

When she began lying to her family about the bruises on her body, Elena Martinez, a victim of domestic abuse, realized it was time to ask for help for herself and her children. She walked into Katy Christian Ministries Domestic Abuse Center, a frightened victim, and walked out an empowered survivor.*

EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank Elena Martinez for sharing this story of hope and faith. If you have an inspirational story you'd like to share, email editor@katymagazine.com.*

This photo is a representation of a domestic violence victim.

My Safe Place

Written by Tassie Hewitt
Select photography by Layla Zakaria

For victims of abuse, help and hope for a better future are just a phone call away. Last year, the Katy Christian Ministries (KCM) Domestic Abuse Center helped over 1,000 local women.

An Abuse of Control

“Domestic abuse is not only physical,” says Kristina Albright, domestic and sexual abuse client advocate at Katy Christian Ministries. “The emotional and mental abuse is far worse. Bruises go away. Mental and emotional abuse leaves a scar. It takes time to heal.”

According to Albright, domestic abuse takes on many forms, including physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and financial. It can be defined as violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner. It is an issue that encompasses every gender, age, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The results can be devastating.

“Abusers isolate their victims from family and friends,” says Albright, whose own sister was a victim of domestic abuse. “Abusers don’t give them access to a phone or vehicle. They give them no access to money. A lot of ladies stay because of financial reasons.”

There are red flags a woman should look for in a relationship, says Martinez, a graduate of Mayde Creek High School, who now volunteers at the domestic abuse center at KCM. “When a man hits you for the first time, or raises his hand at you, and apologizes and says he’ll never do it again, it’s abuse,” she says.

Power to Change

The Crisis Center, which served 1,089 victims of domestic violence in 2014, provides a safe place for victims, and aids in the healing process through crisis intervention, creating safety plans for protection, and providing counseling and support groups. Advocates respond to a 24-hour crisis hotline, provide hospital and law enforcement accompaniments, and assist with protective orders and crime victim’s compensation.

“We go to hospitals if there’s a victim of domestic violence or assault,” says Albright, who has been an advocate with KCM since 2007. “We’ll put them in a cab to a safe place or shelter. We’ll bus them to their family in a different state for safety.”

The shelter also provides food and clothing to victims and their children. They work with area hair salons to offer haircuts, and can supply cell phones to victims so they have a way to call 911 or the crisis hotline if danger arises.

Above all, the center strives to give victims the power to change. “Mainly, what they need is support and to know someone is there for them,” says Albright. “We’re not going to leave their side through it all. If they need something in the middle of the night, one of us will answer the phone and talk to them.”

BCS Blue Sky Chiropractic

Chiropractic Examination • Chiropractic Adjustment • Electrotherapy Modalities
Therapeutic Ultrasound • Trigger Point Therapy/Myofascial Release
Kinesiotape • Dietary/Lifestyle Advice

Now Accepting New Patients



607A Park Grove Ln. Katy, TX 77450 blueskychiro.net

Call 281-492-0190 for your FREE consultation!

Duyen Nguyen-Deeboom, DC



©2014 Katy Magazine



20% off Outdoor Lighting Installation

Exquisite Outdoor Spaces

LANDSCAPE DESIGN
LANDSCAPE INSTALLATION
OUTDOOR LIGHTING
PATIO COVERS
OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES



\$250 off Landscape Design Fee (new customers only)

2014 Katy Magazine

More than 40 years of experience
Designer on staff
Fully insured
Strong attention to detail
Fast and friendly service



GREEN LEAF LANDSCAPE & DESIGN

Exceeding customer expectations



713-560-8606



Texas Water Softeners

Enjoy a healthier, more comfortable life with our affordable reverse osmosis system.

For the ones you love

Saves costs and reduces chemicals

Save costs and live cleaner by using up to 75% less detergent and cleaning supplies.

You will notice the difference in your skin, hair, dishes, and clothes immediately!

Call for a FREE In-Home Water Test 281-712-6151



Pure healthy water for drinking, cooking, & coffee.



Softer skin and hair. No more soap scum on showers, tubs, fixtures & dishes.



Softer towels, clothes & linens. Use far less laundry detergent.

© 2014 Katy Magazine

565 S. Mason Rd. #157 Katy, TX 77450

www.txwatersoftener.com

Once abused women realize the support of their newfound KCM friends, they gain confidence. “They told me that I was doing the right thing,” says Martinez, who has since remarried and enrolled in college. “They made me feel important and did what they could to help me.”

Breaking the Cycle

In fact, 42% of victims helped by the center are children, who may become trapped in the dangerous cycle of abuse. Often, boys in abusive homes will grow up to be abusers, says Albright, and girls may choose partners who will abuse them. The good news is that with proper counseling and support, the cycle can be broken. “My children were my strength to get out,” remembers Martinez, whose son is still learning to trust people and is very protective of his mother. “I knew I had to be strong for them, to give them a life without abuse.”

From Victim to Survivor

“With the right counseling and support, anyone can overcome it,” says Albright who instructs women in dangerous situations to begin a plan of action. She advises them to start putting money away and gather all their important documents, including social security cards and birth certificates. “We try to empower our ladies - to let them know there is a way out,” says Albright. “It may be hard, and they may struggle for a while, but they can do it.”

Albright attributes the success of the center to the leadership of CEO Deysi Crespo and the support of the community, staff, and volunteers. Thanks to KCM, local hospitals, the Katy Police Department, Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, and Precinct 5 Constable’s Office, area victims and their children get the courage they need to escape abusive environments. “There is hope, and there is help out there. You are not alone,” encourages Martinez. “Get out as fast as you can, and don’t make excuses why you have to stay. We have to break our silence.” **KM**

** The name of the survivor has been changed to protect her privacy.*



Deysi Crespo, Lizet Benitez, and Kristina Albright advocate for abuse victims at Katy Christian Ministries

Get Help

The KCM Domestic Abuse Center 24-hour emergency hotline can be reached at 281-391-HELP (4357). All calls are confidential.

➔ 10 Warning Signs of a Batterer

1. Becomes quickly involved with victim
2. Isolates or restrains victim
3. Reacts with anger when limits are set
4. Exhibits controlling behavior
5. Blames others for problems or actions
6. Threatens violence or suicide
7. Is excessively jealous or possessive
8. Displays a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde personality
9. Attacks, accuses, belittles, or humiliates
10. Pushing, hitting, or any physical abuse

A TRADITION OF *Excellence*

Leading the way in print, web, and social media coverage.

Proud winners of more than 95 national, regional, and state level awards for General Excellence, Layout, Ad Design, Cover Design, Community Service, and more.

KATY
magazine™

Making Katy proud since 2003

281.579.9840 | editor@katymagazine.com | katymagazine.com