

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month!

# Turning Points Network

Preventing Violence  
Promoting Respect  
Strengthening Lives



## In My Own Words: A Survivor Story

***April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and this year's campaign focuses on prevention. For this month's newsletter, a survivor shares her story to spread awareness.***

"The Cabin used to be my favorite place in the world. For 14 years, I went there every summer, and stayed until school. It is a simple place, really: five rooms, an out house, a private beach, and a pontoon boat. There really wasn't anything significant about it, but to me it was my one safe place.

The Cabin is owned by my uncle and his college roommate, and there is always family from both of them there. My uncles college friend has a cousin who had heard about the place and came to check it out. (I later found out that he was 37.) His wife was really young, close to my age: She was 19. We got along really well. She told me about how a parent had accused her husband of being a pedophile because a 14 year old girl had asked him what sex was, and he wanted to show her instead of explain it to her. She blew it off, because it hadn't actually happened, so that meant that it wasn't a big deal. I was 14 years old as well, and I trusted so easily because I wanted only to see the good in people. For about a month, all we did was hang out and fool around. We had fun.

Here's when it all goes wrong:

It's the Fourth of July weekend. Everybody is at the Cabin to party. I go to the next town over with my newly found friends. We bought \$400 worth of fireworks. Back at the Cabin, we set them all off, and watch them in awe before heading back and playing with the sparklers that we had gotten as well. By then it had gotten really late, and everybody had left. We planned to go camping in a pop-up camper. So we get settled in, him and his wife on one side, and me on the other. But after a while, I couldn't sleep, and neither could he. So he came over to talk. Thinking back to it now, I should have said I was tired and faked going to sleep. He gave me an uneasy feeling since I had met him. He started talking about his time in the Army, and how he knew how to kill a person without blinking an eye. He told me he had a lot of guns hidden everywhere. It

was just talk to me, but now I know it was him scaring me into submission.

After about an hour of him talking and me listening, his wife woke up crying from a bad dream. She wanted me to come over and cuddle with her because she was sad... and she wanted him to as well. So with all three of us in the same bed, he had full access to do what he did next. The worst part for me was that it lasted for more than six hours, and she never woke up. My best friend's husband had molested me for six hours straight, and I couldn't bring myself to say anything because I didn't want to break them up.

It took me a while to talk after that. I shut down everybody in my life, and refused to talk to anybody about what had happened. It took me two months to say something. During those two months I went down a "rabbit hole." I did all the things that you are probably thinking, and more. When I say rabbit hole, it means that I just shut down. I drank away that night until I forgot why I was drinking. I would sleep for an entire day. I tried to forget how betrayed I felt when I learned how cruel the world can really be. And then, I met this guy. He taught me that I am not worthless. He told me that the threats that were made to me are just that: threats. He taught me what it was to actually let someone in. When I thought that there was nothing left in me, I had that one ounce left that got me up in the morning, and that's how I had to handle it for a while. Talking about this didn't help; it only made it worse. So instead, I talked about the happy memories with this new boy. As cliché as this is about to sound, this boy taught me that even the most broken things can be fixed with time, and love. By the time that I brought it to the police, I learned again how hard life can be. I learned how the system works, and I didn't like it one bit. After months of retelling this one day, his punishment ended with him doing community service.

I think that the thing I will always carry around with me was learning that his wife was pregnant not long after he did this to me. That is something that I will always regret. If I had said something earlier, I could have saved her as well as myself."

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**Thank You!**



The Board of Directors and staff at Turning Points Network would like to thank Joe Tuohy at Salt Hill Pub and everyone who had dinner at Salt Hill Pub Newport last Thursday to benefit Turning Points Network's Steppin' Up to End Violence 5K Walk and Fun Run. A special thanks to Dianne Rochford for organizing the dinner!

Proceeds will boost the community's efforts to raise \$100,000 through Steppin' Up for Turning Points

Network's programs and services. THANK YOU!

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## Upcoming Events

### Steppin' Up to End Violence

#### 5K Walk & Fun Run-

The 10th annual Steppin' Up to End Violence 5K Walk & Fun Run is Saturday, April 30th!

"Steppin' Up" is TPN's signature fundraiser, bringing in critical funds that allow TPN to continue to provide prevention education as well as support victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Learn more by clicking [here](#).



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