

Money management

Housing

True accessibility

Disability visible or not

Healing drumming circle

ARTS

Domestic Abuse Awareness

Health & Wellness

Journal Self-determination

# Speaking Matters



**BARRIER FREE LIVING SURVIVORS SPEAKERS BUREAU**  
Originated by Women With Disabilities

Volume 1, Issue 1

July 25, 2012

## Survivors Speakers Bureau Is In Operation



**Our very first session - Exciting day it was and who would have known it would have been so much fun and a day of ease.**

When thinking about the elections and the "what if" we face more drastic cut backs. It becomes really clear about giving back and how it may be helpful that persons who use resources that are available for their benefit. This is not an easy time for any community in need. So the need to raise funds no matter how much money is in the bank becomes evident. No agency right now is immune to cut-backs or a reduction of resources for non-profits.

### First Year Pilot Session

Our speakers bureau started May 23, 2012. After much planning and editing and back to the drawing board, Secret Garden advocates in training became our first candidates for the speakers bureau, presenting women with disabilities seeking to establish themselves as

When the thought of the Barrier Free Living Survivors Speakers Bureau became a fruit, the threat of cuts were not that great. Theresa McIntosh, moved up the ranks of the organization, first she came to the organization for services, then found goodbye not so easy when she felt it important to advocate for persons dealing with domestic violence who may or may not be disabled. As the spokesperson for Barrier Free Living she constantly ask herself how farther ahead are we when there are so many buildings today, that are not truly accessible. Sometimes she would say even when a wheelchairs can get into buildings, then the bathrooms are not functionally accessible.

There are so many struggles that people with disabilities face that cannot all be listed here. So then came up the

speakers. With the strongest desire to give back to an organization that gave them so much. Being introduced to tabling as an option when starting as a beginning speaker before fully graduating to telling ones story as a speaker to schools, organizations, committees and

idea what can be done to improve opportunities for disabled women that they can go speak on the issues and make changes. To make a long story short Theresa and I spoke of options.

Of the two of us she was the one who could walk into a meeting and make this happen. She also wanted it to be clear that this was her give back as a board member of Barrier Free Living. Without Theresa's initial push, we would not be here to day and so we thank her for setting things in motion to have the outcome of Barrier Free Living Survivors Speakers Bureau.

So we are fully functional in our pilot year. At the end of August 2012 we would have completed the first four Speaker trainings. Keep checking Speaking Matters for our Bureau updates.

events. Those participating in our pilot session are envisioning the many opportunities that our workshops will open for them. With excitement they travel from different boroughs to have this collective experience. Marking an opportunity to combine skills and stories to make a more effective speaker.

### Points of Interest

- INTRODUCING SPEAKERS BUREAU
- PRESS RELEASE
- TRAINING - FIRST YEAR PILOT
- INTRODUCING FOUNDERS

### Inside this issue:

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# Speaking Matters

## Theresa McIntosh - Founding Organizer



Theresa McIntosh - No relation to the computer

Theresa is a mayoral appointee representing the voices of the victims at the mayor's office to combat domestic violence. She is a motivational speaker and a community educator on domestic violence in the disabled community. Theresa was given a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance at life and has made a magnificent glass of lemonade. Theresa story is truly about learning from one's mis-

takes and the resilience of the human spirit. Theresa came to Barrier Free Living in 1996 as a consumer and today she is not only a founder of the Barrier Free Living Speakers Bureau, she is also active on the Freedom House Board.

### TOPICS:

- ◇ Accessing healthcare and the barriers that people with disabilities face.
- ◇ Physical and programmatic accessibility to the services for the disabled.
- ◇ Developing resource material for distribution
- ◇ Domestic violence workshops
- ◇ Physical and programmatic accessibility to the services for the disabled

## Patrice C. Queen - Founding Organizer



Patrice C. Queen Believes we need to be more real and inclusive when addressing DV issues

Facilitator of Forum Theatre, poet, writer public speaker, who uses the pen and open mic. to speak on the issues of domestic violence, incest, rape, abuse and injustice as well as gender.

### Topics

- ◇ Child as DV Victim

- ◇ Sexual violence framed as incest
- ◇ Gender questioning as one outcome of childhood sexual violence
- ◇ Trafficking a hidden DV outcome
- ◇ Healing Drum Circle as medium to transform lives
- ◇ Domestic Violence Workshops

## Mission

*To advance the message, input and participation of survivors while telling our own story and creating the change we want to establish in*

## Vision

*society.*

*Universally, reasonable accommodations and personal ingenuity brings each to their greatest potential.*

*Free from exploitation*

*and intolerance, in which the barriers to housing, transportation, entrepreneurship, employment, social services, where people with disabilities have equal access in every*

*community, all the same, individuals with disabilities could overcome not only the barriers of the physical environment, cognitive, emotional, psychological and spiritual as well.*

## Antoinette Calabretta

My role as a case manager for Barrier Free Living Domestic Violence Program is to provide clients with support and information that enhance their lives and pursuit, in a safe way, freedom from their abusers by providing information and referrals in which they can benefit. Self Esteem, empowerment and believing in oneself are major components to be able to rise, in spite of the difficult

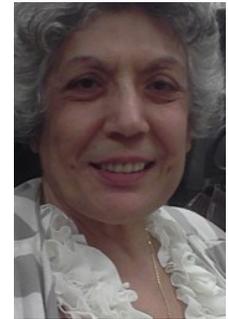
situation they find themselves.

I have been working at Barrier Free Living for ten years now. My education background includes a Baccalaureate Degree in Psychology with a minor in Italian literature from Brooklyn College; a Master's Degree in Liberal Arts with English literature also from Brooklyn College. Subsequently, I completed a four-year Training Program: geared towards the personal transformation using methods of psychology; religion,

philosophy and healing practice.

Though domestic violence has been voiced more, there is still a long way to go to make this issue greater; we still have to speak about it; give voice to those who keep DV secret, because they feel shame, fear being abused more; or they are not financial independent; or for the belief that the abuse is deserved or that it is normal.

*Abuse is neither normal nor deserved;* and together we have to make this cause stronger and stronger each day. We have to remember that *"Love is forever until it lasts"*



Case Manager

## The Team

It takes a lot of behind the scenes activity to pull off a strategy such as this. There were phone calls, emails, telephone conferences. Unsung heroes, which we could not possibly mention all that was done. These are persons who work tirelessly to advocate for prior victims of domestic violence. Now having a pilot program that moves

today's survivors into tomorrow's leaders, speaking on sensitivity of survivors with disabilities. At Barrier Free Living we learn that it takes a survivor with disabilities twice as long as any other group to leave their abusive relationship.



I am the one behind the camera (smile)

"NOW HAVING A PILOT PROGRAM THAT MOVES TODAY'S SURVIVORS INTO TOMORROW'S LEADERS, SPEAKING ON SENSITIVITY OF SURVIVORS WITH DISABILITIES. "

## Speakers In Training

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is in October. Introducing two of our newer speakers we work with to promote intervention, raising awareness, and empowering communities to put an end to family violence, as well as a sampling of our veteran

speakers on the issue. Whether you are looking for a fresh or more seasoned voice on domestic violence intersecting with disabilities, we encourage you to consider one of our speakers as you begin to plan your domestic

violence programs in the coming fall.



I believe the sun entered the room when her exercise was read with passion and reality combined.



Our candidates were awesome on their first day, giving us a feeling that our direction was correct, now on to the work.

**Today's consumers are tomorrow's leaders**

BARRIER FREE LIVING SURVIVORS SPEAKERS BUREAU

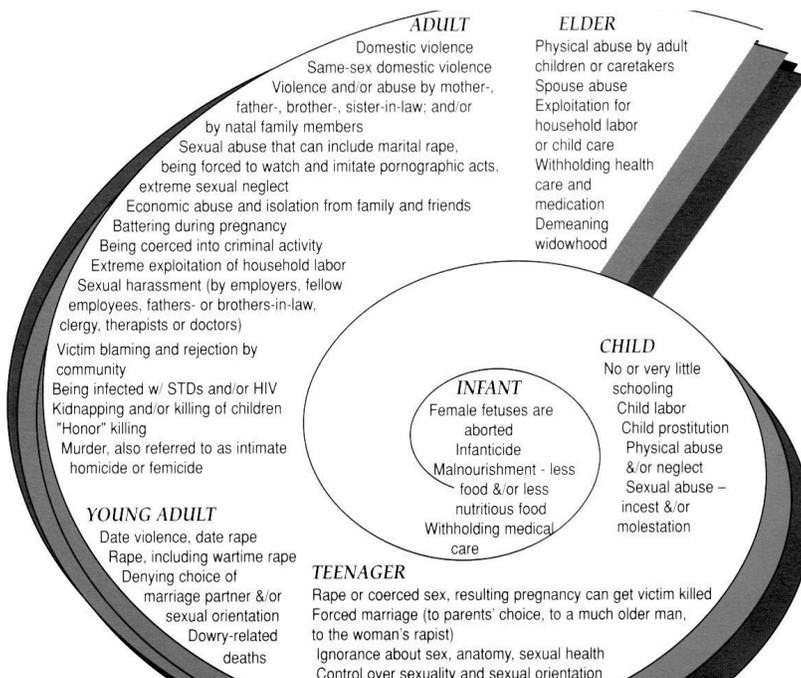
Phone 677 6668 ext. 330

Leave a message and we will promptly respond

[bflspeakersbureau@bflnyc.org](mailto:bflspeakersbureau@bflnyc.org)

[www.bflnyc.org](http://www.bflnyc.org)

### Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence



## Press Release

Let it be known far and wide the Barrier Free Living Survivors Speakers Bureau is fully functioning. Started in May 2012 we look forward to meeting your speaker needs for women with Disabilities.

Our founding organizers Theresa McIntosh and Patrice C. Queen look forward to your inquiries and opportunities to educate your organization, school, university or event on the issues of domestic violence and its intersection with disabilities.

Our speakers and workshops are diverse and we look forward to combining statistics, our stories and your needs to have an effective presentation.

We feel we are fulfilling a need whose chair has been long empty. We are wanting to create a new norm where we are telling our own stories, educating and empowering our community. Let us hear from you

Our contact information is

Phone 677 6668 ext. 330

Leave a message and we will promptly respond

[bflspeakersbureau@bflnyc.org](mailto:bflspeakersbureau@bflnyc.org)

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Family of Companies