





# WHO WE ARE

We are survivors of trauma and allies who believe in the worth and purpose in all people.

# WHAT WE DO

We equip survivors of trauma to create successful lives through education, encouragement and empowerment.

# WHY WE DO IT

We have created real success in healthy relationships, wellness, peace, joy, and financial sustainability, and we want to help others do the same.

# ***WHY WE'RE DIFFERENT***

**We've reached thousands  
of people since our  
founding in 2010 with no  
funding and all volunteer  
efforts.**



**We never turn down  
donations, but the real fuel  
for our work is our passion  
to help young people who  
are where we used to be.**





# **What we've done with NO paid staff**

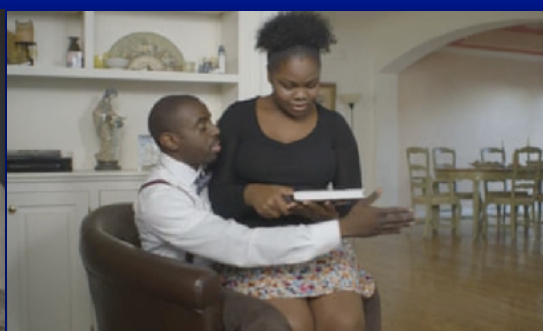
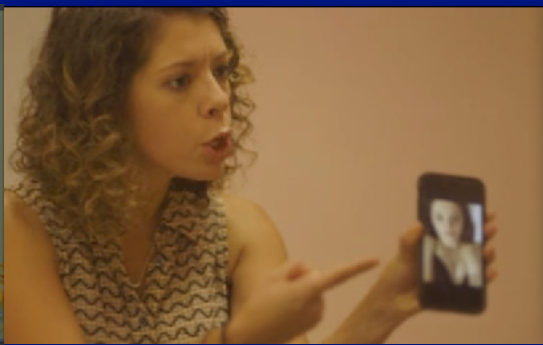


# HELPED PREVENT CHILD TRAFFICKING

**We gathered a group of neighbors to create the PREVENT CHILD TRAFFICKING VEGAS initiative and open the Vegas Cares Boutique where we provide encouragement, anti-trafficking education and empowerment to homeless youth.**



*Click [HERE](#) to see how they did it*



# CREATED GET RESULTS WITH EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS PARENTING VIDEOS

**We worked with an Academy Award  
winning director to create public domain  
videos that help families resolve conflict,  
improve relationships and prevent harm.**

*Click the pictures to watch the videos*

# HELPED SURVIVORS FIND THEIR VOICE

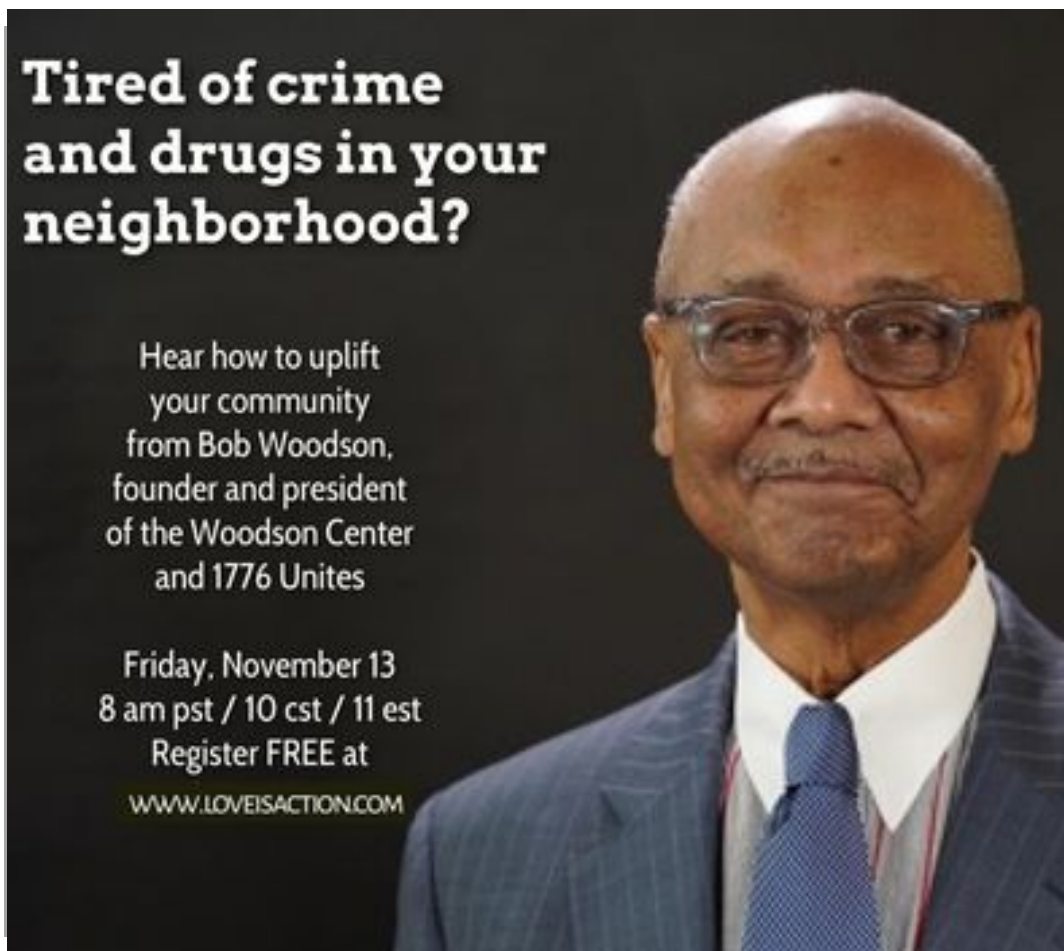
**We created a speaker bureau to help survivors find their voices and to provide trauma informed subject matter experts across the US.**





# EQUIPPED PEOPLE TO HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS

**We created Equipping The Community events to equip neighbors to stop domestic violence, child abuse, child sex trafficking, suicide, and more.**



**Tired of crime  
and drugs in your  
neighborhood?**

Hear how to uplift  
your community  
from Bob Woodson,  
founder and president  
of the Woodson Center  
and 1776 Unites

Friday, November 13  
8 am pst / 10 cst / 11 est  
Register FREE at  
[WWW.LOVEISACTION.COM](http://WWW.LOVEISACTION.COM)

**Click [HERE](#) to watch one of our Equipping The Community events**

# HELPED SURVIVORS FIND PURPOSE

**We facilitate private retreats to help survivors mine the lessons from what they've been through and apply them to create successful lives.**



***Click the picture to see an invitation to a FIND YOUR PURPOSE Retreat***

# HELPED SURVIVORS HEAL THROUGH WRITING

**We help survivors of childhood trauma process their grief and loss by gently guiding them to write their stories and the priceless messages and wisdom that came from it.**



***Click the picture to see an invitation to a WRITE YOUR STORY Retreat***



# HELPED TEENS AVOID DRUGS

**Providing speakers, subject matter experts,  
and consultants for the GAMECHANGER drug  
prevention program.**



Click [HERE](#) to learn about the GAMECHANGER drug prevention program

# HELPED STRENGTHEN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

**We gathered 25+ private, non-profit child welfare organizations to create suggested language for the presidential executive order on strengthening the nation's child welfare system.**



## EXECUTIVE ORDERS

### Executive Order on Strengthening the Child Welfare System for America's Children

— LAW & JUSTICE

*Click [HERE](#) to see the final PEO*

# TRAINED THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES

**We recruited subject matter experts from all over the US to provide free trainings on preventing suicide, child sex trafficking and other tragedies.**



**Click [HERE](#) to see trainings we provided through NFPA Training Institute**



# HELPED GOOD NON PROFIT PROGRAMS EXPAND THEIR REACH

**We identify proven and promising programs  
and help them expand or replicate their  
programs in other communities.**

Prevention	Supportive	Mitigation	Resources
 Safe Families for Children	 Royal Family KIDS	 THE Foster Haven	 foster CARE closet
 GAME CHANGER	 HANDLE WITH CARE Protect • Heal • Thrive HandleWithCareWV.org	 obria MEDICAL CLINICS	 CarePortal every church doing a little
 WOODSON CENTER	 Frister's Teaching Teen Parents to Thrive	 TEEN LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION	 YourRealSuccess®

**Click [HERE](#) to see some of the many impactful  
programs with which we collaborate.**

# HELPED STOP THE CYCLES OF ABUSE

We collaborate with people like Fortune 500 business consultant, Brian Molitor, who cleared his calendar for two years to create MITI YOUTH TRAINING, which has been delivered to thousands of young people through churches in the US and beyond.



Click [HERE](#) to watch Brian Molitor talk about mentoring moments that change lives

# HELPED EDUCATE FOSTER TEENS

**We provided laptop computers to foster kids who were unable to keep up in school and transition to healthy, independent living.**





# HELPED PREVENT TRAGEDY

Our founder, Rhonda Sciortino, has contributed countless articles to *Children's Voice*, *Fostering Families Today* and *Foster Focus* magazine on specific ways to keep kids and caregivers safe.

Connecting The Dots Of  
**HUMAN**  
**TRAFFICKING**  
From Foster Care  
with  
Rhonda Sciortino & Sandie Morgan

**In This Edition:**  
Time for the Drug Talk



Rhonda Sciortino, author of *Succeed Because of What You've Been Through*, is the National Child Welfare Specialist for Market Insurance Company. Rhonda is a foster alum who chairs the Successful Survivors Foundation and serves as a spokesperson for Foster Care Alumni of America. Her weekly radio show can be heard at [www.RHONDA.org](http://www.RHONDA.org)



Dr. Sandie Morgan, Ph.D., is Director of Vanguard University's Global Center for Women and Justice, overseeing the Women's Studies Minor, as well as teaching Family Violence and Human Trafficking and producing the *Ending Human Trafficking Podcast*. Sandie's background as a Pediatric Nurse brought her into contact with her first victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. She is committed to equipping our communities to be a safer place for vulnerable youth.

Live2Free.org  
8 Foster Focus Volume 7 Issue 8

Connecting The Dots  
Between Drugs And Child Trafficking

Where there is the buying and selling of children for sex, there are drugs. Period.

It's not difficult to understand that traffickers give kids drugs to get them addicted so they can lure them into being bought and sold for sex. Then they incapacitate them with drugs so that they won't try to run and are incapable of fighting.

As if that isn't bad enough, the parents often become complicit in the trafficking of their own children. After selling everything they have for a hit of the drugs that have destroyed their ability to think and behave logically, addicted parents barter with the only thing they have left—sex with their children. In fact, some parents sell their children to traffickers in exchange for the drugs that have destroyed their lives and the lives of their children.

This isn't just in the dangerous neighborhoods you've seen portrayed in episodes of *Law & Order*. This is happening in places you might never have imagined—the upper and middle class neighborhoods where parents addicted to pain killers have exhausted their refills and have ventured into the unspoken territory of drug dealers and traffickers for which they are woefully ill prepared. The professional drug dealers, the results of the huge issue that many people have heard about in the US means that parents who are children. Incapacitated parents are selling their children at a greater risk of being trafficked than their glassy eyes.

So what's the answer? What is the problem?

We can explore the question: What is the addiction environment?

That is the question that is the subject of Vanguard University's Global Center for Women and Justice.

Professionals from law enforcement, social workers, and the drug enforcement community, the Drug Enforcement Administration, collaborate to seek solutions for protection of the home.

Children at risk of being trafficked think that this can't happen in your neighborhood, and yet are lured in right before their eyes.

Teachers who see kids regularly see their attitude, and appearance. Coaches, other medical people, and neighbors (and not-so-subtle) clues that indicate danger. Even when they do notice and don't know what to do. No one wants to tear apart a family or a friendship.

Although it is a huge issue, it is possible the *LOVE IS ACTION* Community Initiative opportunity to engage with others to deal," meaning, each person can do what would be a person who likes to bake. There are as many ideas as there are people at the *Ensure Justice Conference* on California to share your ideas.

feature  
BY RHONDA SCIORTINO



How to Prevent Tragedy

In the 25 plus years that I've prosecuted and defended the good people and organizations that care for kids and families, I've seen a lot of tragedy. For many years, my phone ringing meant that I was about to hear about a severely injured or dead child or caregiver.

Before I sold my company, I had gotten to the point of working while lying on the big sofa in my dimly lit office, with my phone headset on, sitting as far as I could from the giant bottle that sat nearby. I had no idea even about "secondary trauma," but I now understand it and the PTSD symptoms of frightened mothers every time the phone rings.

The good that came out of all that tragedy, if there is any good that can be mined out of it, is that we learned an awful lot about how kids and caregivers get injured or killed in out-of-home placement. We learned that there are two root causes in almost every tragedy. First, there are what I call "relationship failures" and the second root cause is "interruption in routine."

Relationship failures occur for the number one root cause of injury or death in foster care. It's not difficult for child welfare professionals to imagine where this starts. They know intimately the inherent problems of caring for kids who have been traumatized by abandonment, neglect and abuse. Anyone who has been involved in foster care for any length of time knows that trying to care for wounded children is like trying to pour water into a bucket that has holes in the bottom. Simply put, traumatized kids need more than any one person is able to give.

On the surface of an incident, it may appear that the injury or death was the result of an accident. The accident, vehicle or otherwise, is the direct cause of tragedy, but the root cause may go back to the argument that was happening in the vehicle right before the accident. Or it might go back to the disappearance at the breakfast table an hour earlier, or the incident that happened at school the day before that resulted in detention at school that put the foster parent on the mat during a heavy traffic time of day. Or the fact that the biological kids of the foster family were engaged in a soccer but the foster child was not.

When we look deeper at the details and step back through the circumstance preceding tragedy, we rarely always find a hole in the relationship—usually between foster parent and foster child, but sometimes it's

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## The Village Can Do What You Cannot

By Rhonda Sciortino

We've all heard that "it takes a village." But sometimes, that village is oblivious to your efforts on behalf of children and families. Sometimes, that village can be downright hostile. But when the village is with you and for you, remarkable things can happen.

In West Virginia, West Virginia Game Changers, one of the largest public-private coalitions of its kind in the state, is a collaborative effort of child welfare, child abuse and domestic violence, law enforcement, and community organizations, especially its members of West Virginia people to make a difference and to become a community of change. The youth-led experts on family trauma, Virginia Gamble, 18, began her work, as a result of her experience, as a result of her experience, as a result of her experience. Bocek wanted to help families from the inside. The more he became aware that the United States include all the children, youth, and young people in secondary schools, the more he became aware that the United States include all the children, youth, and young people in secondary schools.

West Virginia Game Changers plans to expand their initiative to states throughout the country. This village, youth-organized and trauma-informed, wants to work alongside child welfare professionals like you. If you're interested in bringing this program to your community, contact Joe Bocek at [joe@bbbizstrategies.com](mailto:joe@bbbizstrategies.com). Learn more, find out about volunteering, and watch the virtual summit at <https://wvgamechanger.com/>.



Rhonda Sciortino, author of *Succeed Because of What You've Been Through*, was abandoned at the age of six months, raised by a man who was mentally ill and woman struggling with alcoholism, and experienced a bizarre roller coaster of a childhood. Sciortino used the coping skills from these experiences of survival to start her own business. She credits a brief stay with a wonderful foster family for teaching her that there was a better way to live. Through her speaking, writing, podcast, and videos, Sciortino has shared how others can use the obstacles in their lives as stepping stones to a great future. Learn more at <http://www.rhonda.org/>.

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# ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO HELP OTHERS

We launched the Love Is Action Community Initiative, which is a nationwide public/private faith based collective impact initiative to eradicate social isolation and the societal ills that emanate from it or are exacerbated by it.



LOVE  
— is —  
ACTION

Click [HERE](http://www.loveisaction.com) to watch a short video on why this is important

[www.loveisaction.com](http://www.loveisaction.com)

# RAISED AWARENESS

**We help kids and families by educating the public on how they can help others through the vetted partners of the Love Is Action Community Initiative**



Click the photos to watch SSF founder, Rhonda Sciortino, share why and how to help children through Love Is Action participant, Royal Family Kids



# ESTABLISHED SUCCESSFUL SURVIVOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

We established this award to recognize and reward efforts to overcome adversity and add value to the world

## And The Winners Are...

By Rhonda Sciortino  
*Foster Focus Columnist*

There are an estimated twelve million former foster kids in the United States alone. Many successful survivors of abuse have created good lives for themselves, but most of them don't speak of their childhood experiences. They had to live through it, and aren't interested in dredging it up and reliving it by talking about it.

There are myriad misconceptions about foster kids and foster care. Some people assume that foster kids are bad. They don't understand that the kids in foster care are there because they've been mistreated, sometimes in unthinkable ways. Some people assume that foster parents are "in it for the money." What they clearly don't understand is that there isn't enough money on Earth to compensate good foster families for the sacrifices and hard work of loving a wounded child into wholeness. Some people think that kids who've been abused are "too broken to be fixed." Another inaccurate assumption. The truth is that many people who experienced childhood abuse are stronger, more resilient, more resourceful, more courageous, and more determined to live good lives than the average person. According to Dr. Lawrence Calhoun, UNC University Psychology Professor, and author of Post Traumatic Growth in Clinical Practice, it is possible to be stronger following trauma. Yes, I said, "PTSG," NOT PTSD!

When the media reports on foster care, the reports are of a negative nature. Journalists write articles about the people who take in foster kids solely for the money. TV reporters cue the melancholy music and produce heart-wrenching segments on the occasional brutal end of the tragic life of a foster child. And recently, the media has covered the sad fact that some foster kids find themselves trapped in the life of trafficking.

Despite this nearly overwhelming negativity, the truth is that there are myriad inspiring stories of people who have overcome tremendous pain and adversity to live good lives. Additionally, there are many wonderful people who have dedicated their lives and careers to helping victims of abuse overcome their painful experiences. Sadly, these good news stories rarely capture the attention of national media. To counter this, the Successful Survivors Foundation, a non-profit organization founded to help victims of abuse succeed not despite, but because of what they've been through, set out to find some of the inspiring stories of overcomers and those who help others overcome. They established an annual award for overcomers in the categories of foster alumni, foster parents, teachers, social workers, and visionaries. They sought nominations, evaluated the submissions, and found themselves with the very difficult task of choosing winners in each category.

Every nomination submission received told the story of abandonment, neglect, and abuse followed by the emerging of the strong, resilient, courageous person who grew from the ashes of pain. The stories that follow are the highlights of the winners of the 2015 Successful Survivors Foundation Overcomer Awards in the categories of Foster Alim, Educator, Foster Parent, and Social Worker.

We recognize and celebrate every overcomer and the heroes who help others overcome.

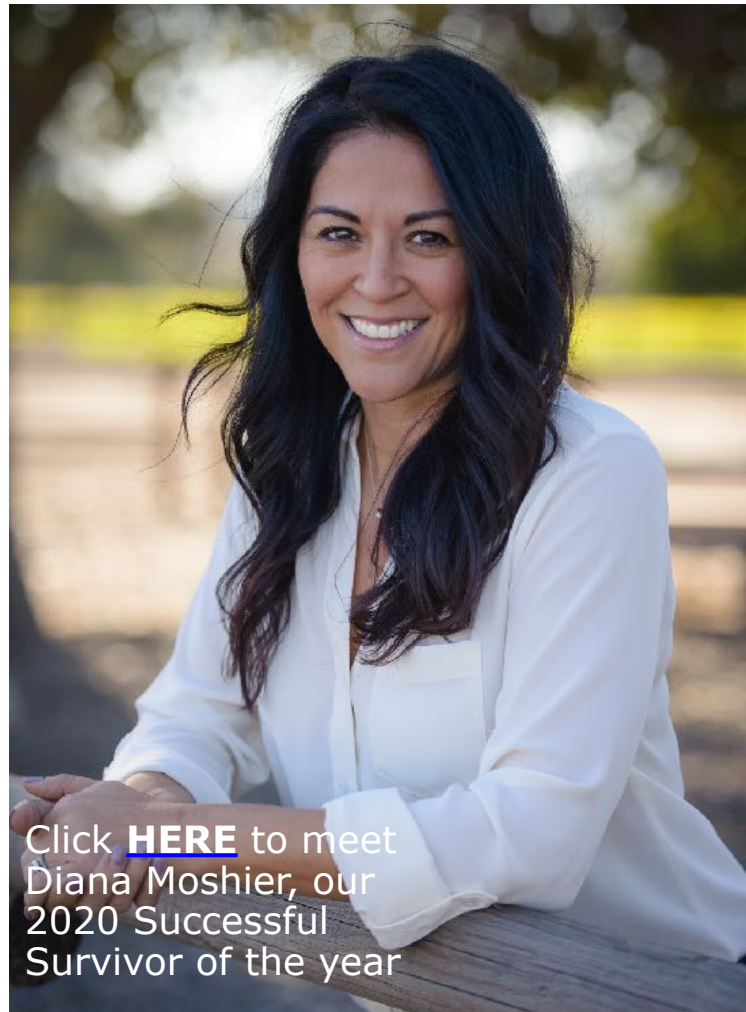


Successful Survivors Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to help victims of abuse succeed, not despite, but because of what they've been through.

[www.successfulsurvivors.org](http://www.successfulsurvivors.org)

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[www.FosterFocusMag.com](http://www.FosterFocusMag.com)

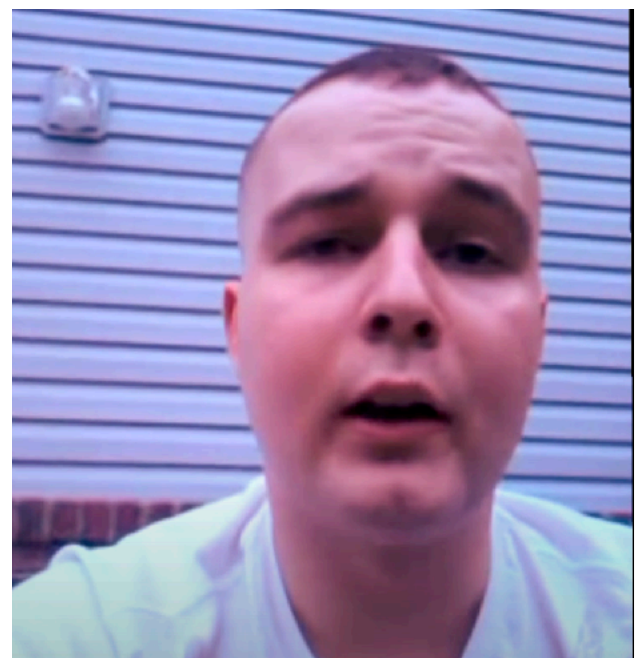


Click **HERE** to meet  
Diana Moshier, our  
2020 Successful  
Survivor of the year



# CREATED A COMMUNITY OF SUCCESSFUL SURVIVORS

**Giving survivors of childhood trauma a voice  
empowers them to succeed while establishing  
them as role models for others**



Click the photos to hear from these successful survivors of childhood trauma

# TAUGHT WHAT LOVE IS

**We created the #loveis social media campaign to encourage people to put their love into action.**

# #LOVEIS

using what we have to  
do good for others



Click the video to see a sample of the #loveis campaign

# CREATED RESOURCES TO HELP FIGHT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

**We brought together thought leaders in the fight against child sex trafficking for some candid conversations around demand, prevention, and restoration.**



**Click [HERE](#) to hear Dr. Annalisa Enrile discuss why men buy sex with children**

# Please help us help more people

The needs are beyond the capacity of our volunteers.

There are passionate people who would love to dedicate their lives to helping others create successful lives, but they need to support themselves and care for their families.

If we can raise enough money to hire our passionate volunteers, we can expand our programs in communities throughout the US and prevent child trafficking and other societal ills that emanate from childhood trauma.

**Your monthly contribution of \$25,  
\$50, \$100, or whatever you can afford  
would help us hire successful  
survivors to help more people**

**Invest Now**

We would love to meet with you to hear  
your ideas for helping survivors of trauma

