

Letter: Domestic violence victim speaks out

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News is withholding the letter writer's name to try to protect her identity.*

To the community,

My story was recently published in your newspaper and I'd like to write this for two reasons. Primarily, to say a special thank you to all the people who helped me, but also to bring light to a nasty subject, domestic violence.

First, I want to thank my neighbors and first responders. I especially want to thank (police Sgt.) Shannon Laney who I truly believe saved my life. He helped me focus and tried to keep me calm.

I want to thank the very competent and capable EMTs that responded so quickly. They did a great job.

I want to thank the entire staff at Barton Hospital; they were so supportive and comforting. Every nurse, even the dietician, made me feel they cared deeply. I especially want to thank the ICU team and Dr. (Kimberly) Evans. They saved my life. I couldn't buy all these people enough flowers and gift baskets to show my appreciation.

Shelly, the social worker there, has a great big heart and I am grateful for her kind words of support and encouragement.

I want to thank the SLTPD as well for doing a great job serving and protecting, safely and quickly resolving the situation.

Thank you to Bryan and Yolanda and the others at the DAs office for your help and support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to those who helped my baby. Thank you for keeping

him safe and for continuing to do so while I heal.

I met so many kind people and I wish I could thank you all in person. I hope this will let you know how special you all made me feel.

However, the irony isn't lost on me that October is domestic violence awareness month. I'm also writing this letter to hopefully reach that person out there that needs to see or hear about this story. Domestic violence is a two-way situation. If you see the signs in your life, you must get help as soon as you know. Whether you are victims or violators, seek help. Both deserve a healthy relationship and both need to heal. Do something before it's too late because domestic violence is a life and death situation, and, yes, it really can happen to you.

I saw the signs and I lied to myself constantly. I thought my situation was somehow unique.

Please take action to stop DV. Show your support, wear the ribbons, and donate to DV related causes. Here in SLT we have Live Violence Free if you need help or if you'd like to help, I am sure they'd happily point you in the right direction.

Lastly, tell all our young men and women about the dangers and consequences of DV. Most important we all need to model these behaviors of healthy relationships to everyone we come across. That's a tall order, I know, but I believe there are so many who've just never seen the behaviors we're all expecting of each other. If you don't see it, how can you learn it. I hope this letter reaches those who need it.

Again, thank you, thank God. I am grateful for a second chance.

South Lake Tahoe DV victim