

# Our History

NextSTEP of Central Louisiana launched in January 2006. We have charted many milestones along the way and are grateful for the support we have received from the community. We are proud of the difference we have made in the lives of those who have participated in our program, ***A Fight We Can Win***.

**2005**

NextSTEP held its first community education event featuring **special guest Denise Brown**, who came to Cenla on two occasions to raise awareness and help launch our program.



**2007**

NextSTEP premiered its **original musical drama, "Shelter from My Storm,"** a two-act play about the journey of a battered woman and her children from the depths of despair to a life of independence and fulfillment.



**2008**

The **National Association of Attorneys General** passed a resolution encouraging school districts around the country to teach teens about dating violence and healthy relationships.



We won a **Platinum Remi Award** at WorldFest Houston's International Film Festival for the Music Video, *Shelter From My Storm*.



**2009**

Every 10th grader in Rapides Parish was invited to attend a special presentation of our original production, *Shelter from My Storm*, during the school day. Student response was overwhelmingly positive. Consequently, ***A Fight We Can Win*** was created to take our message into schools, a year before such education became state law.

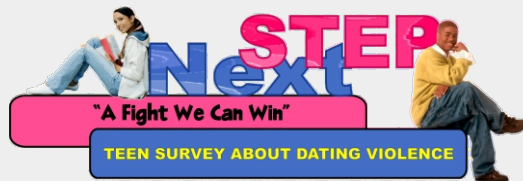


**2010**

NextSTEP was given permission from the school district to conduct its **dating violence survey** in middle and high schools.

**Louisiana Legislature** passed a bill mandating education relevant to dating violence for 7th – 12th grade public school students.

Surveys were approved by the **Louisiana Department of Education**. *A Fight We Can Win* piloted to freshman academies of two local schools (700 students).



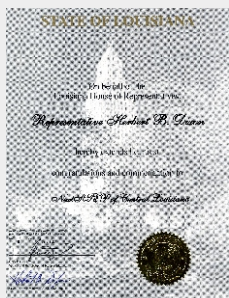
LOUISIANA  
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**2012**

**2014**

NextSTEP received commendations from the legislature (2012 and 2014) for its work educating Cenla students about dating violence and healthy relationships.



**2014**

In 2014, *A Fight We Can Win* creators were asked to help **draft an amendment** to strengthen 2010 legislation requiring dating violence education and were **invited to testify** before the Education Committee of the Louisiana Legislature.



**2018**

In 2018, Executive Director, Carolynne Hoyt, was honored by Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Louisiana with its prestigious **Angel Award** for exceptional contributions to improve the welfare of Louisiana children. She was the first person in Central Louisiana to win the award since 2010.



**2025**

As of 2025 the number of students educated by NextSTEP is approaching **40,000** throughout Central Louisiana, including cadets enrolled in the Louisiana National Guard's Youth Challenge Program.

