

# Finding the Strength



Dear Sir/Madam

Violence within the family - not anger, or temper, but real and punishing violence is something most of us will thankfully never experience, and perhaps, cannot even imagine.

Yet it is a known fact that every day, in homes throughout our city, our state, our country - there are women and children living in fear and living with terror.

**We know them! ...They are friends, family, neighbours and co-workers.**

As a community we often fail to see their plight, or the victims suffer in silence, rather than expose what they see as, "their shameful secret". I want to share with you the story of a remarkable and courageous woman - Maureen.

Maureen wanted to tell her story, openly and honestly, in the hope that her own "silent world" might be exposed, and perhaps, offer a lifeline of hope to other abuse victims.

*"My son and I were both physically and emotionally abused by my husband for over 17 years. He belittled me, and made me feel worthless. My 2 children also suffered especially our son, who is now 15 years old.*

*I tried to leave many times, but I didn't know where to go. I would leave and go to another room in the house and he would follow me and beat me. Unfortunately, from a very young age our son would witness the abuse, and as he got a little older, he would try and pull him off me.*

*After awhile, you start to believe that it is your fault, and you feel such sorrow, that you hide it from everyone else. It is your personal shame. Eventually I found the strength to say enough is enough - for my sanity, and that of my children.*

*I left..... I didn't care what happened.....But I needed help.*

*Inside, I was a quivering mess and very scared. Through a friend, I found my way to the Centrecare agency and my son and I had one-on-one counselling. My self-esteem started to return. Understanding my feelings and emotions helped me cope, and, to begin looking forward rather than back.*

*I then joined Centrecare's "Domestic Violence Group for Women". Our group's co-facilitator from Centrecare has been so marvellous, so caring. She helps us understand the issues of domestic violence, provides us with practical tools that really do help, and makes sure that we all know two important things... **it is not our fault, and we are safe!***

*It took me 17 years of hell, to finally break free. I feel happier now. I see a positive life for me, and my child. It is still very hard to talk about, and even now, I shake with emotion. It is still embarrassing to say out loud, but I know that I am a survivor and not the perpetrator.*

*I want other victims to hear my story and maybe, just maybe, they will call Centrecare and not waste the years I did...God I hope so! The people at Centrecare have helped me get back my life, and I cannot say enough good things about them"*

*Maureen (left) with Centrecare's group co-facilitator  
...continued overleaf*



- Centacare Employment and Training
- Djooraminda
- The Living Centre (formerly HIV/AIDS Pastoral Care Ministry)
- i.d.entity.wa
- Catholic Migrant Centre
- Emmanuel Centre
- Centrecare
- Natural Fertility Services
- Catholic Association for Deaf & Hearing Impaired People of WA
- Anawim
- Cross Roads Community
- Samaritan Projects

**Centrecare is one of the many agencies that has, and will continue to receive, funding support through your generous donations to my LifeLink appeals.**

You may be interested to know that Centrecare has been undertaking research, and providing professional counselling and support services in the area of domestic violence and family violence, since the early 1990's.

The agency employs a specialist team of counsellors, in one-on one or group sessions - for survivors, perpetrators, children or witnesses of domestic violence and abuse.

They provide a large number of services throughout the Metropolitan, Goldfields and Southwest regions of WA including counselling, education, support, advocacy, and prevention.

**Over 1000 men, women and children will be assisted by its domestic violence team this year. In total, Centrecare will provide professional, practical and caring services to over 25,000 West Australian families and individuals in 2004.**

**Through my "Winter Appeal for LifeLink", I hope to raise \$160,000 this year.**

I know how much need there is in our community, and I can only imagine how many requests you must receive for one worthwhile cause or another.

But please know that even if you give \$1, or \$10, or even \$1,000, **every cent will go to the direct care of people in need here in WA.** Consider Maureen's story, and join with me – Together, we can **and really do** make a difference in people's lives.

Please complete the attached donation form and mail your gift today. Official receipts will be provided for all donations over \$2.

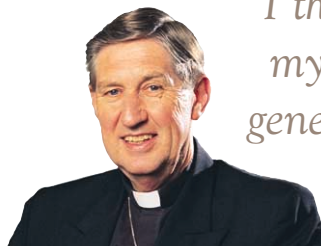
On behalf of the 60,000 Western Australians our LifeLink agencies help each year, I thank you for considering my request, and for your generosity and compassion.

May God bless you, and your family.

Yours Sincerely in Jesus Christ



Most Rev Barry J Hickey  
Archbishop of Perth



*"I thank you for considering my request, and for your generosity and compassion"*

**LifeLink Office**  
23 Victoria Square Perth  
WA 6000

**Telephone**  
+61 8 9223 1315

**Facsimile**  
+61 8 9221 3903

**Email**  
admin@lifelink.com.au

**Website**  
www.lifelink.com.au

**You can donate online at**  
[www.lifelink.com.au](http://www.lifelink.com.au)

**PRIVACY ACT:** To access your personal information, or to be removed from our database, please write to: LifeLink, GPO Box K828 Perth WA 6842.



**Yes, I want to help people in need "Find the Strength" this Winter**

Please accept my donation of (please tick one box only)

\$250   
  \$100   
  \$60   
  \$30   
  \$500   
  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclosed is my cash gift for LifeLink OR**  
 **Enclosed is my cheque payable to LifeLink OR**  
 Please debit my credit card

Visacard     Mastercard

Amex     Bankcard

Credit Card Number

Expiry date   /

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you and God Bless**

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible where name and address details are supplied