



EMPOWERED VOICE

You gave Clara the knowledge to build a healthier life!

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by a survivor who recently used services at New Beginnings.



“Because of all of you and your dedication and support, I have a home. I can’t even begin to express how grateful I feel. I can use the knowledge and skills I have gained to have a new beginning of my own and to build happy memories in a safe, tranquil, and happy place.”

– Clara

When I think back to the first time I called New Beginnings, I was in the worst situation I had ever been in in my life. I was beyond terrified. I had been strangled, beaten, and bruised. I had nothing left—no place to live and no job. I was far from all of my family, and what friends I did have left I was isolated from. My abuser destroyed numerous phones so I couldn’t call for help or become gainfully employed and financially independent.

Even though my abuser ended up in jail, I was still terrified of him. His friends and family harassed me and blamed me for his behavior and incarceration. They threatened me and even went into my apartment and destroyed what little belongings I had left.

I felt nothing but fear and hopelessness.

When I called New Beginnings, an advocate told me that I would have a safe place to stay, and that I wouldn’t be out on the street. I can’t even begin to express the relief I felt. Every day I was there, I felt hope. I felt encouraged, respected, and safe.

I learned so much during my stay at New Beginnings. I attended counseling services and even did mock interviews when I was looking for a job. I am now employed with a non-profit organization, all because I had the support from everyone who kept encouraging me and never losing confidence in me. I have also learned a new set of skills, including how to be assertive when setting boundaries. I have gained so much knowledge to use for the rest of my life.

Thank you for everything you do!

You restored Zuleyha's faith in herself—and her relationship with her children!



I am an American Muslim who was born and raised in New York. Although I am a survivor, experiencing domestic violence made me struggle over everything I believed in — who I was as a person, a woman, a Muslim, my place in this world.

New Beginnings — and you — restored everything.

I grew up in a middle-class, Turkish immigrant family with a sometimes physically aggressive father. I blamed his Turkish heritage and Islam for our family's problems even though we didn't really follow Muslim rules and practices. Years later, a car accident that should have taken my life was the beginning of a spiritual awakening for me. I learned about Islam and started practicing in the peaceful and loving elements of the faith. I joined a Facebook group called Muslim Students Association National, which had tens of thousands of members.

Charmed by Kabir

One day, I got a private message from a group member, Kabir. I was very new to my religion and here was a man who was educated, cultured, and knowledgeable about Islam—and interested in me. After a month of online messaging, we met. Kabir was charming and so orthodox that he would not even shake my hand. One week later, he proposed.

The first clue about what my life with Kabir would become came on my wedding day. Kabir told me I was no longer allowed to hug my gay friend Archie or touch him in any way since Kabir's view of Islam forbids all physical contact between unrelated women and men. At the wedding reception, Archie draped his arm over my shoulder as we posed for a photo.

"What did I tell you?" Kabir scolded. "You have to try to listen to me." I was surprised, but I let it slide. After all, it was my wedding day, and I was determined to be a good Muslim wife.

Two weeks later, we flew to Turkey for a second wedding ceremony for Kabir's family. We got into an argument over something that seemed small and innocent to me, but Kabir flew into a rage, spitting in my face. I was so shocked that I reacted by slapping him. He reacted by beating me black and blue.

I cried all night. I thought I'd made a mistake and should leave, but he hugged me and told me he regretted beating me — all while reminding me that it really was my fault because I'd slapped him first. I felt guilty. Maybe he was right. So I stayed.

A Downward Spiral

This began a pattern that lasted for more than four years, which included punches, hands around my throat choking me until I nearly blacked out, slams into walls, kicks and death threats, even while I was pregnant. He also methodically whittled away at my self-esteem and used our religion to manipulate me into believing that I was powerless.

We moved to Seattle when we had our first son, Tejas, and I was pregnant with our second little boy, Manan. Kabir controlled everything. He wouldn't allow me to work since caring for him and our kids and our home was supposed to be my only job. He'd tell me I was crazy and threaten to take away our sons.

I know it's hard to believe that a college-educated woman — a once-independent woman who had owned a successful business — could believe such things and stay in a situation like that. But that's how insidious domestic violence is. It robs you of reason and steals your self-respect, leaving you unrecognizable, even to yourself.

Enough was Enough

Two things finally pushed me to take action. We were having another argument one night, and Kabir screaming at me that I was crazy. He kicked me, and our little boy, Tejas, came over. and he kicked me, too. "Yeah, mommy, you're crazy," he said.

Soon after that incident, Kabir got very aggressive. I finally called 911. Kabir went to jail, and I went to New Beginnings.

"My God, I thought, was I raising a future abuser?"

A New Beginning



I was connected to a legal advocate who explained my rights and helped me find a pro bono attorney to file for divorce. Kabir refused to give me any money, so we lost our apartment and the boys and I became homeless and moved into an emergency shelter. Just days before our time at the shelter expired, I had an interview with New Beginnings for their transitional housing program. If New Beginnings didn't accept us, we literally would be living in our car. But we were accepted into New Beginnings! For the next two years, my babies and I would have time and support to pick up the pieces and start anew.

Being part of New Beginnings felt like winning the lottery. The staff and the other women I met in group sessions became my family. When Kabir switched from physical and emotional abuse to legal abuse — filing 15 different motions before our divorce trial even started — I could turn to my new family for hugs and help. Thanks to New Beginnings, I was slowly becoming the strong woman I was before I got married.

Today, Tejas and Manan and I are living in our own apartment. We are a happy and healthy little family. You made this new life possible for me. You helped save me and my children from a great danger.

Because of people like you who support New Beginnings, I believe in myself again.



What will you be remembered for?

We hope you will consider giving a gift to New Beginnings in your will or living trust. When you plan a gift in your will or living trust, called a charitable bequest, you will ensure that domestic violence survivors always have a place to turn for help. Bequests offer these benefits:

Simplicity. Just a few sentences in your will or trust are all that is needed.

Flexibility. Because you are not actually making a gift until after your lifetime, you can change your mind at any time.

Versatility. You can structure the bequest to leave a specific item or amount of money, make a gift contingent on certain events, or leave a percentage of your estate to New Beginnings.

Tax Relief. If your estate is subject to estate tax, your gift is entitled to an estate tax charitable deduction for the gift's full value.

We can help! Contact Rachele Nesta-Goff at 206-936-3036 or rnesta-goff@newbegin.org with any questions about naming New Beginnings in your will or living trust. We're happy to help, without obligation.

New Beginnings is redefining our future.

Our 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan is now available on our website!

The most transformative organizations continually examine how they can have the most impact. Thus, we asked courageous questions:

- How can we support even better outcomes for the survivors and children we serve?
- How can we adapt our programs to meet 21st century needs?
- What will it take to truly prevent abuse from happening?

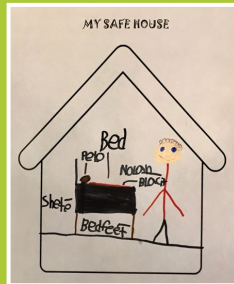
From these conversations, an ambitious vision arose and a plan was designed to build the organization, culture and community it will take to end domestic violence. We are happy to share a snapshot of the first phase of that vision to be implemented over the next three years.

Visit our website at www.newbegin.org/strategicplan to learn more.

Due to the sensitive nature of this material, names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality unless we have been otherwise granted permission by the survivor. These stories represent the challenges and successes of many survivors who have participated our programs.

You have helped so many children find healing through art

Every week, 7-year-old Nolan, 8-year-old Max, and 7-year-old Navi attend Kids Club, a support group for children who are exposed to domestic violence. They learn about safety, responsibility, feelings, healthy relationships, and more. One activity asks children to draw their version of a safe home. In addition to making meaning of their experiences through art, children can also connect to a safe place to return in the midst of trauma.



Nolan

"This is my bedroom. Sometimes I feel sad, so I can come in here and lay on my bed"



Max

"When I am scared at my house, I try to find my dog Ruby. He is always there to cuddle with me and make me feel better."



Navi

"When my mom is with me, I know I am safe."

Hope Network

Start the year off right by joining the Hope Network!

Have you made your new year's resolution? Consider joining the Hope Network, our monthly giving club, and resolve to make a difference in the lives of survivors every month! Want to learn more or sign up? Visit our website at www.newbegin.org/get-invested or contact Kerry Dirk at 20-926-3033 or kdirk@newbegin.org