

# Mockingbird Times

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS YOUTH SPEAK OUT ACROSS THE NATION



May 2011

Volume XII, Issue V

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## National Foster Care Month Honoring Caregivers Across Washington State

May has marked National Foster Care Month since 1988. The goal of the Foster Care Month campaign is to recognize those who have contributed immensely to better the system and the youth in it. Another goal is to bring light to the issues and experiences of the system's youth. There is an estimated 12 million alumni of care and 424,000 children and youth still in out of home care. The Mockingbird's Network of youth and alumni from care are celebrating this month a little bit differently this year. Among our six chapters The Mockingbird Network and its youth and alumni of care have chosen people that have impacted them strongly while in care. Some youth chose to honor caregivers, mentors, and other child welfare staff. In these articles you will see how it takes just one caring adult to make all the difference in the life of a child of youth.

### Grace Runyan BY TIANA OLIVER, REGION 5

This year for National Foster care month my fellow chapter leader Janessa and I would like to thank and honor Grace Runyan, an IYHP (Independent Youth Housing Program) Case Manager for all of her generous help and contributions toward helping youth from all around the community transition into adulthood. We all thank you deeply for helping us make these hard transitions into living on our own, as well as giving us the resources to do so, and so much more. Here are a few questions we asked her about her experience and reasons for working with youth:



Grace Runyan

#### How long have you been at Pierce County Alliance (PCA)?

I have been working at PCA for 3 1/2 years. I started as a case manager for the Transitional Living Program and now I am the case manager for the Independent Youth Housing Program and I supervise the Peer to Peer Mentoring program.

#### How did you begin working with youth?

I have always wanted to work with youth. After I graduated with my BA in Psychology from New Mexico State University, I moved to Alaska and I worked at a teen shelter. I moved back to NM and then worked for 5 years in Group Homes, Shelters and Transitional Living Programs.

#### How did you transition into working with foster youth?

I have worked with youth transitioning into independence regardless if they were in foster care or just homeless for many years. Over the years, many of the clients I worked with were foster youth. When I moved to Washington I found this job working exclusively with foster youth. My entire career I have worked with foster youth in some capacity and I love it. I feel committed to helping our young adults feel safe and capable of anything.

#### What do you enjoy most about your job?

GRACE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

### Katie Moore

BY GARRETT NADEAU, REGION 3

For National Foster Care month, HEYMAC or "Hearing Every Youth Making a Change" is honoring our local YouthNet Independent/Transitional Living program Case Manager Katie Moore. She was chosen for her amazing personality and great sense of humor. She listens, tries to help us accomplish our goals and be prepared as possible. She handles matters with a very positive attitude. She smiles a lot which brightens up the day and is just a very caring individual. Katie also is very supportive of the HEYMAC chapter. She always takes the time to actually call me and find out what youth in the chapter are supposed to do and then helps them to complete tasks on time. I find it amazing that she does that when it isn't even her responsibility. It just shows that she really cares and is a valuable addition to the HEYMAC chapter. The chapter thinks she is amazing and we are blessed to have her help us.



From L-R: Kristina Thomason, Patric Campbell and Goldie Campbell

been a foster parent for more than 20 years. I have been with them for nearly six years. They took me in when no one else wanted me, not even my birth family. They have been great to me. Of course we have our rocky points from

GOLDIE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

### Tess Thomas BY NICK HOLCOMBE, REGION 4

The person who has influenced my life greatly is my foster mom Tess Thomas. She has always been there for me and if I had any problem with any situation, I could count on her to help me. She was like my "mom". When I graduated she threw me a big party and she helped me get an apartment after high school. I experienced life skills training at a very young age then she introduced me to the YMCA, and the YMCA got me involved in the Independent Living Project (ILP) at the age of 16. The YMCA

helped me get into college, and helped get another apartment. My foster mom supported me while I was in her care. Tess Thomas is strong in faith, and I appreciate what she did for me as a foster parent. She helped me as a young adult venturing off on my own. She was by my side during bad, good, and indifferent situations. Tess always had my back. And, no matter what happens I will always appreciate her for that.

### Cherokee Frasier & Catholic Families & Child Services

BY BRANDY BAXLEY, REGION 2

This month we are celebrating Foster Care Appreciation Month by honoring Cherokee Frasier. She has helped Region 2 for the past two and a half years. Cherokee has helped so much by transporting and recruiting youth, providing food, and helping to clean up. She also has attended and helped with activities such as the Corn Maze event by bringing candy and decorations. At Skateland she helped transport and recruit youth to come and enjoy the event.



Cherokee Frasier

When we went to the Union Gospel Mission she transported youth and volunteered with us. At the "100 Jobs for 100 Kids" event Cherokee helped guide the youth through the process of filling out applications, as well as preparing for the interview and the responsibilities of work. We really appreciate Cherokee's enthusiasm. Thank you Cherokee for all of your support and encouragement through out the years! We are looking forward to continued work with you and want you to know what a difference you have made in so many lives.

### Steve Queen

BY CHRIS BAUER, REGION 6

What most young men hope for in life is a good father to teach them what it is to be a man. I am one of the people who asked for that mentor with an open heart and hands. In my experience, I have found that it doesn't matter if that special person is a blood relative or a complete stranger who thought that your life was worth saving. My boss at Centralia College Steve Queen had the patience and the "keys" to opportunities that ultimately helped me so much. Maybe it was because of my good work ethic, or maybe it was my cool sunglasses, but we began to talk. We got to know each other quite well over the first few months I worked there. And with a weight off my shoulders, when I started to feel the after-effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), instead of being fired, he asked me to sit down and discuss what caused me to disappear for days on end, rather than what pain I caused my co-workers in my absence. Since that day, I began to feel more and more comfortable with sharing pieces of myself. Whether I needed help with the responsibilities of living on my own; someone to chase away my dark feelings; how to put up sheet-rock, or dealing with an unhealthy relationship, Steve was the man to go to. He is an awesome friend and a phenomenal mentor. I owe him a great deal. I have been saved from despair more times than I could remember and he has given me a new outlook on life and I just hope everybody can find such a selfless and caring person in their own life.

## Letter From the Editor BY JIM THEOFELIS



Dear Friends,  
May is National Foster Care Month (NFCM). Spring is a season of renewal and gives us the opportunity to honor and thank the tireless work of all caregivers and the opportunities they provide to children and youth. We are so grateful to foster parents, kinship caregivers, social workers, CASAs and service providers. These amazing people truly are the unsung heroes who make a difference in the day-to-day lives of children and youth in the foster care system.

The Mockingbird Society, partnering with organizations such as the National Foster Care Association, strives to shine a bright light on children and youth in care to remind each of us that all children are OUR children. We all have a responsibility to ensure they receive the resources necessary not only to survive, but to thrive.

The 2011 Washington State Legislative session has been a major challenge due to the ongoing economic struggles and declining resources. Our goal continues to be to retain as much funding and resources as possible in the Children's Administration budget for vulnerable children, youth and families. And, as we go to press, we are bumping up against the last days of the scheduled legislative session and our elected leaders are negotiating the final budget. This session I am happy to announce that the Legislature has passed Unannounced Visits (HB1697) and Governor Gregoire has signed it into law. Our other major priority, HB 1128, which extends foster care to age 21 for youth working to achieve their high school diploma

or GED, has passed the Legislature and is awaiting delivery to the Governor's Office. In addition to these successes, we continue to fight to protect safe housing for youth transitioning out of care and street youth programs, as too many foster youth often find themselves homeless.

The legislative progress we have made for these reforms thus far is due to the combined efforts of The Mockingbird Network youth who have testified from personal experience to inform the system; as well as the Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition, ASK-Y and Children's Home Society, and our legislative champions. Our annual Legislative Celebration will take place on Wednesday, June 29th from 9 to Noon at Seattle University Student Center. Please Save the Date. I look forward to celebrating our legislative achievements and honoring the vibrant coalition of advocates that made them happen.

Lastly I want to express my heartfelt gratitude towards everyone who participated in the Jefferson Award voting process. It has been a true honor to be among such admirable public servants and I congratulate Megan Johnson for being selected as the Washington State Nominee for the National Jefferson Award.

Thank you all for your strength and commitment to building a world-class foster care system.

Jim Theofelis  
[jim@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:jim@mockingbirdsociety.org)

## Update on Legislative Progress

HB 1697 - Unannounced Visits was signed by Governor Chris Gregoire on Friday, April 22, 2011.

HB 1128 - Extended Foster Care has passed the legislature and it is awaiting signature.

The Mockingbird Society will continue to work with legislators to ensure foster youth, alumni of care, children and families are supported in the final budget.



*The Mockingbird Society heads to Olympia for the signing of Unannounced Visits*

## Submitting Letters

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to the *Mockingbird Times* and will be opened by editorial staff. All incoming correspondence to youth under 18 years of age will be opened first by *Mockingbird Times* Editorial Staff.

## The Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, The Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "... Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us."

What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world, in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds?

Join The Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

## The Power of Public Service BY DAVID BUCK



On February 24th, we learned that Jim Theofelis, Founder and Executive Director of The Mockingbird Society, was named a 2011 Washington State Jefferson Award winner. The Jefferson

award is given out to five individuals in the state who have promoted excellent achievements and contributions through public and community action, as well as volunteerism. We at The Mockingbird Society rooted for and are very proud of Jim. Ultimately, Megan Johnson of Federal Way was selected to go on to represent us in Washington D.C. and, that was synchronistic too because she is an incredible advocate for the homeless and we have so many issues in common.

### The Jefferson Awards

celebration caused me to think a little bit about volunteerism and community action. We at The Mockingbird Society have built the foundation of our mission off of the importance of standing up and doing what is right. Jim was willing to risk a lot for all the right reasons when he first created The Mockingbird Society because he knew it was the right thing to do. And, ten years later the impact of The Mockingbird Society and that call to action to do what is right has paid off substantially.



*From Left to Right: Peggy LaPorte, Ahndrea Blue, Megan Johnson, Phyllis Jean Camfield, Jim Theofelis*

Since saving the world isn't "profitable" it may be hard to come by volunteers who are willing to dedicate their time to making a difference. But volunteers provide our society with projects and services that essentially go hand-in-hand with the health of our community. For the longest time there have been difficulties for those of who have the spirit of volunteerism to utilize this spirit in the most effective manner. Luckily enough social networking sites for volunteers like Earthbongo are starting to become trendy. The pride and the call to action that drives volunteers is one that doesn't get enough appreciation.

<sup>1</sup>[http://earthbongo.com/tour/eb\\_tour/what%20is%20earthbongo](http://earthbongo.com/tour/eb_tour/what%20is%20earthbongo)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/blog/2011/01/ebay-exec-launches-site-for-volunteers.html?ed=2011-01-06&s=article\\_du&ana=e\\_du\\_pub](http://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/blog/2011/01/ebay-exec-launches-site-for-volunteers.html?ed=2011-01-06&s=article_du&ana=e_du_pub)

## MEET OUR STAFF

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**ABOUT US:** The Mockingbird Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation developing innovative models for improving the outcomes of foster care, while advocating with decision makers for system reform. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation. The Mockingbird Times is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of The Mockingbird Society are paid between \$9.50 and \$12 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, and poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The Mockingbird Times has a monthly circulation of over 25,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the USA, through a private distribution list and as an insert in *Real Change*, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the Mockingbird Times may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright ©2009, The Mockingbird Society.

## Into the Hearts and Minds of Foster Parents and Youth BY DEONATE CRUZ



What's good Mockingbird Readers! As some of you may know, this month is National Foster Care Month; that being said I want to do a quick shout out to all foster parents, social workers, foster youth, and all affiliated with the child welfare system. In honor of the occasion, I would like to share an interview that I had the opportunity to conduct with an anonymous foster parent and her foster child. Hopefully you'll be able to connect with the hearts and minds of foster youth and their caregivers after reading the highlights of this interview. One thing to keep in mind when reading this is the authenticity of these individuals that is reflected by the passion in their responses; maybe next time someone approaches you with misconceptions of the foster system that you'll look back and reference the reality of this article.

### Foster Parent:

#### Why did you decide to become a foster parent?

I didn't believe other foster parents when they told me how the state handled other foster parents. I thought they went into the state system and all of a sudden they (foster youth) were "cured". When searching for foster kids, I actually went around to several group homes to decide what kind of child would benefit most from living with me.

#### What is your overall goal (what do you hope to achieve) as a foster parent?

I want my children to succeed; to be able to grow up and be able to provide for themselves when they reach adulthood.

#### When you are asked to take in a foster child what are your thoughts/main concerns?

When looking for a child I actually look for all of the issues that they have; if they don't have a lot of issue then they really aren't worth helping as much as those who have a lot of issues. In my eyes it's more of an accomplishment to make a difference in the lives of those with more struggles than those with very few.

#### When you see an "at risk youth" what are your thoughts?

Don't judge them; read the reports and give them the benefit of the doubt because most people are products of their environment. I want them to experience things first hand; in my mind even if you are a perfect child, being moved from place to place would drive anyone crazy.

#### What do you like about being a foster parent?

The outcome is the most gratifying part about being a foster parent; if you stay with the child long enough then more than likely they will succeed. Also giving them choices really helps; when they have the free will to make choices they are then held more accountable because they alone came to the decision of their own.

#### What would you like to achieve as a foster parent?

I would like to try to help make the state follow through with sibling connections; it's a chemistry. Even if they were separated at a young age they know that they still have siblings; also helping the state recognizing that foster parents have a lot of firsthand experience working with the youth, so they should consider the foster parent's recommendations more; that being said even a lot of the professionals like psyches have their hands tied with what they can and can't do.

In conclusion, I believe The Mockingbird Society fights for system reforms. There also are some success stories in the system. Some things are great just the way they are.

#### 4-Year Old Child:

#### Are you happy in this foster home?

Yes.

#### Why do you like living in this foster home the most?

Because I love grandma and I love sleeping with my toy dinosaur.

#### What do you like to do the most in this foster Home?

Play with my cat. His name is Lu Cat.

#### What do you like about Grandma (foster parent) the most?

I love it when she bakes cakes and she is really nice.

## GRACE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I enjoy it most when I see a young adult succeed! There is nothing better than seeing a person reach goals and experience stability and independence.

#### Are there any challenges?

Challenges are in every job. One of the most serious challenges in this field is program funding being cut or threatened.

#### What message would you like to leave youth with?

I just want to thank you for this honor and praise all the youth out there for your courage and dedication to the cause. I am so proud to work with such an amazing and dynamic population.

## GOLDIE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

time to time, but all families do. They have helped me to grow by supporting me and by being examples of good human beings. They have encouraged me to get through high school and to go on further to college. They encouraged me to become involved in church and led me to God. I have gained an amazing family because of them. Thanks to Goldie and Patric I have learned that people don't have to be "blood" to be your family. So, I like to say I got lucky!

## Sharehouse BY DAVID BUCK



Aging-out—or "transitioning" out of foster care—is something that is always happening, but the experience is different for everyone. Reasons for this can vary based on a social worker's involvement, or lack thereof; services that a youth is eligible for; having key support people in their lives; and even the time that a youth aged-out. Transitioning out of care puts a lot of pressure on youth and it may cause a lot of stress because finding a place to live, employment, post-secondary education and living independently is really tough.

Most youth, whether in care or not, go through a transitional phase that may include going off to college, or just moving out on their own. The main difference is the fact that aging-out for foster youth isn't a "whenever you're ready" deal. At age eighteen the state is no longer responsible for them so they must pack their belongings and leave their placement—unless they are enrolled in Foster Care to 21 or have yet to graduate from high school.



David Buck & Diamonique Walker displaying the official "luggage" of foster youth.

By law all states are required to assist youth in developing a transition plan for exiting care starting ninety days before their eighteenth birthday. In Washington State it is called the "17.5 meeting". In my opinion, if these meetings started at the age of sixteen, it could benefit the youth more if more time was dedicated to planning for this critical transition. Six months isn't enough time

to prepare a youth to be out in the world on their own. Independent living services and transitional houses have waiting lists ranging from a few months to a couple of years. That wait could be devastating to youth that actually have no place to live when aging-out.

Having a real support group is key to a smooth transition. An especially supportive social worker is beneficial to youth because they are familiar with the resources that youth need when transitioning out of care. Having someone that knows the system well and knows the requirements for programs will aide youth on their journey into adulthood.

Foster youth have access to numerous resources to help them pay for many different types of post-secondary education choices. College Success Foundation and

Foster Care to 21 are just two programs that can help youth with going on to college and remaining stable while doing so. Going to college or remaining a ward of the state isn't for everyone so by no means do youth have to participate in any programs. But if fewer youth participate in the programs, they won't be available when someone really needs them. It's really important for youth to be able to have access to funds and resources that they need to survive. For more information on services for youth transitioning out of care your local YMCA can be a good place to begin.

After 15 months of living at ISIS, a transitional living home for homeless youth through YouthCare, I moved into my first apartment. When I moved in it was the final "nail in the coffin" of my time as a homeless youth. I safely closed a very long chapter in my life as a homeless youth and put it in the past for good.

My first night in an empty apartment had another side to it, though. My first night in my new home I slept on the floor. Not exactly something I'm not used to after my time being homeless, but that moment was full of melancholy. My home was not a home. It was a roof over my head. But, my kitchen had no kitchenware, my bedroom had no bed, and my living room didn't have much life to it. Homeless families that have gone through the painfully long and sad journey to no longer being homeless deal with the realization that their home is not yet a home. That is where a non-profit organization called the Sharehouse comes in.

In 1989, a needs survey discovered that there was a desperate need for household items for families and individuals that have been homeless or who are at-risk. This led to the creation of the Sharehouse, a non-profit organization whose tagline is "turning housing into homes." Through my own experience with the Sharehouse I found this to be true. At Sharehouse I was able to get a



**The Sharehouse**  
www.thesharehouse.org

bed, furniture, and kitchenware that turned my empty apartment into a place I could call home.

The Sharehouse essentially is a warehouse where donations are received and then are distributed to households in need. According to **Michal Nortness, the Sharehouse program director**, the organization changes the lives of about 1500 to 2000 people per year. "We distribute 2600 items annually. This has a dual benefit by keeping those items out of landfills and changing the lives of those in need which helps all of us," she said.

More often than not, youth who moved into the Home of Hope Apartments did so without a bed, without kitchenware, without furniture, and found themselves with a house, but not a "home". The youth who live there often access the Sharehouse, allowing them to turn their empty apartments into homes that they can be happy with. The Sharehouse also needs help.

The Sharehouse is at capacity in regards to what they can do. Sharehouse only has about half the amount of donations and financial contributions needed to serve people in need of help. They accept physical donations such as furniture and kitchenware on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9

**SHAREHOUSE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

## Thank You!

Stephen D Akerman, Alpenland Delicatessen, Tammy Barrett, Paul and Debbi Brainerd, Bungie Studios, Cellar 46, City of Seattle Combined Charities, Maurice Classen, Karen Cowgill, Susan Craighead, Susan Elizabeth, Jan Eveleth, Sandi Everlove, Linda Foley, Richard Allen Gallaher, Garlic Jim's Famous Gourmet Pizza, Girl Scouts of Western WA Troop #53110, Krista Goodman, Deanna Grace, Makeba and Aaron Greene, Jillian Gross, Catherine Hartley, Jo Ann Herbert, Barbara James, Anders and Stacey Kruus, Lyman Legters, Sergey and Lyudmila Lezhnina, Carol Lucas, Mercer Island Printing, Mercer Island Martial Arts Center, Mo's Pizza, Sarah Morley, Thach Ngoc Nguyen & Camie Ng, The Norcliffe Foundation, Katy Obermeier, Nancy Olson, Mark Perry, Quality Food Centers, Gregory J. Ritts, Tracy Robinson, Mary Helen Roberts, Christine A. Scarlett, Kenneth Shang, Erin Shea McCann, Tatters LLC, Alicia Tonasket, Eric Trupin, What To Wear LLC, Cynthia & Matt Winiski, Ann Yzuel, Ryanne Simonson, Alex Tarasar, The "Y" Independent Living Skills Program - Seattle, SafetyNet - Spokane, Garce Runyan, Cherokee Frasier and Catholic Families and Child Services

**When I'm Not Around****By Nickole Criteser**

It's True

Can I still stand here  
begging for a difference  
for something to change?

And still be at fault  
for all the things you've done wrong.

I want my voice to still echo in your head  
When I'm not around  
When we are all gone.

I want you to know even though this has been our  
worse strength  
It was good.

**I Came to You****By Rochelle Koon**

I came to you with my tears but you turned me away,  
I came to you with my fears but you left me in the  
rain,  
I came to you with my dreams you told me they were  
lame,  
I came to you with everything and you just thought it  
was a game,  
Now you come crying to me,  
What if I do the same?  
Will you feel what I did?  
Will you drown in pain?  
But I won't leave you, let you cry or turn you away,  
I hope next time I come to you, you can do the same.

You never could do it on your own  
Even though  
I have been your daughter standing by your  
side  
Not to put you down  
But let you know

To tell you what you don't see  
To be the only person who'd speak the truth  
You know it's true.

**We Welcome Your Work!**

We welcome submissions of articles, poetry, artwork, and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or with homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Mockingbird Times*, visit [mockingbirdsociety.org](http://mockingbirdsociety.org) and select *Mockingbird Times* under *The Mockingbird Network* or contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at [kara@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:kara@mockingbirdsociety.org). Note: If you have submitted something before that hasn't been published, we need your submission agreement in order to print it. Please submit again via the web location listed above. Because of space constraints, shorter poems have a higher chance of being published.

**Community Events****Region 2 (Yakima)****May 21st:** *Voice Development* - 2-4pm. Casey Family Programs.**Region 4 (Seattle)****May 6th:** *Emerge (The Play): "7 Women, 7 Stools"* - 8:00 pm.

Benaroya Hall.

More info: <http://www.seattlesymphony.org/benaroya/>**May 7th:** "Mother's Day Eve" Ceilidh - Nile Golf Course. Join the Northwest Junior Pipe Band as they celebrate their 16th Anniversary.**Region 5 (Tacoma)****May 11th:** *Chapter Meeting* - 3:00pm. PCA.**May 13th:** *Culture of Foster Care Training* - 10:00 am. Centralia Community College.**Region 6 (Olympia)****May 2nd, 16th, 31st, June 6th, 20th:** *Childbirth Education Classes* - 3-4:30pm. Community Youth Services. More info: 360-534-4716.**Every Tuesday through June 14th:** *Queer Art Heals Your Heart* - 10-11:30am. Community Youth Services. A group of Queer youth and allies, Ages 15-19. More info: 360-357-4472.Mark your calendar: **June 27th-29th** *Foster Youth and Leadership Summit*, Seattle, WA.

*"Success is not to be measured by the position one has reached in life, rather by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed."*

~Booker T. Washington

**Domestic Violence** BY AMANDA BEVINGTON

I am writing this article on domestic violence (DV) because I am tired of seeing young women abused by their partners. It is not okay for your significant other to put their hands on you in anger, and it is not okay to make excuses for the abuser. They know what they're doing and it's called being manipulated. As women we need to be strong for each other and say "enough is enough!" Love shouldn't hurt. Love should be filled with happiness and not pain. Women today have enough to worry about without having to live under the threat of an abusive partner. Its time to put our foot down and stop letting men who are abusive control other women's lives.

According to [www.domesticviolence.org](http://www.domesticviolence.org), domestic violence and emotional abuse are behaviors used by one person in a relationship in order to control the other. Partners may be married or not married; heterosexual, gay, lesbian; living together, separated or dating. Examples of abuse include name-calling or hurtful putdowns, keeping a partner from contacting family and friends, withholding money, clothes or possessions, stopping a partner from getting a job, actual or threatened physical harm, sexual assault, stalking, intimidation, and many more.

Here are some interesting domestic violence statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's website ([www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)):

- Females who are 20-24 years of age are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence.

- An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year.
  - Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police.
  - Approximately 3.3 million children witness violence towards their mothers each year.
  - 42% of murdered women are killed by their intimate partners.
  - Every year between two and four million American women are battered by their husbands or boyfriends.
- Intimidation
  - Emotional abuse
  - Isolation
  - Minimizing denying and blaming
  - Using children
  - Economic abuse
  - Male privilege
  - Coercion and threats



Power and control wheel

Another pattern of abuse is what is known as the "power and control wheel." This shows the various steps of abuse from a partner.

for pre-school. She said the shelter was the best thing that had happened to her because now she is free from fear and pain and the most important thing is that she saved her life.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence please get out or get help ASAP. There are many helpful resources available to victims. Remember that you are not alone, it is not your fault, and you can get help. Please take advantage of the help that is out there. Please do not put your life at risk because of an abusive man. Remember don't ever settle for less when you could have the best.

If interested in help here is the 24 hour domestic violence hotline number: 1-888-888-7702.

Remember please get out and get the help you need.

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**SHAREHOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

a.m. to 4 p.m. at their warehouse. They also can be reached at 206-767-5280 or by visiting [www.thesharehouse.org](http://www.thesharehouse.org). Remember that before you consider taking that old couch of yours to the dump, you should first consider how you could change the lives of those in need by giving it to an organization that literally turns housing into homes.

<sup>1</sup> [www.thesharehouse.org](http://www.thesharehouse.org)

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Michal Nortness, the program director

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