

ONE VISION.

NEW HORIZONS



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

"SURVIVORS HELPING SURVIVORS... ONE LIFE AT A TIME"

THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUTH: The Real Deal about Teen Dating Violence

The year 2009 is promising to be a year of new beginnings and change in light of the new head in office, and the shift that will undoubtedly take place. We are committed to seeing a shift as well in the an area of DV that affects our most precious asset as a community: our youth.

Dating violence is more prevalent than most want to admit. It happens to all ages ranging from middle school and up, and is most detrimental and distressing to middle school, high school, and college students. These are the moments in time when our youth are most impressionable, most open to new things and adventure, and more than anything, vulnerable.

Middle school is a time in life when children are going through puberty, figuring out the meaning of a relationship, and exploring life, these

young people are most susceptible to dating violence due to youthful ignorance, lack of appropriate relationship education, as well as poor examples in the community. Similar to adult domestic violence, it still holds true that domestic/dating violence does not stop just at the physical, but also includes emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse. In a reported study from Advocates for Youth, a DC based organization advocating youth reproductive and sexual health, it was found 21 % of male adolescents and 22 % of female adolescents reported physical or psychological abuse by an intimate partner. This study proves rates of dating violence are similar across genders.



Psychological violence includes uneven power dynamics, control, jealousy and threats regarding the relationship. In one study, 21 % of teens said that they had been in a relationship with someone who wanted to keep them from seeing friends and family. The same study found that 64 % of those surveyed had a partner who acted jealous and demanded to know their whereabouts at all times.

ChooseRespect.org is an online national initiative to help adolescents form healthy relationships to prevent dating abuse before it starts. They reported the

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overall occurrence of dating violence being higher among blacks (13.9%) than Hispanic (9.3%) or white (7.0%) students.

Additionally noted:

- Nearly 80% of girls who have been physically abused in their dating relationships **continue to date their abuser.**
- Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break-up.
- Almost 70% of young women who have been raped knew their rapist either as a boyfriend, friend, or casual acquaintance.

Wow! It is already the year 2009! What an adventure the last year has been. There have been tests, trials, and victories, all seemingly intertwined, and all there to make us stronger, and more proficient at what we do here at Looking for My Sister.

That being said, there is much to look forward to in the New Year!. Flip through the pages of our first issue of *New Horizons* for the New Year, and get inspired, impassioned, and get INVOLVED!

We always love to hear from our readers! Give us feedback @ cthomas@lookingformysister.org

MY 2 CENTS

Notes from the Editor

Cynthia C Thomas

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An Evening of Enchantment with LFMS!

The day dawned bright, with a slight chill in the air, as the Looking For My Sister offices were a bustle with the evening's events ahead.

The Looking for My Sister 4th Anniversary Gala was held at the Sheraton—Detroit Riverside, formerly known as the Pontchartrain.

Our event space, at the "Top of the Pontch" created the perfect atmosphere with a panorama of the Riverfront for the festivities of the evening. The event kicked off at 5:30pm with our V.I.P. reception, complete with

Exe. Director Laurie Moore & Minister Sumayya Coleman, Laurie's Mentor



drinks, great conversation, and live classical guitar serenade. V.P. Antonio Moore, and Minister Sumayya Coleman blessed the evening, and what followed was an evening of valuable information for our attendees, recognition, inspiration, and fun!

Our Premier Sponsor, Detroit Home, provided a photographer, Carrie Hall, who acted as our own "paparazzi"! (*thanks for the pictures, Carrie!*) The event was a smashing success, and everyone commented on the fun they had; they even stayed for the Bananas Foster After-Glow reception, complete with dancing & music.

C. Thomas

Keynote Speaker, Mrs. Michigan Int'l 2008 Keisha Guy & husband Keith Guy. *Keisha is a domestic violence survivor! Award for Fastest Speaker: 15mins!!*



Volunteer of the Year!! Evelyn Coleman has been a faithful volunteer since the spring of 2007, and logged the most hours of all our volunteers. **And** she was a table sponsor for the event!
We love you, Evelyn!!



Detroit's own Monica Gayle, guest emcee, with gala organizer and LFMS board member Korin Sharp!
Great evening, Ladies!!

Farewell

Looking for My Sister wants to express heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our parting Chairman of the LFMS Board of Director, Dr. Betty Barrett, and Board CFO, Julie Funke. Thank you both for your years of service and dedication to the cause of domestic violence in the city of Detroit and all of Wayne County.

Julie Funke, CFO has served on the Board of Directors of Looking For My Sister, Inc. since February 2005. At LFMS, she has served on the Fundraising Committee, currently chairs the Finance Committee, and has served as the Board Chair. A graduate from U of M, Julie is a CPA, and Assistant Controller at Hamilton Anderson Associates. *"As my board term comes to an end, I look back on my years serving LFMS with gratitude and amazement. I have seen the organization come from a start-up, to a thriving, respected, and highly necessary organization in our community. My deepest thanks to the rest of the board, Laurie, Thelma & the other LFMS staff & volunteers - without your tireless dedication and passion for serving this community, LFMS would not be where it is today.*

Additionally, I must express my heartfelt appreciation to YOU - supporters of LFMS. You realize the need to prevent and stop domestic violence in our community, and support us so we can make our mission possible. Please continue that support, as it is needed now more than ever. Take care, and see you at the LFMS 2009 events!"

Betty Barrett, PhD, MSSW is an Assistant Professor of Social Work and an affiliated faculty member of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Windsor. She has practiced as a community social worker in the areas of family violence prevention and treatment, housing stability and homelessness, developmental disabilities, and youth mental health.

Passing on the Vision:

Words from Our New Chairman of the Board



It is with great pleasure that I accept the position as Chairman of the Board of Directors. As chair, in 2009 I plan to work closely with the LFMS board members and

Executive Director in transitioning from a working board to governance. I will work to inspire, and innovate in a concerted effort to achieve the organizational mission. The past year has been challenging, especially with the decline in the overall economy, in particular here in Michigan. Contributions to non-profit organizations are at an all time low. Despite these challenges LFMS continues to be a strong advocate for those faced with the tragedy of domestic violence.

As the New Year dawns, I would like to thank the volunteers, staff and our affiliates for their hard work, dedication and support.

Dr. Gina Hayden, M.D. - Chair, Board of Directors

cont.... *The Future of Our Youth*

EXPANDED HORIZONS: NEW STAFF @ LFMS

Warning Signs - For parents, teachers, and young people, it is important to be able to identify warning signs of dating violence, to aid suffering students in getting help.

Most common warning signs are:

- Bruises, scratches, or other injuries
- Avoiding friends and social events
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Alcohol or drug use
- Anxiety and depression
- Sudden changes in mood

Looking For My Sister has joined the cause by developing its Preventative Education Programs to include outreach to youth groups in the community. We also are launching *Take the Stage*, a 12-week program, facilitated at middle schools. Some of the topics to be covered, besides dating violence, are *Communication, Healthy Relationships, Self Esteem: Body Image*, etc. The program is due to launch in two Detroit middle schools at the beginning of 2nd semester, and by September 2009 we plan to offer this program at two additional Detroit Public schools.

C. Thomas

Sources: *Contemporary Issues Companion: Battered Women.* Lane Volpe. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2004. *From Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center;* Barber, Marcel'le Renise. "Why some men batter women (and why some women take it): Domestic violence is America's most

In Other Words... Client Feedback

I truly thank God for being a part of this program, Looking For My Sister. They have helped me in so many ways by building my self-esteem, managing my money, helped me with emergency gas for my car, also helped pay my light and gas bill, paid for my CNA classes, gave me emergency food, and personal needs. Its been a rocky mountain for me, but I'm thankful to know there are good people in my corner.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

LFMS Client

Welcome Karen Graham Program Specialist

Date of Birth: May 25

Favorite Time of Day: Morning

Fun Fact: Love for old yorkie-poo named Smokey (RIP); arts and crafts, jigsaw puzzles and gardening.

Karen came on board at Looking for My Sister in September 2008, bringing with her a background of 15 years in property management, and an education in Business Administration. Karen's interest in domestic violence came when her granddaughter was sexually assaulted, and the family was forced to move. As Karen puts it, "Her [granddaughters'] once childhood home was no longer a place of safety". This is the focus Karen has brought to her work at Looking for My Sister as the Program Specialist II. When women leave their abusers, and have their children with them, they do not have much of a choice of where to go for safety, and sometimes they return to the situation because there is no other place. Karen's goal is to ensure that LFMS can aid victims in finding safe and affordable housing.

Behind the Scenes: Karen and her husband La Rence have 7 children and 3 grandchildren. 2009 holds exciting events for Karen and her family with one daughter graduating from Bowling Green State University in May, and another daughter getting married in April. **Congratulations Graham Family!**

Welcome Rahshell (Shellie) Stephens Executive Assistant

Date of Birth: July 27

Favorite Time of Day: Evening

Fun Fact: Poodle named Baisle (pronounced like the herb), in her words "He is soooo cute!!"

Shellie, before joining the staff of Looking for My Sister in September, had been a dedicated volunteer since June 2006 on our fundraising committee and administrative support. Shellie brings with her 6 years of Business Administration and Management experience. She, along with her two sisters, ran three family owned tutor centers, locations in Southfield and Detroit, and an outreach to the Detroit Metro area and beyond.

Shellie is the "brains" of the office, and we are proud to call her so! She graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a B.S. in Biochemistry, and has aspirations of being a medical researcher. Her personal goal is to be able to give back to her community by creating a health education program for schools and low income families. She has seen this need arise from the budget cuts in the community that have resulted in the removal of health programs in many urban school districts.

Welcome Roxie Williams Victim & Legal Advocate

Date of Birth: 2/12/1943

Favorite Time of Day: Night

Fun Fact: Roxie has been golfing since the early 80's

Roxie came to Looking for My Sister in September 2008, with a background in Law Enforcement. Roxie served as a Detroit Police Officer for 27.5 years, covering a variety of assignments. Roxie's first assignment was as a decoy "lady of the night" on Woodward Avenue, where she stayed for 2-3 years, then moved on to organized crime, doing after hour surveillance and street beats. She then went on to work with Judge W. Crockett as a court officer, worked in the law department, research, interviews, interrogations, and even worked in security with Mayor Young. In her final years on the force, Roxie was promoted to Investigator, and spent time at the 12th District, and eventually retired out of the downtown department. Roxie retired in 2001.

"If I can help one person realize they don't have to be in the position they are in, that they are not a punching bag, and there are better things for them, that makes it all worth it. I really just want to help people", says Roxie of her contribution to LFMS.

Roxie is proud of her 3 biological children and niece that she has raised; they currently hold positions as doctor, nurse, electrical engineer & detention officer. Her pride & joy are her 11 grandkids, ranging in ages from 3 to 28.

"I'M IN CONTROL!!!"**BEHIND THE EYES OF A BATTERER**

Most often the topic of domestic violence brings shaking of heads, and clicking of tongues, along with the question, "who could do such a thing? They would have to be crazy!" Unfortunately, "such a thing" happens quite often.

Domestic violence is a perpetration fueled by the need for and rush-feeling of power and control. It is very rare that a perpetrator of domestic violence "snaps" and abuses their victims. It can start very mildly, even subtly. Maybe it is just a slam of a door, or a grabbing of their victims' arms, to emphasize their upset feelings. This brings the desired response of a humbled, contrite victim, which makes for a very malleable "object" to control. The victim then bends to the will of their partner in hopes of ameliorating the situation, while the perpetrator revels in having now discovered a way of being in control.

This begins a spiral of subtle actions and responses between the two, until, as it often does, the situation escalates to a point that neither party anticipated. At the point of frequent and blatant battery, different factors come into play.

Some batterers have grown up with abuse being a part of life –

Although not as large a contributing factor as expected, growing up with abuse is a part of why some men batter. "Six months old. I can't remember not being hit", recounts Jules to Scott Raab of *Esquire*, when asked when he started getting hit. "I got hit more on a day to day basis, mostly slapped. There were a few occasions where I got punched out. I got to

the point where it didn't hurt. I hated this guy. I resented him being alive." Perpetrators justify domestic violence with the "logic" that these behaviors are acceptable forms of communication. "Talking with your hands", Jules comments, "You can't reason with people. So you hit them." Other abusive men are not only imitating what they've seen growing up, they have also convinced themselves that women expect abuse. "These men see their manhood as their ability to control women who are out of control," says Dr. Hare, a clinical psychologist and sociologist in private practice in San Francisco.

Batterers do not see their victim as another human being –

In the article "The Luckiest Day of His Life", perpetrator David mentions that it was not until after being treated in a BIP, Batterer Intervention Program, that he saw his wife as a human being. David abused his wife for 5 years. It began as a heightened emotion triggered by minor off-handed comments from his wife, or being upset about dinner being late. However, let's not stereotype the starting point of the escalating situation that results in violent behaviors; intimate partner violence is sometimes disconnected from the emotion of anger or upset. "It was like having a new toy," David said. "I had the buttons and I could make her do whatever I wanted. I was trying to intimidate her. I wanted to control her for the simple reason that I knew I could do it. It made me feel powerful." Jules picked up a stapler and threw

it across the room at his first victim. When asked about it, he reported it was not in the context of an argument, and he wasn't even angry. Often the longer the abuse continues, the tighter the control. When David's wife was leaving the house, he would give her a set time to get back. She knew if she was late, a beating would be waiting for her. She was never, if ever, late. These controls are very calculated, and not at all the behaviors of someone in the throws of the moment's emotions. They are premeditated and executed with precision. A cobra does not randomly explode: he strikes.

It is critical to know the victim is dealing with a person doing whatever it takes to maintain a level of control and power. The victim's next move could be the determining factor in her situation, it could dissipate, or it could escalate. Not even the victim can say which way the scale will tip. More than anything, it is of vast importance that the victim knows help is available, that someone believes her, and her safety and security will be a high priority in the process of exiting the volatile environment that has imprisoned her.

C. Thomas

Our Vision: To work in the direction of a society where women are protected, life is esteemed, home is sacred, fear is unknown, and domestic violence is unthinkable.



We're excited to announce our newly awarded grants:

- Google—\$30,000
- City of Detroit - Community Development Block Grant—\$45,000
- The Target Foundation—\$3,000
- Federal Encourage to Arrest—\$262,000
- Grassroots—\$50,000
- MSHDA ESG Grant—\$16,500

SAVE THE DATES

1st Quarter Events:

January 27, 2009, 6pm

After-5 Business Networking Event
Sakana Sushi Lounge, Ferndale

February 19, 2009—6:00pm

Sponsor Appreciation Reception

February 24, 2009—7:30pm

Comedy For A Cause—Joey's Comedy Club, Livonia
Featuring Crystal P. of Showtime at the Apollo

March 28, 2009—2:00pm

Spring Fashion Show



Annual Events

June 9, 2009, 6pm—9:30pm

Cruising for a Cause:
Yacht Extravaganza

October 23, 2009, 6:30pm—10pm

5th Annual Anniversary Gala

See our website @ www.lookingformysister.org for our up-to-date community events calendar . Get more information and even more opportunities to participate with us!

Looking for My Sister

Transitional Housing Program Opens!!

Looking for My Sister is excited to announce the opening of our Transitional Housing Program. Our Transitional Housing Program puts the "missing rung" on the local housing ladder by providing housing services for victims of domestic violence. Current domestic violence data in Detroit demonstrated one clear, compelling issue: there was a critical need for housing and supportive services to victims of domestic violence. Due to the lack of housing and the amount of time that victims spend waiting to be housed, many women return to their abusers. 92% of homeless women have experienced physical abuse and 50% of them have fled their homes because of domestic violence. With the increased number of reported cases of domestic violence over the past two years there have been an enormous amount of families that have been turned away from services due to the increase for demand and no additional funding or resources to assist those in need. Looking for My Sister is committed to serving those who are homeless from domestic violence in the city of Detroit regardless of race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, religion, or socioeconomic status. Looking for My Sister will now be able benefit survivors by increasing housing opportunities in a safe environment, where they will have time to heal, voluntary counseling, case advocacy, child care, life skills development and other supportive services necessary to build a new life and transition to self-sufficiency.

L.Moore

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

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P.O. Box 37129
Oak Park, MI 48237
Phone: 313-861-3221
Web: www.lookingformysister.org

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Laurie Moore, Executive Director
Rahshell Stephens, Executive Assistant
Cynthia Thomas, Program Specialist
Karen Graham, Program Specialist II
Thelma Jones, Office Administrator
Roxie Williams, Victim Advocate

From the Desk of the Executive Director Laurie Moore: Looking Forward to 2009!



New Years bring new beginnings. I envision that as an opportunity for Looking For My Sister to newly reach out from our hearts. This means more efforts into program development for women and teens, expansion of our housing department, and additional funding to provide basic needs through our client services. With the holidays came time to reflect and create what 2009 will bring. Our primary focus always has been, and will continue to be making a difference for people. We are constantly reminded of the harsh realities of domestic violence in the faces of our clients who seek our help, whether for housing, counseling, or food for their children. I want to lead our organization to the realization of our mission through partnerships with likeminded organizations and businesses, expansion of our marketing and fundraising efforts, and bringing together those whose passions match our own. **L.M.**

Looking for My Sister 2008 Adopt-A-Family Program



Winter 2008 marked the 4th year Looking For My Sister has facilitated the Adopt A Family Program, where we partner with the community to provide Christmas for our clients who have expressed a need. The response this year was fantastic, with 26 families and gifts enough for everyone! The strong support was a testament to our community, with equal amounts of LFMS volunteers and outside community members adopting families. Word went out at the end of November that there were women and children who would not be able to celebrate Christmas this year without any support. No sooner had the word gone out, people began emailing, calling, sending money, and offering to adopt 1 or 2 families at a time. Families picked up their gifts on December 23. The families expressed gratitude, appreciation, and humility as they picked up their gifts, and wrote out thank you cards.

Here is a beautiful example: *"I would like to thank you for your generosity during this difficult financial season—I know that things are hard all over and my boys will be very happy when they get to open extra presents especially considering the absence of their father. I truly appreciate your kindness and on behalf of them—I thank you"—Family #19.*

Our express thanks for gifts from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Verizon Wireless, Hamilton Anderson Associates, DPD Domestic Violence Homicide Unit, Evelyn Colemon, Brenda McAllister, Mary Parks, Tina Richards, Denise Mahone, April Watson and Antonio Moore; and monetary gifts for presents from Kyle Boehlke, Hamilton Anderson Associates, Carmen Bradley, Karen Dumas, Beverly Thomas, and Paul Schram.