

# *Danielle's* SURVIVAL STORY

*A local woman endures years of domestic abuse at the hands of the man who claimed to love her*

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*– Danielle Wicks*

I met Kevin when I was 15 years old. He was an attractive college football player and everything a girl could want -- muscular, tall, athletic...and three years older than me. I was infatuated with my first real boyfriend and wanted nothing more than to make him happy. He called me "Dannie" and made me feel special. We quickly fell in love.

### Love Shouldn't Hurt

One day, Kevin announced he wanted us to have a child together. When he sensed my reluctance, he became infuriated. Before I knew it, the back of his hand hit my face and knocked me to the floor. He grabbed me by my hair and threw me to the bed. After a brutal rape, he left the house and I found myself running after him begging him not to leave. Over the next five years, each attack became more violent than the last and my will to live gradually started dissipating. I was pushed down the stairs, thrown from the second story of his house, choked, and raped, but still I believed things would change. Despite many hospital stays, his apologies and promises to change always brought him back into my arms.

### The Final Blow

We were on our way to dinner one night when he turned down a side street near a cluster of warehouses. I braced myself and began to pray. Pow! He smacked me in the face and began to pummel me

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with his fists. His massive hands slammed the side of my face into the passenger side window. My head broke the glass and I started to lose consciousness. He kicked me out of the car and onto the pavement. Knowing that he would not leave until I was dead, I lay as still as possible. The quiet of the night and the cool pavement provided only a slight moment of peace. My clothes were tattered and my hair was matted with blood. He got out of the car and stood over me for a second and then got back in the driver's seat. Before I realized what was happening, he drove over my legs, breaking one and shattering my ankle. Just as I was about to give up and die, a security guard found me and called for help. I made a decision to live that night and have not looked back. It took some time, but I decided never to let another person destroy my self-esteem with his hands.

### Reaching Out for Help

During my years with Kevin, I never reached out for help. If you are the victim of abuse, I'm encouraging you to take the first step and get the help you need before it's too late.

There are resources available in the Fort Bend County to help victims of domestic violence. The Fort Bend Women's Center is a place where battered women and children can turn to in a time of desperation and need. If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, contact the Fort Bend Women's Center's crisis hotline at 281-342-HELP (4357).

## Fort Bend WOMEN'S CENTER

The Fort Bend Women's Center offers a safe-house in Fort Bend County where women can go to escape a violent situation. There were 349 clients (including children) in 2008, and the 14 rooms in the shelter are almost always completely filled with those trying to escape an abusive situation. "The shelter gives survivors a peaceful place to start healing," says Allison Parker, Assistant Director of the shelter.

Vita Goodell, Executive Director of the Center says, "Our mission is to assist survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to achieve safety and self-sufficiency and also to work on preventing domestic violence in the community at large." Safety is the first concern, says Goodell. "Once they don't have to worry about that, they can start concentrating on how to get on with their lives."

Some of the services offered include transportation, counseling, employment, child care, and health services. When the client leaves the shelter they receive help finding housing and the other resources they may need to survive.

*Sugar Land Magazine would like to thank Danielle Wicks for having the courage to share her personal story with our readers.*