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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daughters of Penelope Announces Opening of Penelope's Place *Organization's Second Nationally-Sponsored Domestic Violence Shelter*



WASHINGTON (December 7, 2009)—The Daughters of Penelope (DOP), a premier international women's organization, celebrated the opening of its second nationally-sponsored shelter for victims of domestic violence, Penelope's Place, in Brockton, Mass., with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 24, 2009, announced Grand President Elaine M. Sampanis.

"Obviously, we wish there was not a need to sponsor and open shelters of this type," said Sampanis. "However, through shelters like

Penelope's Place and Penelope House in Mobile, Alabama, we are able to provide an invaluable service to the community that is unfortunately needed. I commend the efforts of Daughters of Penelope Zelia Chapter 120 in Salem, led by Chapter President Elaine Rice; and federal, state, and local government officials, who worked tirelessly to see this important project through to completion."

Penelope's Place is a collaborative effort between the Daughters of Penelope and Health Imperatives. It is a 24/7 emergency residence for women and children who flee domestic violence. Residents live at Penelope's Place for an average of 90 days. During that time Penelope's Place staff provides a safe place for healing from the trauma of domestic violence. Each resident is assigned to a primary staff person, who works with the resident and her family to develop goals to achieve self-sufficiency upon leaving Penelope's Place. Services provided include counseling, housing, legal and medical advocacy, life skills, parenting skills, and job coaching. In addition, children receive services from a specialized child therapist. Penelope's Place can accommodate up to five families at any time.

In 1979, under the direction of the local Daughters of Penelope chapter, Penelope House, the first shelter for battered women and their children in Alabama, opened its doors in Mobile. According to Sampanis, Penelope House is recognized as a model shelter for other such homes. Penelope House shelters as many as 440 women and 550 children annually.



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“We believe Penelope’s Place will follow Penelope House’s excellent example and become a model shelter in the community,” said Sampanis.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Also, children who witness domestic violence are more prone to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.

Founded in San Francisco in 1929, the Daughters of Penelope is the first women’s organization of its kind established in the United States. It is an affiliate organization of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA).

The mission of the DOP is to promote the ancient Greek ideals of Hellenism, Education, Philanthropy, Civic Responsibility, and Family and Individual Excellence.

For more information about the DOP, or any of its programs or projects, please visit www.ahepa.org/dop.

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