

" No Longer a Puppet on a String"

In her cramped, two-door Chevette, a woman and her five young children are sound asleep in a deserted parking lot. Any minute, her six-day old baby will need his mother's nourishment. The evening before she had carefully laid the children's clothes in the trunk of her car in preparation for the next morning. As the sun begins to rise, she dresses the children and drives them to daycare and school. Then she arrives at work and portrays an image of everything being okay, but she is dying inside.



Yolanda a 34-year-old full-time administrative assistant has survived another night of abuse. Yolanda has endured 10 years of physical, sexual, and mental abuse by her husband. Yolanda shares her experience, "The first time my husband hit me, it knocked me completely out and I was terrified. I thought there was something wrong with me. Sometimes I would be in terrible pain from a black eye, a busted lip, kicked and forced to do things sexually that I didn't want to do. The worst experience is when my husband knocked my tooth out. I let my husband take complete control of me and I was rearranging my entire life for him. I became intimidated, I felt worthless, and lost all my self-esteem. Finally, everyday I would pray for God to let me die or remove me from this situation. I felt like I was a walking "dead woman".

"That's when I learned about Bay Area Legal Services. I thank God everyday for Bay Area Legal Services. My attorney helped me acquire an injunction for protection and later a divorce. He also assisted me in finding housing for my family. Bay Area helped me to have a voice. **I am no longer a puppet on a string.** I want to encourage others who are being abused that there is hope and that there is a better life. I thank God for answering my prayer and giving me hope. It is not an easy road, but I have regained my self-esteem and the children are no longer exposed to abuse. Although it's an everyday work of prayer to reconstruct my children's minds from the years of being witnesses of abuse, they are coming along fine thanks to Bay Area Legal Services."

"Bay Area Legal Services Saved My Life"

Yolanda has established a support group
www.BethanysSupport.org.