as a Jewish woman, the fact that I can --

FS: I think -- I know I can say that for myself.

SK: Right. All --

FS: I would imagine each and every one of us can say that. Yeah.

SK: I think just the friendships that came out of it --

FS: Yeah.

SK: -- just to be involved with people that I normally didn't have contact with. It was incredible, so -- I still have such respect for everybody that I worked with. It was -- I loved it. It was a wonderful time -- very tiring.

F: Mmm hmm.

SK: I remember I gave birth to Manucha. You must have just had Hasida.

F: Right.

SK: I gave birth. And I would be nursing her. I remember we had meetings at my house. I could nurse the baby. So, and it was great, because I would be there still for the one o'clock nursing. It was no problem. You know? Everybody would be around. It was great. It was marvelous. I just -- It was a wonderful --

DJ: Why was it wonderful?

SK: Oh, because we had --

TF: Yeah, when we --

SK: -- all the stuff sitting around. Yeah. What if?

DS: 11:30 was -- Yeah.

F: (laughs)

TF: We all had our work in the morning, most of us.

SK: We all had life. Yes, we all had our own regular life.

FS: And when we were doing that symposium and were sitting around the table, stuffing envelopes. We sent out this --

TF: Oh, yeah.

FS: -- community-wide mailing. It was --

HG: Remember that?

TF: Everything was done manually with us and --

SK: Yeah, it was wild. It was wild.

TF: Stuffing and licking stamps.

FS: But, you know, I wanted to mention one thing that Tamar reminded me.

F: Fayge.

FS: And you talked about how -- this is Fayge talking -- Sherry Dimarsky went into the schools, even before -- Now SHALVA has a peers program, which is an official program that goes into schools. But at that time, it was like whenever we can get into a school by any means, we went in there. One of our success stories was, in the early years, when Sherry went into the Academy, the Ida Crown Jewish Academy, and she would be talking about, officially, some topic. And, of course, it was always, in the Academy, the kids were dating, and she would be talking to them about, you know, what's right and what's not really good and don't just expect, you know, in a dating relationship. A couple years later, the SHALVA gets a call from a young woman, and she says that she's engaged and she knows that SHALVA doesn't really do premarital counseling, but she would like to come in. And when they questioned her a little further, it turned out that she was a senior, sitting in the back of a classroom when Sherry came in to talk at the Academy that day, and Sherry is talking about how just, you know, this is not normal and healthy and -- And she's like, "That's what's been going on in my home, like in my fa--" you know, "my parents. This is --" you know, "I never realized that this is domestic abuse, you know, what's been going on." And she didn't say anything. She wasn't one of the ones who asked questions that day. But she internalized it and absorbed it. And when she got engaged, she called up SHALVA because she wanted her and her fiancé to learn about, you know, what to do and how to conduct their home so that she doesn't become, you know, a second generation. And that, you know, is always, you know --

TF: That's such a story.

FS: I mean I'm sure there are many others that we don't know about, but this one we know about. And it's a real success story.

SK: I should tell -- I have used SHALVA numerous times professionally. I send clients to SHALVA to get counseling and to --

TF: Oh, I do too.

SK: Numerous, numerous times. They have therapists that are beyond what I've seen anywhere else. I mean, SHALVA's organization has helped me professionally and my clients a lot, even though I'm not actively involved. But I use them a lot. So, it's not just an organization that shelters women any more. It's so much community involvement and help and --

TF: Do you have like a card or something, if I want to contact you, or an e-mail address, something? Like if we can think of anything else.

SK: You have to give your history.

(laughter)

TF: Everything. He'll get to you.

FS: Devora, we didn't get your history.

SK: We didn't get your history.

TF: I'm sorry for rushing so.

DS: It's not any different than anybody else's, really.

SK: Isn't it funny how --?

CF: It's interesting to listen here.

TF: I'll just write it down. Just and you write it on a piece of paper. That's fine. I'll write you --

SK: Actually, you have a copy of this letter. I think it's on the bottom of the letter.

FS: Is the e-mail address on the letter?

SK: You have a copy? Yeah. Do you have a copy of it?

TF: Yeah, I do have a copy of it. But is that your own personal --?

DJ: Yeah.

TF: All right. And this is your phone number.

SK: E-mail.

TF: Yeah. OK. Yes, I do have the letter. Really good. And also feel free to call me, if you have anything --

DJ: OK.

TF: -- that you want to talk to.

SK: Stop in the office. I'll be there to get an application.

DJ: Oh, what I didn't do, I didn't do the picture. Can we do a picture before you go?

TF: If you --

FS: I don't know it's clear from all this but, I mean, you probably ought to know that we don't have a shelter now. We talked a lot about the shelter. That really only lasted --

what? -- less than two years.

SK: Two years.

DS: Two years.

FS: Two years? Because we were using, in conjunction with The Ark -- The Ark had a shelter for homeless. And we basically got like an apartment across the hallway, so we were able to --

TF: We rented --

FS: -- use like their security --

TF: For free. It was for free?

FS: -- or whatever, their intake. It was kind of in conjunction -- When The Ark left that particular place and they built a larger shelter and it was going to cost a lot more money, we determined that our money can be better spent on support services and --

HG: That was really you, I thought.

SK: We --

FS: -- legal advocacy and --

TF: Safe housing.

FS: -- counseling --

SK: Yeah.

TF: Safe housing.

FS: -- than to spend so much money on a shelter. Because most of our clients didn't need shelter as much as they needed counseling and the other support services. And in the event that we ever did need one, we could figure out --

DS: I think we had [Bitachon?], which often they were letting them go to a hotel or something and stay there --

F: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

F: Right.

DS: -- which I think worked almost probably just as well --

FS: Right.

DS: -- since most of our subjects are (inaudible).

FS: The actual shelter only lasted a very short time.

HG: The first year, there was a significant use of the shelter. The second year there was a significant non-use of the shelter. And that's when we realized that we didn't have to put the money there. We could use the money elsewhere. And we used safe houses. We used hotels. There was a time when they even used some nursing homes.

TF: Really? And --

SK: Do you remember collecting makeup?

F: Ohh --

TF: Yeah.

SK: We had hordes of makeup, (laughs) just diapers --

HG: Toiletries, (inaudible).

SK: -- toiletries, right, clothes --

HG: Oh, I remember --

SK: -- things like that.

HG: -- Tamar going shopping, and we would carry grocery bags up the steps --

SK: Mmm hmm. Mmm, I remember that too.

HG: -- so that there was food in the apartment.

SK: Right. Right. We totally outfitted the apartment, so somebody can move in right away.

CF: I would like to say something -- this is Chani -- just from a proactive stance, as what SHALVA, I think, did for --

(Long break in audio)

CF: -- SHALVA. It was the thought that maybe there's something that can be done so that SHALVA isn't necessary, that we don't get to the point of abuse. And so Daughters of Israel was involved in starting a counseling service, more in the Orthodox community than not the Orthodox community, because, again, the feeling was the non-Orthodox community is pretty comfortable going to therapists when they're in need. And from SHALVA, I think, was born Project Shalom Bayis --

TF: Shalom Bayis. [And need to go down?]

CF: -- which was, again, a Daughters of Israel function. Fayge and I are still very involved in Project Shalom Bayis. We have the community rabbis all on board on this

piece, because --

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: And that's basically a referral service for people who need marital counseling.

CF: And --

FS: And --

CF: -- some financial help --

FS: Right.

CF: -- for those who can't afford it.

HG: Significant financial help. (laughs)

CF: Yes.

F: Financial.

CF: We spend \$2,000 per couple. We have helped over 200 couples since Project Shalom Bayis was founded, which was 1983.

FS: This is the only city that has Shalom Bayis. Every time I ask another city... It's such a nice thing to be proud of.

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: It's a wonderful, wonderful project.

CF: Well, and I think that it came out of the same living rooms. Because if we're looking at the dates --

FS: Mmm hmm. It was.

CF: Of, OK, let's deal with the problem at hand that is now in crisis but let's also be proactive and not get to crisis. Perhaps there are ways to put out the fires that lead to abuse, before we're full blown. We struggled with that organization. And I'm not trying to give you another organization to put in your hopper, because I don't think it's -- It never --

FS: But it's the same people. It's like, it does need to be the --

CF: It's the same people, that it's a grassroots thing.

SK: That's a marvel.

CF: And it's basically to bring harmony into the Jewish home, with professional help, for those people, in a very anonymous way. We have codes for our couples who are helped. We don't know who they are. And our therapists give us a reduced rate to help. Our community therapist is (inaudible).

FS: Basically, barely covering their office costs --

CF: (laughs) Right.

FS: -- and what they get out of this but --

CF: Right. And that, I think we can say --

DJ: And sort of an offshoot of SHALVA.

CF: That's an offshoot of SHALVA.

FS: Well, they're both --

F: So, SHALVA --

FS: -- offshoots of Daughters --

SK: Oh, oh.

DS: Daughters of Israel really deserved --

SK: Everything.

DS: -- a tremendous amount of credit.

CF: You have to give Daughters of Israel --

SK: It did!

CF: -- credit for --

DS: They had branched out into so many ancillary groups that helped so many women, so many different fronts. Shiras Chana, which is for infertility, came from them.

F: Right.

DS: You're helping couples deal with, you know --

F: Right.

DS: I even think financial help --

FS: Sor.

DS: Sor. OK. Getting financial help in order to get treatment for infertility. I mean, Daughters of Israel's an organization that's been here, is, God willing, to continue for many years -- because they really --

FS: Well, I doubt that this thing --

SK: And, you know --

FS: -- the work of that community --

CF: All volunteer, too.

SK: And it doesn't get the recognition that it deserves.

DS: No, it doesn't.

SK: Well, Yitty Leibel came out of that also, at the same time.

CF: Also, there's a concept --

FS: Well, it's all --

SK: A hotline. This is a --

FS: When you say it doesn't get the recognition, I think that's all part of what we've been saying. The Orthodox women have traditionally, through the years, through the ages, been very, very involved and helped a lot of people in a very quiet way --

CF: Yeah, in an unpretentious way, though.

FS: -- you know?

DJ: That's interesting that SHALVA sort of is both part of that tradition and that it, in other ways, goes against that.

HG: It doesn't go against it. It's a variation of the tradition.

SK: Right.

DJ: Oh, I see.

DS: Right.

HG: It's a variation of the tradition in the sense that, in order for this service to happen, there needs to be a public piece in it. The other services can happen without the publicity.

FS: Right. Because the big problem with the basic abuse is that everyone was afraid to even talk about it. I mean, if you're not going to talk about it, obviously you can't help the people --

HG: Who need it.

FS: -- who need the help. So, a major part of SHALVA's program has always been outreach and education. Because like we have to name the problem. We have to say it exists. We have to be able to talk about it, so that people who need help can say, "Hey, if everyone's talking about it, it must be I'm not the only person and therefore it's OK to get help." Most --

HG: Don't even know they had a problem until they hear it being discussed.

FS: We also don't even know that the --

DJ: Because everybody (inaudible) on a problem that isn't there.

FS: Identify the problem. And so, neighbors can say, "You know? What they're talking about, that sounds an awful lot like what I hear going on next door." And then maybe they could, you know, kind of try to, you know, get that person to call SHALVA. So that rabbis can hear it and say, "You know, this couple that came to me the other day, that's what it sounds like. Let me, you know, get them involved with SHALVA." Because of the extremely under-the-table kind of way that people have always treated domestic violence, it had to be spoken out or help could not be achieved.

CF: Yeah.

HG: The other piece that's fascinating about --

(Break in audio)

HG: -- this is Hadassah -- about the rabbinic involvement is that these were rabbis who were living in a city that was fairly large as an Orthodox community but definitely a second city, relative to New York or relative to Israel and the Orthodox community in both of those places. For these rabbis to take a stand was a huge, huge leap. (coughs) And -- I'm sorry -- while we might privately remember some of the difficulty that they had, which I think we realize -- I realize, at least, was part of the phenomena that all of us have faced -- There's denial initially. And the rabbis are just people, and so the denial was normal. But the fact that they were able to listen and come around and take a step which other rabbis in other communities were still not able already to do, is just an amazing testimony to who they were. This one particular rabbi, who was opposed, was outvoted. He was -- And the rabbis were clear, across the board, backing us. They continue to back us. And that piece of education I think paved the way for lots of other areas of difficulty that then needed to be addressed. So, there were, you know, issues of child sexual molestation, sexual abuse, whether it was from outside the house or within the house. These are areas that the rabbis are able to sit down and have a dialogue about and address, I think to a great extent, because of the leap that they took with domestic violence policy. So, there's been lots of areas that it has touched because of --

DJ: What about the fundraising? Want to talk about what you did in that?

HG: Oh. Yeah, that was interesting.

DJ: Yeah.

FS: I think that was another reason I left.

(laughter)

DS: I remember that first time when we got that first Federation grant.

FS: Ohh!

HG: That first gra-- No, that wasn't a Federation grant. That was --

FS: Oh, from the --

HG: We had -- At the time, Federation ha-- they still have a monthly newspaper. It's like the house organ. And the person who was the editor, who is no longer with them, Joseph Aaron, is Orthodox. And I don't remember if we went to him or if he came to us but he -- I think this was -- Was this August of '85? He did a cover story --

FS: We went to him.

HG: We went to him.

FS: We went to him.

F: Right.

HG: And he did --

F: Well, (inaudible) group.

HG: That's right.

SK: That's right.

HG: That's right.

F: (laughs)

SK: That's right.

HG: That's right.

DS: I remember this.

HG: That's right. And he did a cover story.

FS: Because we were --

SK: We went public.

HG: Public.

CF: We went public.

FS: Public, yeah.

HG: And then all hell that break I--

END OF AUDIO FILE 1

CF: You and I many times were the interface to the rabbi --

F: Mmm hmm.

CF: -- just because of our community involvement and just the sort of thing -- We (inaudible), not that we're such important people. But I think there was this -- just and so many other things, that we were talking then.

DS: There were so many other times and other projects that we had worked with.

F: Yeah.

DS: Yeah.

CF: And we were working with them.

DS: Yeah.

CF: It was natural --

SK: Right.

CF: -- to come talk to them -- wasn't easy, but it was natural.

HG: So, after this cover story came out in the *JUF News* there was reaction within the Orthodox community, but unbeknown to us, there was a huge amount of reaction in the non-Orthodox Jewish world. And there was a very, very old women's organization. I think it was called Chicago Women's Aid. They were maybe over one hundred years old as a social activist group, wealthy Jewish women. This was their social and their communal obligation, kind of combined. In many cases, it was multigenerational. They were phasing out. They realized that they no longer had a membership, because most of their next-generation Jewish women were professionals and they were not interested in the luncheon stuff and -- And so they wanted to put some of their money into some kind of project. And they read this story. And they called us in for an interview and wanted to know who we were and what we were. And they were offering us money, seed money. And I remember going down. I don't remember who I went with. But I went down to this meeting with them and had to sell SHALVA to them. What --

FS: And had to make believe that we had all (laughs) these things --

HG: Together.

F: Yeah.

HG: We were really --

FS: But it was all pie in the sky at the point, (laughs) you know.

HG: And what we didn't know was that they very carefully did their homework. And they contacted Federation. And Joel Karp, who was and still is a major Federation executive, gave them the go ahead. The Federation, at that time, just really took a backseat. And I had learned, over the decades, that Federation does this. If they see an entity beginning, they will not jump in to say, "We'll offer you help," or -- They sit back, let the grassroots project develop, and then wait to see what place they might or might not have. And so, this woman from Chicago Women's Aid went to Joel Karp and he said, "It's OK." And they gave us \$18,000, which in those days --

SK: Oh, my God.

HG: -- was at least a million-and-a-half. (laughter) And that was our seed money. That enabled us to pay our initial expenses.

SK: Yeah.

FS: Well, until we --

SK: We hired somebody.

DJ: What was the -- that you --?

DS: We didn't pay for the office.

FS: Oh, we didn't?

HG: I think it was called Chicago Women's Aid.

DS: We didn't pay for the office.

FS: Edie gave us the --

HG: Edie.

DS: Edie gave it to us for free.

FS: But we paid --

DS: We had to pay Sherry.

FS: -- we had to pay Sherry.

CF: Well, we also --

DS: We didn't have Sherry.

HG: We didn't have Sherry yet.

FS: (inaudible) come on yet.

DS: We had this part-time --

HG: Pay phone line.

SK: Phone lines, right.

FS: Right. We didn't even have a computer then.

HG: Oh, no.

SK: No, no. But nobody had a computer then.

FS: Nobody had a computer then.

HG: No. No.

SK: But remember Shulamis --? And I'll never forget sitting a meeting -- we said, "We need like \$3,000," and she was like --

HG: Oh, yes.

SK: -- "Yeah. What's the problem?" And she just wrote us a check. And we were awe-stricken that somebody would do that. It was so wild.

HG: Yeah.

SK: It was incredible.

HG: And then she said --

SK: She helped us.

HG: -- "I'm going to go to --"

SK: She helped us, really.

HG: And she had a list in her head. She was going to go to ten people --

FS: Yes.

HG: -- and she was going to get money.

SK: She got us money.

FS: That was -- I think that she's probably in Florida --

HG: Yeah.

FS: -- and I don't know if you've had contact with her, Shulamis Weinfeld. She was --

SK: She was incredible.

FS: -- a very, very --

HG: Yeah.

SK: She was incredible.

FS: But I think our first president, and extremely -- really involved in just getting us on our feet financially.

SK: I remember her going to visit Joel Karp.

FS: She had a lot of contacts.

HG: Yes. (laughs)

SK: I remember that was her.

FS: Went to help the --

F: That's --

SK: Well, her and Edie were very helpful at the --

HG: Yes. Yes.

SK: It was very --

HG: Both of these women are financially very comfortable and very involved in the community. We used Edie Davis' house for this meeting with the rabbis --

FS: Rabbis.

HG: -- because we knew there wasn't a single rabbi in the community --

F: (laughs)

HG: -- who would say no to an invitation from the Davis'.

(laughter)

SK: We were very conniving!

DJ: You know --

HG: Yeah. We knew how to work it.

DS: We had to. We had to.

HG: Yeah.

CF: And professionally, you know --

SK: Right.

F: Yeah.

CF: And so, she's always been open-minded --

SK: Very much so.

CF: -- and involved.

DJ: And say her name again?

HG: Edie Davis and Shulamis Weinfeld, W-E-I-N-F-E-L-D. Both of them are considered founders. They were both probably -- not probably -- they both were on the list. I don't --

FS: Edie was at the first meeting.

HG: Edie wasn't called? Edie wasn't --?

FS: She's on the list.

DJ: She is.

FS: She was definitely on the list.

HG: She is. Yeah.

DJ: She wasn't able to come.

DS: She was at a meet--

HG: She's out of town, I'll bet.

FS: Shulamis was not at that meeting.

HG: Right.

DS: Because she was very close to Rebbetzin Weinberg.

FS: (inaudible) involved very --

SK: Hmm hmm.

HG: Yes, right, Edie was very close --

SK: I remember Edie very --

HG: -- with Rebbetzin Weinberg.

SK: Yeah, I remember Edie very involved.

DJ: So, and --

SK: Shulamis.

DJ: -- Shulamis, their phone was disconnected.

HG: Yeah, I think they may be in Florida.

DJ: She's in Florida?

HG: Yeah.

FS: (inaudible).

HG: Yeah. I don't know if you would have any inclination to call any of these people and do a phone interview, but Shulamis has a lot of passion about this.

F: That's right.

FS: Do we have -- anyone have her number? Want to call her?

F: I mean --

HG: I might. You can call one of her children and get it.

SK: Let's get Devora's history, before we forget that.

FS: Oh, yeah, Devora's --

SK: I'm not going to let you go!

F: (laughs)

FS: We didn't do Devora's history.

DJ: Yes, I know. I know.

HG: Yes, I do have her number.

DJ: Tell me, Devora, why you --

DS: My parents were both Holocaust survivors, sole survivors of their family. Mother was the youngest of seven. She's the only one that survived. My father was an only child. Grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. They were very necessary in the Jewish *cheder*, which is for boys -- you know, the way that it was run in Europe, the school system there. And my mother would cook for the luncheons they would have. I think we all basically have the same --

SK: So fascinating.

DS: -- you know, backgrounds, to a very large degree. Our door was always open. Any rabbi would come to town, they would come to our home. So, we were very used to have, you know, people in and out of the house. And I try to follow in that tradition. I mean, my house, you know, is also open, anybody who needs a place to come, there's a wedding, there's -- whatever's in town. People know they can come stay by us. And I got involved -- were also Daughters of Israel, a newlywed in town. My husband went to school here before, you know, we got married. Somebody called. Called back. Said, "Let's go. I'm taking you to a meeting." And started out being the secretary and worked my way up through the ranks. So, I was president. And under our thing they built a new *mikveh* for the women in the community -- and we started SHALVA. And from that -- Like I said before, Daughters of Israel was a tremendous, tremendous asset to the community, and it still is. And they just continue to help all of us in whatever way they

find -- Wherever they find a need, they're there to the rescue. Or at least they try. That's it.

CF: Devora and I were in high school together.

DS: (laughs) You're a year older!

CF: I'm older. (laughs)

SK: Where did you go to high school?

F: Really?

DS: Yavneh.

SK: Ahh!

DS: It was funny. At a Daughters of Israel luncheon, we're walking, and we just look at each other. "What are you doing here?"

F: (laughs)

DS: And that was it.

SK: That's funny. Remember those luncheons? They used to have a hundred-and-some people and --

CF: OK. The luncheons always -- the funds from the luncheon went -- Well, I [inaudible] with those funds to begin with.

FS: I just went to pay for --

DS: The meeting (inaudible).

CF: The services of Daughters of Israel.

DS: And again --

FS: That's already --

CF: The luncheons became less popular --

FS: Once Shalom Bayis started.

CF: -- because the school started having luncheons --

F: We were just going --

CF: -- and we were just not getting a following. So, then we said, "Let's make the luncheon -- let's identify it to Project Shalom Bayis or to something more focused on the family." And that worked for a while. And then we said, "The luncheons are becoming too expensive for that," and we just got rid of the luncheons altogether --

DS: That's too bad.

CF: -- because people were going to other --

HG: But there's also the reality that more and more of the young women are working young women.

CF: Yes.

HG: And they just don't have the time.

CF: And so much time.

HG: Right.

F: That's --

HG: So, what Chicago Women's Aid was dealing with then --

CF: We dealt with.

FS: We dealt with --

HG: -- we dealt with also.

FS: -- 15 years later --

HG: Yeah.

FS: -- or not even 15 years. It's true.

HG: Yeah.

FS: But you know what? It's sad, because Daughters of Israel doesn't have --

HG: Yeah.

FS: -- the power.

DS: Well, there's a refresher course.

HG: Oh, yeah, they do.

FS: Well, they only had, every year --

DS: They tap a lot more subjects, though, you know, in those --

HG: Yeah.

CF: And Project Shalom Bayis --

DS: Is a very ongoing --

HG: Yeah.

CF: -- they still are on the phone, and when women get into big trouble, they are there.

SK: But it doesn't have the presence that it had.

HG: No.

DS: There's just so many more organizations today too.

SK: I know.

HG: Yeah.

SK: It's true.

DS: I mean, usually we were the only outlet for a lot of these women. We started out, we were all the young -- You know, now you go, you don't know anybody anymore and we're the old one. (laughs)

SK: But that's how you met your peers.

HG: Yes.

SK: That was how --

DS: That's exactly it! Exactly.

SK: Because until your kids are in school, you have no way to meet anybody.

CF: But what Hadassah says is correct. Because of the working --

DS: Right.

CF: -- population now --

DS: Right.

CF: -- people just (inaudible). And they don't need another --

DS: They don't even (inaudible).

HG: There's also a difference, I think -- There are a lot of young women who are part of [Bika Cholem?]. Bika Cholem is another grassroots organization that deals more directly with health issues. And I think the difference there --

DS: And (inaudible).

HG: It's the same group of people, but I think the difference is that there you can do very hands on work. You can cook for a family that's sick. You can drive someone to the hospital if they need cancer treatment. You can --

DS: Visiting.

HG: -- visit people --

DS: Yeah. Buy groceries.

HG: -- you know, whatever it is. So there's much more of this real direct service to people. And I think that's what women enjoy doing. What we were doing is kind of --

FS: Socializing.

HG: Yeah, it's too vague.

FS: Which is actually one of the reasons -- this is Fayge talking -- why sometimes we have had difficulty in getting the right kind of people working for SHALVA, because most people think they're going to have hands on, they're going to help somebody who's being abused, which, of course -- Here, you know, you're talking to one of the founders of it, involved with SHALVA, forever, [salem?] --

DS: It seems. (laughs)

FS: -- and I never have known the identity -- Unless they personally called me to ask me if they should call SHALVA, I've never, ever known the identity of a single one of SHALVA's clients. But people think, oh, they're going to help, you know, people who are abused -- you know? -- I mean, like hands on. And they're not, you know? When we need board members, we need board members who are going to take on financial commitments, who are going to do fundraising, who are going to maybe work on, you know, community education and outreach, but never, ever deal with the victims themselves, unless they're willing to take the 40-hour domestic training, which is from the state. And then they could, you know, perhaps volunteer in the office and answer the phone or something. But they would need to take this intensive 40-hour training to do that, which is not what people are thinking about when they want to join an organization to help, you know.

DJ: But even initially, in the very beginning, you didn't have that type of a --?

SK: Never.

FS: No.

CF: No.

SK: Never.

DJ: And so you did --

FS: Well, in the very beginning, when we had the shelter, the intake was through The Ark. And then that person -- And when we agreed --

HG: She was the case manager. Renee Lepp was the case manager.

FS: She was the case manager.

HG: She was in charge of the Ark shelter. She later became the executive director of The Ark. But initially, she was the case manager. And so she would do the intake with the client. She would bring the client to the shelter, which we supplied. And she would help work with the client around job, money, legal, whatever --

SK: Concrete services.

HG: Concrete services.

FS: And then once we were able to hire -- First there was a part-time social worker, you know, and that person. Then -- now we're at, what? -- four part-time social workers and then a full-time Executive Director and a full-time office manager. So, I mean, those people in the office, of course, you know, know, you know -- but the, you know, people who are involved on the outside, you know, the Board members -- In the very beginning, some of the people may have known the --

DS: I didn't.

FS: Did we ever have to take anyone to court --

CF: I must say --

HG: No.

CF: This is Chani speaking.

FS: -- or anything like that? I don't think so.

CF: The hallmark of SHALVA, as it was created, and probably Shalom Bayis, to this day
--

DS: It's confidential.

CF: -- is the confidentiality, the anonymity. And as much as we are community people
and we have our fingers in a lot of different pots, I think we can all say that we're discreet
individuals --

F: Mmm hmm.

CF: -- we are not busybodies. We never have been. We do what we need to do --

FS: Right.

CF: -- and identity is the last thing on our list.

DS: Kind of making all the --

CF: Exactly.

FS: Right.

CF: That was the hallmark, from day one --

FS: Yeah.

CF: -- of the organizations we started.

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: Mmm hmm. Yeah.

CF: And it is service oriented now.

DS: Yeah. Yeah.

CF: And I think that's helped make it successful too, because nobody feels that they will be exposed. They won't.

FS: No, never.

CF: Remember, this is very close-knit community. And nothing's (inaudible).

HG: Safety -- The creation of the safety piece was what made it successful. And --

SK: We were very careful.

HG: Oh!

SK: And we still are --

CF: We still are.

SK: -- in any aspect of our work.

DJ: You weren't (inaudible) work that out.

HG: Oh, yeah.

F: Yeah.

(laughter)

SK: But in any aspect of our work.

FS: Yes. When we were looking for larger quarters, there was one location which would have been like a nicer office and maybe a nicer building or whatever, but it was also a building that had certain -- I don't know if it was doctors' office or whatever, where a lot of peo--

DS: Directory.

FS: The directory downstairs, you know, room -- and office number. They're not listed downstairs--

(Break in audio)

FS: -- community. So, we took a different location, which, you know, maybe was not as nice.

DS: Well, one thing we were trying -- is that you have to get there by bus easily.

FS: Right --

DS: So -- you know.

FS: -- public transportation issue.

SK: One of our concerns, always, was the safety also. We didn't want a spouse coming or a significant other coming and hurting any of our workers or hurting the person themselves.

CF: That's right.

SK: That was always a big fear -- for ourselves too. Remember?

DS: Yeah, and that's a --

SK: We weren't going to house that.

CF: Oh, you bet!

SK: And we were frightened. We were very frightened.

HG: I think one of the eye-openers was when we went to visit the Evanston shelter.

FS: I remember that.

HG: And that shelter is housed in a camouflaged facility.

DJ: (laughs)

HG: And when I went -- Well, we went in, and I saw the double doors and how -- I had driven by this place so often and it was --

FS: Never thought twice about it.

HG: Never!

SK: And it's still -- Isn't funny how now you can drive by it --

F: You still --

SK: -- and you always know there's a shelter there, but you think, "Wow --"

DS: That's it. Yeah.

SK: And, you know, it's amazing.

F: Yeah.

SK: It really was. It was -- Yeah.

HG: That's when we said, "No, this cannot happen in my basement."

(laughter)

SK: Right. That was one of the thoughts --

HG: Yeah.

SK: -- was that we would house them in our basement. (laughter) Oh, gosh. That was --

HG: But, you know, I think it was that kind of naiveté that enabled us to do this. I think if we had gone in realizing what we were getting ourselves into, we would have --

FS: What was hiding under the next rock?

HG: Yeah.

CF: It went to the (inaudible).

SK: Well, incredible idealism.

HG: Yeah.

SK: It was just incredible.

FS: You needed that in order for it to --

HG: Yeah.

CF: Come around.

SK: Plus, no clue of how much it would cost.

HG: Right.

SK: We had no clue --

HG: No clue.

SK: -- about the fundraising.

HG: Yeah.

DS: We had no clue about the need of it, even. That's what, you know --

FS: The scope, right.

HG: And I think that we didn't know how strongly the community would not be happy with this. It was also a time where feminism was so popular in the general culture. And I didn't see myself as a feminist. And when people accused me of that it felt very hurtful. So it was also a matter of overcoming, that by being involved with this my self-image, or the image that I thought people had of me, was coming into question. And how do you get beyond that? How do you be able to say, "I believe in this. I know this is right. And if other people, you know, think badly of me because of it, well, then --"

FS: And my husband used -- this is Fayge -- to get teased all the time. "Oh, your wife's one of the ones involved in SHALVA, huh? Well, you know --" (laughs)

SK: Yeah. Yeah.

DS: (inaudible).

HG: What does that mean about --?

FS: Yeah.

SK: I wonder what's happening in your house?

FS: Our husbands had to be very strong --

SK: Oh, my gosh.

FS: -- and very, you know --

DS: Supportive.

FS: -- supportive and very confident in our marriages, in order for them (laughs) to let us keep on doing it.

HG: Yes.

FS: You know?

SK: It was. It was really interesting.

HG: And I wonder, often, what impact this work has had on our children.

SK: Mmm hmm.

HG: And --

FS: It's certainly made them much more -- this is Fayge -- aware of --

DS: Problems that exist.

FS: -- problems that exist and, you know, much less likely to go through life with blinders on.

HG: Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm.

SK: And much more proactive, I think?

HG: Yes.

SK: And also verbal. I know, for my kids -- maybe has nothing to do with SHALVA but I think that they are very verbal about what they need and what they're willing to take in life. I hope so, anyway. And that they're willing to fight -- not physically but, you know, go after what it is that they feel a community needs. I hope they work very much in a community -- you know? -- not alone.

DS: I married daughters very well, their children's school, with (inaudible) husband. I mean, I think seeing your parents involved --

SK: Yeah.

DS: My husband's still very, very active in the community, in very different aspects. I think seeing the parents involved, it does go -- I mean, I was very happy.

SK: Mmm hmm.

DS: "Thank God. It's going to the next generation."

F: Mmm hmm.

F: Yeah.

SK: Wasn't it nice, though, to give it up, also --

F: Yeah.

SK: -- to give up the --?

DS: And my kids weren't getting their -- I was out a lot, because I was so involved. They didn't like it that I was out so much. That's why I stopped being so involved.

SK: There was -- We had --

CF: I think that it's always easier to take the path of least resistance. That's the natural way, perhaps. But I still maintain I think our kids see it and even other kids see it too. So, it's not even your own children, especially if you're teaching. I think people see that you stand for something. Taking on a challenge is never easy. It's always easier to sit home and read a magazine and put your feet up. And I think we try to do that. (laughter) We did it sometimes. But I think just any community has so much that they need help with. And if nobody will help, then nothing will help. And I think that's a message, you know, to give out here.

SK: You know, my kids had an assignment, I think in high school -- One of the English assignments is to interview a parent and see what their best accomplishments are. And so everybody says, "Oh, having this X -- and amount of kids and --" And my daughter just immediately wrote, "Well, my mother created --" you know, "helped create SHALVA and Yitty Leibel," and you know, whatever else, and now Elan. And it was really cute. And I looked at her and said, "But you guys are also my very proud accomplishments." And she said, "Yeah, right." (laughter) It was cute and I thought, "Ew, wasn't a good message," you know. But it was -- Yeah, I was really happy. I was proud that they recognized how much this really meant to me. I really did. It was a fun time of life.

DJ: And that one was? Well, you've all talked about how your parents worked -- and open and active and so forth, and how they're Orthodox. But can we talk a little bit about how the relations were, how that activism became part of you, and --

SK: Orthodoxy?

DJ: -- Jewish (inaudible)?

SK: Or the two put together?

DJ: Or other Jewish values.

FS: Well, I think that very, very strong Jewish values are -- There's a verse in the Bible that says, "*Al Taamod Al Dam Reiacha*," "You shall not stand on the blood of your friend," which literally means you don't stand by and watch somebody else in pain or suffering. And if you can do something about it, then you have to do something about it. So, it's very much ingrained in any Orthodox person that, if you ever -- You know, it's part of our Torah. It's part of our belief and our practice of the Torah, the Bible, that you don't stand by. You're not always in the position to do something. So, if you feel you can't do it yourself, you give charity to an organization that they can do it. But if you can do it yourself, you do it yourself. And that's, I think, very ingrained in me and all of us and what makes us, you know, go out, do these things.

CF: This is Chani. I'd like to add to that. I think there is also the expression, "*Kol Yisrael Areivim Aeh Bazeih*," that we have a responsibility to each other. I think in our history we have always had a community concept, a *kahilah* concept, a concept of committees or councils that dealt with the needs of the community. This is from the beginning of time. I think it's Jewish history -- and maybe numerous --

F: And we're going to take --

(laughter)

CF: -- right -- numerous examples of --

FS: World's best Jewish history.

CF: -- this is the essence of what we are or the way we are. I think on a personal level we believe that we have to worship our Creator in the best way that we can. That worship means following the precepts of the Torah. And the Torah is full of precepts that deal with those commandments, those mitzvahs that we do between man and man,

which are our social mitzvahs, and we have a certain obligation for. We have personal obligations, and personal growth, I think, each of us, in our own way. We are not supposed to compare ourselves to each other. And I think all of us -- I know everyone around this table, that's not the -- I think we have goals, the internal goals that we have, just by virtue of the fact that God has given us another day. And in those goals will be how we can grow. And part of growth is not being selfish but giving. That's a part of our religious philosophy.

FS: You know, when we were growing up, all of us, was during the time that Russian Jews were being tortured.

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: And we would go -- the schools would send us to demonstrations, to -- Well, I'm the only one from Chicago.

F: (laughs)

FS: But we would stand outside the Civic Center with placards and yelling and screaming. We were all of six, seven years old. The schools taught us to be community oriented. We all grew up in organizations -- Well, I grew up in B'Nai Akiva. Somebody else grew up in Bnos. And we were incredibly active, because all our -- Remember during the '67 wars?

F: Yes.

FS: I mean, we would stand on the corner with our little pushkas out there, you know, collecting money, dollar bills or pennies.

HG: I'll go back even earlier. And I remember, in '54 and '55, in elementary school, having to bring cans to school because they were sending food overseas. Not money,

literally food was being --

SK: Food. Amazing.

HG: -- sent overseas.

FS: So, our obligations are to ourselves, our family, our community, and then the larger community, be it Russia or Europe or Israel or wherever our hearts go to. But --

DS: Or our next-door neighbor.

HG: Mmm hmm.

FS: But it never ends. It never ends. It's continuous. And so SHALVA's commitment ended. OK, on to the next project, whatever that be. And --

CF: Those of us who came out of SHALVA --

DS: Yeah.

CF: -- went on to some other aspect.

FS: Oh, yeah!

CF: It never ended.

FS: It never ended. None of us --

DS: Never.

FS: -- sat dormant. It just continued. And unfortunately for the community, we keep begging for money for our new projects, you know. But that's just how it goes.

DS: Well, there are just always different needs.

FS: Always.

HG: The other piece that's really been fascinating about the involvement in SHALVA is when SHALVA made the shift outside of the Orthodox community into the larger Jewish community, that was just an amazing piece. And it's probably the only non-Federation organization, maybe even in the whole country, (laughs) that includes all parts of the Jewish community, both in service as well as in organizational structure. And that has been --

F: That's --

HG: -- for me personally, literally, as an individual, one of the most amazing experiences. These are women who would otherwise absolutely never cross paths with each other.

DS: No. And earn your respect.

HG: Oh, oh, yes.

DS: And that was what --

HG: Yeah.

DS: -- I found amazing. You had women who really were not observant, were not affiliated -- they were Jewish -- and their outlook or their view of Orthodox women -- may not have been very proud of. Once we all worked together, it was amazing to see the change.

CF: The Ark has a little bit of it.

DS: You know --

HG: Yeah. Yeah.

DS: -- do we not pay one of these women?

CF: But it's unique. It is unique to Chicago --

DS: That's right. That's true. The Ark does. Yes.

CF: -- and it's amazing. It's just --

DS: And respect (inaudible).

FS: Does [Bitachon?] do that or --

DS: No.

HG: No.

CF: No.

HG: No.

FS: No? It's all ortho--?

HG: And the different parts of the Jewish community are really very separate, because the belief system and the lifestyle have variations. Those variations are pretty big. And there's just separation. There's geographic separation. There's lifestyle separation. To be able to come together and work together for a common cause and bridge those differences has just been wonderful. I think there is also -- You know, originally there was always the idea, "Oh, where is --?" Sherry Dimarsky used to always tell this fabulous tale that when she would start going from rabbi to rabbi and opening this up to the larger Jewish community -- So she would go to a Conservative rabbi and he would say, "No, the problem is not by me. The problem is over there by the Orthodox, because they're old fashioned and they don't think women are worth anything," et cetera. And then she would go to a Reform rabbi, and he would say, "No, it's not by us. It's by the

Conservative, because they can't decide if they're Orthodox or if they're Reform. They've got their feet in --" You know, and it was always this pointing to somebody else. And the notion that they could sit with people and stereotypes could be changed was phenomenal. And I think that what this really also speaks to, in a parallel kind of way, is that when a woman is abused, whether she is seen that way by her husband, as someone who can be abused, or she experiences herself like that, she falls into a stereotypical niche. And the work of SHALVA is to help her move out of that niche and that she not be identified exclusively as someone who is a victim of domestic violence, but she is a person who has strengths and capabilities and possibilities, and we just have to help her heal so that she can move on. So, I think, in many ways, there is that parallel piece about changing the stereotype. So, I think that's sort of a byproduct of --

FS: That's exactly what we were fighting, all those years ago.

HG: Yeah.

FS: That's exactly the piece that --

HG: Yeah.

FS: -- nobody wanted to hear. (laughs)

HG: Yeah.

DJ: And do you know why that became (inaudible)?

HG: Why --? Please clarify the question.

DJ: Why you were able to bring those different parts of the community together in SHALVA and not in other --

HG: Oh, um...

DJ: You know, why is that anything --?

FS: Because abuse knows no difference.

CF: Yeah. Yeah.

SK: Right.

FS: It happens in all walks.

CF: Yeah.

SK: I think control and --

FS: Because like, in terms of schools, you know, each one has their own schools. Or if you talk about synagogues, they're each -- have got their own separate ones. But when it comes to there is one agency that deals with domestic abuse for Jewish women in Chicago, that is SHALVA. So --

CF: So ideologically, the lines aren't as complicated.

FS: Yeah.

F: Yeah.

CF: There's more in common than not.

HG: Mmm hmm. But I would imagine that, if it was any kind of social issue, problem that needed to be addressed that didn't involve -- No, I don't know that that's true.

FS: Well, you know --

HG: I'm just trying to --

FS: -- Keshet also has --

HG: That's true.

FS: -- very broad -- Keshet is --

CF: Keshet is a broad --

HG: Keshet does also. Right.

F: Keshet --

DS: Special needs children.

FS: -- an organization for --

DS: Education. Right.

HG: Yeah.

SK: I'm going to guess that Keshet has more issue with it. The SHALVA issue is just strengthening the ego of the woman to let her grow and become her own individual.

DS: Can I just put in one --? SHALVA helps men too. I think we've --

HG: Yes. Yes.

DS: -- only been focusing on the view of women. There is such a thing as an abused husband.

HG: It's about 5%.

FS: Abused person. Abused person.

DS: You know, so I think we have to --

HG: 5%.

DS: We help them too.

SK: But in Keshet you're going to have ideological differences in education, whatever.

DS: Right, because it has to do with education. I think we've also --

CF: But on the other hand, Keshet has that tug at the heart strings. So --

HG: Mmm hmm.

FS: Right.

CF: And brings it back to --

FS: And you can show a video --

DS: But that's why they can --

FS: -- and you can show pictures of kids --

DS: That's why they can fundraise.

FS: -- which obviously we can't do.

HG: Right.

FS: But I think also one of the things we've really been consciously working on is not to let religious --

DS: Differences?

FS: -- differences, discussions really -- We try to keep it out of SHALVA.

HG: Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm.

FS: I mean, differences do come up sometimes, things that have to be because of religious reasons or not religious reasons, but we really, really stay very focused on our mission, which is to help the victims of domestic violence and not to get sidetracked on religious issues -- which is, I think, one of the reasons why we've been successful at keeping this group.

HG: It's an apolitical entity. And because it's apolitical, I think that we can do it in this kind a -- The other thing that I think that -- maybe just for your own awareness -- and Orthodoxy is not monolithic. There's not one kind of Orthodox. Every one of us at this table is different Orthodox, in some way.

F: (laughs)

HG: I mean, I sometimes say that, in my own house, count the number of people is in the house at this time and then you will know (laughter) how many different kinds of Orthodox there are, right here, right now. But people on the outside, you know, are not always aware of that.

FS: This has nothing to do with our discussion --

HG: (laughs)

FS: -- but when we write SHALVA, we usually spell it all out in caps --

HG: Yes.

FS: -- because it's an acronym and each letter stands for something else. So whenever -- and any --

HG: It also has a Hebrew meaning.

DJ: But it's --

HG: Right.

DJ: Right. So it's --

FS: Well, the word itself means tranquility, the word shalva. And that's why -- It was at your house --

HG: It was -- (laughter)

FS: -- when we did that.

SK: Unh huh.

HG: It was at --

DS: My house.

HG: -- Devora's house. And it was Tamar --

DS: Oh, excuse me.

SK: Tamar.

F: Tamar!

SK: You know how that was?

DS: I came up with -- We were sitting in --

SK: That was Shalva Banker. That's what happened.

DS: That's where the name came from. Exactly.

SK: That's where the name came from, was Shalva Banker.

HG: But then we also --

SK: She had just moved --

HG: It stands for something.

DJ: What does --?

HG: So, in your --

SK: We were coming up with names, and so somebody sai-- There was a girl in the community, a young, little girl, at the time.

DS: Not anymore.

SK: Yeah, but at the time she was young, maybe eight years old. And somebody said, "Oh, isn't that a beautiful name, Shalva?" And then Tamara came up with shelter, advice, legal -- what is it? -- legal advoca--

FS: Legal advocacy for victims of abuse.

SK: Victims of abuse. And we were like --

FS: So just whatever people had.

SK: -- bingo! -- you know, it worked.

HG: When you do your writing, just in anything, SHALVA should be spelled that way.

FS: And Devora's spelled without an H.

(laughter)

DS: That's called (inaudible).

SK: That was cute.

DJ: OK.

SK: Now you know what everybody had to deal with, huh?

DJ: I'm going to --

DS: You sit here long enough and then you --

SK: It was fun.

HG: I was just kind of wondering if you had any questions for us, maybe even off the record. I don't know. And this must raise so many questions, in your mind.

(pause)

DJ: Uh --

(laughter)

DS: He's trying --

HG: Boy.

FS: So many!

SK: You know, we were passionate about it. I don't --

DJ: That's right, turn the microphone around.

DS: Oh, come on. It's facing the person, right?

(laughter)

DJ: No, I mean, I just think it's a -- And what were you --?

HG: I don't know, just --

(Audio break)

SK: I think one of the nicest things about SHALVA, what happened was that we were able to go across the country and help other communities.

FS: We haven't said that we've been involved for (inaudible) --

DS: You know Cleveland's called us?

HG: Oh. All over. All over.

CF: To get calls all the time.

FS: All over the country --

CF: We got those --

FS: -- people have asked us to -- Sherry Dimarsky used to travel very far to help people set up similar --

HG: Conferences. Yeah.

FS: Nothing quite like what we have, I don't think. Is there something, really, like SHALVA anywhere today?

HG: Los Angeles --

FS: Los Angeles.

HG: -- has a very well-developed domestic violence program. But it's part of Jewish Family Service there. It's not a separate entity. And Baltimore has a program called CHANA.

FS: Right. Well, Baltimore was --

HG: Yes.

DS: They were the forerunners on that.

HG: But there's no one --

SK: But they didn't have CHANA when we started SHALVA.

HG: No, they didn't.

DS: No.

HG: No.

FS: No, but she was like working on --

HG: She would do it more one-on-one.

DS: Right.

FS: Right.

HG: She had a mentoring system.

SK: Oh, it was very exciting. And the public awareness really, I think, took a big step because of SHALVA, because we went public. So other cities weren't afraid to do that.

DJ: Are there any other important landmarks or history? Do you...?

HG: I'm just wondering, and I don't know what your timeframe is on this, if it might be helpful for you to speak to Sherry Dimarsky herself. She's not a well woman and she would not be able to come out anywhere. She's on oxygen. But maybe on the telephone, maybe at her home. I don't know. She was Executive Director for about ten years.

FS: In the very crucial early --

HG: There's no question that she --

DS: Oh, yeah.

HG: -- pulled this together to be a formal --

CF: Professional --

HG: -- professional organization. Yeah. She's a lawyer by training. She worked legal assistance for a good number of years and became disillusioned with that. And there's no question that her legal background was critical to this. She's also an incredible speaker and was able to get the message out to everyone. She'd go down and make a presentation at Federation, at the point where we went to Federation for grant -- which they continue to give us. They're our largest grantor. And she could sell us to Federation. And that was no easy piece to do.

DS: Where many organizations are getting their grants cut --

HG: That's right.

DS: -- and we're able to maintain at least the same, if not more.

HG: Right.

SK: I remember going with her to foundations --

HG: Yes.

SK: -- oh, the horrible family foundations where -- ew -- it was just terrible. We'd walk in and nobody could care less about us. They didn't want to give us a penny. She would have them all in tears. And it was great. I would just be the sidekick. It was a lot of fun.

FS: She was -- she is an amazing person.

SK: She was great.

DS: She really helped us grow.

FS: She did leave us because of her deteriorating health. And then we, you know, had -- But she was the voice and face of SHALVA for --

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: -- you know, the --

HG: Entire time.

FS: So really it would be very helpful to speak to her. Or like you can call her. It really depends on -- She can say, "Yes, call me tomorrow at 10:00," and then tomorrow at 10:00 she won't be able to talk to you. But it's definitely worth -- reserve that --

SK: Do you remember negotiating her salary in Shulamis' house?

HG: Oh, yes.

SK: Do you remember that?

HG: Oh, yeah.

SK: Let's say she asked for whatever it was. And we were like, "We don't have that money." We all knew we didn't have a choice. It wasn't like anything -- We were all going to hire her. She was the only one that knew what to do. So.

DS: She was leaving and teaching us.

HG: Yes.

SK: She sure was. That poor thing. She had to put up with all of us. Euh! Poor thing.

HG: There were the usual growth pains that every organization has. And we got through them.

SK: (laughs) Letting go, you know?

HG: Mmm hmm.

SK: Very difficult.

DS: I still have it. Every once in a while, I really have to -- It's I can't do this any more, you know? And I just keep up.

SK: Yeah, but it's important to keep that Orthodox movement in there, in the original way.

DS: Right.

FS: Well, the --

CF: So, something about continuity.

HG: Yeah. We called in the history.

CF: In every organization there are those few people who have been there at the beginning, during, and now. They're always just a few, less than a handful.

SK: Mmm hmm.

CF: Makes it bearable. That's to give (inaudible).

SK: Right. Well, it's important to have that historical presence. (laughs) You know, it didn't feel so long ago, until today.

CF: A long time ago.

HG: Beginning to feel like it's history. Right?

SK: It is.

DS: They don't want to come here.

DJ: (inaudible)?

CF: No.

SK: No, sixteen years.

CF: No, no, no, no, no.

SK: Seventeen. The baby must have just been born.

FS: Oh, it was seventeen.

SK: So, he's seventeen.

FS: I was pregnant with Yaakov Itzak at the time.

F: Oh!

SK: Right. Right. That's right.

FS: I only --

(Overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

CF: Seventeen sounds like almost twenty, to me.

SK: Chani was born sometime --

CF: I don't know about everyone else's math. (laughs)

SK: What?

CF: Seventeen.

SK: No, no. Seventeen's still --

FS: No, seventeen is nowhere near twenty.

CF: But --

FS: I don't know what you're talking about.

SK: Seventeen, they're still in the house. Twenty, they're already out. So, no, seventeen, you still get yentas -- everybody.

DJ: Well, I don't if you have like a date -- a beginning date.

FS: The beginning was that --

SK: I think that --

DS: Right.

HG: The symposium.

FS: Rebbetzin Weinberg, when she came.

HG: Oh. Hm.

DS: Which, either -- Oh, it's Weinberg. OK?

HG: That wasn't the beginning of the organization.

FS: Well, some of the -- or started a lot later.

DS: There were seeds of it in --

HG: Oh.

DS: For SHALVA?

HG: I don't know. See --

DS: Yes, that was the seeds.

HG: That was the seed, yeah, definitely.

F: We were --

FS: That's when we started -- So we weren't called SHALVA yet.

F: Mmm hmm.

FS: We were just a group of -- But we started with our, you know, meeting and --

DS: We knew there was a need.

FS: -- deciding what to do, and we were going to open a shelter, and how we were going to do it and --

HG: I think it took us a long time.

CF: Oh, I want to say --

SK: Yeah, that shelter didn't start until much later.

CF: I know Project Shalom Bayis is '84. I'm telling you; SHALVA was --

SK: Was before that.

CF: -- the same time! Right. If anything, around the same year.

F: Mmm hmm.

CF: I'm telling you.

DS: Yeah!

F: Mmm hmm.

SK: '84 was Shalom Bayis?

HG: We were definitely before Shalom Bayis --

DS: Yes.

HG: -- definitely before Shalom Bayis.

DS: All right. And right after.

CF: Like always (inaudible).

FS: I don't think it was more than a year between when the Weinbergs spoke and when we opened the shelter.

DS: I think it was --

SK: It could be.

HG: It was at least --

SK: No, it could be. It cou--

HG: -- a year from when she spoke to when we -- I'll tell you why it was a year. Because she spoke in the summer. Because --

FS: No, she spoke in November.

DS: She -- winter, more winter.

HG: It was the winter?

DS: I think it was in January.

FS: It was November?

DS: November?

SK: I think it was --

HG: And the symposium was near June.

SK: I didn't go, because [Labe?] was just born.

DS: June.

SK: And Labele was November.

HG: But you think it was that same -- I have the sense that it was another full year.

SK: It had to be --

DS: It doesn't seem long.

SK: One second. I'll tell you. Labele was born at the symposium. That was November. Not the sympo-- that --

DS: That --

SK: Yeah, when she came. And Nuche was born a year and August, like 18 --

DS: When was Labele born?

SK: Labele was born November '84. And Nuche was born August '85. We were definitely sitting still in my room, with nursing. So, it had to have been the following June, which was '86 --

DS: Yeah.

HG: That (inaudible).

SK: -- when everything was put together.

DS: Mmm hmm.

HG: That makes more sense.

FS: But then we opened the shelter right away, that same month.

HG: Yes, yes. The shelter was the same --

FS: So that was a year-and-a-half --

SK: Mmm hmm, yeah.

FS: -- between when --

SK: That's how I always have it in --

CF: We tried to get our ducks all in a row.

FS: Maybe the first --

DS: That's --

HG: Yeah.

CF: I mean, we --

DS: We just needed to get ourselves educated first --

F: Yeah.

DS: -- before we could do anything. Because we had no idea about anything.

SK: And you can even go even further. You know when we hired Sherry, because that was at Shulamis' house. And that was about a half a year later. So, you know, like you can just tell from historically what was going on.

DS: Yeah.

SK: See how everything works with children. You can't -- (laughter) You know, it's -- [Mitch?] -- I had four more kids right after that. I had two more kids after that, then --

DJ: I'm out of questions. That was great.

SK: It was fun. It was fun.

DJ: Anything you want to say?

HG: I think there's just something very special about us as a group. Our lives are pretty diverse. And every now and then we come together like this for whatever, and I just feel such a warmth --

SK: Mmm hmm. Very special.

HG: -- about each of us, this way. It's -- And I imagine, you know, wherever our lives are going to take us --

FS: And the energy starts up all over again --

HG: Yes. Yes.

FS: -- when we sit down -- the table.

SK: It was an incredible time. It really was. It was very warm. And it was fun. It was tiresome. But, you know, you learn people's strengths. It was beautiful. It was just --

CF: Yeah.

HG: Yeah.

CF: No, and there was a goodness about the --

HG: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

CF: -- exuberance, and the lack of fear.

F: Mmm hmm.

HG: Yeah.

CF: There's a fearlessness when you're still --

SK: Mmm hmm. It's true.

DS: It's really much more conscious of things.

SK: Well, you just don't feel like putting out as much energy as you did then.

CF: Oh, I know. As much energy to put out.

(laughter)

SK: Plus, you have other things going on that --

HG: I think it might have also been a very interesting time in the community. Because I think that there weren't that many older women in the community who were not rabbinically connected, in other words, rabbis' wives who were in positions of leadership. So, there wasn't anyone, you know, that you could kind of fall back on.

CF: I think they were busy with their schools.

F: Mmm hmm.

CF: They were doing --

HG: Yeah. Yeah.

CF: -- their piece. And I think they --

HG: There were a couple of school principals maybe and, you know, rabbis' wives, but there wasn't another entity of non-affiliated ladies. And as young as we were, we were that. That was very different. And it probably enabled this to happen, because, if there

was a structure of women in leadership positions who were older and who could not buy into this, then this would have been much, much harder to do.

SK: Everybody just left us alone.

HG: Yeah.

SK: I don't think they thought anything was --

DS: Well, they didn't even want to touch this. (inaudible).

SK: I don't think they ever thought this would happen. I think there were older women that probably -- I think they were around but they just -- like Chani said, they were busy with school.

CF: They were in whatever their stage was.

SK: Yeah.

CF: And we were active in Daughters of Israel at that time, doing these things. You were active because of the role in the refresher course, the seminars.

FS: Right.

CF: This was all part of the seminar business --

HG: Yeah.

SK: Right.

CF: -- which was the educational arm --

SK: Right.

CF: -- whole, you know, educational outreach. (laughs)

DS: Right.

SK: But that was the most fun part of Daughters of Israel, was that educational outreach.

DS: Yeah.

HG: Yeah. That was also an interesting piece of, shift that Daughters of Israel did. Because when I came to the city and started, it was literally just a fundraiser -- and a social entity. And then I remember the meetings that we had, where we had to expand it. And we had to go back and see what were the original mission statement and how do we --

CF: What are the needs?

HG: -- what were the needs and how do we justify education and how do we do it?

CF: With the Jewish family. Yeah.

FS: Can I just ask you what you're planning to do with all this, like what exactly your mission is here? (laughs)

[END OF INTERVIEW]