

FEBRUARY 2012

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The Sex Abuse Treatment Center's mission is to support the emotional healing process of those sexually assaulted in Hawai'i, to increase community awareness about their needs and to reduce the incidence of all forms of sexual assault.

FROM THE HEART

Comments from those served by the SATC staff

"My son and I appreciate the kindness and compassion expressed as well as the help provided...thank you." (mother of sexually abused child referring to crisis counseling)

"(THERAPIST'S NAME) acts as a positive and nurturing support base; offers me the opportunity for growth through self-awareness; teaches alternate methods of dealing with stress." (client referring to a SATC psychologist)

"The curriculum is well-planned & organized, something that's easily accessible and practical for our classroom. I'm excited about incorporating the lessons in our class." (teacher trained on SATC's sexual abuse prevention curriculum)

I Finally Knew That I Was Safe Young Survivor Shares Her Story

Krista-Lyn Stephenson, a courageous and poised 16 year old from Nanakuli High School, firmly held the crowd's attention the moment she took the microphone. The occasion was the Sex Abuse Treatment Center's Benefit Luncheon and Krista-Lyn came to share her story of surviving sexual abuse by her father. For six years she kept the abuse a secret. She explained to the luncheon crowd, "from 9 years old, growing up was difficult for me. I thought it would never end; he would never stop haunting my life." She went on to share that, "my father raped and molested me and took what was rightfully mine."

Krista-Lyn was manipulated into secrecy by her father and spoke of being trapped by fear and confusion, unable to tell anyone or ask for help. "So many things were going through my mind. I had questions about CPS and what would happen if I told a friend or my mom. Would I be a foster child? Would I ruin my family? Would my mom believe me? Would my father hurt me more? Would he hurt those whom I loved dearly?"

"...for the very first time, I could sleep in my bed without any troubles, any worries."

At age 15, when Krista-Lyn was physically abused by her father, her mother filed a TRO on him. With her father out of the house, Krista-Lyn explained that she knew it was time to

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(R to L: Krista-Lyn, SATC therapist Thuy Tran, Keline and Dayne Kabau (Krista-Lyn's mother and stepfather).)

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I Finally Knew That I Was Safe (continued)

tell her mother about the sexual abuse too. With great trepidation she finally told her mother the truth and begged her not to be angry or mad that she had kept it a secret so long. She was deeply relieved when her mother pulled her into her arms and said "I could never be mad at you, you're my baby. I love you." Krista-Lyn spoke of the many tears they shed together that night and explained that "for the very first time, I could sleep in my bed without any troubles, any worries ... and although I woke up with puffy eyes, and my hair messed up, I finally knew I was safe." Her mother called the police to report the abuse and later Krista-Lyn started treatment at the Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC).

Many in the luncheon crowd were visibly moved by Krista-Lyn's story. They applauded her loudly as she made her way back to her table. There she was met by the smiling faces of Keline and Dayne Kahau (her mother and step-father) and Thuy Tran, Krista-Lyn's therapist at SATC. Krista-Lyn attributes her strength and survival to God and to the support provided by her mother, other family members and her therapist.

New Video to Strengthen Prevention Efforts

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center recently unveiled its new video, *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Let's Talk About It*. The video was made possible through a grant from the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund. The 12 minute video features adult survivors of child sexual abuse from Hawai'i. They share their personal experiences and provide insights on how adults can protect children from abuse.

The video also includes interviews with clinical psychologist Sherrie Takushi-Isara from the Sex Abuse Treatment Center and Detective Jim Maurer from the Honolulu Police Department, Sex Crimes Detail. They provide key facts about child sexual abuse and perpetrators, and highlight the importance of parents and other caregivers monitoring the relationships their children have with the adults in their life. Also emphasized is the importance of being an approachable parent who listens to what their child has to say, and educating children about personal safety, starting at a young age and continuing through the teen years.

The video and other sexual abuse prevention resources can be viewed or downloaded free of charge on the SATC website, www.satchawaii.org. The video was produced by Shooters Production Company and is part of the One Strong Ohana Campaign, a statewide child abuse prevention effort.



To My Brothers Living in Silence

Andre Bisquera

Before coming to the Sex Abuse Treatment Center, I dabbled in therapy and self-medication in dealing with anger management, identity issues, and addiction. I was sexually abused from age 8–12 by an older half-brother who came from the Philippines to live with my family in Vancouver, WA. Mine was a typical Filipino family where we respected our elders, and communication was one-way and limited to being told what to do. I was left to share a room and be “supervised” by my half-brother. Subsequently, I was at his mercy without a voice to express what was happening to me. Like many victims of sexual abuse, I was scared, ashamed, and afraid no one would believe me. I didn’t have the proper environment or words to express the acts committed against me.

Fortunately, my nightmare ended when my half-brother left for the Navy and I was free to live a “normal” life. I tried being the good son, and earned straight As, ran track, and played piano. But underneath this façade, I was boiling with anger and full of shame of what happened to me. I couldn’t wait to go to college and start a new life. The freedom I experienced was cathartic. But this newfound freedom wasn’t the panacea that would heal me and make me whole again. I spent many years partying and trying to numb the pain of my sexual abuse. I had some great friends, a long-term girlfriend, a good job, but I still felt empty. My soul searching led to traveling around SE Asia, and a three year stint in Lake Tahoe snowboarding and rock climbing. It was in Tahoe that I was finally able to tell a friend about my abuse. The release of being able to share this deep, dark secret was incredible. But this was just one step in my long journey to recovery.

From Tahoe, I moved to the Bay Area. Here I was able to confront my identity issues. It was helpful to be in a much more diverse place than my home town and speak with a professional. I started practicing yoga and meditation to try and calm my deep-seated anger. I went to couples therapy to help with communication issues. But I always danced around the real source of my personal issues.

In 2009, I moved to Hawai’i and found the Sex Abuse Treatment Center. Through their help and the support of my loving and caring wife, I have been able to see the connection between the symptoms and the root cause of my issues. I have been able to tell my family and close

friends about the abuse, and most importantly, have forgiven myself. The hate and anger that I carried has been replaced with hope and happiness. The biggest thing I have learned is that my recovery is a process. Each time I confront an issue and take the next step, there is always something else to be tackled. Now it’s time to pay it forward and help other survivors take their first steps to recovery.

To my brothers living in silence... I understand your suffering. You are not alone.

Andre Bisquera was recently invited to join The Sex Abuse Treatment Center Advisory Board. He intends to offer his survivor viewpoint to further the Center’s goals and to help other survivors of child sexual abuse. He also has started a survivor blog: <http://survivor2thriver.wordpress.com/>



“Now it’s time to pay it forward and help other survivors take their first steps to recovery.”

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15th Annual Wahine Surfing Classic



Above: Sporting the theme of the Wahine Surfing Classic "Riding the Wave of Respect" from R to L: HPD Sex Crimes Detail Detectives: Darrien Thornley, Dwight Sato, Randall Platt, Kim McCumsey and Mark Matsusaka, SATC staffers Kingston Dias and Malia Nickison-Beazley and Detective Jim Maurer.

Left: Roy "China" Uemura is shown with two commemorative plaques from SATC and the Hawai'i State Senate presented to him at the 2011 Wahine Surfing Classic in Waikiki. For 15 years China has promoted female surfing in Hawai'i and has used his annual event to create awareness about sexual abuse prevention.

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