

EXITUS

***Where IT Ends,
I Begin.***

RESET®
Society of Calgary
Rapid Exit from Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking

2022

Editor's Letter

Where it Ends, I Begin.

After a two-year hiatus, the **EXITUS** magazine has returned. For RESET's 33rd year of operation, our Participants chose the theme, Where it Ends, I Begin. This year's theme reflects the journey of rediscovering oneself after exiting sexual exploitation.

A loss of self-identity is commonplace for survivors of sexual exploitation. However, their stories don't end with exploitation. As you read their stories, you will see that it is only the beginning of a bright and budding future. Whether it be cooking, athletics, peer mentoring, fine art, academics and more, the Participants at RESET are given the space and resources to engage their unique interests.

The contributors and staff at RESET see beyond what a survivor of sexual exploitation has endured. Our hope for this edition of **EXITUS** is for the readers to see the same; A woman whose strength cannot be measured, and a sense of hope fueled by unwavering determination. We thank you for taking part in the journey of wonder and self-discovery.

Yours in recovery,

The Editors



I reached a point in my life that I was forced to change. The lifestyle I was in was getting darker and darker. It pushed me into desperation of needing to change. I knew that I couldn't protect myself unless I let go of my addiction. It was hard going through everything, but I'm so glad it happened. It gave me the will to change. I finally wanted to change for the better. I didn't know how much I needed this program and these women to finally heal. I'm so thankful to finally want true change. I had to hit rock bottom hard so I could get back up even stronger.

(JC, Participant 2022)

All hope was gone, fear riddled through my body daily. I felt my fight to have a better life was over, I felt I didn't even deserve a better life. In my eyes it was like I deserved the neglect and abuse I was forced to surrender to almost every single day. I lost friends, my family, and worst of all the ability to see my baby girl. No one could save me except for me. I was the only one who could make it end and create a new beginning. I finally picked myself up and found the people to help me start fresh. I decided that was not how I would go out or be taken out. Now I see hope and I am reconnecting with the people that truly matter and best of all I'm getting to know myself, love myself and fight for me. Where all my pain, suffering and emptiness ended my loving, happy and beautiful self had the chance to finally begin.

(DF, Participant 2022)



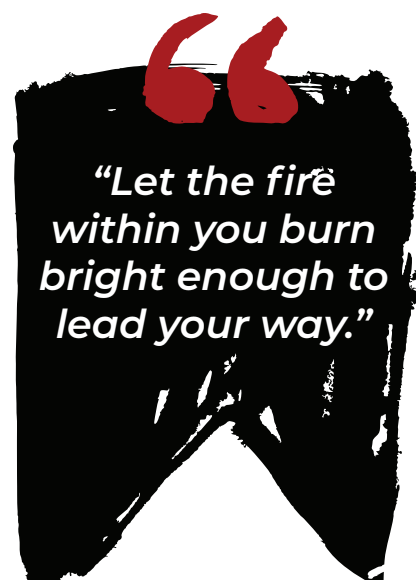
***“The top of one mountain is
the bottom of the next, so
keep on climbing.”***

Throughout my time of healing, there was many a time when I truly got to witness the awakening of a strong women. I pondered, 'what the hell did they walk through?', for mountains do not rise without earthquakes. One can be a victim. Another, a survivor. We are all survivors. Survival is a mindset. It is also a choice. Each one of us chose to survive when we walked through RESET's doors on day one.

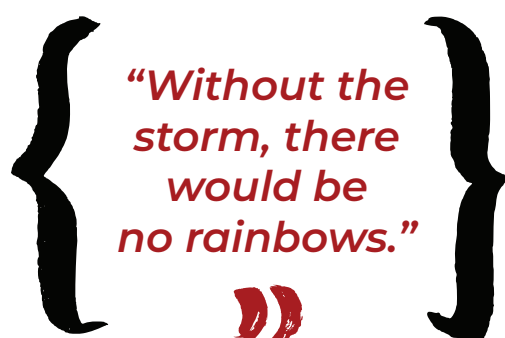
A survivor is someone who triumphed over the traumatic, horrific, terrorizing events in her life and a woman who remained alive through circumstances other died in. This was not by chance. This was fate. We use our experiences to find our purpose. Our purpose is our hope. My hope is to one day be active in the fight against human trafficking.

I will never be ashamed of my scars. They just signify that I was stronger than what tried to hurt me. I am not what happened to me. I am what I chose to become. I must remember who I was before the world told me who I should be. I am powerful. I am resilient. I am bold. I am a survivor. And one day, I hope with all of my heart to be someone's hero.

(JM, Participant 2022)

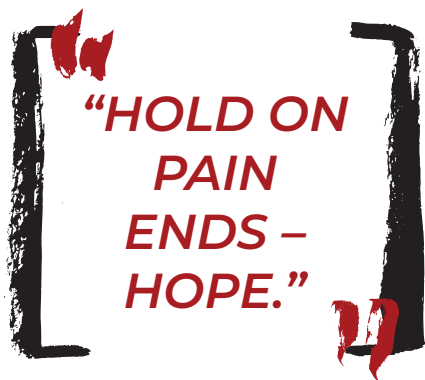


I don't know where to begin, I was on the streets being trafficked and exploited by my pimp. I decided to come to RESET and it changed my life. I began being the person I really wanted to



be. I now know how to set healthy boundaries in all of my relationships. I am starting to build a relationship with my daughter and getting her back. I'm healing and recovering everyday.

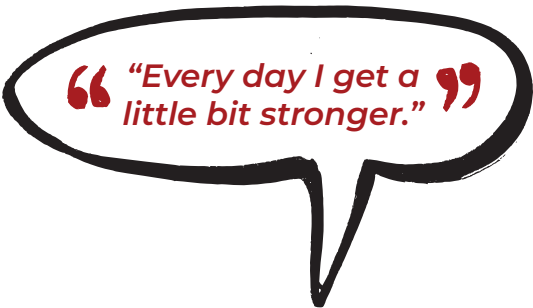
(BL, Participant 2022)



Where it ends was the day admitted to myself, I needed help to exit the exploitation lifestyle. Such a lifestyle was mentally damaging. I lost myself who I really was sacrificed my morals and my self worth. Now I begin to recover I've found myself, my self worth, self confidence and self esteem. I being to find my identity again that I lost when I was exploited.

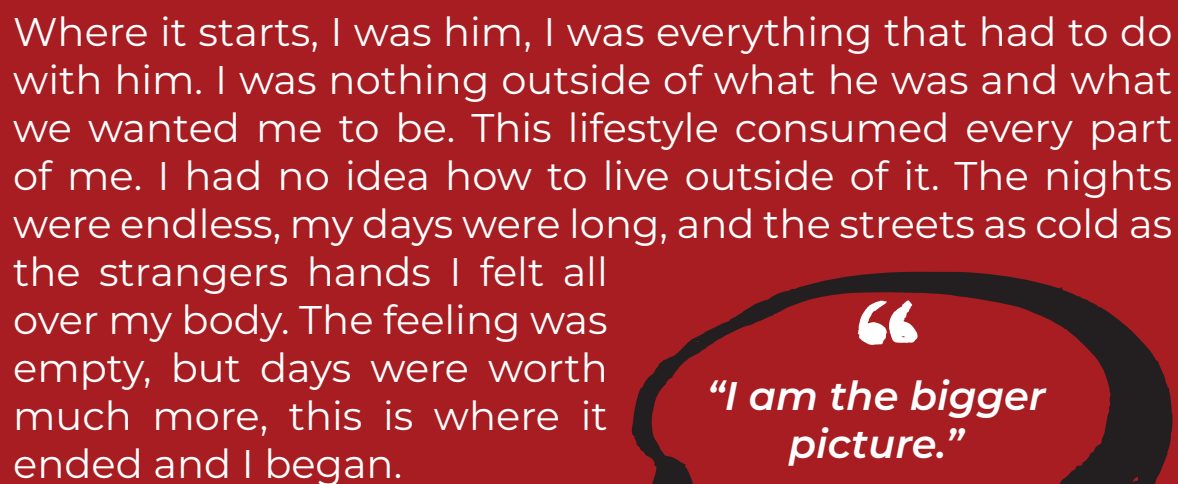
(NP, Participant 2022)

Before RESET I used to have an attitude of "why me" "This isn't fair" which always led me deeper into the darkness. Since beginning in recovery I've learned "why not me" as I can use my past experiences and help teach others like me you can turn your life around and have the power to choose a life worth living!



“Every day I get a little bit stronger.”

(EM, Participant 2022)



Where it starts, I was him, I was everything that had to do with him. I was nothing outside of what he was and what we wanted me to be. This lifestyle consumed every part of me. I had no idea how to live outside of it. The nights were endless, my days were long, and the streets as cold as the strangers hands I felt all over my body. The feeling was empty, but days were worth much more, this is where it ended and I began.

(HM, Participant 2022)



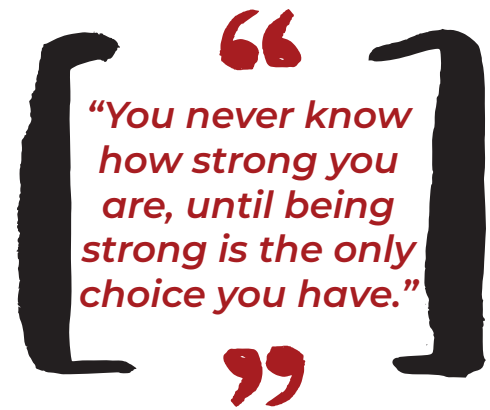
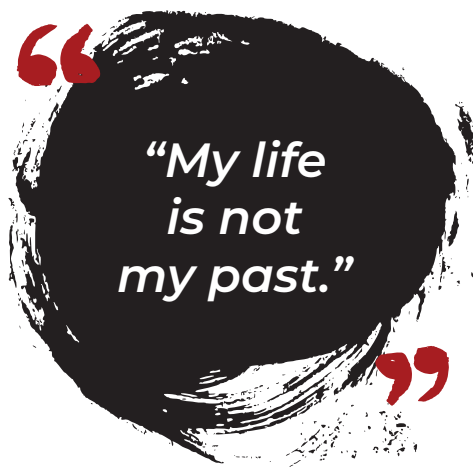
“I am the bigger picture.”

Blind to my reality. Lead in an illusion of his control. I was a child when I met him. An illusion that invaded my family impacting all of us. My beautiful children more aware then I wanted to believe. Their father, my pimp.

Years of twisted in years of chaos. Violence, crime and drugs became the very core of my existence. Rage and shame screamed inside of me. Endless fear that crippled my ability to have hopes and dreams. Transformed into a product sold. My pimp after 26 years dies, my children cried. I wipe their tears. I feel the release of his hold. Now it ends. No longer smothered under his control. Slowly I feel the release, I breathe. Shackled to the lifestyle, I reached out I feel hope. Now my healing beings.

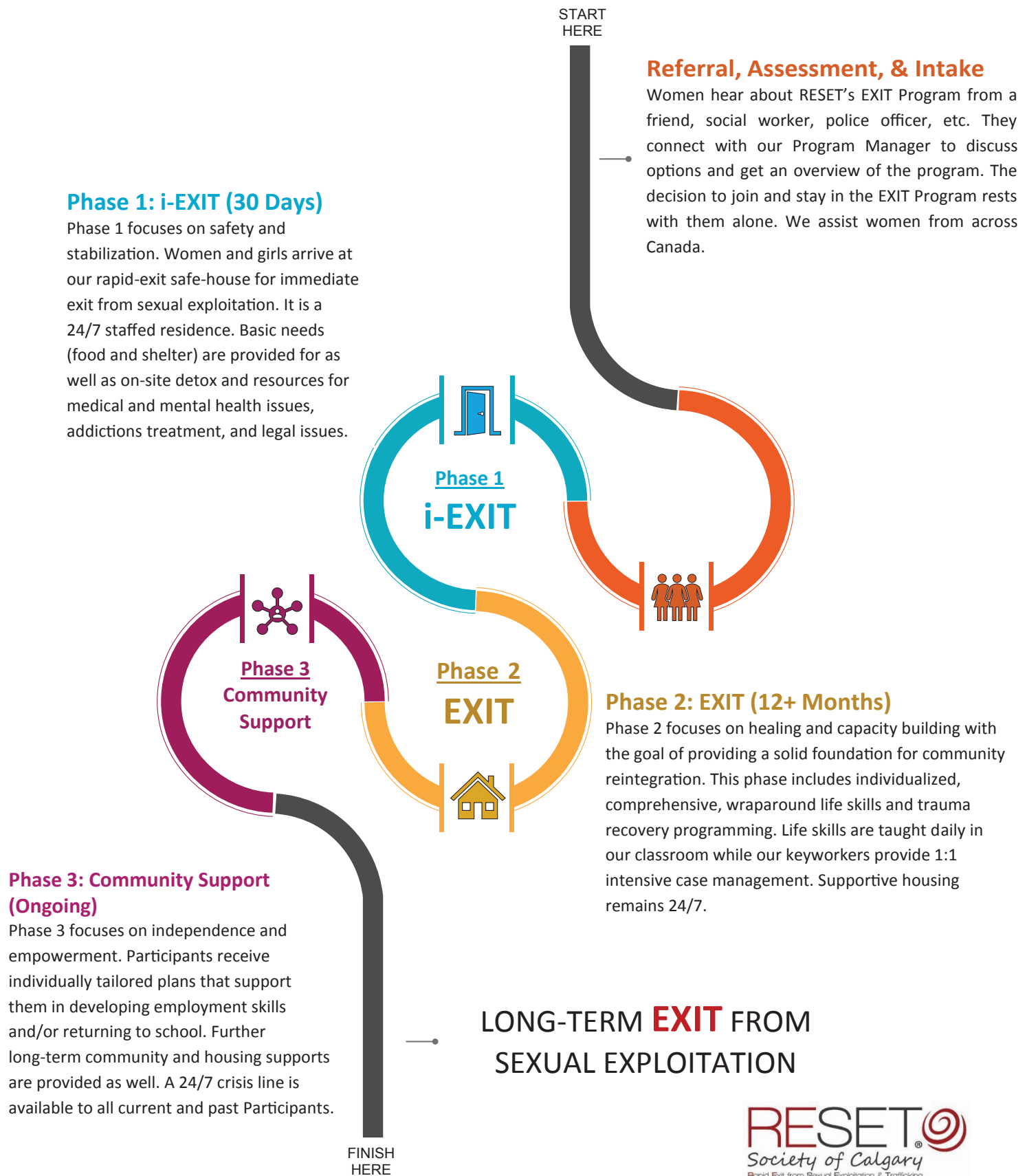
Today I'm free to examine what happened. When I choke on the words of past reality...there's help to release that hold. I'm free to discover who I am. What I'm capable of. Where I need change. I have the strength and the support to face the truth. I'm with ladies who know the trauma, shame and fears of the lifestyle. They understand but I am held accountable. In the faces around me I see hopes and dreams. We are able to safely find our truth, in our truth our purpose, in our purpose life. In life, we are free to thrive. Today I'm letting go of the false beliefs, and the code of the street. To be a part of a life I couldn't imagine. Building healthy connections and letting go of the old. I'm in the process no longer resisting. I'm continuing to find the parts of me that I love.

(BC, Participant 2022)



RESET EXIT Program Model

(**EX**ploitation **I**ntervention and **T**ransition Program)



Walking through RESET's doors was the hardest decision I had to make. I am grateful I found the courage and the doors were open. My life on the streets were dangerous and hopeless. Once I got here, my life began changing almost immediately through support, understanding, of the staff who run RESET. Since being in RESET, I am learning who I am. I have re-entered the community in positive ways and have re-established healthy relationships with healthy friends who used to be a great strength to me. RESET is one of the most life-altering experiences I have had and I will always be grateful for the opportunity this program has given me.

(JK, Participant 2022)

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“Doing the next right thing is often the hardest.”

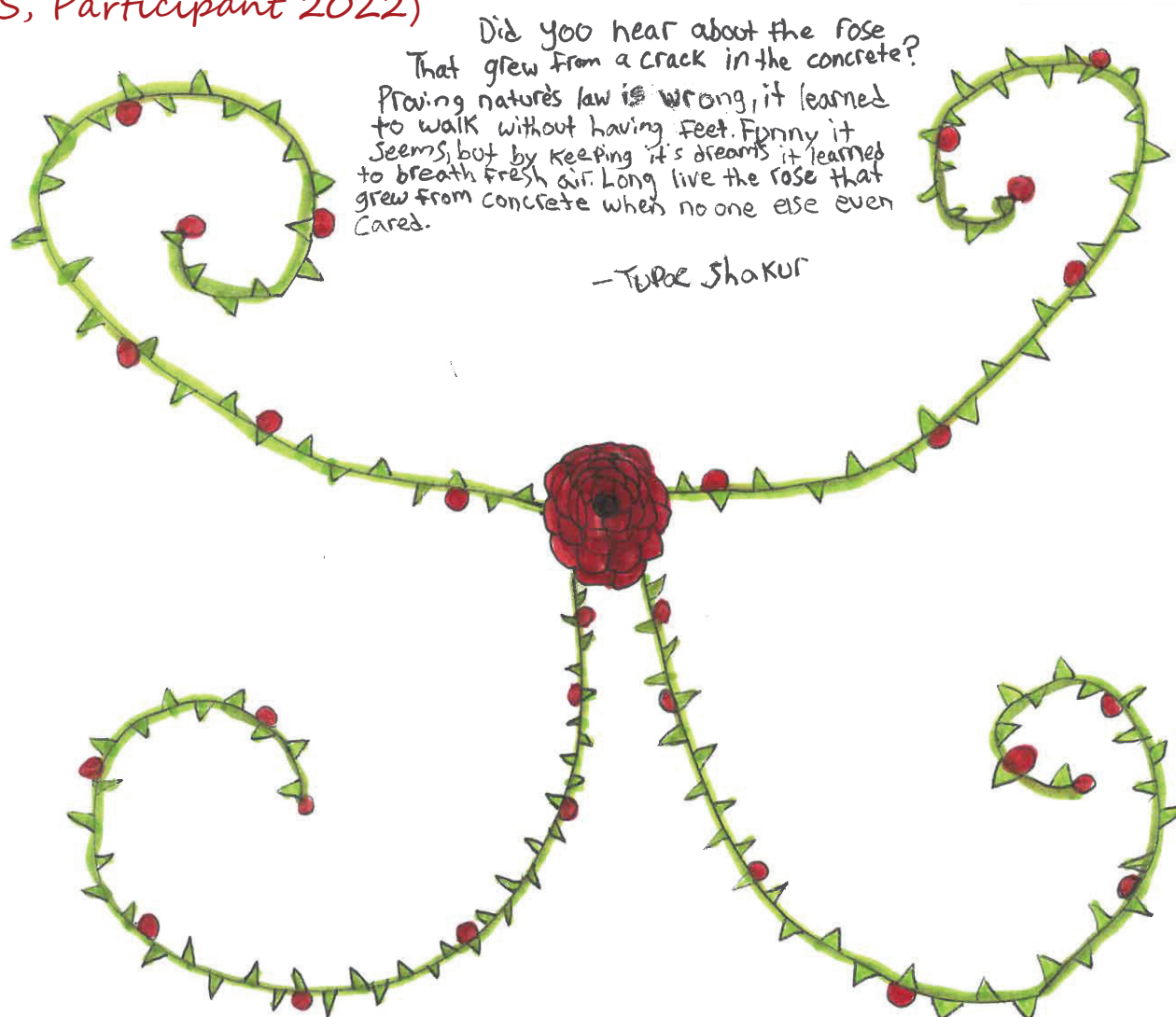
In my 42 years of living I have been through so much almost like a rollercoaster. I've been physically, mentally, and emotionally abused. Even though I have gone through all that I don't think it defines who I am it only makes me stronger. Coming to RESET was my first step in becoming me again. I am so thankful for this program it has helped me in so many ways. I gain new knowledge everyday. The relationship with my mom is growing stronger everyday. When I first came here in April 2022 I had nothing but the clothes on my back. Now I have warm clothing, a safe and warm bed to sleep in every night, food in my tummy and people who support me and care. I'm thinking more about my future and what I want to do. Also the chance that I can see my kids again gives me more hope and strength to stay clean and healthy. My children are a big part of why I am here getting better. Don't get me wrong its hard.

(KP, Participant 2022)

I am no longer the lost scared little girl of my past. I have grown strong and fierce. I now know who I truly am, and I couldn't be more proud. I used to be an empty shell where a real human used to be. I was angry and scared. I have grown so much in the last couple months. I went from the false version of myself back to who I truly am. I'm happy and no longer fear where my future is heading as I now know that the future is bright and full of new opportunities. I am actually excited to see where the path to the future leads me.

"It is only when we take chances, when our lives improve. The initial and most difficult risk that we need to take is to become honest."
— Walter Anderson

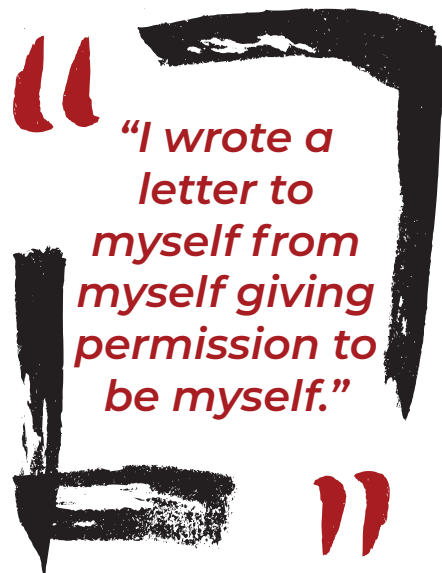
(LS, Participant 2022)





I am not my trauma, I am not my exploitation. My past will not define the trajectory of my future. My life began the day I walked thru RESETS doors. I have been allowed the chance to build my life up from ashes and dust and I am forever grateful for that.

(MI, Participant 2022)



I was so used to listening to him and allowing him to tell me what was wrong with me and what I could or couldn't do.

I was physically and mentally broken down for the last 15 years... stabbed, pistol whipped, ran over by a car and sexually assaulted more times than I can count. Until I had no sense of self left to cling onto. The minute I left was the minute I started loving myself again. Today, I am surrounded by people who love, support, and allow me to be who I truly am. I HAVE THRIVED.

(MA, Participant 2022)

After 40 years, abuse, exploitation, where had I gone? I had gone into depression, darkness, whole other person. I was an object, possession, money-maker. Being ashamed, hurt, crying, pain. Then the lightning struck. I was not needed anymore, death was upon me. I escaped, found RESET, they saved me. Staff, supporting, caring, positivity. Safety, food, bed. There is hope, belonging. Very appreciative, blessed.

(BT, Participant 2022)



Vision:

For sexually exploited women and girls to know there is a way out.

Mission:

To provide comprehensive, individualized support and safe housing to women and girls aged 16 and over exiting sexual exploitation and trafficking so that they may transform their lives.

Need help?
Call 403-918-7311

RESET®

Society of Calgary

Rapid Exit from Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking

There is a way out

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