



A Family Heals

“When they took my kids away from us, that was it. I didn’t want to live anymore.”

Maria’s face still bears the evidence of a childhood spent in an alcoholic, violence-filled home—physical scars from her uncle’s abuse, and emotional ones from witnessing the violence her parents and uncle inflicted on each other.

Maria was a recovering meth addict when the county removed her children from her and her husband. She had used drugs for 14 years, trying to escape the violence and self-doubt that were the result of her traumatic childhood. Though she had been clean for two years and loved her eight children dearly, she was overwhelmed by a self-destructive spiral of depression and her sense of inadequacy. She repeatedly missed court dates and appointments with her social worker. One day, the police were called to the house where they found the kids living with an out-of-work father and no electricity.

“I knew something had to change. I had to change for my kids. They didn’t want to be with me. They didn’t believe me when I said I would get better,” she remembers, “and my husband had given up on me and couldn’t do it alone.”

Maria entered an intensive six-month program of substance abuse treatment, parenting classes, and therapy with her infant daughter through STAND!. In trauma therapy, she worked through the wounds of her childhood. In other weekly therapy sessions, she began to develop self-worth and control of her depression. In parenting and play therapy, she bonded with her baby daughter and gained critical skills she needed to be a nurturing parent to all eight of her children.

In this Issue:

A Family Heals Through
Therapy and Recovery

Working on Being Free:
A Client’s Story

19th Annual Rebuilding
Lives Luncheon Recap

Save the Date!
Academy Awards Benefit Party



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Mission Statement

*STAND! leads the community
in ending domestic violence
and child abuse and
rebuilding lives.*

From the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,



Two current stories of child abuse have dominated the news over the last few weeks. While at first glance the stories share little in common, they clearly demonstrate the troubling roles that our ideas about privacy play in the reporting and prosecution of child abuse.

Reactions to the video of Texas Judge William Adams screaming slurs at his teenage daughter, Hallie, and hitting her repeatedly with a belt range from horror to justification of his actions. A recurring theme presents itself over and over—that this was a private matter of parental discipline between the Judge and his family. But was it? If Judge Adams had hit a stranger the same way in a public park or supermarket, it clearly would be considered assault. Why does it make a difference that he did it to his daughter behind closed doors?

At Penn State, athletic department and school officials placed reputation above the well-being of children and teens. Eyewitness accounts of sexual abuse were handled internally and not reported to law enforcement, and the abuser was left to continue his abuse, so long as he did it off campus. With the termination of Head Football Coach Joseph Paterno, questions arise about ethical obligations to report abuse. Should Coach Paterno have gone to the police? Did his embarrassment and reluctance to believe something terrible about a colleague change the way he made his report?

Our reactions to stories like these reveal much about how we view abuse. We feel that it is shameful, something to be kept in the dark. We, as a culture, are uncomfortable with the idea that a family court judge would mistreat his own family, so we say it is none of our business, or that if it was really that bad, his daughter would have come forward sooner or her mother would have stopped him. It's easy to overlook the power that Judge Adams had—both within his abused family and within the community. He is a family court judge with ties to law enforcement and the legal community. Where could his wife and daughters have gone to escape him?

We recoil from the thought of revealing others' humiliating secrets, so we say that Coach Paterno did enough when he reported the abuse to his superior. We ignore the fact that, with the power and influence wielded by Paterno as the popular longtime football coach, he could have made a difference—encouraged the University to file police reports and made it clear that he stood with the victims, at the least.

Child abuse will only become a thing of the past when we all play a role in ending it. Only when we move past our embarrassment can we take action. Each of us can make a difference when we know a child is being hurt. Suggest an alternate form of discipline to your friend who hits her child in anger. Follow up when you report

something suspicious. Use concrete language to name abusive behavior. Believe children when they say someone is hurting them.

At STAND!, we help victims of domestic violence and child abuse heal, so they can be more than “the girl on the video” or “Victim 8.” Your generosity helps us to provide the Hallie Adamases of our community with a safe place to go, to rebuild. It helps us shape the conversation in the community to support people in power who want to do more than Joe Paterno did to safeguard the most vulnerable members of our society. Thank you for making a difference.

Wishing you peace and joy,



Gloria J. Sandoval
Chief Executive Officer



A FAMILY HEALS

Continued from cover

With help, they faced the court system that had so overwhelmed Maria and began the process of getting the rest of the children returned home. “They brought them back to me one at a time, so that I could get used to taking care of them. I was so scared I was going to mess up. My husband began to believe in me again and found a job to provide the basics for us. And Lita, my therapist, was there to support me. She knew I could do it, and she convinced me.”

Three years later, Maria is a different person: a confident, outgoing woman whose husband and children are as devoted to her as she is to them. She attends regular therapy sessions and recovery groups. She works at a substance abuse recovery center, running groups for recovering addicts, and she is earning her certificate in Substance Abuse Counseling. “Everything I learned from Lita and Victoria and the other therapists at STAND!, I use in my own groups,” she says proudly. “Thanks to STAND!, I can help other people heal the way I healed.”

Her family is healing too. They have learned that they can trust her again, that she is there for them. Her oldest son receives therapy and the whole family is attending therapy together. “My children endured and witnessed so much pain.

Making up for those lost years is critical to their emotional health.” Maria still has the journals she kept as part of her own counseling, and sometimes she goes back and reads them. “Sometimes, I can’t believe I was that person. When I read my old journals, I remember how far I’ve come—we’ve come. I’m proof that recovery does work—that therapy can help you heal and heal a family. I wouldn’t be alive without STAND!, and my children would be without a mother.”

STAND! helps more than 180 women like Maria every year rebuild their lives. For more information visit www.standffov.org/gethelp.html ■

“Thanks to STAND!, I can help other people heal the way I healed.”

“I’m Working on Being Free” A Client’s Story



How had she gotten to this point? Sunny sat in her sister’s living room, trying to piece together what had gone wrong and what to do next. She couldn’t stay there or with any of her friends. Alan, her second husband of five years, knew where they all lived and she couldn’t keep moving around. She needed help.

Earlier that evening, Alan had come over to Sunny’s house to pick up the car, saying he needed it for his granddaughter’s birthday celebration. But instead of taking the car parked in the driveway, he flew into a rage as he ran into the house and up the stairs to find Sunny. He burst into the bedroom and threw her against the wall, his hand around her throat, squeezing tighter and tighter.

In that instant, everything Sunny had suffered with Alan and the abuse of her first marriage—the rape, the burns, the beatings with the TV antenna, all the things she had pushed way down inside her—came into stark focus. Her daughter Anna, hearing the crashes, ran into the room, screaming at Alan “Stop! Stop!” Alan seemed to snap back into consciousness, letting Sunny go as he turned toward Anna. Sunny grabbed Anna and ran down the stairs and out of the house. She ran blindly, not knowing where she was going, until they ended up at her sister’s house.

He hadn’t always been this way. When they’d met at church, he’d been kind. He had helped her organize and run a 12 Step group for church members. Her children had liked him because he made her smile and laugh. When they got engaged, they went for pre-marital counseling with the pastor. It all seemed perfect.

But after the wedding, everything changed. Alan became jealous and controlling, objecting to her volunteer work at the church, even when she offered to help the pastor’s wife after surgery. “You’re MY wife—you should be taking care of me!” he would say. He isolated her from her family and wouldn’t let her friends into the house, telling them that she was out. He stopped letting her go to the church that had been her lifeline after she had divorced her abusive first husband. She became depressed, not leaving the house except to go to work.

When they took in Alan’s granddaughter, Hope, a baby girl who was born addicted to crack, Sunny found new joy in her life. She loved buying things for the baby, and quit her job to take care of her. Alan resented the money she spent, and grew jealous of her bond with the infant. He began undermining her relationship

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STAND!



with Hope, telling her that he loved her more than Sunny did. When Sunny tried to object he would threaten her, saying “You don’t know who you’re dealing with!” He yelled at her, belittling her for not having a job. He left the house, taking Hope with him and staying with friends, and calling her every day to harass her. The emotional abuse grew worse until the evening he tried to strangle her in her bedroom.

Her friend put her in touch with a women’s shelter in her hometown. She moved in right away, but she didn’t feel safe. Alan knew people all over town, and she was terrified that someone would recognize her and tell him where she was. She began spending her days exploring neighboring towns, looking for a place she could be secure. That was when she found STAND!

For the first time, Sunny feels confident in the help she is getting. She is learning about abuse and how to take care of herself. She is learning to set boundaries, and how to step out of her comfort zones. “STAND! opened their arms up to me,” she says. “They didn’t treat me like I was nothing. I know that if I’m ever in another relationship, I’ll recognize any signs thanks to what I’m learning here.”

For now, Sunny is working on creating safety for herself and her family. She has found an apartment and is job hunting. She says, “I’m working on being free.” ■

STAND! For Families Free of Violence shelters more than 90 women like Sunny and their children each year, and refers another 200 to other shelters.

For more information about the shelter and how you can help, visit standffov.org/gethelp/strengthenfamilies.html

*Together, we
can change lives...*

Join us in ending the cycle of family violence and child abuse. Use the attached envelope or make a secure donation online at www.standffov.org.

Your gift will support our crucial programs and services.

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Join **STAND!**'s Safe Places Monthly Giving Program

Members of STAND!'s Safe Places Monthly Giving Program help us provide for the daily needs of families in crisis by providing a regular stream of income that can be used where it is needed most.

Won't you join us by making a monthly contribution?

YOUR GIFT'S IMPACT:

\$100 per month (\$1200 per year) funds two days of the therapeutic child care program.

\$50 per month (\$600 per year) provides a family emergency shelter for 10 nights.

\$25 per month (\$300 per year) provides food for the shelter for 15 days.

\$10 per month (\$120 per year) answers 5 crisis/help line calls.

For more information about how to join Safe Places, please call (925) 603-0138.



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Love the Oscars?

Join STAND! For Families Free of Violence
for the 8th Annual
Academy Awards Benefit Party

Sunday, February 26, 2012
Brenden Theatre, 1985 Willow Pass Road, Concord

The event will include a live simulcast of the
84th Annual Academy of Motion Pictures
Award Ceremony presented on the big screen.
The night will be filled with food, raffles,
prizes, and much more!

Reserved ticket price will be \$45 and \$55 at the door.
Please visit www.standffov.org/takeastand/events_oscars.html
or call (925) 603-0110 for ticket and sponsorship information.