

### **Thoughts of an Advocate:**

*I was so busy today. We had a couple of women and their children who came to the shelter today badly in need of safety and help.*

*I hurried about after hearing their stories and doing intake to help meet some of their basic human needs such as food, a bed and personal essentials. They came here in a hurry with basically nothing but the clothes on their back. Between doing this and answering the phone my mind was in a whirl and I was feeling angry and frustrated. I was angry at the system. Angry at the police, angry at the Courts and angry at the abusers who caused such pain for these women.*

*Feeling overwhelmed and tired I finally sat down to catch my breath. I looked up and there sat my sisters at the dining room table feeding their children. Visible bruises, cuts and bite marks on their faces, legs, and arms inflicted by their partners, the father of their children. I stared and stared at them. Yes, here sat our women feeding our sacred babies.*

*As I stared and what I began to see brought a lump to my throat and made it hard to swallow at the tears welled in my eyes. What I began to feel in the room was so strong that I could almost see them. It wasn't just the visible bruises and cuts. What I seen was tattered, bruised, torn spirits of my sisters. Here was the reality. This is what I'll never forget. We can go to workshops, conferences; meetings to discuss the whys, shouldve's, couldve's of the battered women and the batterer. But this is the reality. Here were my sisters, my daughters, my nieces, my granddaughters, my auntie, my mother. And yes, she was still going on tending to her children. Wow!! What strength. What Courage. What perseverance our Lakota women have. Now tell me, who is the real Lakota warrior? I honor them and I respect them - - my sisters. This is why I am here. To help, to persevere, to use my frustrations and anger to help make a difference so we don't have to live like this anymore.*