



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vanessa Justice receives an appreciation plaque.

## James house holds fundraiser in Petersburg

On Friday, April 8, 2011 The James House Intervention/Prevention Services, Inc. hosted Expressions; The Invisible Girl a fundraiser and awareness event at the Petersburg Area Art League. Attendees had the opportunity to experience one woman's story of multiple rapes through an art installation exhibit. Various scenes depicting events in her life were staged with props, many donated by The Trading Post in Petersburg, and the story itself was told through journal entries at each station. The powerful display deeply touched those who attended. One visitor stated, "I'm overwhelmed by what I'm seeing. I don't know how a young woman could survive what she has."

Equally important as telling the story of abuse and assault, was telling the story of recovery and healing. Guest speaker, Lynette, whose story was told, stated, "It's important for people to know that sexual assault doesn't have to ruin your whole life. I've moved on and

found peace in my life. The healing journey is not easy, but it is possible."

The exhibit was sponsored by Gerdau Ameristeel, Ligon Jones Insurance Services, Haley Ford, the Tammi Kamin Band, William Gandel, and the Honorable Riley Ingram. A silent auction was held in conjunction with the event and included items donated by Trevor Elliot, Sue Skalleberg, Cookie Lee, Haley Ford, Annie Publow, Family Preservation Services, Angel Bell, Ron Wood, and Gay Cutchin.

Understanding the impact sexual assault can have on people seeking care, Southside Regional Medical Center School of Nursing students Julia Huft, Amy Crites, and Jennifer Myers got involved by volunteering to assist with the event. Other volunteers included Lenora Deas, April Booth, Ashley Lusich, Jermaine Clayborne, and Derek Clayborne. "We couldn't do what we do without the help of our very dedicated group of volunteers,"

stated James House volunteer coordinator, Lori Kalish. "They tirelessly give of their time and talents."

During the event, James House Board of Directors chairperson, Gay Cutchin, recognized several departing board members for their outstanding service. Receiving appreciation plaques were Vanessa Justice, Kimberly Willis-Miles, and Tammi Slovinsky. "We deeply value the dedication and support of all of our board members," Cutchin stated. "Thank you for your exceptional efforts on behalf of the agency."

All proceeds raised from Expressions will be used by The James House to provide accredited, cost-free, confidential support, advocacy, and education services for people in the Tri-Cities and surrounding counties affected by sexual and domestic violence. To learn more about services or how you can support The James House through monetary donations or by volunteering, call 458-2704 or visit [www.thejameshouse.org](http://www.thejameshouse.org)