

Charity News

ACORUS

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Acorus is one of a few non-governmental, Czech organizations active in the area of preventing violence. For last 13 years, Acorus has been helping victims of domestic violence return to a normal life without violence. The majority of Acorus' clients are women and children endangered by domestic violence, although men have been assisted as well. They arrive from all over the Czech Republic.

Acorus provides a range of services: psychological counselling, legal and financial advice, social consulting, etc. Acorus maintains a safe house at an undisclosed address, a non-stop crisis helpline, and a counselling and advice centre in Prague 7. After leaving their homes because of violence, the women and children often struggle with finances. Many of them live close to the poverty line, which makes them vulnerable and dependent on help from others.

Jana's Story

Jana (not her real name), an unemployed primary school teacher, called the Acorus helpline. She needed advice on her deteriorating domestic situation. Her husband was physically attacking her, locking her in their home, and checking her phone calls and messages. He would not allow her to leave the house without him. He was accompanying her nearly everywhere, and if he was not satisfied with her behaviour in public, once at home he would beat her as a punishment. Jana was always trying to excuse his behaviour. "My husband is just an angry person who cannot control himself. He only did it because he loves me." He would then bring presents to Jana and apologize for his behaviour afterwards.

The violence continued to escalate. Finally, Jana left and came to the Acorus safe house, with her two small daughters. She could not leave them at home alone and unattended when she had to run away from her violent husband to escape further injuries. Gradually at the safe house, Jana received counselling and was able to find a job. After three months of persuasion by her husband who promised "a new beginning" for their relationship (he even started therapy), she left the safe house and went back home.

Unfortunately, within a few weeks Jana had to return to the Acorus safe house. There she again undertook psychotherapy. After a few months, she was strong enough to move out. She continued attending group psychotherapy sessions at the Acorus counselling centre in Prague 7 for a number of months after leaving the safe house.

Now, Jana lives independently with her daughters and teaches at a primary school. She is also studying at university to increase her qualifications. Her youngest daughter, however, has been subject to school bullying (mirroring her mother's experience). The Acorus counselling centre is providing services to help her daughter. •

Ways to donate directly to Acorus:

- Send a donation by SMS from your mobile phone. Send this text message "DMS ACORUS" to 87777. The cost for this message is 30Kč, and Acorus receives 27Kč.
- Contribute every month for one year. For this method, send this text message "DMS ROK ACORUS" to 87777; 30Kč will be added to your mobile phone bill every month for a total annual donation of 360Kč.
- Make a direct deposit donation to bank account 19-3938820257/0100 at Komerční banka.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - 25TH NOVEMBER

Since 1981, the international community has marked the 25th of November as a day to publicize the world-wide human rights issue of violence against women. The United Nations General Assembly designated this date in December 1999. Women around the world are subject to rape, domestic abuse and other forms of violence, and the scale and true nature of this issue is often hidden. In the Czech Republic, this date has been officially commemorated since 2001.