

Valley Voice: Shelter a safe haven for women and kids

Andrea Carter, Special to The Desert Sun 5:53 p.m. PDT September 11, 2014



(Photo: Courtesy)

[f 18](#) CONNECT [TWITTER](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#)

The recent publicity surrounding NFL running back Ray Rice and a video that revealed Rice knocking his then-fiancée, Janay, unconscious and dragging her out of an elevator into a hotel lobby, has forced the spotlight onto an issue that is too often kept in the dark: domestic violence.

Rice's suspension from the NFL following this brutal attack has stirred quite a debate, but perhaps what's been most shocking to those who don't understand the underbelly of domestic violence was

Janay's outrage at Rice's termination from the Baltimore Ravens, and her "stand by your man" stance on the situation.

While no one knows why Janay Rice chose to stay, studies have shown that many women don't want to tell their family and friends out of embarrassment or shame. Some deeply love their partner and believe the promises that their abuser will change, and blame themselves for being the cause of the abuse. Others fear further victimization such as stalking or other forms of harassment, or worry their partner will track them down and kill them — and those fears are real.

In the U.S., an average of three women are killed daily at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. Domestic violence remains the No. 1 cause of injury and death to women, nationally — more than car accidents, assaults and rapes combined.

Sometimes considered "the dirty little secret" that occurs behind closed doors, domestic violence is difficult to talk about and can be a vicious cycle that seems impossible to escape. It takes an average of seven attempts to leave before a woman is courageous enough to leave for good.

If there was anything positive that came from the Ray Rice story, it was an explosion of conversation on domestic violence, and an opportunity for awareness and education. Personal testimonies of domestic violence came pouring out over Twitter, inspiring a thought-provoking movement using the hashtags #WhyLeft and #WhyStayed.

Imagine feeling fear in the one place that you are supposed to feel safest. What if you felt you had nowhere else to go? That's why Shelter From The Storm — our regional shelter for families in need of escaping domestic violence — exists.

Shelter From The Storm is the only comprehensive intimate partner domestic violence service provider in the Coachella Valley serving eastern Riverside County from the Banning/Beaumont Pass all the way to Blythe. Shelter From The Storm offers a 24-hour crisis help line as well as counseling, outreach services, an emergency domestic violence crisis shelter and a transitional living program.

Shelter From The Storm provides services for men as well, as domestic violence does not discriminate. It affects all races, socio-economic backgrounds and sexes.

At Shelter From The Storm, we prefer to consider our families survivors rather than victims. These are strong women and children who have taken monumental steps — completely uprooting their lives — to free themselves from "the storm." Unfortunately, there are still many in the desert living in domestic violence situations who still don't know this safe haven exists.

Andrea Carter is president of the Sheltering Sisters, an auxiliary that serves Shelter From The Storm. Contact her at [andrea](#)

[@andrecarterassociates.com](#)

NEED HELP?

If you or someone you know is in need of help, please call our toll-free hotline at 1 (800) 775-6055. To learn more about Shelter From The Storm, go to [www.shelterfromthestorm.com](#)



MORE STORIES



You've got issues? Tell us about them

Aug. 13, 2014, 6:14 p.m.

Letter: White House intruder? Unbelievable

Oct. 1, 2014, 5:30 p.m.

Letter: Mayes should agree to debate Hargrove

Oct. 1, 2014, 5:19 p.m.