

How a Sexual Assault Changed My Life Forever

by an anonymous HCWC client



A fellow graduate student raped me during my first year in the program. I'd gone out that night with a girlfriend to have a "girls night." Soon Julia was inviting friends, female and male, to join us and we bar hopped. I knew everyone who joined our group, and I was comfortable with everyone. Ryan (not his real name) was the last to join us.

"I knew him a little. He always seemed kind and creative and respectful."

Eventually, Julia's fiancé picked her up, and she didn't tell me she was leaving. The others left as well with no word. I went home with Ryan because he said he would make me waffles before he dropped me off. He did make me waffles, and we played with his dog, and then he picked me up and carried me to his bed.

We fooled around a little, but when he reached for a condom, I sat bolt upright. I said, "No, I can't." I spent the next ten or so minutes with a sheet pulled up over my body.

"I felt naked, even though I wasn't."

He was quiet, and his jaw was clenched as I spoke. I was frightened. I said, "I'm sorry", "I can't" and "This is a really bad idea." What I wanted him to say was, "You're right. Let me take you home." Instead, after a few moments of silence, he pushed me back down, pulled off my dress, and raped me. I gasped and started to speak and he said, "What? You're going to say something now?"

At that point, my memory becomes shattered. I remember the color of the pillowcases. I remember wondering where the dog was. I remember wondering if the neighbors could hear us, because I could hear them through the wall. I remember feeling as though my legs were going to break. I remember feeling like if I didn't move, it would be over faster, and if I just let it happen, he wouldn't hurt me. He laughed at

me when he was done because I kept saying I couldn't find my pants, but I'd worn a dress.

I told a few people afterwards, and I slipped in the word "rape," but that was always met with a response like, "Are you sure that's what happened?" or "That doesn't seem like Ryan."

"Over a year later, I sugar-coated the story to a friend, who said, 'That's not a situation. That's called rape.'"

It didn't sink in until the two-year anniversary. I was a wreck. I'd been paying a lot of money for counseling, and then went to HCWC to see a counselor. I wasn't able to ignore the fear, anxiety and disdain that I had for my own body. I was entering my thesis year of a graduate creative writing program, and I couldn't get words down on a page.

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I met with the detective in HCWC's office who would see my case through. I was able to ask questions off-the-record and explain what had happened in as little detail as I wanted before making the decision to go in and report, which I did the following week. I think it's important to understand that before I reported, though I felt like an emotional mess, I was maintaining a happy face, a healthy weight, and continuing to work on my graduate degree at a good pace. Within two months of reporting, I lost 25 pounds. I went to see a doctor who prescribed a variety of anti-anxiety and sleep medication. I became an even heavier smoker. I had a deep desire to change my appearance with the uncontrollable change of my body and my mental well being, so I got numerous large and small tattoos.

“I cut off my chest length hair in stages until my head was mostly shaved.”

The case came to an abrupt end about a year later when the DA's office called me in to tell me that even though my perp had failed his polygraph, failed to cooperate, had been arrested and had his bail raised because he didn't cooperate then either, even though there was enough evidence to convince them that I had been raped, they didn't have enough to take it to court and have it pass.

Now, nearly three years after my rape, I'm continuing to heal.

I feel angry that our legal system can't do more than it currently does, but that anger has spurred some great things. I've begun speaking publicly to groups about rape and victim response in order to raise awareness of what happens in rape cases. My hair grew back and I gained back the weight I lost. I take care of myself better than I ever have, and while it's a year later than I had planned, I

am set up to finish my thesis and graduate in May of 2014.

“ I wish I could go on with my life like it had never happened, but it did.”

I am grateful that despite all of it, I do have a voice now, and that I am able to speak out and advocate for changes and for better awareness of resources for victims. 🌸



Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Imagine, if you will, memories as a mass of post-it notes randomly pinned on the bulletin board of your brain in a chaotic fashion. There is no order, no emphasis or no time-line. This describes the brain after a trauma. Here are some common functions of the brain that may be affected:

Language and timelines may be compromised making it difficult to describe the incident.

A fight/flight/freeze response may be activated. The response may appear illogical.

Flashbacks may be triggered by smells, tastes or other cues.

Fear feedback loops may make it impossible to determine that danger is not present.

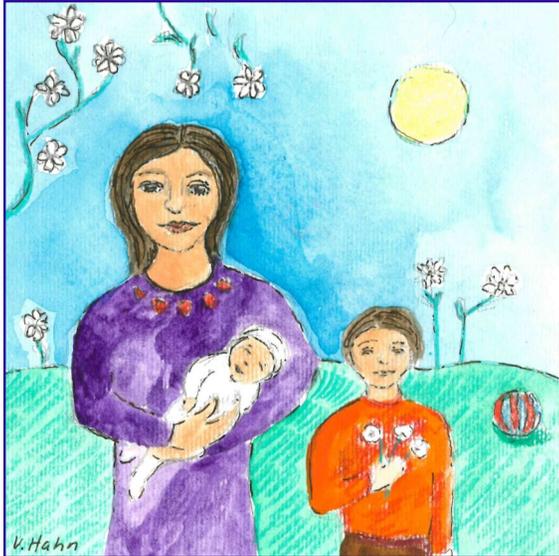
Disconnect from bodily cues may cause loss of ability to accurately sense danger.

Brian Erskine, Chief Assistant Criminal District Attorney, Hays County, stated that “Specifically, working with victims of trauma requires more than just a listening ear; it requires an understanding of the critical interplay between memory and traumatic stress responses. Appreciating how these issues often present in a counter-intuitive manner has played a significant part in my work.”

HCWC practices trauma-informed care. Our services are based on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate.

**Honor your mother in a meaningful way
this Mother's Day.**

Donate \$25 or more to HCWC, and we'll send a personalized card to your mother featuring original art donated by San Marcos artist Veronique Hahn. We will note that you have sent a generous donation in your mother's name to help victims of abuse.



Send this form and a check in the enclosed envelope **before May 6** to ensure delivery of your card by Mother's Day.

_____ Your name & phone #
(in case we have questions)

_____ Mother's full name

_____ Mother's address

_____ City, State & Zip



Serving Victims of Abuse

(512) 396-3404 office

info@hcwc.org

www.hcwc.org



Philosophy

Physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse of one human being by another is unacceptable.

The Hays-Caldwell Women's Center believes that all abuse diminishes or prohibits the full expression of life and growth that is every person's right.

Mission

The purpose of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center is to create an environment where violence and abuse are not tolerated in the communities we serve. The Center will provide education, violence prevention services, and crisis intervention to victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse. We will seek the support and resources necessary to achieve this mission.

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The 2014 Auction Committee members have some big ideas for the 30th Annual Auction (back row, left to right) Michelle Ducote, Marsha Moore, Carolyn Linér (front row) Marla Johnson, Ann Everett and Brooke Bernhagen. For more information, see page 4 and back of the newsletter.



Marla R. Johnson,
Executive Director

30th Annual Auction

SATURDAY, MAY 3RD AT 6:00 P.M.

LBJ STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM, TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

TICKETS \$30



Young and old and anywhere in-between, everyone enjoys HCWC's Annual Auction. Join the fun including a live auction, silent auctions, raffles, card cuts, BBQ dinner, cash bar and more!



Buy tickets online at www.hcwc.org

Become a sponsor! Donate an item! See back page for details. Last year 350 guests raised \$72,000!



This is HCWC's biggest fundraiser of the year!



Enjoy yourself at this annual party and know that you are helping victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

For more information, contact Brooke Bernhagen at (512) 396-3404 x248 or at bbernhagen@hcwc.org.



DONOR FOCUS: PLANNED GIVING

Honoring the memory of longtime HCWC supporter Marian Pharr Posey

Last spring, HCWC was honored to receive a very generous bequest from the estate of Marian Pharr Posey.

“I remember Marian attending our Annual Auctions over a decade ago,” remembers HCWC Executive Director Marla Johnson. “She was a competitive bidder—exactly the kind of person you want supporting your cause at an auction,” she added.

Marian Pharr Posey passed away on June 5, 2011. Unbeknownst to HCWC, she had placed a provision in her will that a bequest be made to serve victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

“One day I got a phone call from the executor of her estate, saying she had remembered us with a planned gift” said Johnson. “It had been a few years since her last auction, but she had clearly

worked behind the scenes to continue her legacy as a donor.”

Marian Pharr Posey was a longtime physical education teacher and athletics coach at the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin before moving to San Marcos, where she began supporting HCWC.

Making a planned gift is easier than many suppose. Like Marian Pharr Posey, you could choose to list HCWC a beneficiary in your

estate plan.

One advantage is maybe reducing your eventual estate taxes, since gifts to a qualified organization, either now or at death, may avoid the federal estate tax. Speak to your financial planner to learn more about potential deductions and tax advantages.

Don't forget to let HCWC know you've chosen to give to us. We'd like to say thank you for your generosity! 

HCWC's lobby artistically recognizes donors from our recent capital campaign.



How You Can Help!



Before bringing donations to HCWC, please call Victoria, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at (512) 396-3404. Because of our limited storage, she will let you know if we still need the item(s) and where to drop them off.

Donate Gift Cards from HEB, Target and Walmart to help clients shop for essentials like gasoline to drive to work, food, medicine, clothes and school supplies.

Donate money in a variety of ways. Give securely online at www.hcwc.org. Send a check in the enclosed remittance envelope. Donate via your workplace giving program. See if your company matches donations.

Donate Bus Passes.

Have a 3rd-Party Fundraiser at your Place of Business. Call Melissa at (512) 396-3404 for details. We'll promote it with our supporters.

Donate Items from our Wish List.

- Small Furniture, Twin or Full Beds, Dishes, Pots & Pans
in good condition for setting up new households
- New Women's Panties & Bras
- Boys clothes sizes 10 and up
- Boys Boxer Briefs
- Children's Shoes
- Towels & Washcloths
- Razors, Q-Tips & Floss
- Band-Aids & First Aid Items
- Hair Conditioner
- Fleece Twin-Sized Blankets
- Bath Mats & Laundry Baskets
- Back Packs
- School Supplies
- Canned Goods



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Katriana Munguia **SHE HAS A PASSION FOR HELPING AND LEARNING**

Katriana has been a volunteer since September 2012, logging more than 1,000 hours! She has been a regular on HELpline and HEARTeam and received HCWC's 2013 Changemaker Award for her dedication to helping victims. Katriana shared with us the challenges of juggling school and volunteering.

Tell me about yourself.

I was in the Army for six years and did two tours to Iraq. I've been married for five years and recently had a baby boy. I graduated from Huston-Tillotson University in December with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and a minor in Criminal Justice, and I recently started on my Master of Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Tell me your volunteer role at HCWC.

I took Advocate Training to become a volunteer and ended up working on the telephone crisis line and on the HEARTeam. Usually I would take one overnight shift a week. I would receive phone calls from people who were in a crisis or just needed to talk. The HEARTeam was a little more emotional work. I would volunteer one weekend day for a 24-hour on-call shift. I would get calls that involved rape victims and would drive to the hospital to give them emotional support if they wanted it. I provided each victim with a packet on what services HCWC could provide and would sometimes stay with the victim during the exam with the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. I really liked to help and be supportive for the victim.

Why did you want to volunteer for HCWC?

I would like a career in social work or counseling. I know this would be a great stepping stone to my career goals. Though I would have volunteered anyway, it was a bonus that the volunteer hours counted towards my degree.

How did you fit volunteering in to your busy schedule?

It was hard because I was a full-time student and I had to juggle school, family and volunteering. I also had to make sure that I knew that I can't help everyone. Support from my friends and family is important in keeping my life balanced.

What should a new volunteer expect to find at HCWC?

HCWC has lots of resources that can help women and men who are abused. Before volunteering with them, I did not realize how much help was out there. I am glad HCWC has shelter and counseling for victims of abuse. 

2014 Summer Advocate Training Begins in June

**This 40-hour course, certified by the Texas
Office of the Attorney General, prepares
volunteers to respond to those in crisis.**

**For more information, please contact
Kate Shaw at 396-3404 or kshaw@hcwc.org.**



HCWC PRESENTS THE SPRING 2014 ADVOCATE TRAINING GRADUATES

Back row (left to right): Melissa Harris, Irene Acosta, Lorena Llamas, William Charest, Jennifer Fernandez, Kathleen Fox, Maria Lee, Dallas Lee, Jr., Ogechi Okafor
Front row (left to right): Natalie Duecker, Maria Ponce, Blair Knezek, Caroline Miller, LaCrystal Cruse, Emily Chandler, Neesha Jayasuriya, Briana Nicholson

(Not pictured: Sherrian McClung & Ix Chel Morrison)



State-Wide Wear Blue Day is on April 4 to support Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month!

Wear blue on **Friday, April 4** at your school or office to promote awareness of child abuse and support child abuse survivors. Churches can participate by having a Blue Sunday on April 27. Blue Sunday was established to encourage the church to take one Sunday in April to pray for children who have been victims of abuse and neglect, and to pray and honor local social service workers who rescue children and strengthen and restore families. Send us a photo of the participating congregation, and we'll share on Facebook. Visit www.hcwc.org for more information about Wear Blue Day and other Child Abuse Awareness activities.



Dripping Springs Students Held a Mock Trial

Student "attorney" Alex Thompson questions student "witness" Jacob Thomas during the 2nd Annual Mock Trial. Over 75 students from Dripping Springs High School convened at the Hays County Government Center for a mock trial centered on a dating violence incident. This effort was spearheaded by the Law Offices of Sarah K. Brandon, P.C., with the help of the Hays County District Attorney's Office, area District Judges, Hays-Caldwell Women's Center (HCWC), the Hays County Bar Association and Dripping Springs ISD. The goal was to educate students about the dangers and legal ramifications of dating violence and to provide an insight into the workings of the American judicial system.

HCWC Happenings

Sponsor a Denim Day on April 23 to support Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month!

Why not plan a Denim Day on **Wednesday, April 23** at your school or office to promote awareness of sexual assault and to support sexual assault survivors? You can even make it a fundraiser for HCWC by asking participants to donate \$5 to HCWC to wear jeans. Visit our Denim Day page at www.hcwc.org



for more event planning information. Share photos with us, and we'll put them on our Facebook page.

What is Denim Day? Wearing jeans on Denim Day has become an international symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes about sexual assault. In 1998, a teenage girl in Italy was raped by her driving instructor. The man was convicted, but his case went to the Supreme Court of Appeals in Rome. The court overturned the conviction, arguing that because the girl wore very tight jeans she must have had to help remove them, thereby giving consent to have sex. The case made international headlines, and the young woman's jeans became a symbol of awareness that what someone wears is never an excuse for rape. Visit www.hcwc.org for more information about Denim Day and other Sexual Assault Awareness activities.



HCWC Board and Staff Met for Strategic Planning

HCWC Board Treasurer Marsha Moore (facing), Boardmember Curtis Clay and HCWC Counselor Bethany Kulp discuss issues for the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. The process began with a Listening Project where board and staff interviewed former clients, offenders and the general public to gather information about what is most needed in the communities we serve and best business practices. One important goal is to reach out to all communities to engage in prevention efforts, provide support services and share self-compassion ideas to foster healing.



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San Marcos, TX 78667-0234

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*There's still time to become a sponsor!
Over 300 guests will see your company name.
Look inside for more information about our 30th Annual Auction.*

All auction sponsorships are publicly acknowledged in the auction program. Additional privileges include:

PLATINUM (\$2,500) receives listing on a large display banner at the event, 16 admission tickets, reservation for two tables and priority placement (RSVP).

GOLD (\$1,500) receives 16 tickets and reservations for two tables (RSVP).

SILVER (\$1,000) receives 8 tickets, reservation for one table (RSVP).

BRONZE (\$500) receives 4 tickets, reservation for ½ table (RSVP).

COPPER (\$300) receives 4 tickets.

BRASS (\$150) receives 2 tickets.



30TH ANNUAL AUCTION

Saturday, May 3, 2014, 6 PM

Bid on Trips, Jewelry, Collectibles, Artwork, Gift Certificates & More!

All proceeds from the auction are used to provide services to local victims of family violence, sexual assault and child abuse in Hays and Caldwell counties.

\$30 Admission Includes
Live/Silent Auction &
BBQ Dinner

For Tickets or to Contribute
Call 512.396.3404 or
Visit www.hcwc.org

Buy tickets online at www.hcwc.org. There's still time to donate auction items.
Call Brooke at (512) 396-3404.