

# EMPOWERED VOICE

SUMMER 2018

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## You've changed Yolanda's life!

Hello my dear friend,

You wouldn't know me if we passed on the street, but I already know lots about you. I know that you cared enough to support New Beginnings, and so you have helped save my life. You must be a generous, caring, and hopeful person, believing that the future can be brighter. And you're right—you make my future brighter each day. Without you, there would be no New Beginnings, and so many of us, too many, would remain hopeless.

When I called the helpline, a caring person invited me to join a support group. I went, nervously, thinking I didn't belong. My husband had never hit me, so I felt like maybe my experience wasn't enough. But as I looked around at the circle of strong, brave women, I soon learned that my story was not unique, and I belonged there.

The control over my life, the threats, the screaming, the not letting me spend a penny without his approval: it was all abuse.

Something clicked; I think it was the sound of me starting to change.

It's been two years since I first went to that support group, and I'm still sometimes happily surprised at the strong woman you've helped me to remember, the woman I used to be. It wasn't easy. I fought many legal battles, faced judgment from people in my life, and struggled to help my children to understand what was happening. But it was all worth it. Now I am free. Free to use the Master's degree I had worked so hard to earn, free to be with my children without worrying about their father's anger, and free to be me.



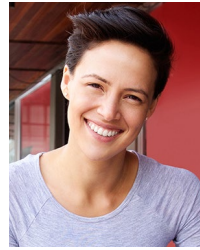
So even though we will probably never meet, know that if we did, I would smile, offer you a hug, and say thank you, thank you.

With love,

Yolanda

# You stand by their side, one survivor at a time.

Thanks to you, when survivors come to New Beginnings, they are welcomed by a team of advocates ready to meet them wherever they are on their journey. Some survivors might want to know how to stay safe in their current relationship, and others might need help with immigration documents. Many survivors come not understanding that they are experiencing abuse. They feel excited to gain the knowledge they need to set their own goals and work toward empowerment—empowerment as defined by the survivor.



## You lend a supporting hand

Sabrina called the Helpline over 30 times in two months before she decided to come to a support

group. A co-worker had given her the number for New Beginnings, but Sabrina thought that domestic violence programs were only for women physically beaten by men. Sabrina's wife did not seem to fit this profile.

*"Finally, I had a place and a community full of other people who understood and could validate my feelings."*

At Sabrina's first support group, she wasn't sure what to expect, but she listened carefully as the facilitator talked about the different kinds of abuse.

She later shared, "When I started to learn about financial abuse and emotional and verbal abuse, I could feel tension immediately release from my body. Finally, I could name what it was I had been experiencing and know that my experience was real. Finally, I had a place and a community full of other people who understood and could validate my feelings. For the first time in 7 years, I felt hope that things could be different."



## You make legal help possible

Jaymee is a bright, 27-year-old accountant, and she is also a survivor. Thanks to your help, she no

longer looks over her shoulder every chance she gets, as Jaymee is finally free from her abusive boyfriend.

She shared, "I met Bryan when I was 24, and we dated for a year before I realized I was in an abusive relationship. He was very controlling and jealous. I tried to break up with him several times, but he kept convincing me to take him back.

**Did you know?**  
61 percent of female survivors and 44 percent of male survivors were stalked by a current or former intimate partner.

"The fifth time I tried to leave him is when the nightmare really began. Bryan began stalking me, showing up at my work, and begging me to take him back. He texted and called constantly, and when I changed my number, he somehow tracked down my

new number from a mutual friend. He started waiting outside my apartment in his car and leaving notes on my doorstep about his love for me.

"One day, his tone changed, and he began leaving angry, threatening voice messages on my phone. I probably should have called the police, but I called New Beginnings."

Jaymee learned that she had legal rights, and with the help of our legal advocate, she got a protection order against Bryan. Thanks to your help, Bryan finally left her alone.



## You empower survivors to achieve their goals

Isabel immigrated to the United

States with her husband after they were newly married, and her world soon became one of loneliness and isolation. Her husband controlled their finances and he began pushing her around. They had two children, and by the time the kids were 6 and 8, Isabel was no longer allowed to leave the house other than to take the kids to school or for approved activities. The bruises became a normal part of her life.

### You gave Isabel a chance to begin a new life.

One day while Isabel was at the library—an approved activity for which her husband tracked mileage—a woman approached her quietly and told her that help was available. Isabel had taken off her sweater, forgetting the bruises covering her arms.

Isabel called New Beginnings, and soon she was meeting with an advocate at the library each week. They met for a year, and the advocate helped Isabel to set goals and begin her journey toward those goals. Isabel decided to leave, and she and the children moved into New Beginnings' housing. She continues to meet with her advocate, whom she calls her personal lifesaver.



## 5 ways to support survivors

**Listen.** One of the primary things a survivor needs is for you to just sit and listen sincerely. Listen without judging and without fixating over what you to say next.

**Believe.** Even if you've never seen it, believe them. Believe even if you can't imagine their partner doing those things because you only know him/her to be funny, kind, and caring.

**Ask.** Meet the survivor where they are by asking about their goals and plans. Remember, this person is the expert when it comes to their relationship. They will know when it is safe to leave and what actions are possible. You can ask questions like:

- Do you feel safe at home right now?
- What do you need to feel safe?
- Are you interested in making a change?
- Do you want to stay with this person?
- What have you thought about doing?

**Respect.** There are many reasons why a survivor of intimate partner violence may stay with an abusive partner. Your goal is to help the person you care about feel as supported as possible—not tell them what to do.

**Refer them to New Beginnings.** No matter where your friend or loved one lives, New Beginnings can help them—even if it's with finding a local organization. Call our 24-Hour Helpline at 206-522-9472.



Behind each of these survivor's success stories, standing next to each survivor as they gain control over their lives—is *you*.

