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November 2004

“Preferred Contact Name”

“Constituent First Name” “Constituent Last Name”

“Address 1”

“Address 2”

“City”, “State” “Zip”

Dear “Preferred Salutation”,

I am writing to you this day with my deepest appreciation for your support of The Women’s Center. The Center is so vital to our community. I will briefly share with you my story so that you may be able to realize that you are saving lives of women and their children and helping to break the cycle of domestic violence.

My abduction and attempted murder last January shocked our community. It brought awareness to the problem. Domestic violence lurks everywhere, in poor neighborhoods and in affluent neighborhoods. A perpetrator can be either uneducated or an educated person with a good job. A victim can be ANYONE.

When I met my ex-husband, he seemed charming. He had a good job and owned a nice home in a nice neighborhood. He was on the church board and proclaimed to be a Christian. I fell for it. On our honeymoon, he began insulting me and hitting me for not "following his orders". My "duty" as his wife was to "submit" to him. I stayed because I didn't want to FAIL at my marriage. I stayed because I thought I could change him by making him happy. I couldn't.

Two daughters and three years of verbal and physical abuse later, I left. It was the fourth time. But this time I never went back. I had been getting counseling at The Women’s Center for about six months and realized that the abuse was not going to stop. He was not going to change and I DID NOT DESERVE TO BE ABUSED. More critical, MY CHILDREN DID NOT DESERVE TO BE RAISED IN AN ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLD. The counselors at The Women’s Center gave me the focus and the strength I needed to save my girls and myself.

I left in November of 1999. I secured a restraining order against him. My children and I stayed at the shelter for about a month. It was hard being away from family and friends but I knew it was our only chance of survival. It was our lifeline.

After our stay at the shelter, we moved into an apartment. My soon to be ex did everything in his power to make things unbearable for me, from trying to get me fired from jobs to not paying child support when we so desperately needed it. But it didn't work. I pressed on.

I eventually met a good man and remarried. On January 31, 2004, exactly three years to the day of our divorce, my ex tried to kill me. He failed. I am here today to speak on behalf of all of my fallen sisters and those too frightened to speak for themselves. The care, counseling, education and SHELTER The Women's Center provides is SO VITAL. IT IS a LIFELINE. Please consider continuing your support for their mission. Together, we CAN change the world.

Best Regards,

Teri Jendusa-Nicolai

P.S. Please use the enclosed gift tags, donated by The Lauterbach Group, as The Women's Center's gift to you. As you use them this holiday season, remember how your donation to The Women's Center helps families find safety and support.