

We dedicate this newsletter to all the advocates in Illinois who continue to do the hard work even with all the financial shortfalls that have remained a constant over the last few years.

Thanks for helping to keep survivors of domestic violence and their children safe.

“Shine the Light” A Survivor’s Story



“He was the best boyfriend I ever had, my first love.”

“He was the best boyfriend I ever had, my first love. I met him when I was only 17. I am now 23, with a three-year-old daughter, and six month old baby boy. I thought we would be together forever. I didn’t understand why he would hit me. I guess that’s why I kept going back.

“He would beg forgiveness and promise that it would never happen again. I loved him. I wanted to believe him. This was the Father of my children, so I went back eight times. Finally, I left for the last time. What made it different this time? I realized I didn’t love him anymore.

At first, his voice was quiet, then it became more menacing...

“The children and I left for a family gathering nearly 200 miles away from our home. My husband decided to stay home, not wanting to travel that far in one day. It was great seeing my family. We all talked and laughed and had a great time visiting with each other. Everyone was happy to see me and the kids.

“It was really late when we finally got home that night--about 2:00 am. I

thought my husband would be asleep. We quietly entered the house, and there he was sitting in the dark, waiting. Once I saw him, I knew he was mad. At first, he spoke softly, then he became more menacing and started yelling at me. He accused me of being with another man.

“I begged him to let me put the kids to bed. They had slept in the car, and now I was afraid for them. He let me put them to bed and when I came back into the room, he was on his feet. He moved fast, getting in my face and stalking me around the room. He wouldn’t let me leave the room. He asked me who I’d been with. I told him I had been with no one except my family. He began to yell at me ‘I know you were with someone!’ I told him to call my family’s house to verify that I was there, but he refused. I became even more frightened. I was afraid to do or say anything.

He was threatening to kill us all, and I knew he meant it.

“My daughter woke up and began to cry. The yelling continued, and my daughter wouldn’t stop crying. I realized I had to get out of house with my children. He was threatening to kill us all, and I knew he meant it. I told him that if he loved our children, he’d let me comfort them. For some reason he agreed.

“I grabbed the two kids, as he stood at the refrigerator getting a beer, I bolted out the door and jumped in the car. With my baby in my arms, and my three-year-old sitting on the seat, I backed out of the driveway as he chased us screaming and pounding on the back of the car. I

drove a mile before I stopped to secure the children in their seats. I immediately went to the domestic violence (DV) program. We had nothing but what we were wearing when we left the house. The advocates were helpful and we stayed at the DV program for nearly two months.

“During our stay at the DV shelter, the advocates provided us with food and clothing. They listened to me as I cried years of tears. I received help from the criminal justice system and Department of Children and Family Services to protect our children. I got my GED from the college, I received emergency help from the county. Most important of all, the advocates helped me find the courage to make a plan.

“I learned about the cycle of violence, and what might happen to me and the children if I went back again. I knew if I did, the risks were high for me and my babies. I had already experienced this first hand as the verbal and physical violence escalated each time I left and came back. I learned how to be a better Mom in parenting classes. I stopped yelling and spanking my three-year-old daughter. The advocates helped me find better ways to discipline.

I owe my life and my children’s safety to the staff at the DV shelter.

“Finally, I was ready to take my children and find a more permanent place to live. I decided to move closer to my family. My relatives agreed to help me and my

kids for the first year. Currently my family watches the kids while I take classes to improve my computer skills. I found a DV agency and group here that I go to every week. I'm not going back, I'm moving on. I owe my life and my children's safety to the staff at the DV shelter. I love those women who listened to me and allowed me to find my own answers.

"Now I'm beginning to make better decisions for my life. I'm not sure what the future holds. I don't know yet if I will have to let him have visitation with the kids. So far, I don't because he threatened to hurt them, and because he forced them into danger when we had to run without them even in their car seats. I have a long way to go, but each day that long way gets shorter. My counselor says, 'baby steps', so that is what I do. I'm calmer now, and my three-year-old daughter is getting calmer, too. Thank God the baby was too young to know everything.

"I used to want to be away from my family, but now I am so grateful for them. I never could have done it alone. I am a different and stronger person now. I'm going to keep getting better for all of us. The DV shelter and staff that took me in so many months ago helped me change my life."

All identifying names and locations were purposefully removed, or changed, to protect the confidentiality of all survivors and advocates mentioned in this story.

ICADV's Economic Empowerment Project Featured in Research Article and Webinar

This summer, ICADV's Economic Empowerment Project was featured in a research article about how to assist domestic violence survivors with asset building and other economic opportunities. The article, "Integrating Asset-Building Strategies into Domestic Violence Advocacy" was researched and written by Andrea Kovach, a staff attorney at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law in Chicago. In the article, Kovach discusses the impact of economic abuse on survivors and the different asset-building strategies being incorporated into domestic violence advocacy work, including individual development accounts and microloans. The article concludes with case studies from several organizations around the country that have been using these strategies with survivors.

In the last several years, asset building has been seen as an important way to help low-income individuals move out of poverty. With most asset-building programs, an individual or family, saves or take out a small, inexpensive loan, to purchase an asset, like a home, small business, or education. In the same way that this strategy has been used to help people move out of poverty, many domestic violence advocates believe that it can be one of the key strategies in helping survivors gain independence from their abusers.

The agencies featured along with ICADV's Economic Empowerment Project were, A Safe Place and Lake Forest Bank in Lake Forest, Illinois; Barren River Area Safe Space in Kentucky; the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association's Economic Empowerment Project; Redevelopment Opportunities for Women, Inc. in Missouri; and Woman's Crisis Center in Kentucky.

To coincide with publishing the article, the Shriver Center also hosted a webinar on October 26, 2009 to discuss the findings and case studies in the research. ICADV, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association's Economic Empowerment Project, Lake Forest Bank, and Redevelopment Opportunities for Women, were all invited to participate in this national webinar. ICADV was given the opportunity to discuss the experiences and lessons learned since the beginning of the Economic Empowerment

Project in 2007. ICADV's role in the webinar and article was to discuss how to create a foundation of economic support that assists survivors as they seek out more asset-building opportunities. More than 150 people from around the country attended the webinar to hear the experiences and strategies each agency has implemented to increase opportunities and safety for survivors.

"Integrating Asset-Building Strategies into Domestic Violence Advocacy" by Andrea Kovach was published in the *Clearinghouse Review Journal of Poverty Law and Policy*, July-August 2009, Volume 43, Numbers 3-4.

ICADV's Economic Empowerment Project is also pleased to announce that it has recently been awarded a grant of \$25,000 from the Allstate Foundation to support its member programs as they work with survivors on economic issues. With these grant dollars, ICADV member programs will receive assistance as they implement the "Moving Ahead Through Financial Management" curriculum and also expand their economic advocacy services. A small part of the money has also been set aside for direct-assistance grants to survivors seeking education or job training. This new

curriculum was created in a collaboration between the Allstate Foundation and the National Network to End Domestic Violence. ICADV will be conducting regional trainings for the "Moving Ahead Through Financial Management" curriculum in February and March 2010 for all of its member programs. ICADV is excited about this new partnership and the support that it will bring to domestic violence survivors in Illinois.

ICADV would like to thank the Little Angel Foundation, Field Foundation, and the Fifth Third Bank Foundation for their continued support of the Economic Empowerment Project. With these funds the project has been able to continue to support domestic violence programs and survivors throughout Illinois as they incorporate economic advocacy into their basic services.



SafetyNet Project



Last year, ICADV-funded-domestic-violence-programs served almost 44,000 adult survivors of domestic violence and over 9,000 child survivors. For many of those victims and their children, the revolutionary tool of the Internet helped them flee the violence in their lives by providing them with the tools to reach out to domestic violence programs, find information on orders of protection, and find housing and employment opportunities. However, what many victims don't know is that, although technology may be very helpful to them, perpetrators of domestic violence may also use these technologies to further their abusive and controlling behavior.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and its SafetyNet Project have been working diligently to help domestic violence advocates and survivors better understand the emerging risks of technology use so they may build this into survivor safety plans in their everyday activities. One of the goals of the SafetyNet project is to continue building a network of technology advocates throughout the U.S. ICADV staff attended NNEDV's training on this topic last summer. In the coming months ICADV will be providing domestic violence advocates with this information to help increase their skills when working with survivors with technology-safety issues. However, ICADV wanted to also take this opportunity to raise awareness of technology safety and provide some safety tips shared with us by NNEDV.

There are many, many ways that computers record everything you do on them. Did you know...

- It is not possible to delete or clear all computer "footprints." Actually, trying to delete your entire Internet history could be dangerous if it isn't common practice for you and someone is monitoring your computer activities.
- If you think your activities are being monitored, you're probably correct. Abusive people are often controlling and want to know your every move. You don't need to be a computer programmer, or have special skills to monitor someone's computer activities, anyone can do it and there are many ways to monitor.
- You may not be using the safest computer for you. If you think you may be monitored on your home computer, be careful how you use your computer, since an abuser might become suspicious. You may want to keep using the monitored computer for innocuous activities, like looking up the weather. Use a safer computer to research an escape plan, look for new jobs or apartments, bus tickets, or ask for help.
- Email and Instant/Text Messaging (IM) are not safe or confidential ways to talk to someone about the danger or abuse in your life. If possible, please call a hotline instead. If you use email or IM, please use a safer computer and an account your abuser does not know about.
- Computers can store a lot of private information about what you look at via the Internet, the emails and instant messages you send, internet-based phone and IP-TTY calls you make, web-based purchases and banking, and many other activities.
- It might be safer to use a computer in a public library, at a community technology center (CTC) (<http://www.ctcnet.org/>), at a trusted friend's house, or an Internet Café.

If you think you are a victim of domestic violence, you should contact your local domestic violence program (<http://www.ilcadv.org/dvprogs/default.asp>), the Illinois Domestic Violence Help Line at 877-863-6338, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233).



Become a Member of ICADV, choose the level that fits best.

ICADV FRIEND

Requirements: An individual who supports the vision and mission of ICADV. Potential Friend members must review and sign ICADV's assurances document found at www.ilcadv.org/membership/default.asp.

Fee: \$25.00 per year

Benefits: Friends will receive information regarding trainings, public policy, and newsletters.

ICADV COMMUNITY PARTNER

Requirements: Non-profits, for-profits, and government agencies that support the vision and mission of ICADV and are acceptable to local ICADV members. Potential Community Partner members must review and sign the assurances document found at www.ilcadv.org/membership/default.asp. This level of membership goes through a review process by the ICADV Membership Committee.

Fee: \$250.00 per year

Benefits: Community Partners will receive information regarding trainings, newsletters, and public policy. Community Partners receive up to \$100 worth of ICADV resources, chosen by the Community Partner and may sit on ICADV committees

ICADV VOTING BOARD MEMBER

Requirements: Non-profits or for-profits that support the vision and mission of ICADV and are acceptable to local ICADV members. Potential Voting Board Members must review and sign our assurances document found at www.ilcadv.org/membership/default.asp. There are additional criteria that must be met for membership at this level.

This category is made up of two types:

- Domestic Violence Service Provider
- Partner Abuse Intervention Program

For more information on any level of membership contact Jacqueline Ferguson at ferguson@ilcadv.org

Notes from the Executive Director

We just wrapped up Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2009. ICADV was very pleased to receive proclamations from the City of Springfield, Governor Quinn, and President Obama. The awareness that domestic violence must stop in our homes has been recognized at the local, state, and national level. Local domestic violence programs, all over the state, hosted candlelight vigils, open houses, walks, and other events to honor those who died because of domestic violence and to celebrate the survivors. The work to make homes violence-free is ongoing. We are at a point in history where we now have national leaders that understand how important it is to work collaboratively at all levels to achieve our common goal – the elimination of domestic violence.

At the state level, we will continue to be challenged as long as we are in this budget crisis. There is no conceivable way to continue to increase our response as our resources drop. There has not been any meaningful increase in the domestic violence line item in the state budget for 10 years. No matter what type of business you are in, you cannot pay the bills and keep the doors open with the same amount of money used 10 years ago. So which families do we turn away? How do we offer safety and tell a victim of domestic violence to come back later? As responsible citizens, we must have revenue that supports protection for our most vulnerable people.

I commend all who are working toward keeping families safe. It is to the benefit of all our communities that we keep doing this work.

Vickie Smith

Executive Director
The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence