



*SUCCESSFUL
SURVIVORS INC.
FOUNDATION*



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 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. It's now time to hire paid staff to be able to do so much more.





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

ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO HELP OTHERS

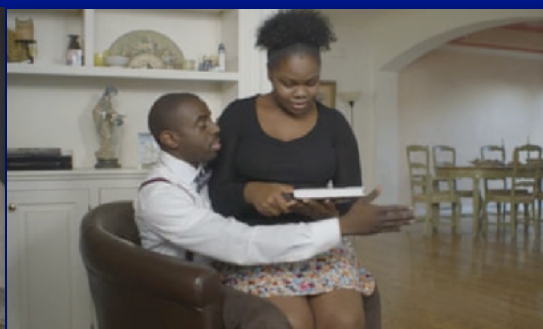
We launched the Love Is Action Community Initiative, which is a nationwide public/private faith based collective impact initiative to eradicate social isolation and the societal ills that emanate from it or are exacerbated by it.



LOVE
— is —
ACTION

Click [HERE](#) to watch a short video on why this is important

www.loveisaction.com



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

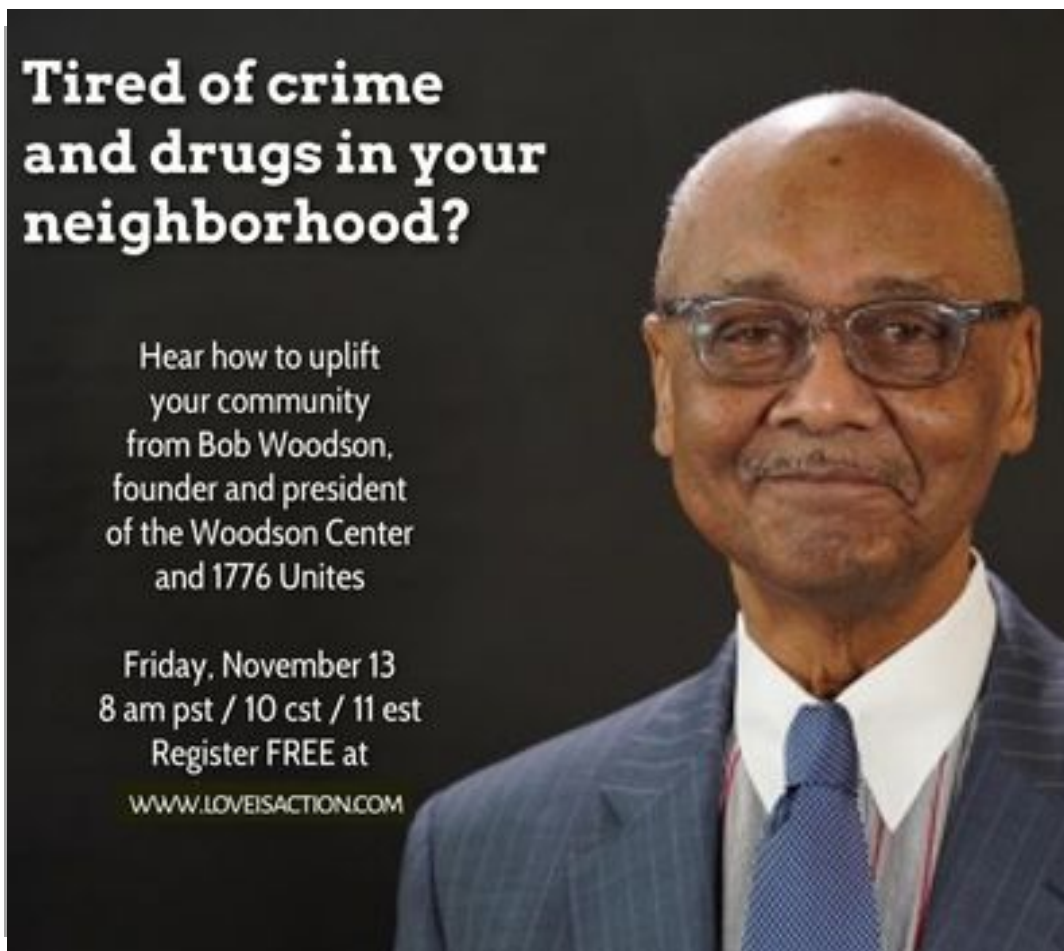
HELPED SURVIVORS FIND THEIR VOICE

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

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

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.



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 HandleWithCareVY.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 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

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 Alum, Educator, Foster Parent, and Social Worker.

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

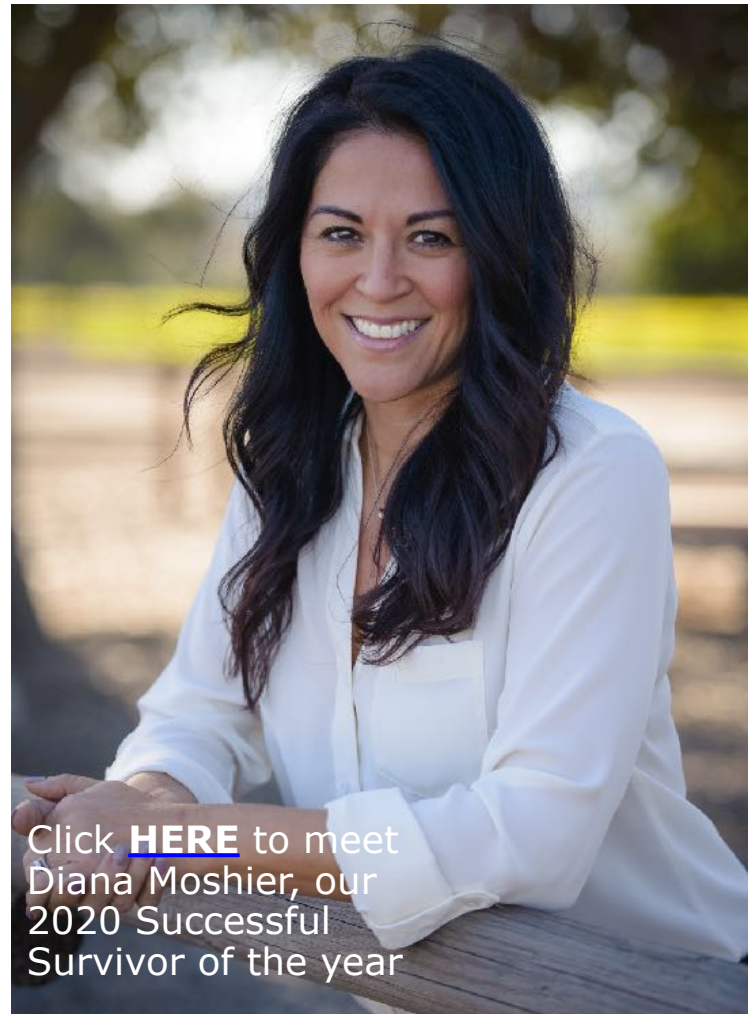


Successful Survivors Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to help victims of abuse succeed, not despite, but because of what they've been through.

www.successfulsurvivors.org

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www.FosterFocusMag.com



Click [HERE](#) to meet Diana Moshier, our 2020 Successful Survivor of the year

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*



*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
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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 coalition of parents, teachers, law enforcement, child protective workers, and other professionals. Game Changers is a coalition of West Virginia people who want to make a difference in the lives of children and to become a better community. Game Changers is a youth-led coalition that includes all the children, youth, and young people in the state. Game Changers is a coalition of West Virginia people who want to make a difference in the lives of children and to become a better community. Game Changers is a youth-led coalition that includes all the children, youth, and young people in the state.

How to Prevent Tragedy

In the 25 plus years that I've protected 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.

Relationship failures are by far 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 parent 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 disagreement 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 road during a heavy traffic time of day. Or the fact that the biological kids of the foster family were signed up for soccer, but the foster child was not.

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



feature
BY RHONDA SCIORTINO

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, eating aspirin out of the giant bottle that sat nearby. I had no idea then about "secondary trauma," but I now understand it and the PTSD symptoms of tightened muscles 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."

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*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/>*

RAISED AWARENESS

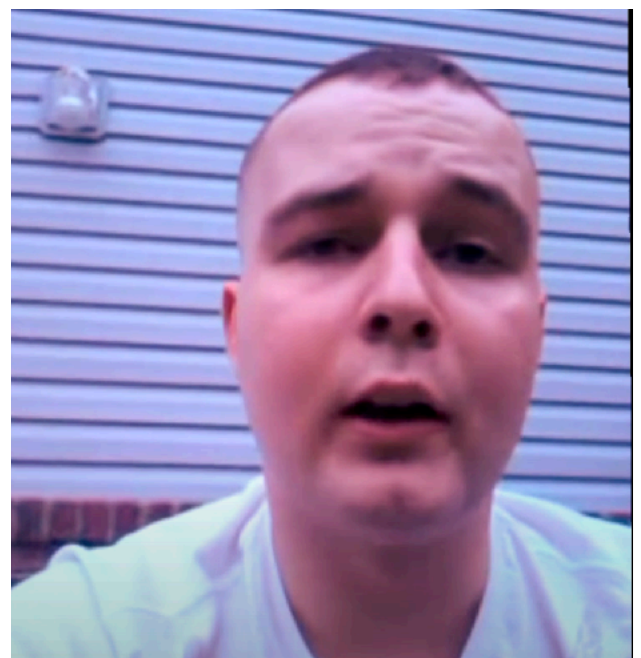
We help kids and families by educating the public on how they can help others through the vetted partners of the Love Is Action Community Initiative



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

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



**There is unimaginable need
that is beyond the capacity
of our all-volunteer staff**


Childhood TRAUMA is often at the core of homelessness, substance abuse, human trafficking, and other societal ills. We know how to mine the lessons from trauma and use them to create successful lives.

Invitation to partner with
[Successful Survivors Foundation](#)

Please help us help more people

The needs are far beyond the capacity of our volunteers.

With just three paid staff members we can recruit more volunteers, sell more products and event tickets, give more paid speeches and workshops, and thereby generate the funds that will make us self-sufficient.

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

[**Donate Now**](#)

Successful Survivors Foundation board members



***Click the names to hear a brief message
from our board members.***

Successful Survivors Foundation is an all volunteer 501 c 3 educational non-profit seeking to do more for others through paid staff.

Additional details are available upon request.

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