

First Draft
March 12, 2008

Martha's Story

Martha is familiar with the signs of abusive behavior. She grew up in an environment where she saw her mother abused by men that came in and out of her life. That knowledge was not enough to keep Martha from entering into a relationship that became verbally and mentally abusive but enough to be instrumental in her decision to leave.

After the birth of her first child, a son, Martha recognized the need to get control of her life if she was going to be the mother she wanted to be for her son. One of five children, as a child she missed what she would have liked to have in a mother. She wanted a mother who would take time to know her personality; a mother who would praise her accomplishments as well as be the disciplinarian; a mother who would find the time to see her play sports and participate in various school activities. Martha readily admits she was a challenge to raise, but feels that if her mother had been more nurturing things would have been very different. It was now time for her to make better choices and staying in an abusive relationship was not one of them.

In August of 2007, Martha left. Unfortunately despite her attempts to find affordable housing before leaving she was unsuccessful. Her back was to the wall. The relationship with her mother made moving back not an option. They had grown apart over the years and she did not want her son in an environment she resented as a child. With no where else to turn Martha and her 2 year old son moved into the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter where they lived for three months before being accepted into the St. Vincent de Paul Supportive Housing Program.

Martha describes herself as a good worker, street smart, proud and resourceful. She got herself into this and she was determined to fix it. She was very happy to be accepted into the Supportive Housing Program. Having a place of their own to live made working on a plan to regain self-sufficiency, with the support of her case worker, a goal she was determined to achieve. While she had a full-time job as a Certified Nursing Assistant before moving in, the program fees made regaining a stronger sense of financial security a reality. During the 6-months Martha was in the program she got her GED. The program also helped her to see and appreciate her talents and strengths. She is now looking into career options that would not only allow her to provide for her son's wellbeing, but also give her time to raise him in a more nurturing environment. Currently, she is looking into becoming either a Dental Assistant or a Dental Hygienist. Her life's goal is to be a good mother to her son...to raise him to see his full potential, confident that his mother will always be there to cheer him on. With a smile on her face and determination in her eyes she told me, "I know he can be great".

Written by Dolores Antunes
Supportive Housing Volunteer

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Martha is proud of her accomplishments in regaining her self-sufficiency. She now has a plan and the determination to see it through. She and her son have just moved in to affordable housing in Kettering. Martha thanks the St. Vincent de Paul Supportive Housing Program for their support during a very trying time in her life.

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