Abuse Support & Prevention Education Network pays off mortgage on safe house

By John Carroll
Enterprise Staff Writer

It was a happy occasion Wednesday at Opportunity Bank on Main Street as three Livingston women celebrated paying off the mortgage on Abuse Support & Prevention Education Network’s safe house, an emergency shelter for victims of domestic abuse.

On hand for the loan retirement payment of $118,000 were Opportunity Bank President Megan Watts, ASPEN Executive Director Heidi Barrett and ASPEN Board Chairwoman Laurel Desnick.

“The community really came through for us with their gifts and donations,” said Barrett. “ASPEN now owns the safe house outright and has no more loan payments.”

The money to pay off the loan on ASPEN’s safe house came courtesy of donations from individuals, families, businesses and two community foundations — the Livingston Community Trust and The Kendeda Fund.

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, The Kendeda Fund contributed a matching gift of $50,000 to ASPEN to help retire the debt.

“We are happy and proud to do that for such an important organization,” said Tim Stevens, a Livingston resident and Montana Fund Advisor for The Kendeda Fund. “ASPEN is one of the best organizations that we know of for helping victims of domestic abuse.”

ASPEN is a nonprofit organization that provides direct services to domestic and sexual violence victims in three southwest Montana counties — Park, Sweet Grass and M T. The nonprofit provides legal services to victims, manages a 24/7 crisis hotline (406-222-8154), and operates a five-bedroom safe house in Livingston.

Barrett said ASPEN’s safe house shelters more than 100 domestic violence victims each year who stay for days and weeks, or until they are stabilized.

“This is emergency housing for individuals and families escaping domestic violence, and sometimes sexual abuse and human trafficking,” said Barrett.

Founded in 2000, ASPEN rented a three-bedroom safe house for more than 20 years. In January 2021, ASPEN made a down payment on a new, larger safe house. Less than a year later, the mortgage is paid off on the safe house.

“We really want to thank the community,” said Barrett. “We received so much financial support and that has made a difference.”

Some local bank officials officiated the event.

Vaccines making Thanksgiving easier, but hot spots remain

By The Associated Press

Parents, not expect to lose teachers.

month — 100% unvaccinated,” Truskey said. “It’s just so incredibly sad to see a woman die with teenagers. Especially with that age group, it’s nearly 100% preventable.”

In Detroit, where less than 40% of eligible residents were fully vaccinated, Mayor Mike Duggan said hospitalizations have doubled since early November.

“We have far too many 169,000 cases and 1,645 deaths per day, and about 81,000 people were in the hospital with COVID-19. The U.S. now is averaging 95,000 cases, 1,115 deaths and 40,000 in the hospital.

Airports have been jammed. More than 2 million people passed through security checkpoints on Friday, the busiest day since the pandemic shut down travel early in 2020. On some here, and I’m r and I’m thankful and that G survive,” said J, who got her f