

Testimony in Support of LD 875

Good Morning,

My name is Luba (Greene) and I'm 58 years old. Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony of how Caring Unlimited impacted my life and provided the safety that none other could at a time when I most desperately needed it.

Nine years ago, I fled my home of 5 years, after sleeping with a gun under my pillow the night before. You see, I was married to a Covert Narcissistic Abuser for those 5 years. Many, many times, and in many different ways, my life was put in danger by this person. With the State Police present, I fled my home with a bag of personal items and went to a hotel.

At the time, I didn't know what social services were available to me, since I had never needed to access them before, so I opened a telephone book and found Caring Unlimited, the domestic violence agency serving York County. Even though it was a weekend evening, the phone was answered immediately and I was met with a wonderful and calming voice who asked some questions, answered some of mine, then told me to take a deep breath, eat something healthy, to try and sleep, and that they would see me right away the next morning.

At my intake appointment, the staff was so kind and calming. The passcode locks on the office doors told me the seriousness of their work. The first thing we did was to create a safety plan. Right away I was to understand how dangerous my situation was and how very experienced they were with what I had been and was facing. They helped me write a PFA and gave me other significant advice that I followed. They next brought me to the women's shelter, with more strict safety protocols in place at that location. While there, I slept more deeply than I had in a long time, because I finally felt safe.

More support was instantly put into place: a case manager who checked in with me regularly, many different support groups, food pantry locations, financial literacy classes, crafts classes, a car repair program, a matching savings program, an appointed court advocate, and a divorce attorney. In three weeks' time, I was in a beautiful little apartment around the back of the building from the main offices, all with the same kinds of security protocols in place. During my months there, I witnessed many women receiving the same care and help as I did, most of them with young children.

Caring Unlimited doesn't only provide basic care - no, they think of everything a woman and children might need - from clothing, toiletries, books to read, toys and crafts, to every holiday celebrated to the fullest. One of my fondest memories is witnessing the ladies and children at an upscale resort's (donated) Christmas celebration full with dinner, music, pictures with Santa, and gifts. They know how much you've lost and they know how to make you feel so special and loved.

Caring Unlimited allowed me to have peace of mind after several years of absolute chaos and feeling like I might not make it out alive. But I knew I had to, because of my adult son who needs his mother. With Caring Unlimited's help and guidance, I was able to return to the teaching profession and today I can say I am financially stable. Today I am able to be a teacher who understands trauma and can understand my students better. This would not have been possible without this agency and others like them. I had no other options at the time I sat in that hotel room with the phonebook in my hands. As a society, there is no question, we must continue supporting these kinds of agencies and this vital work.

I am forever indebted to Caring Unlimited. Thank you for your time.