



THE

CAPSA CONNECTION

"Hope Shining Through"

October 2008

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CAPSA Support

by Tracy Hernandez

*You can fall here
Women's hands are strong*

These words greet the women at a CAPSA educational support group each week as they gather together, providing a solace and a silver lining, a place to lean when their world filled with violence and pain seems like it is more than they can handle.

For over two decades CAPSA has offered educational support groups for survivors of domestic violence and rape. The women who come to the groups vary as much in their current situations as they do in personalities, but each shares the common goal of not only learning more about their situation but also building a network of supporters on which they can lean. The groups are held in the fall and spring, in English and Spanish, each year. If there is enough interest during the summer a third group may also be organized.

Often on the first night they arrive shy and withdrawn, not sure if they are going to participate, but curious of what they might take away from the evening. They ask Anne or Jolie, CAPSA Support Group Facilitators and caseworkers, to promise not to put them on the spot by calling on them. When they know they will not be forced to participate, they plan to come and silently listen.

Most group nights begin with an icebreaker to get to know one another, and then a "feelings check-in". The women are invited to look at a list of words that describe feelings and choose one that they are experiencing at the time.

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 was the second meeting of the fall English-speaking group. During the feelings check-in one woman said she was feeling "drained", another "sorrowful", and another "upset". The women are allowed to share why they are feeling that way, but they do not have to share if they do not want to.

Frequently throughout the evening they are invited to do more check-ins to see how they are responding to what is happening during the group. The feelings are not always positive, but help provide a guide for where each person is and what she is feeling.

"One of the most powerful aspects of the group is that, even if the women do not initially want to be involved in the group by participating, there is tremendous power in discovering that you are not alone," said Program Director Kathryn Monson.

"I was really nervous the first time I attended group, scared that it might not help. But I had to give it a chance," said Christina, a domestic violence survivor who attended the group in the spring and is attending again in the fall. "At first I felt so alone, like I was the only one who had this problem," she contin-



"The women who come to the groups vary as much in their current situations as they do in personalities, but each shares the common goal of . . . building a network of supporters on which they can lean"

ued. "Then when I went to the group I saw that there [was] so much heartache in [that] room, but you realize that you are not alone. You think you are alone, but you're not."

During the first couple of meetings the caseworker or facilitator may provide a lot of information and do a lot of talking, continued Monson. But after a few sessions the women really start to take over and help each other through their individual difficulties and situations. The caseworker is there just to steer the discussion, to facilitate, but has little role in the resolution of issues. Mostly the women take over that role and begin to share their own experiences with one another. This is where the power of the group takes place, where the feeling that each person is not alone in her experiences comes from.

"[The group facilitator] asks you some simple questions so that you don't feel uncomfortable talking," said Christina. "They make you feel like it is okay to talk to each other, and it is okay to share your story. By the third time I went to the group, I could just pour my heart out. I could cry at last, do all those things I couldn't do before, because they made me feel like it was okay and they were really listening."

Even though the discussions are directed mainly by the needs of the women, that does not mean

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CAPSA Holiday Gift Wrap Booth

By Emily Burgon



Jill Anderson, Executive Director

Opening Doors to the Future

The need for safe, affordable housing for victims of domestic violence in Cache Valley can be seen by the number of families seeking housing assistance from CAPSA and BRAG, our local housing authority.

Both of our organizations maintain waiting lists as long as six months and even years for families in need of housing.

Without access to housing options, women fleeing from abusive relationships are often forced to live in substandard conditions or return to their batterers. While many survivors of violence need only short-term, emergency shelter, others face numerous barriers to achieving independence free from the abuse and require long-term housing assistance and a variety of support services.

For more than 30 years CAPSA has provided emergency shelter for families fleeing violence, crisis advocacy, and other crisis intervention services. In 2005, we were thrilled when notified that we had received a three year contract from the Department of Justice to develop a Transitional Housing program. Since that time we have watched more than 30 families who have experienced so much abuse discover tremendous strength and motivation, utilize the resources provided to them through this program, and achieve amazing results. We have watched survivors become first generation college students excelling beyond their own expectations and are amazed with the changes in their children's success in school as they watch their mother begin to thrive.

The Transitional Housing program truly does open doors of opportunity that CAPSA board members, volunteers, supporters, donors, and staff can be proud they invested in. Thank you everyone for helping so many lives and future generations with your ongoing efforts. U

Around the holiday season for the last seven years Noelle Call has suffered an acute, and probably unique, obsession: gift boxes—where can she find enough gift boxes?

“Boxes of all different sizes and shapes,” she says, ticking them off on her fingers. “Shirt boxes, jewelry boxes, great big boxes for unruly stuffed animals.” And then to fit the odd-shaped items, she says, you need long boxes, deep boxes, and wide boxes.

For years her search for boxes led her to wake before dawn the day after Christmas to clean out the inventory at Wal-Mart for 50 percent off. When the obsession was at its worst, she even knew when individual shipments of boxes were arriving at the LDS Distribution Center. “I’m not LDS,” she says, “but they have great boxes there.” The obsession also extended to gift bows and tags, so she hit ShopKo and Smith’s Marketplace in search of those too. “Cart after cartload of bows,” she remembers.

Now, after seven years, Call can stop thinking about gift boxes, because she is officially retiring from organizing the CAPSA Gift Wrap Booth located at the Cache Valley Mall during the holiday season. Along with the boxes, bows and tags, she’ll also be passing on reams and reams of wrapping paper, cases of packaging tape, and a little folder full of instructions.

The CAPSA Gift Wrap Booth was started fifteen years ago by board member Marge Allgier, whose husband used to manage the J.C. Penney. “J.C. Penney helped us out by letting us put the booth in front of their store and by donating wrapping paper and boxes,” said Jill Anderson, CAPSA Executive Director. Nine years ago Noelle Call and Kris Neece took over the booth, running it together until Neece moved away two years later. Since then Call has organized the booth by herself, which has proven to be a daunting task.

Besides wrangling up all the wrapping supplies, Call was also responsible to advertise for the booth and find volunteers to man the station. Beginning two weeks before Thanksgiving and continuing throughout the season she arranged advertising on the radio, in the newspaper, in church bulletins and newsletters throughout the valley, on fliers and on the local cable channel. To recruit volunteers Call usually asked valley organizations, such as the police department or different church congregations “to adopt a day,” she says. Those organizations then found their own volunteers to fill the many time slots.

“We’re open every day [from] the day after Thanksgiving until the day before Christmas during regular mall hours, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.,” Anderson says. “You’d think we’d have trouble staffing it for thirty days, but we don’t have any trouble at all.” Some organizations are even willing to cover two or three days at the booth and some up to five.

“There’s that tremendous support for the booth,” says Call. Not only are people willing to give of their time to wrap gifts, but the patrons



are often generous, paying more than is asked or leaving supplies for workers to use, such as bags full of bows or a whole box of tape.

In the early days of the Gift Wrap Booth, Straw Ibis even helped CAPSA find a wrapping paper vendor that sells industrial size wrapping paper rolls, and Sally Keller, owner of Global Village, has often donated entire cases of tape.

However, when volunteers were not to be found, Call often filled in personally at the booth. “It really is a wonderful, Christmas-season type thing,” says Call. “As you wrap, it’s not unusual for people to share their stories with you—often people who’ve utilized CAPSA services. You hear [their stories] and you think, ‘I’m so glad I do this.’ It touches your heart.”

Working at the booth is a great experience, says Call, because “people laugh together and share stories” while they wrap. “We wrap for men, who when asked what paper they want, they say, ‘It doesn’t matter, she’s just going to return it anyways.’” She also remembers one man who had been married for 52 years who bought his wife “a slinky nightgown.”

“It’s fun,” Call says. They wrap at least one engagement ring a year, and they see a lot of children who are excited about the gifts they have bought for their mothers. “People get hooked on wrapping because they have these experiences,” says Call. In fact, many volunteers come back to help year after year, including one family who came in every Christmas Eve, “even on a Sunday.”

She also seems especially grateful to one USU professor who came five or six years in a row to help take the booth down on Christmas Eve. “It’s a big job. It’s hard work, and he helped haul out the reams of heavy paper and carried out cases and cases of boxes. He came at three and worked until six putting things away on Christmas Eve.”

Balancing the CAPSA booth with her family life and her career—she works full-time as a director at USU—has become trickier recently. “For a couple of years there my kids were older teenagers and didn’t care if I was there or not, so [the booth] filled a void. But then they got older and came back home, and we started doing things again like when they were little, but I couldn’t be there, because I was at the CAPSA booth. I felt very fragmented.”

So this year, Call is passing the baton to Linda Bradak and Susan Prebish, both CAPSA Board members. “I’m glad to see these other ladies take this on,” says Call. “It really is a big job, and I’m glad two of them are doing it.”

“We think it’s going to be a wonderful experience,” says Prebish. “[Noelle Call] did a marvelous job. Both Linda and I agree that we have some big boots to fill.”

Bradak echoes that sentiment, adding, “CAPSA is such a worthy organization. We want to get even more people involved and make a lot of money for CAPSA and wrap lots of pretty gifts and include more and more people in the notion of service.”

Prebish added, “If there is anyone out there with a special talent for wrapping, or someone who just wants to help, we can always use more volunteers.” Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer, or signing up a group to help with the booth can e-mail giftwrap@capsa.org.

For the past five years the Gift Wrap Booth has brought in \$7,000 to \$8,000, says Anderson, “which is huge for us. It’s [also] a good way to get CAPSA’s name out there”—while bringing the community together and spreading a little holiday cheer. U

CAPSA Staff Bios *u*



Chelsea Crawford
Evening Shelter Manager

Shortly after Chelsea completed the volunteer training, she applied for a job as our evening shelter manager. Chelsea graduated from Snow College in 2004 and lived in Mexico and Argentina a while before finally coming back to complete her degree in social work. During the volunteer training she said she felt "comfortable and at home here at CAPSA," and wanted to use her Spanish skills to help people. She loves getting to know all the women who come to shelter, and helping in any way she can. Spare time for Chelsea is basically non-existent, since she goes from school to an internship at Mountain Crest, then comes here to CAPSA for work in the evenings. But when she finds a little, she loves to run, paint, travel, and be with family and friends.



Dionne Stirland
Rape Crisis Program Coordinator

Dionne received a bachelor's degree in Social Work from USU in 2003 and has been working in hospice in both Utah and Idaho since then. She is now back at CAPSA, after working as a "weekend house parent" (shelter manager) in the mid-1980s when the shelter was just a small home with a basement apartment. She loves CAPSA because she finds it personally fulfilling to work for organizations that provide help to many different people. She grew up in North Logan and has four children and two step-children; her oldest is about to give birth to Dionne's first grandchild in November (it's a boy, and she is excited!). When she is not working she loves to read, cook, snowmobile, go 4-wheeling, and travel.



Amy Nielson
Rape Prevention Educator

Amy received a B.A. in international studies and is currently attending USU to get her Master's in health education. She wanted to work for CAPSA after volunteering with the Rape Prevention team. She loves working with teens, and has always been an advocate for education. Her favorite thing about CAPSA is the environment—she loves working at a place where a weekly "self-care" circle exists and people are so helpful. She also loves her role as an educator who can prevent abuse. She is always active rock climbing, long distance running, or mountain biking, and also is a guitarist, vocalist, violinist, mandolinist, pianist, and accordionist in a folk and bluegrass band with her brother started called DAH. She has traveled around the world, loves Australia, and was married in May to her husband Jeffrey.

Somebody's Attic *u* Raising Funds for Those In Need



Somebody's Attic is a small thrift store in Cache Valley that takes gently used items from generous donors in the community and resells them to the public. We are fortunate to operate in a community that gives abundantly of their time and goods, with people who understand that we have limited space and therefore can only accept items that will sell.

Items that are not accepted include chemicals, carpet remnants, tires or damaged or broken merchandise. By donating clean items in working condition during our business hours Monday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., your generosity can help Somebody's Attic continue to give back to charitable organizations in Cache Valley.

The sale of donations from the community allows us to make cash donations of up to \$70,000 per year to abuse prevention agencies such as CAPSA and the Child and Family Support Center. We would like to remind the community to only donate clean merchandise in working condition because it takes time and costs money to dispose of dirty or broken items. We appreciate and value the donations we receive. Thank you, thank you, thank you for supporting us for over 20 years!

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435-753-2500

The Rape Prevention Education Primaries

by Tracy Hernandez

In this hotly contested presidential election year, the word “primary” no doubt evokes a lot of emotion. At CAPSA, the word “primary” brings excitement and anticipation because this year we are changing our Rape Prevention Education strategy from secondary prevention to primary prevention. A “primary prevention” strategy seems so obvious when you stop and think about it—it is good to help victims and spread awareness about sexual violence as a problem in our society, but why not stop the crime from taking place at all?

Since 1997, CAPSA has worked with youth in Cache Valley in grades 6-12 (and occasional college audiences) talking about rape, rape myths that exist, and what students can do to protect themselves from being victimized (or if it does happen, where they can go for help). Over the years CAPSA teams have reached over 40,000 students through thousands of presentations and workshops.

The program is fantastic, and we are extremely proud to have been the first domestic violence and rape advocacy organization in the state to offer it to the youth in our community, and know that so far we have done our job to spread awareness about the problem. But the problem with our current awareness strategy is that it addresses sexual violence as something that the victim should try to avoid—rather than something that the perpetrator should never do in the first place.

When the grant cycle renews for 2008-2009 the focus of the team will change from spreading awareness about the problem to a primary prevention model where we talk to kids sooner so we prevent rape from happening in the first place. But the methods we are pursuing may seem a little unconventional for a “Rape Prevention” team.

In fact, the team will very likely not ever talk about rape, sex, date rape drugs, or other common things that come to mind for the topic. Instead, we will be using a proven method to build Developmental Assets in youth by combining educational discussion groups among teens, peer to peer education opportunities, and promoting youth leadership in creating social change.

The Developmental Assets model was created by the Search Institute, an organization based in Minneapolis, whose mission for the past 50 years has been to ‘provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities’. The Search Institute’s research on child and adolescent development, family life, and community and social change has shown that the presence of assets in youth have tremendous power to protect them from many different harmful or unhealthy choices. The charts below illustrate that youth with the most assets are far less likely to engage in harmful behaviors, and far more likely to engage in positive behaviors.

But what are Developmental Assets? According to The Search Institute, they are “common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.” The Search

EXTERNAL ASSETS

- a. Support
- b. Empowerment
- c. Boundaries & Expectations
- d. Constructive Use of Time

INTERNAL ASSETS

- e. Commitment to Learning
- f. Positive Values
- g. Social Competencies
- h. Positive Identity

Institute has identified 40 assets in eight categories that have been shown through research to increase positive behaviors and decrease the risk of youth engaging in negative or harmful behaviors. The eight categories are:

For a comprehensive list of the Developmental Assets in each category and more information about the model itself, visit the Search Institute’s website at www.search-institute.org.

At CAPSA, we have three goals for the Rape Prevention Education program this year. First, we will be targeting males ages 11-17 and focusing on building positive values, positive identities, and social competencies like personal responsibility. To do this, we are looking at existing campaigns from around the country and around the world that have worked to open discussion and dialogue with young men about their responsibilities as men in our society. We hope to use a similar model and curriculum as the Men Can Stop Rape program (www.mencanstoprape.org), with discussion groups among young males, peer to peer education, and creating Men of Strength Clubs (MOST Clubs) as after school activities. We will also be working with males in small groups like the Boys and Girls Club, youth church organizations, and youth sports teams.

At the same time we will be targeting female youth with a similar message, but focusing on some of the different developmental assets like building positive identity and self-esteem. Since there are currently no programs that address sexual violence for female youth in the same way the above-mentioned programs have targeted boys, we want to adapt the curriculum from some of the male-specific programs to address the issues that young girls face growing up. We are building a ‘Women of Strength’ campaign, and hope to use it as a pilot program that can eventually be adopted nationwide.

Last year CAPSA started its first-ever Youth Council, and participants helped CAPSA spread awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault, and also helped with fundraising for our organization. This year we want to expand the Council so the students can gain additional leadership experience by engaging in peer-to-peer education. The students will be an integral part of bringing these messages to the youth in our community.

Primary prevention methods are proven to work, and this program will help reduce sexual violence in our community. But in order for it to be a success, it must be long-term and it must be constant. Our hope is that eventually through our efforts we will be able to partner with other youth-serving organizations throughout Cache Valley and throughout the state to expand this program. We want to reach youth at many levels in many different ways in order to reduce both sexual violence and other harmful behaviors to give children in our communities the best chance for success. **U**

Developmental Assests and Risk Behavior, by Asset Level

Behavior Pattern	Definition	Percent Reporting Behavior Patterns			
		0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Alcohol	Has used alcohol three or more times in the last thirty days or been drunk once or more in the past two weeks	45	26	11	3
Tobacco	Smokes one or more cigarettes every day or uses chewing tobacco frequently.	22	9	3	0
Illicit Drugs	Used illicit drugs three or more times in the last 12 months.	38	18	6	1
Sexual Intercourse	Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime.	34	23	11	3
Depression/Suicide	Is frequently depressed or has attempted suicide.	44	29	15	5
Anti-Social Behavior	Has been involved in three or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with the police, or vandalism in the last 12 months.	47	22	7	1
Violence	Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the last 12 months	62	38	18	6
School Problems	Has skipped school two or more days in the last four weeks or has below a C averag	44	23	10	4
Driving and Alcohol	Has driven after drinking or ridden with a drinking driver three or more times in the last 12 months.	33	19	8	2
Gambling	Has gambled three or more times in the last 12 months.	27	18	10	3

Source: The Search Institute website (www.search-institute.org)

Developmental Assests and Thriving Indicators, by Asset Level

Behavior Pattern	Thriving Indicator	Percent Reporting Behavior Patterns			
		0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
School success	Gets mostly A's on report card.	9	19	34	54
Helps others	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week.	62	79	89	96
Values diversity	Places high value on getting to know people of other racial and ethnic groups	39	60	76	89
Maintains good health	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise.	27	48	69	88
Exhibits leadership	Has been a leader of a group or organization in the last 12 months.	48	66	78	87
Resists danger	Avoids doing things that are dangerous.	9	19	31	44
Delays of gratification	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away.	27	41	56	72
Overcomes adversity	Does not give up when things get difficult	56	67	78	86

Source: The Search Institute website (www.search-institute.org)

LOOKING to make a difference in the community?



CAPSA is currently in need of volunteers to help out in various areas which could include:

- Front Office
- Mobile Crisis Team
- Children's Groups
- Booths and Fundraisers
- Donations

All volunteers must attend a 40-hour training which is held in January, May, and September, and be able to pass a background check

If interested or for more information, please contact Ruth at: **753-2500**

Support Groups, continued

there is no structure to the group. Each week in the 15-week group there are specific topics that are addressed, including Definitions of Abuse, The Effects of Abuse on Children, Setting Boundaries, Assertiveness, Grief & Loss, Self Care, Self-Esteem, Values, and Healthy Relationships. But even with scheduled topics of discussion, each group can vary significantly in terms of what is talked about and what is learned based on the participants' input.

On Tuesday the women talked about the definitions of abuse, the different types of abuse, such as physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal; the women also brought up financial abuse and using the children as things they were experiencing.

"In the discussion of abuse, the controlling part is what stood out the most to me," said Christina. "He always had to have the power, to be in control. That really hit home and is what really started to open my eyes," she continued.

"And listening to what the other women were saying and what they were going through I just kept thinking, 'that is me, that is so me'. I was letting him get away with so much, and I was just a puppet."

Christina originally came to the group after a friend told her that she needed to get out of a verbally and emotionally abusive marriage that had lasted 49 years.

"I just knew that I had to have help, because I was not strong enough to do it on my own," she said. "I didn't know what to do, I just needed someone to take my hand and show me where to go."

She decided to go through the group a second time for a little more support and strength.

"I feel like I gained so much strength [from the first group]. I laugh, I'm happy, even though there are terrible, sad days, and it's hard to go through this. They have given me a new life. So I can't fall back in my other ways, I have to be strong, I have to keep fighting. It helped me realize that, yes, there is life after this," she said.

An Artistic Outlet

In 2002 CAPSA worked with the USU Music Therapy program as part of a research project to determine the usefulness of a program like music therapy in the healing process for victims of violence.

That program enjoyed so much success that the women from the original support and research group decided to record the outcome of their therapy sessions on a CD, and began performing as a group called *Finding Voice* (for more details about *Finding Voice*, including the chance to purchase *Finding Voice* CDs, contact CAPSA; all proceeds benefit CAPSA). They performed several shows throughout the state of Utah to help raise awareness about domestic violence, and used their own stories put to music to educate audiences.

Due to the success of the original project, Maureen Hearn, Director of the USU Music Therapy Program, has offered to work with the women in CAPSA's current support groups.

"Research shows that the way we integrate new knowledge into the brain is much more effective if we can use more than one learning style," said Hearn. "We're looking at things through sensory experiences, whether through sound or art, and increasing the ability of these women to internalize what they learn."

Even though the research grant was a one-time deal, Hearn saw what a difference the music therapy made for the participants of the original group. She is now donating her time to the group so she can help in the healing process. She also has a music therapy student work with her in the group as a clinical placement.

"I really do think that if shelters and agencies that provide this resource would consider using music therapy to help educate, reframe, and move through trauma in life it would be very effective overall," said Hearn. "We are musical as human beings, we learn through music."

Christina was particularly excited about the music therapy portion of the group.

"They played soft music and had you close your eyes, and then you have to draw what you are thinking about," she said.

"It was very interesting to me because it brought out anger at the beginning, then softness at the end. It just really helped me to think, okay, I know now that I have quite a bit of anger in me that I have to work on, because I know where I am going."

"It is incredible to see the connection the women make to each other and the leaders of the music therapy sessions," said Monson. "The com-

bination of the educational component, the music and art, and the base of support help the women make the connection between the intellectual and emotional—between their head and their heart. It is so powerful."

Groups for Special Circumstances

A CAPSA caseworker also goes once a week to the Cache County Jail to facilitate a support group for incarcerated women.

"The majority of women incarcerated in the Cache County Jail are there because of alcohol and substance abuse," said Jill Anderson, CAPSA Executive Director. "And a large number of those women abuse drugs and alcohol because they have experienced some form of abuse in their lives."

The jail groups present some interesting challenges, but also provide a lot of much-needed information and comfort to the women who participate.

Since most of the women in the jail are not there for extensive sentences, the groups usually do not last a full 15 weeks. The topics are condensed, and the caseworker will cycle through the topics every couple of months as the group welcomes new participants.

Day by Day

When the group met last Tuesday one of the participants mentioned that she had a particularly difficult week trying to deal with shared custody arrangements, and the thing that kept her going was knowing that she could come to CAPSA and talk about it with people who would understand and who she could rely on for support. "I live for Tuesdays," she said.

Then Hearn asked the group to create written affirmations that describe what helps them get through difficult situations. The result was put to music in a beautiful song, which they titled "Day by Day", and is shared below with permission from the women of the group. **U**

Day by Day

I can do hard things

Day by Day

I will face my fear and rise above it

Day by Day

I will stand and I will speak

Day by Day

I am strong

Day by Day

I know it's going to get better

Day by Day

I am brave

Day by Day

I will "faith" it

Day by Day

I can do this

Day by Day

I am a happy and loving mother

Day by Day

I will feel joy again

Day by Day

We can help each other

Day by Day

I will teach people how to treat me

Day by Day

There is a way

Day by Day

Don't Have the Time or Money to Donate to CAPSA?

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© Written by the "Tuesday Group"
Women of CAPSA, September 9, 2008

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