

SOLUTIONS

The newsletter of Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County

Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County works to end the intergenerational cycle of violence by providing prevention and intervention services and by challenging society's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to effect social change.

Domestic Violence Is Everyone's Problem

Even though domestic violence is finally coming out of the shadows, it is appalling that in this day and age we still have men beating up women. With all the progress we've made toward women's equality and empowerment, with all the education and treatment for abusive men, you would think we would have been able to stop this dehumanizing crime.

We need to send the message that domestic violence will no longer be tolerated. Men can take an active role by speaking up when they hear any reference to a man being abusive to a woman and letting other men know that it is unacceptable behavior.

We need to send the message that domestic violence is not someone else's problem—it is everyone's. For example, the latest research shows that children who witness domestic violence are affected as deeply and negatively as the person being abused. They tend to suffer from extreme anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and either blame themselves for the abuse or act out against society in the form of bullying, juvenile delinquency or gang violence.

We need to send the message that dating violence is starting at younger and younger ages and that youth need to be educated about the warning signs of abuse, how to manage their anger and resolve conflicts, and what the resources are in their local community if they find themselves in a violent relationship.

We have made some progress, of course. It used to be that most of the women who entered our shelters returned home. Now we find that nearly three-fourths do not return but end up staying the full 45 days. Many apply to stay in our Second Stage transitional housing facilities where they continue to heal, to learn better parenting skills, and to gain skills that will enable them to start their lives anew.

And the men who enter our 52-week Intimate Partner Abuse programs also end up staying longer than they did in previous times. Most of the men who are referred to us by probation

end up completing the program. Many report experiencing major changes in their thinking and their ability to manage their emotions.

But unfortunately, we are finding that the issue of domestic violence is far more complex than we had previously realized. The women who enter our shelters not only need help in order to heal from the current abuse but from the abuse they experienced as a child. We are finding that 90% of our women were abused and/or neglected as children and suffer from what is called, "complex trauma."

The men who abuse also suffer from complex trauma, having also been abused or neglected as children. Complex trauma is a difficult disorder to heal and it takes counselors with very special training. Fortunately, at DVS we have many such counselors who work diligently with both the abused and the abusers to provide them with the tools they need to recover.

While all our programs depend on financial support from the community, our transitional housing programs need help the most. Women who have been abused are ill equipped to start their lives over in just 45 days. In our transitional housing programs they can stay up to 18 months where they will receive one-on-one and group counseling for their complex trauma, help in finding a job, an opportunity to go back to school, time to save money for rent, and assistance in finding housing (a major hurdle here in Santa Barbara).

During October *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* there are many opportunities to learn about our lifesaving work. You can also learn more about domestic violence and prevention strategies to pass on to your family and friends. A calendar listing of all the events is included in this newsletter.

Thank you for your loving support for all these years. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you as we help battered women and children in Santa Barbara County.

Beverly Engel
Executive Director



Denise

By Lisa Ahlgren, Teen Program Coordinator

Like many students placed in one of my *Healthy Relationships* groups by a counselor or teacher, Denise rolled her eyes on the first day of class when I explained the purpose of the group and what we would be talking about for the next 12 weeks.

Even though we talked about the fact that teen dating violence affects teens from all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, she would regularly insist that the issues and expectations raised were only relevant to "white people relationships" and therefore didn't apply to her. She said that people who can't handle a little teasing and rough-housing are "lame and boring" and need to have a thick skin to spend time with her and her friends. It wasn't until several weeks into the curriculum, when we talked about the warning signs that someone may be an abuser and the students completed a checklist requiring them to consider the presence of those signs in a current or past relationship, that Denise sat silently through the class.

After completing the worksheet, she had finally connected enough with the material to stop arguing that these behaviors are not abusive and that I simply didn't understand "her world." She asked the most important question I could answer for her: "Why is my relationship unhealthy?" While still resisting some ideas, such as experiencing jealousy as a sign of mistrust and insecurity instead of as a sign of true love, she allowed herself to be open to discussion, and to the possibility that what we were talking about as a healthy relationship is not just an image romanticized by "white people" like those seen on such television shows as *Dawson's Creek*.

When I went to collect the girls from class for our eighth session, Denise came bouncing out of the classroom with a glowing smile. "Guess what?" she grinned enthusiastically.

"What?" I asked. She had broken up with her boyfriend. "Why did you decide to do that?"

She told me that he wasn't very nice to her and he embarrassed her a lot. She looked sheepishly at her shoes, shrugged her shoulders and simply said, "I'm over it." A little embarrassed, she quickly made a joke, and changed the subject to which snacks I had brought to group that day.



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Beverly Engel

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www.dvsolutions.org

During difficult financial times, incidents of domestic violence increase while donations decrease. We need your help now more than ever.

Please consider sending a donation. If you would like to join our *Men Against Domestic Violence* group and help end domestic violence, please call Melinda at 805-963-4458 x17.





A Letter from Board President Sally Hamilton

I am a Nice Girl in recovery. I discovered this by reading *The Nice Girl Syndrome* by Beverly Engel, our new executive director. I am also honored to be the new board president of Domestic Violence Solutions and work with a terrific group of board members. I feel lucky to begin this job when we're entering a new phase in our mission. DVS is striving to end the cycle of domestic violence through prevention and intervention, as well as challenging society's attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that condone or contribute to abusive relationships.

We are doing a great job with intervention through our three shelters, two long-term housing programs, and counseling centers. All our facilities are full and we have a wonderful team of counselors who, last year, worked with over 328 women and children who stayed in one of our facilities, and over 1,200 individuals, including perpetrators, who were counseled about domestic violence.

Prevention efforts continue, with programs in the high schools (and some junior high schools) throughout the county where students learn about healthy relationships and how to identify abuse in dating. Some students go on to become peer counselors in our SHARE program. We have just received a grant through the Avon Corporation that will enable us to increase our work with teens in the community.

Our new focus is in outreach to the community, and it begins with the introduction of Beverly Engel's new book, *The Nice Girl Syndrome*. I was in an abusive relationship in my twenties. After several years of counseling, unfortunately before there was a domestic violence organization in Santa Barbara, I learned to stop being attracted to controlling men, and have been happily married for 26 years to Mark, a very supportive husband. However, as I read Beverly's book, I realized that I am still vulnerable and caught in the Nice Girl Syndrome in social and working situations in ways I hadn't realized. I think many of us are.

We invite you to ask Beverly to speak to your organization about the work we are doing and to find out how the Nice Girl Syndrome affects your life.

Thank you to our excellent staff and to you, the generous people in our community, who are willing to support this serious issue.

Sylvia

By Lisa Gonzalez, Shelter Coordinator

We first met Sylvia at 2 a.m. when we went to her home to meet police responding to her 911 call. Her husband had come home drunk, grabbed her out of bed and ordered her to cook for him. He threw food in her face and started slapping her. The abuse in her seven-year marriage was escalating. The previous week he had attacked her with a knife, but she had been too scared and shocked to call the police. This time she didn't hesitate. He was taken to jail, and the next day she called our crisis line to arrange to come into the shelter because he would be released that week, and she felt scared. A friend delivered her and her two children, boys, age 2 and 7, to our shelter from a supermarket. When she arrived, she had a blank look in her eyes and later told our staff that she had felt scared and confused in those first days after leaving her home.

During her 45 days in the shelter, Sylvia got a temporary restraining order, medical attention for the untreated stab wound, assistance through the Victim Witness agency, and both group and individual counseling. She arranged childcare for her children so she could keep her job, and began saving up for her new independent life. She learned to use a budget, provide positive discipline to her children, and make weekly goals with her case manager to assist in building a foundation for herself that didn't involve her abusive husband. She applied for a transitional low-income housing program and was accepted. She is currently working, has her oldest child in counseling with CALM, continues with her own group and individual counseling with DVS, and is considering going back to school to upgrade her job skills. Sylvia expresses deep gratitude for all the services DVS provided and hopes to someday help other women as DVS helped her.

Client Story

Beverly's Turn by Beverly Engel Executive Director



It has been quite awhile since you have received one of our newsletters. As many of you already know, there has been a major transition at DVS with our previous executive director, Rebecca Robertson leaving. Rebecca was a tremendous asset to DVS and I'm sure you join us in wishing her well.

As your new Executive Director I have big shoes to fill but I am confident that I will be able to do so. Ending the cycle of abuse is my life's passion and so I feel particularly fortunate to be working for such an exemplary organization and with such dedicated staff and board members.

I've met many of you already at our *Meet Beverly* luncheon, as well as other events. I hope to eventually meet you all. Please feel free to call me at the office at: 963-4458 to set up a lunch or to just come by and visit.



Calendar

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

During October DVS is offering many opportunities to learn more about domestic violence. Several programs will be centered around teen dating violence prevention. Executive Director, Beverly Engel will be speaking at various venues on her latest book, *The Nice Girl Syndrome: How to Stop Being Manipulated and Abused and Start Standing Up For Yourself*.

As we are preparing for press at the end of September, our *Once Upon a Table High "Esteem" Tea* (on October 5 at the Biltmore Hotel) is SOLD OUT, kicking off a great month for domestic violence awareness. Thank you to our generous sponsors and guests!

October 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Recovering From Domestic Violence—Speakers and Candlelight Vigil. Santa Maria Santa Maria Public Library Shepard Hall
421 S. McClelland Street.
Beverly Engel will speak on her new book and a survivor and a recovering abuser will also speak. Refreshments will be served. Candlelight vigil on the lawn at City Hall—corner of Broadway and Cook Streets.

October 14, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
The Cultural Aspects of Domestic Violence Movie Screening:
Once Were Warriors
Santa Barbara Public Library Faulkner Gallery
40 E. Anapamu Street.
Screening of award-winning New Zealand film about domestic violence in the indigenous Maori community. Panel discussion afterward with a focus on the cultural reasons for domestic violence in the Latina/Latino community.

October 15, 7:00 p.m.
Silent Walk—UCSB
Gather outside Cheadle Hall

Celebrating Springtime!

at Lee and Elizabeth Gabler's Equestrian Estate

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October 22, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Author's Event Featuring Beverly Engel, DVS Executive Director—Lompoc

Lompoc Public Library
501 E. North Avenue.

Beverly will discuss her latest book, *The Nice Girl Syndrome*. Book signing and refreshments.

October 23, 5:15-7:15 p.m.

Girls' Night Out (\$25) Benefiting the Santa Maria Programs of DVS

Santa Maria Country Club
505 W. Waller Lane

Beverly Engel will discuss and sign her book, *The Nice Girl Syndrome*. Hors d'oeuvres, wine, male "celebrity" waiters—and lots of fun!

October 29, 7:00 p.m.

Book Signing, DV Event, and Candlelight Vigil

Alan Hancock College—Lompoc Campus, Student Center
1 Hancock Drive.

Join Beverly Engel for a conversation about the dangers to girls and women of being too nice, and her book, *The Nice Girl Syndrome*. Special guest speakers from the Lompoc DA's office and Lompoc Police Department. Live performances by local children. Live vocal performance. Candlelight vigil, outdoors after presentation, begins at 8:15 p.m.



Leave a Legacy . . .

. . . By remembering Domestic Violence Solutions with a bequest in your will or living trust. Future generations will thank you!

For more information or to learn about the many ways you can make a difference, please call Melinda Johansson, Associate Executive Director, 963-4458 x 17.

Join the Leadership Circle!

Domestic Violence Solutions is pleased to announce the formation of a new group of supporters: the Leadership Circle. This group is comprised of community individuals, leaders, corporations and other organizations who wish to make a significant difference in the lives of battered women and children through an annual unrestricted gift to DVS of \$1,000 or more.

Leadership Circle members enjoy special privileges including complimentary admission to private cocktail receptions where guests enjoy wine and hors d'oeuvres as well as a fascinating short program on topics related to domestic violence. Leaders are also recognized in our newsletters and annual report. Plus, each level of membership will enjoy additional unique experiences and an increased awareness of DVS' plans.

For more information on the Leadership Circle, please call Melinda Johansson, Associate Executive Director at (805) 963-4458 x17 or email melindaj@dvsolutions.org.



Thank you to our community of supporters! We share your vision and commitment to a peaceful world. Your support says: "We believe the cycle of violence can end with this generation here in Santa Barbara County." Thank you for being part of the solution!

Listed below are the donations received from January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008. Additional major contributors are listed in the Springtime Event article.

We apologize if we inadvertently omitted any donation and ask that you contact Jackie Goodman at 963-4458 x 11 to verify our record of your gift.

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Gary & Deborah Welterlen
Laura White
Phylene Wiggins
Joyce Wilson
Janet Wolf
Laura Young
Mary Ann Zegers
Jane Zuzalek

Girls' Night Out

Santa Maria Country Club
505 W. Waller Lane, Santa Maria

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 5:15-7:15 PM \$25

FOR TICKETS, call 963-4458 x17 or visit www.dvsolutions.org

Sponsored by Dan & Peggy Blough and Dr. Robert Ibsen

All proceeds from this event will benefit DVS' Santa Maria programs!

Please consider making a donation even if you cannot attend.

We need your help now more than ever.

Male celebrity waiters include:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mike Gibson | Bob Orach | Frank Ortiz |
| Tim Seifert | Dave Wright | Ed Pippan |
| Ken White | Tim Ness | Kirk Spry |
| Gil Palacios | Ed Murray | Mike Valdez |
| Jim Rigali | Eddie Murray | |



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