

# Afternoon tea and book signing a success

By PAMELA ROBINSON  
Register Staff Writer

has coated me with peace."  
Westbrook said she believes that counseling is good and necessary, but "only God can take you to restoration."

Westbrook said "Christ can bring you to become a victor, to go beyond being a victim."

"During my crisis there was no Abigail's Arms," said Westbrook. "I had no counseling."

"But, now we have an Abigail's Arms in this community," said Westbrook. "It is a worthy cause."

Abigail's Arms has been busy raising money for the shelter for victims of abuse through their Capital Campaign which kicked off in April. Executive Director Aaron Davis said Abigail's Arms has raised more than \$300,000 since April.

Davis said recent benefits for Abigail's Arms include the Gospel Concert hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ and Mary Fay Jackson, the Republican Women "Bricks for the Foundation" picnic, and today, the tea and book signing.

Abigail's Arms Shelter Project Manager Betty Kay Schlesinger said there will be "lots more benefits and opportunities for everyone in the community to be involved in

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(© Staff photo by Pamela Robinson)

## Westbrook shares story

Guest speaker Theresa Westbrook shared her personal story of restoration from childhood sexual abuse during the "Afternoon Tea and Book Signing" Saturday at "Amelia's Attic" to benefit Abigail's Arms. Westbrook said she now has the confidence to speak about her abuse openly, without shame.

It was high-time for tea Saturday at the "Afternoon Tea and Book Signing" hosted by "Amelia's Attic" from 2-4 p.m. to benefit Abigail's Arms.

Guest speaker Theresa Westbrook, author and founder of "Pearls Shalom Ministries," said her book, "A Strand of Pearls," is her personal story of how she was restored from her painful childhood experience of sexual abuse.

"The Lord has given me the confidence to speak about it openly, without shame," said Westbrook.

Westbrook said her biological father sexually abused her continually from the age of four to the age of 14.

Westbrook said she named her book "A Strand of Pearls" because to create a pearl, the oyster must embrace that pain that eventually gives way to beauty.

"God has given the oyster the ability to protect itself," said Westbrook, and in the process, that pain becomes a beautiful pearl.

"We can be restored, brought back to normal," said Westbrook, "that is the pearl, that is the message."

Westbrook said that "instead of depression, Christ has coated me with joy...instead of confusion, He

## Westbrook

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the building, in both small ways and big ways."

Regarding the land where the shelter will be built, Davis said right now they are just keeping the land maintained.

"We can't do anything else yet until the engineering surveys are finished," said Schlesinger.

Davis said the surveys should be completed soon but there is not an exact date for completion.

At the end of her message, Westbrook said "if there is

anyone here today I would be more than happy to speak with you, say a prayer for you. I want to make myself available to you."

Westbrook said "if you know someone that has experienced abuse, this ("A Strand of Pearls") is a wonderful ministry resource.

Donna Hertel, owner of "Amelia's Attic" and "Sarah's on the Square" hosted the benefit and provided the teas and finger foods for the benefit. Hertel's menu included black

olive and curry toast points, spicy pimento cheese on pita bread, miniature croissants with chicken salad, chocolate dipped strawberries, fresh blueberry garnish, lemon bars and fresh raspberries.

For more information about Westbrook go to her website at [www.pearlsofshalom.com](http://www.pearlsofshalom.com) or E-mail her at [theresa@pearlsofshalom.com](mailto:theresa@pearlsofshalom.com).

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