

When Violence Hits Close to Home

Katy Christian Ministries' Domestic Abuse Center is There to Help

Donna* may be just like a woman you know. She may look like your sister or talk your mother. She may remind you of your child's Sunday school teacher. What you may not know is that she was a victim of domestic abuse and rape.

According to the American Institute on Domestic Violence, one in every three women will experience some form of abuse in their lifetime. Yet, if you met Donna, you would never imagine this woman, so full of life and pride, is the same woman that endured ten years of abuse at the hands of her own husband.

Help for Katy Victims

"When I first came to the center I was a disaster. I was the mother of four children who left a violent husband in search of a new life and I found myself barely hanging on," explains Donna. "When I turned to the center they offered me hope, emotional support, guidance, financial assistance, and food to feed my children."

Since that time, Donna has continued to attend the center's meetings each week for the past four years. Reflecting on the time she spent at the center, she recalls "I saw other women who understood me and the road that I had ahead

of me. They encouraged me that I could get to the other side of it!" With great emotion, she adds, "I felt love and support from the staff and volunteers. I found a safe place for me and my kids."

It Started With One

Since 1992, the Domestic Abuse Center at KCM has served the greater Katy/West Houston community as the primary source of help for victims of domestic abuse. This program works to provide protection and support to individuals involved in an abusive relationship. Ann Bayliss, Director of KCM's DAC states, "The center started eight years ago with one part-time person answering the phone lines." Now a fully functioning center, it offers counseling services, support groups for children and adults, as well as art therapy and mentoring for children. "Our center has truly grown!" Bayliss exclaims.



Ann Bayliss, Director of KCM Domestic Abuse Center with Counselor Staci Mullinex

The Face of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse does not know social or economic boundaries, nor does it differentiate between males and females, race or religion. Bayliss reaffirms, "Battering is not about gendering—it is about power and control, and that can stem from a female or a male." Domestic violence includes threats, intimidation,

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YOUR HEALTH *Domestic Violence*

emotional abuse, economic deprivation, or physical and sexual violence. KCM strives to meet the needs of all victims suffering from all forms of abuse.

While writing her grant proposal to fund KCM's Domestic Abuse Center, Bayliss found that, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety, Harris County reported over 20,000 domestic abuse calls in 2005 alone. When asked about the numbers now she reports, "They grow each year—Katy is not immune to domestic violence. There is a strong need for our center in this community. People often live in situations that we cannot sometimes fathom, but we have to listen for their experience and then we have to be willing to help them in the way they need."

In addition, the center also houses a separate Sexual Assault Center. Together, both

"The center changed my life. I am not the same woman that walked in that center feeling alone and afraid. I can't put into words what they gave me there—it was just tremendous!"

—Donna*, client of KCM's Domestic Abuse Center.

centers work to aid anyone needing assistance or therapy. A licensed therapist is available for the families seeking help and Aid to Victims, a non-profit group dedicated to helping victims and abusers, volunteers time at the center

as well. Aid to Victims visits the Domestic Abuse Center twice a month offering free legal advice and assistance to those who can't afford legal counsel.



The staff at the Katy Christian Ministries Domestic Abuse Center

Children of the Battered

Staci Mullinex, a licensed social worker, hosts a therapy session once a week at the center structured around the needs of teens whose parents are also receiving therapy and assistance. She has a passion for helping those known as the "silent victims" of domestic abuse—the children of the battered.

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“For most of these teens, this is the only place where they can truly express what they are feeling,” she says. “They can’t talk to their parents about what they are feeling and they don’t talk to their peers or teachers at school about the violence at home. There is a great fear of being judged or misunderstood.” Mullinax says she hopes children will come to realize there are other people in similar situations and that changes can be made for the better.

More Volunteers Needed

The Domestic Abuse Center has a trained volunteer or staff member available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help victims assess their crisis situation and determine immediate needs and priorities. This includes assistance in instituting safety and escape plans, establishing protective orders, locating emergency shelter placement, and accompanying victims to court and legal proceedings.

“We have a need for volunteers from all walks of life. Right now our center runs on a staff of three employees with a volunteer basis of 8-10 people,” Bayliss says. Katyites can support this center and its clients by offering their time, new or used cell phones, gently used goods or home items, art supplies, food, clothing or cash donations. “If you have a heart to give, we will find a place for you to help here!” Bayliss exclaims.

Nicky Golyer, one of the youngest volunteers at Katy’s Christian Ministries Domestic Abuse Center, is known for having a huge heart. Golyer, a recent Cinco Ranch High School graduate, started volunteering at the center two years ago as sophomore and now works at the center as the Director of the Children’s Support Group. Her primary focus at the center is creating art lessons for Pre K- 5th grade students. “Being a part of this center and helping these kids out makes me appreciate my life more,” she proudly exclaims. “I like being here. It makes me feel good to know that I am impacting these kids’ lives in a positive way and that they have someone to talk to.”

To Volunteer

For more information on KCM’s Domestic Abuse Center or to find out about volunteer opportunities, call 281-391-5261 or visit www.ktcm.org.

If You Need Help

Call the 24 hour crisis hotline for the Domestic Abuse Center at 281-391-4357.

Jennifer Couter is a freelance writer. She lives in Katy with her daughter, Lauren.

Cinco Ranch High School student and Volunteer Nicky Golyer sits by a mural painted by kids she counsels at the KCM Domestic Abuse Center



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—Nicky Golyer, a Cinco Ranch High School Student and Christian Ministries Domestic Abuse Center volunteer


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