

Building Relationships, Families & Communities Free from Violence

Dear Friend,

I love the start of the New Year for two main reasons: the opportunity to look back at see what was accomplished over the past year and the opportunity to look forward and determine where we want to be and how we want to get there... all the while making sure we are awake and aware of what is occurring in the present moment.

Looking back, there are numerous notable moments that occurred here at The Center. First, those who have the opportunity to work closely with The Center's staff know how truly amazing and magical they are. So it was particularly rewarding to have staff member Eddie Z named as the recipient of Inspirational Project of the Year award from MORE Industries. Upon presenting Eddie with his award, Susie Davies, (MORE's Executive Director) stated, "Eddie's Non-Violent Communication training was so, powerful and meaningful that the culture at MORE was transformed."

Second, the response from you, our community partners to our Holiday Adopt-A-Family program was nothing short of miraculous. Your generosity enabled us to provide nearly 100



Making a blanket for the Holiday Program

clients with everything they could possibly need to make new holiday memories as they work to rebuild their lives free from family violence. From all of us here at The



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

blue of california



Hanson
McClain®

Independent Investment Advice



Raley's BEL AIR NOB HILL
FOODS

verizon

Domestic Violence

Sexual Assault

24/7 Crisis Help Line

530-626-1131

Center, thank you so very much for your overwhelming support and generosity. Our clients truly understand that our community cares about them and their families. Thank you for sending such a powerful message! A special thank you to all of the employees at Blue Shield California, El Dorado Hills campus for their amazing support!

This edition of *The Center Now* also contains the first in a series of articles from members of our Survivors Advisory panel. Their insight and experience is critical in determining the best ways for us to deliver services to our clients. Additionally, they are powerful speakers and ambassadors of The Center throughout the community. I hope you enjoy this series of articles.

Last of all, we are excited to join with our friends at Federated Church to present a once in a lifetime community event. Hate to Hope is happening on January 29th. This event is well on its way to selling out. Be sure to read more about how you can be in attendance.

Thank you in advance for your continued support, encouragement and generosity. Together we will be able to make even more progress towards our ultimate objective of building a community free from sexual assault and domestic violence.

Peace,

Matt

Matt Huckabay
Executive Director
(530)626-1450 or matth@thecenternow.org

P.S.

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

In This Issue

[Survivor Series ~ Article One](#)

[Our Own Eddie Zacapa Wins M.O.R.E. Award](#)

[From Hate to Hope ~ An Interactive Presentation](#)

[Hope for the Holiday](#)

916-939-6616

Support The Center

Donate Now
Secure donations through
Network for Good

CENTER'S SUPPORT GROUPS

**Domestic Violence Support and
Education Groups:**

**Tuesdays 5:30-7:30 pm
Wednesdays 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**CAP - Women's Changing Abusive
Patterns**

**Peace First - Men's and
Women's Workshops on Improving
Relationships**

**MAAP - Men's Alternative to Abusive
Patterns
(English and Spanish)**

**For more information on these
groups call
(530) 626-1450 or
(916) 949-4464**

CENTER'S CALENDAR

January 29, 2011

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

**From Hate to Hope
Federated Church**

February 7, 2011

6:00 pm

**Communicating from Your Heart
4 week series**

February 22, 2011

Volunteer Classes Begin

[Center Offers Workshop](#)

Survivor Series - Article One

Welcome to the first in a series of articles that promise to shed some light on victims of domestic violence and their journey to freedom. In the following months, we will highlight the story of Susan Hamlin, a survivor of abuse so horrific that her case became national news about six years ago.

In this bizarre case, Susan's husband of 20 years, former Sacramento prosecutor and criminal defense attorney Richard Hamlin, was arrested and charged with assault, assault with a deadly weapon, corporal injury to spouse, willful cruelty to a child, endangerment, false imprisonment, and torture. He was ultimately found guilty of torture and sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. He will be eligible for parole this February after serving only 6 years of a life sentence. During the sentencing hearing, El Dorado Superior Court Judge Eddie T. Keller told the courtroom that the violence in this case was "*inspired by pure evil.*"

Susan has been on the Survivor's Advisory Committee at The Center for several years now and we began talking about issues related to domestic violence and victims. Why do they hesitate to leave? What could possibly keep a person in such an awful situation for so long? Why are so few perpetrators, once arrested, not actually charged?

In this article series we will examine these questions as well as others and try to give our readers a good sense of what it is like to be a victim of domestic violence.

Let us begin our journey with Susan... when we met, I asked her some difficult questions, listen in as she gives us a glimpse of what it was like for her...

The Center: Do you remember when the abuse began?

Susan: Over a 20 year marriage, it is difficult to identify when the 'abuse' started. Abuse is not just physical - it is also verbal, emotional and psychological. Grooming for physical abuse

For more information call

530-626-1131

or 916-939-6616



[Our Website](#)



Pretty women wonder where my secret
lies.

I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion
model's size

But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.

I say,

It's in the reach of my arms

The span of my hips,

The stride of my step,

The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

-

-

-From "Phenomenal Woman."

by Maya Angelou

precedes the actual physical abuse and is difficult to recognize when you are in it. I was being physically controlled by his threatening verbal commands long before he ever hit me. He would yell things like "Don't you leave this room when I'm talking to you!" or "You sit there until I'm finished!" The transition from verbal commands that controlled my movement to physical restraint of my body to control my movement was too subtle to be noticed in the overall hostile environment. For this reason I cannot be certain of the first time he actually hit me.

The Center: Why did you stay so long in a relationship that was so awful?

Susan: There are many answers to this question. As stated in the previous question, the relationship spanned 20 years and the changes were so gradual that they were unnoticed until a significant imbalance of power existed. By that time so many traps were in place that options were severely limited. The traps are many: I had given up my career and had been out of the workforce for years; my self confidence was non-existent; I had four young children that needed both care and support; I had been isolated from family and friends and had no support system; isolation and fear led to brainwashing. . . . there are many examples of traps that serve to keep a person in a bad relationship. In addition to these very real traps, however, there is also something else at play - at some unknown point it became too dangerous to leave. While I was certainly not able to articulate these different stages of the relationship when I was enveloped in the abuse, my senses were guiding me and I knew the children and I were not safe to leave. His ego and unhealthy need for power and control would not stand for his wife to leave him and take his children. And my senses told me that I was much better able to manage the situation from within, as opposed to being forced to send children for visitations where there would be no protection from the abuse. At least living in the home, I was in a position to draw the fire to me, buffering the children from the abuse. I was too enveloped in the abuse to be able to objectively assess my environment. None of my options were good. My choices were between bad and worse and I was forced to make decisions quickly in a state of panic - I was living in survival mode -

Calling all Volunteers!

Volunteer Training will begin on February 22. Anyone who is interested in becoming a Certified Volunteer of The Center (remember we were voted #2 in EDC - BEST PLACES TO VOLUNTEER!!!)

Call the Center or email Martha at marthab@thecenternow.org

Join Our Mailing List!

Thanks to your contributions:

The Center has....

provided **25,000** counseling sessions, provided over **37,000** shelter nights and answered nearly **60,000** calls to our crisis line from victims of sexual assault and domestic violence since 1985.

Domestic Violence

Sexual Assault

24/7 Crisis Help Line

530-626-1131

916-939-6616

Support The Center

Donate Now

Secure donations through
Network for Good



Forward this email
to a Friend

minute to minute with no ability to make a plan.

The Center: Can you tell us why didn't you seek help?

Susan: Again, the reasons are many. In the early stages of a relationship that is becoming abusive, there is denial and disbelief. Promises that it won't happen again are believed. Stigmas that shame the victim into silence exist in our society. The occurrence of abuse without consequence fuels further abuse. Again, a point is reached where it becomes too dangerous to report the abuse, or the fear exists that the report of abuse will not be believed. Our system does not keep the abuser in custody, so when released after being reported, the controlling fear is that he will be more enraged than ever. In my situation, my intuition was that unless law enforcement could keep him in custody without bail, we were not safe to report - it would escalate the danger.

Return to this series next month for more of Susan's story.

Our Own Eddie Zacapa is Awarded M.O.R.E's Inspirational Project of the Year

Eddie Zacapa, Program Coordinator for The Center's Positive Solutions programs, was awarded the 2010 Inspirational Project of the Year by Mother Load Rehabilitation Enterprises (M.O.R.E.). Susie Davies, Executive Director of M.O.R.E., presented the award to a very surprised Eddie at a banquet held in his honor in December.



Eddie with Susie Davies of MORE

The Center and M.O.R.E. created a partnership whereby The Center would provide Non-Violent Communication (NVC) training to M.O.R.E. clients and 35 staff members. Eddie took his Positive Solutions program on the road and provided M.O.R.E. with three - 8 week sessions of

NVC training. In her remarks to those assembled at the banquet, Ms. Davies stated that "The training was so powerful and meaningful that staff who attended the sessions did not want it to end." Ms. Davies also stated that the culture at M.O.R.E. has been transformed as well at the personal lives and relationships of those involved in the training. "Eddie inspired all of us... and taught us how to resolve conflicts with ease... how to listen to ourselves and truly hear the needs of others...he taught us how to strengthen our personal and professional relationships and to start living to our fullest potential," remarked Ms. Davies during the award presentation ceremony. Matt Huckabay, Executive Director for The Center described Eddie as "a true "gem" in our county."

We are very proud of Eddie and the Positive Solutions Program, and hope that you'll join with us in celebrating this achievement. If you'd like more information about any of the Non-Violent Communication classes, please contact Eddie at EddieZ@TheCenterNow.org.



From Hate To Hope

Matthew Boger was just 13 years old and homeless after his mother kicked him out of t



the house when he told her that he was being bullied at school for being gay. He lived in a park in Los Angeles, sleeping on cardboard and hustling to survive. Until the night when everything changed...

All he remembered when he woke up was lying face down in his own blood after a group of skin heads, complete with safety pins in their check and razors on their boots had chased, beat and kicked him leaving him for dead. Boger didn't go to the hospital, he didn't go to the police... "I survived." He said.

Timothy Zaal spent his youth in a variety of hate groups after his brother was killed by an African American. As a quazi-Nazi skin head, Zaal spent his time on the streets fighting and looking for trouble and spent a year in jail for his efforts. After one particularly brutal attack, Zaal spent decades thinking he had killed someone.

Having kids changed him. About the time Zaal's 2-year-old son wreaked havoc in a store for calling someone the "N-word," he realized that it was time to start doing things differently.

Zaal went to the Museum of Tolerance and began volunteering. One day, he had lunch with one of the managers at the museum and they were discussing what brought each of them there. It was during the small talk at this lunch that Boger and Zaal put the pieces

together. Zaal realized that Boger was the kid he thought he had killed all those years ago. Boger broke off the discussion and left.



Fast forward several years later ~ ***From Hate to Hope*** is an Interactive presentation that is based on the novel ***Freaks and Revelations***. The novel written by Davida Wills Hurwin, is the remarkable true story of the reconciliation of a perpetrator and the victim of a hate crime. Featuring Matthew Boger, Timothy Zaal and Davida Wills Hurwin, this presentation examines the roots of prejudice and discrimination and the ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Beginning with an interactive presentation followed by a Q & A session, Matthew and Tim engage the audience in a discussion of redemption and the power of forgiveness.

This event is sponsored by the Neighborhood Group at the Federated Church of Placerville, and all proceeds go to benefit The Center for Violence-free Relationships.

The \$25 ticket price includes:

- **Brunch**
- **A copy of the book *Freaks and Revelations***

Advanced ticket purchase is recommended as space is limited. Tickets are available at:

Tickets are available on our website
www.thecenternow.org

Federated Church Neighbors Group - Please call Pam at (530) 409-1124

The Center for Violence-free Relationships - 344 Placerville Drive, Suite 11, Placerville, CA 95667 (530) 626-1450

Tony Matthews - 447 Main Street, Placerville, CA 95667 (530) 626-9161

A public book signing will take place following the VIP Event at Zia's in Placerville. (Books will be available at that time.)

We hope you'll join us for this exciting presentation and we look forward to seeing you there!

Hope For The Holiday

by Martha Borders

The Center's Adopt-a-Family campaign impacts women and children, offering lasting hope and support for our clients who are healing from the effects of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the year. For the past fifteen years we have sponsored an Adopt-a-Family Program, where community members, clubs, school classrooms, and corporate centers provide gifts based on what clients request on their 'wishlists'. This year we had 78 donors with donations totaling \$13,224! We provided food and clothing to 93 clients and 173 children with a total of 266 served! Even in a year when the economy is tough, we had more donor participation than ever before. A heart felt thanks



to ALL of our donors and to Blue Shield for making this holiday season warm and bright for so many hurting people in our community.

The following is a thank you letter we received from a client who participated in our 2010 Holiday, Adopt-a-Family Program... enjoy!

Wednesday, January 6, 2011

Good Morning

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and New Years Holiday!!!

My son and I wanted to thank you (and everyone) involved for giving us a wonderful and very blessed Christmas.

With everything my son has been through this year it was so important for me to make this a very special Christmas and let him be a child again - if just for a few days. I was so down because I knew it would be impossible with our current financial situation. I was trying to save every penny just to ensure he had something to open Christmas morning. I know it sounds cliché but I really was praying for a miracle.

Sometimes we (I) tend to forget how wonderful and giving people truly are. We face something in our life that appears to tear us apart inside...and sometimes it feels we'll never be the person we once were. But then something amazing happens - like you, and others in the community giving their time, energy, and love to others who would otherwise do without. So many people gave - and it allowed me to watch my son have a wonderful Christmas and see the excitement in his eyes every time he opened something. And the gifts for me...I haven't opened presents for myself in years. It was wonderful - the way it made me feel...It goes without saying - we wouldn't have been able to have such a wonderful Christmas dinner without the generosity of people. All the traditional smells of turkey, pumpkin pie, stuffing filling the house...it's been a very long time since we were able to just be a family and feel grateful for all that we have...and not hurt over the things we've

lost.

Thank you so much - for **all** you do. Please pass our thanks and best wishes for a wonderful year to all those that allowed us to have such a beautiful and wonderful Christmas!

Center Offers *Communicating From Your Heart* Workshop

The Center for Violence-free Relationships is giving individuals an opportunity to improve their relationships by focusing on compassionate communication that fosters connection and respect. The four week workshop starts on February 7, 2011 and will meet on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. at The Center.

The workshops will focus primarily on teaching individuals and couples Nonviolent Communication (NVC), founded by Marshall Rosenberg. NVC has been used around the world to mediate conflicts, nurture relationships, and promote peace.



NVC is also known as giraffe language because the giraffe has the largest heart of all land mammals. It is considered the language of the heart.

"Our hope and vision for these workshops," said presenter Eddie Zacapa,

who uses giraffe ears and puppets to illustrate giraffe language in his workshops, "is to be able to give away valuable information to individuals who desire to strengthen their communication with their loved ones and others who they come in contact with daily."

The Center is dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual assault and domestic violence through education, advocacy and services in western El Dorado County.

The workshops are held at The Center, but can also be brought directly to community organizations that are interested. To sign up for the Communicating From Your Heart workshop, or for more information contact Eddie at 530-626-1450 or 916-939-4464 or EddieZ@thecenternow.org.

Cost: Sliding scale \$15-35. Scholarships and assistance is available for those who qualify. No one turned away for the inability to pay.

The Center for Violence-free Relationships is dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual assault and domestic violence through education, advocacy, and services in western El Dorado County.

The Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible and vital to continue our services.