

2019 saw unprecedented numbers of survivors speaking out against their abusers. Sexual assault came out of the darkness into our mainstream conversations. Survivors around the country and around the world felt empowered and compelled to break their silent trauma and stand in solidarity.

No longer afraid of larger than life Hollywood personas, 2019 showed a wave of survivors holding their perpetrators accountable for their actions. Survivors came forward in support of one another and would not stand for intimidation; their voices would not be silenced. High profile celebrity survivors sharing their stories provided a platform for others to speak up and prosecute.

ZCenter witnessed this courage through many of our clients' healing journeys and also through our event speakers. Kelly Tennant, our luncheon keynote speaker, bravely came forward with her own sexual assault allegations against a former colleague and NBA coach with whom she worked closely. She too made her voice heard on national TV. As she said, *"this process has allowed me to step out of the darkness and into the light."*

Erin Merryn, our keynote speaker at our fall Gala, reinvigorated us with her own call to action to end childhood sexual assault and abuse. More and more childhood sexual abuse disclosures are being reported due to the legislation she initiated, Erin's Law. Adopted in 2013, Erin's Law mandates yearly child abuse prevention programs be taught in all public schools. Now passed in 37 states, and counting, it is a driving force in helping educate, prevent and stop childhood sexual abuse and to remove these perpetrators from our communities.

ZCenter and the vital services we provide are directly showcased in the powerful words we heard from of our client survivor speakers. 17 year-old Maythe, saying, *"I owe my life to my second home, ZCenter. ZCenter has shown me the love I needed. It is, and always will be, my home away from home and I will be forever thankful for that."* Emily, reiterating just how critical our services are, said, *"I was hurt and didn't know what to do. Then I started coming to ZCenter. I am glad ZCenter is here for me, and kids like me."* Emily is 11 years-old.

Now serving our community from two locations:

4275 Old Grand Avenue, Gurnee, IL 60031 • 4232 Dempster Stree, Skokie, IL 60076
24-Hour Support Line (847) 872-7799 • (847) 244-1187 • www.ZCenter.org

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center exists to empower, believe and validate survivors. We know that sexual abuse is an epidemic. It does not discriminate by race, sex, age, economic status, education, ability, religion, or geography. It occurs at private and public schools, in Hollywood, throughout sport organizations and in every sector of our life.

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthdays.
- 1 in 3 college women is the victim of an attempted or completed rape
- Every 98 seconds a person in the United States is sexually assaulted...
- ...and every 8 minutes, that victim is a child.

ZCenter's clients range from ages three to ninety. We provide free crisis intervention, counseling, prevention education and medical and court advocacy. In the last 12 months we answered 600 calls from our support line, met 260 survivors in hospital emergency rooms and provided counseling to nearly 1,000 clients. We also reached over 8,000 students through our prevention education. Our efforts this past year impacted over 30,000 people and helped to spread our message of awareness, prevention and fueling out efforts to ultimately eradicate these heinous crimes.

Please be in action this holiday season by donating to ZCenter. We rely on your courage, passion, strength and partnership. Your donation enables survivors to receive the vital services they need to begin their healing. While survivors work through the process to break their silence, supporters like you demonstrate that we all have the capacity to unite in the fight to end sexual violence. We look to the future with optimism and clarity and to the day we are all safe from these unconscionable crimes.

In keeping with the spirit of the holidays, please give the gift of healing to survivors, both children and adults, today. We are counting on you and your generosity during this beautiful season of giving.

We wish you and your families a safe and loving holiday season.

Deeply grateful, we are,



Torrie Flink
Executive Director



Ali Barnett
Director of Development

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