Empowered Every Step of the Way!

“The Lakes Crisis Center never gave up on me,” emphasized a successful Minnesota professional. We’ll call her “Tina” for privacy purposes.

Tina was in and out of counseling for a number of years with a LCRC advocate prior to the construction of the shelter called “Mary’s Place.” If the shelter had existed then, she and her children would have found a safe, comfortable, temporary home until their personal storm had subsided. Instead, she found refuge through the guidance of Leona, a long time staff member at the center. Tina tells what a difference the crisis center and her personal heroine made in her life.

Fostering safety, hope, and healing through advocacy, intervention and education.

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For the first few years there were numerous calls to police that were made by my neighbors, never by me – and each and every time I would have someone from LCRC follow-up to see if they could offer me assistance but I always declined. Another incident occurred and the police brought me to the hospital and the LCRC where I met Leona. She helped me fill out an Order for Protection and she attended the hearing with me. She was very supportive and asked me what I wanted -- which was something nobody had ever asked me before! Leona also kept up with the criminal proceedings and let me know what was going on each and every time the abuser had a hearing. I eventually allowed myself to believe he had changed and he would never be violent again. I was wrong. Even when I told Leona that I thought he had changed and everything would be different she did not agree or disagree. She was supportive and strongly suggested a safety plan for the "what if" and made me feel like I mattered. She emphasized that I could call, come in, whatever was needed anytime I wanted to – the door was always open.

The last year of the violent relationship, I again was brought to the hospital and then to LCRC. I was embarrassed but when I saw Leona it stuck me, I could rely on her to never judge me. She just listened and offered support. Again she assisted me with an Order for Protection. The biggest challenge I had was the need to attend court and the possibility of testifying. I was very scared but Leona was there and made sure there was a safe place to wait in the courthouse until the hearing. She sat by my side through all of it. Leona was my one constant through everything. I also used Positive Connections for court ordered supervised visitations and my children received assistance and counseling.

I wish so much that Mary’s Place would have been around then but with the work that Leona did I was able to survive and thrive. I did not feel very comfortable going to support group but the one-on-one support Leona provided, gave me the necessary empowerment to keep going and do what I needed to do. In my mind, Leona is one of my heroines because she helped me when I was down to raise me back up, giving me the tools I needed, empowering me every step of the way and never giving up!

During her leaving abusive husband, Tina says she rented what she calls a “rat hole” in order to save her money to buy a house. She sold her only asset, a car, and she walked to two jobs so she could support her young children. Today, that is only a memory – a source of credibility as she guides other women to safety. Tina is now the director of a shelter elsewhere in Minnesota. She is using her troubled past along with social work skills, to help her clients create a life without violence, poverty, and self-doubt.

She is re-married, this time to a fellow who loves and cares about her and her children. She is also taking college classes on-line, staying up late at night to schedule her studies around her full time job and family responsibilities.

Tina is an example that a better life is possible with guts, determination, and support from family, friends, and the Lakes Crisis and Resource Center!