

Kimberly Casa de Paz Client

I was abused by my boyfriend. I was with him for three years. I went to a hospital because he kicked me in the eye and in the back of my head. A nurse gave me a bunch of numbers to call. I called the place in Orange County and they didn't have room. So they gave me this number.

He had broken my arm before. Cut me with a box cutter. Why did I stay, I wonder? Now I can wonder that, really ask myself why. There was a security there. I had a house and a car and a pool. The only bad thing about the relationship was the abuse. Couldn't I deal with that and stay and have my otherwise happy life? So I think that's why I stayed. I was secure financially. I was a homemaker.

When I first met Earl, he rescued me. He was my champion. He took care of me, protected me. I'm disabled. I have heart problems and a small monthly income. He had everything. I believed he was my knight in shining armor so I just went with him. Suddenly I couldn't see my sister. I couldn't see my friends anymore. And now that I've been through this program, I understand that this is so typical. They all do the exact same thing.

The first couple of days I was here were awesome. They gave me a really nice room, my own bathroom and there weren't a lot of people here. They let me rest. I came with nothing. They gave me absolutely everything. I was able to rest and relax a couple of days.

I've seen it over and over again. The women come here so tired. So it's important to be able to just lay down on your bed.

There's groups all day long here. It's very structured.

People here are very interested in helping themselves. Every day there's a quote and we write it down and talk about what it means to us.

In the morning there is domestic violence education. They teach you the cycle of abuse, the red flags to look for. Absolutely everything. All the tools you need to make sure this doesn't happen again. To understand that you're worthy.

I don't think I would let it happen again because I have too many things going for myself. I know now I can take care of myself. I didn't think that before and he exacerbated the situation. He told me over and over again that I couldn't take care of myself.

They are so awesome here.



I love children and the children really really like me. So I thought maybe I could do something with children. They said Mt. San Jacinto College has child development classes. They got me all the information. I went to the school and found that I don't need years of study to work with the smallest children. There was an assessment test. I was so nervous. They were very encouraging to me. I went and I did really good, much better than I thought I would. They enrolled me right away. Now I'm taking child development classes. There I am, 40 years old, going to school every day with all these kids. The people here are so nice.

Everybody has the same story. One thing I've learned is that, no matter what your degree of abuse has been, there is someone who has had it worse. Everybody starts to feel stronger. When you realize how much someone else has been through, you feel compassion for them.

If I hadn't come here, I would probably be dead because he would have killed me. It was getting worse and worse, although I didn't see that at the time. But I know that now. The explosions were getting closer together and worse.

I was horrified of anyone finding out. It's still embarrassing and humiliating.

I so don't want to leave. But I know that in order for me to have been successful is I have to leave. I so want to volunteer here and eventually work here in the children's program.