

Thursday, February 5, 2015

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Healing Broken Hearts for Valentine's Day

WHW Client, Elina, believes that Valentine's Day should be a special day, especially for women like her; women who have gone through abusive relationships and who don't know what it's like to feel special. After a four-year abusive marriage and the birth of her son, Elina's husband walked out leaving her and the one-year old homeless and without resources and landing her in a dirty state-sponsored motel room.

"I could never believe that such a thing would happen to me," recalled Elina. "It crept up very subtly. Emotional and mental abuse was the worst. I lost all confidence and my self-esteem took a great dive. I felt inferior despite all of all my accomplishments prior to my marriage. Continuous screaming and accusations made me feel worthless." As a full-time mother to a new born with a number of health issues, Elina's plans to rejoin the workforce were put on hold and financial abuse in the form of withholding all resources from her kept her dependent on her abuser's mercy. "Like quick sand, being abused was becoming a norm with no way out."

Elina said that there were three factors that kept her going: her faith, her son and the support of people who helped her find herself again. When Elina was referred to WHW (Women Helping Women/Men2Work) by partner agency, Human Options, she had one regret...that she had not gone sooner. "I was so uplifted and encouraged by the warmth, empathy and compassion of WHW," Elina shared. For over three months, Elina has been going to WHW every day to take advantage of all the different workshops and computer training, helping her to create a new resume, improve her interview skills, regain her confidence and develop a new professional image.

This is going to be Elina's first Valentine's Day since her husband left. "My husband hated this holiday and never did anything special for us. In fact, it was loneliest day of my life while in that abusive relationship," Elina shared.





On Friday, February 13th WHW will host the second annual "A Valentine's Day to Remember," a special event focused on rebuilding the confidence of women who are overcoming abuse. Each client will receive a new professional look including clothing, accessories, hair style and pamper items. While it is common for women to associate love with the physical and emotional pain they endure during abusive relationships, WHW hopes to give the holiday focused on love a new meaning to these women and to equip them with a newfound confidence to seek and secure employment.

Elina, who will be a volunteer personal shopper for these special clients who are her peers, believes that this annual event aligns perfectly with WHW's mission to restore and to help heal broken hearts. "It will be words put in action...it will demonstrate the true love and care for women in recovery."

About WHW. WHW is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to provide comprehensive employment support services to empower disadvantaged men, women and teens to achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment success and who has served over 50,000 clients since 1993. WHW's Employment Success Program includes resume and interviewing skills, workshops, computer classes, image consulting, professional clothing appropriate for interviews and transportation services. Supported by United Way, WHW's services are always at no charge or obligation to clients and 275 referring non-profit partners. For more information on WHW and its Employment Success Program, go to www.whw.org.

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