

Snapshot of Success: Detroit, Michigan

Standard Intro

“Every two minutes a woman is sexually assaulted somewhere in America”

“More than one million women are stalked each year”

“Nearly one out of three murdered women die at the hands of an intimate partner”

“America is responding”

Snapshot Transcript

Narrator: In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act to address the problems of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This landmark legislation created new federal crimes and provided resources to help states, tribes, and local communities focus on victim safety and defender accountability. These resources have made a real difference. In Detroit, a victim of domestic violence can find legal help, shelter, and much more through the Women's Justice Center.

Survivor I: Kinda just as a dead-end street. That was before I found out that there was help out there that was available to me. It just seems a lot more bright now that I've got the help that I've needed. Like I said, they put me in a place, and they started me off with all the essential things that I needed to live. And they put me in training for better job skills. And I truly believe that I would probably be in the same situation had it not been for this help. It's overwhelming how much they have helped me here.

Norma J. Tucker, Executive Director, Women's Justice Center/My Sister's Place:

I came in 1995. Actually, at that point, families who, who needed the services and who were residents of the shelter actually had to turn around their lives and find housing and jobs. And actually, just everything that needed to be done within 30 days, it was unbelievable that families were expected to just start all over again within 30 days, now we're able to follow up. We've got staff that work with families through our funds.

Survivor II: The people and the advocates and things, hey know more resources for us to go for, to help us to get started again. Because that's what we have to do when we're here. We're starting a whole new life. No matter what age that we're at, we have to start all over again. It doesn't matter if you have one child with you or 16 children with you. You still have to start all over again.

Narrator: Detroit has one of the largest, poor, urban, and new immigrant populations in the country for victims of domestic violence in these communities. The key to survival is learning that there are services available to help them and laws to protect them.

Officer Wedad ElHage, 12th Precinct: From personal experience. And being born in Lebanon, I know people tend to, when they come involved with domestic violence is not a big issue in the Middle East because they keep it in-house and within the immediate family. They don't want any outsiders to interfere, especially law enforcement. Most of the citizens in the community, they don't really understand the laws, what domestic violence is and how to go about seeking some help. We should let them know that the laws are different. You have the same rights as he has in the household, especially when it comes to physical assaults of property. They're humans. By us going out there with a woman justice center or with the educational outreach program to go out and educate them, let them know what the laws are.

Sgt. Darrel McLendon, 12th Precinct, Domestic Violence Unit: A woman with a poor economic situation, they're basically stuck within their, their little environment. And if the battery is basically running that environment, they have nowhere to turn. They can't get out of town. They have no money to get out of town. They have nowhere to turn to. When they turn to us, now we have places that we can take them, places that can assist them. We work with the Women Justice Center. We all play an integral part in the safety of this victim. Before we had nowhere that we could turn, I would have a victim say, well, what should I do? My response is, I have no idea, but now I can tell them. I say, look, I got this place for you to go. We have these people you can talk to. I enjoy it, to me I feel as though my job is worthwhile.

Officer Gwen M. Ashe, 12th Precinct, Domestic Violence Unit: You're talking about women who have no real income, who may be in this relationship because he's the breadwinner. And if you have no money and you want to get out of it, the Women's Justice Center is right there for you. You can get your divorce. You may have child custody pertaining problems pertaining. They have attorneys available for that, for housing and for PPO's.

Norma J. Tucker, Executive Director, Women's Justice Center/My Sisters Place:

I think that when people think about the Women's Justice Center, that they do think about the legal services that offer for women who are not able to afford an attorney, a private attorney. But knowing that they would get good service, and that's what's important, that they receive the same type of representation as someone of a different economic status, we'll say.

LaChelle Reed Bobo, Legal Services Director, Women's Justice Center: A lot of the times, if we're talking to a victim of domestic violence and we are assisting them with a family law matter. But we can see that they need to maybe talk to therapists, or they need assistance in finding housing to get out of the situation that they're in. With the outreach case manager or domestic violence therapist being right there in the same office. It's just a matter of going to the next office and saying, you know, can you talk to this client for me?

Narrator: For victims of domestic violence counseling, advocacy, legal help, safe housing, and links to

job training are essential elements to a brighter future.

Survivor I: Once I got into the program, they kind of just not handed everything to me, but showed me that there were some different avenues that I could take in getting business taken care of, you know, right here, I didn't have to go out, you know, to file any paperwork for PPO's or anything else. It was right here within arm's length and they're still continuously helping me do things. I love it.

Advocate: Since you got into transitional, have you set some goals for yourself that you did not have prior to arriving?

Survivor I: Well, I'm not going to say that I didn't have prior to arriving, but it was just that I need to get some other things in order before I could go forward with those goals and school is my number one priority right now because it's okay to have a job, but I want something to say that it's going to be a career then no matter what state I go to or where I'm at, I can get that particular job. I took a test for the Focus Hope program and did really well on the test. I should be entering into that, hopefully sometime next month. And that's a machinist training program for the big three to get in to the big three. Once I finish that training, I should be self-sufficient with a job that I don't have to go and ask anybody to give me this or give me that because I have it and I have some type of schooling, so I'll never be jobless again. Never.

END

Standard Outro:

This program is dedicated to the survivors and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking whose courage, strength, and commitment to these issues have inspired and informed us all.

Produced for the Institute for Child and Family Policy at the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Policy, Portland, Maine

Thanks to the organizations whose cooperation helped make this production possible:

- Women's Justice Center, My Sister's Place
- Detroit's 12th Precinct, Domestic Violence Unit
- Focus Hope Program

Special thanks to the people who participated in the program: Norma Tucker, LaChelle Reed Bobo, Gwen Ashe, Darrell McClendon, Wedad Elhage, Laura Teeley, Johana Delp, Gwendolyn Brown, and the former residents of My Sister's Place who kindly allowed us to use their comments for this program.

A heartfelt thanks to the many others whose encouragement, assistance, and cooperation helped make this program possible.

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS – Detroit, Michigan

The Snapshot Project would like to thank Catherine Pierce, and the staff from the Office of Justice Programs' Violence Against Women Office, Tracy Cooley, Ruth Grady, and Kris Sahonchik, for the editorial assistance.

A special thanks to Barbara Hart, Joan Kuriansky, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and our project consultants: Raina Fishbane, Travis Fritsch, Robin Hassler-Thompson, Susan Landenwich, Lynn Levey, Eileen Luna, and Anne Munch.

Special thanks to the Snapshot Project staff at the Muskie School: Julie Atkins, Jean Bessette, Julie Dennehy, Phyllis Farr, Andrew Ferguson, Penny Guisinger, Diane Hogle, Marcella Makinen, Erin Oldham, Tammy Richards, Anita St. Onge, Al Sheehy and Gail Sweat.

This project was supported by Grant N0.00-WT-VX-K002, awarded by the Office of Justice Programs' Violence Against Women Office, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Copyright © 2000, Institute for Child and Family Policy at the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Policy