

Pay It For Her is a young 501(c)(3) organization that supports and encourages women facing adversity, so that they may get back on track and accomplish their goals. Founded in 2018 in Newport News, VA, we are 100% volunteer staffed. We have a clear mission: to build a community of care for women through acts of kindness. To do so serves to buffer the impact of adversity and provide resources to empower them through difficult times. Furthermore, our hope is that by helping a given woman power through adversity, we are benefiting her not only personally, but also her ability to fulfill family and occupational functions to the best of her ability; thus, a small act of support exerts a larger rippling effect.

Given Pay It For Her's size and mission, we are positioned to exert our greatest charitable impact by way of promoting **secondary preventive care** to women in need. We have two funds that support secondary prevention, which is defined as providing early detection and interventions for mental health-related concerns before these issues become exacerbated or reach a level of crisis. Our **Small Kindnesses Fund** provides encouragement and small pick-me-ups to an identified woman who is having a hard time (e.g., cancer treatment, loss of spouse, loss of job), and the **Emergency Fund** provides financial support in critical situations (e.g., support legal, medical, or mental health costs when other options are unavailable or are not expedient).

### **Why is secondary prevention important for women?**

Numerous studies confirm that women are regularly discriminated against in various arenas: being paid less on the dollar than men, less represented in well-paying jobs, carrying more of the burden of managing a household, and tending disproportionately to care-taking needs (e.g., Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018). Thus, the impact on mental well-being of women is unsurprising: research has also consistently demonstrated that women who are experiencing stressful events are at great risk of experiencing mental health concerns with the potential of escalation into full-blown mental and/or physical health diagnoses. In addition to the direct impact of those disorders on women's well-being, "they also contribute to the increased vulnerability in the face of adversity" (Min et al., 2013, p. 310).

As Mental Health America (n.d.) has aptly described, "when we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait years to treat them. We start way before Stage 4. We begin with prevention." The aim with secondary prevention is for such efforts to slow or stop the progression, or decrease the impact, of an identifiable problem that is causing emotional distress or adversity. Research has supported the need for and value of preventive care in women: "preventive services can significantly improve health outcomes for women, and save tens of thousands of lives per year" (Stolp & Fox, 2015).

Research on barriers to preventive care is also consistent on a couple critical points: (1) "the values of mental health promotion and illness prevention have been underappreciated more than those of physical health" (Min et al., 2013, p. 307), and (2) encouraging women to effectively engage in preventive care cannot be accomplished without education and community support (e.g., Chuang et al, 2012).

Women who are experiencing adverse events are already emotionally depleted, and many do not have a strong support network in place. Pay It For Her aims to make it easy and safe for them to (1) be aware of us as a resource, (2) reach out privately, and (3) receive support, including responding to early signs of stress and distress via our Small Kindnesses provision of resources—ideally, rather than waiting for issues to build to the level of crisis, which is more costly both in terms of emotional and financial toll. If we are unable to assist in small ways early

on, however, our Emergency Fund alternatively allows us to aid in funding urgent services. In each case, we take on the effort rather than further burdening a struggling woman.

Designated gifts support either the Small Kindnesses Fund or Emergency Fund. Non-designated gifts to Pay It For Her can support either of these funds as well as the outreach strategy and operating costs we incur in promoting awareness of our services through broad and accessible reach via social media. We are happy to work with donors to establish how they wish their contributions to be utilized.

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