

# VOSES

## VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### **COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

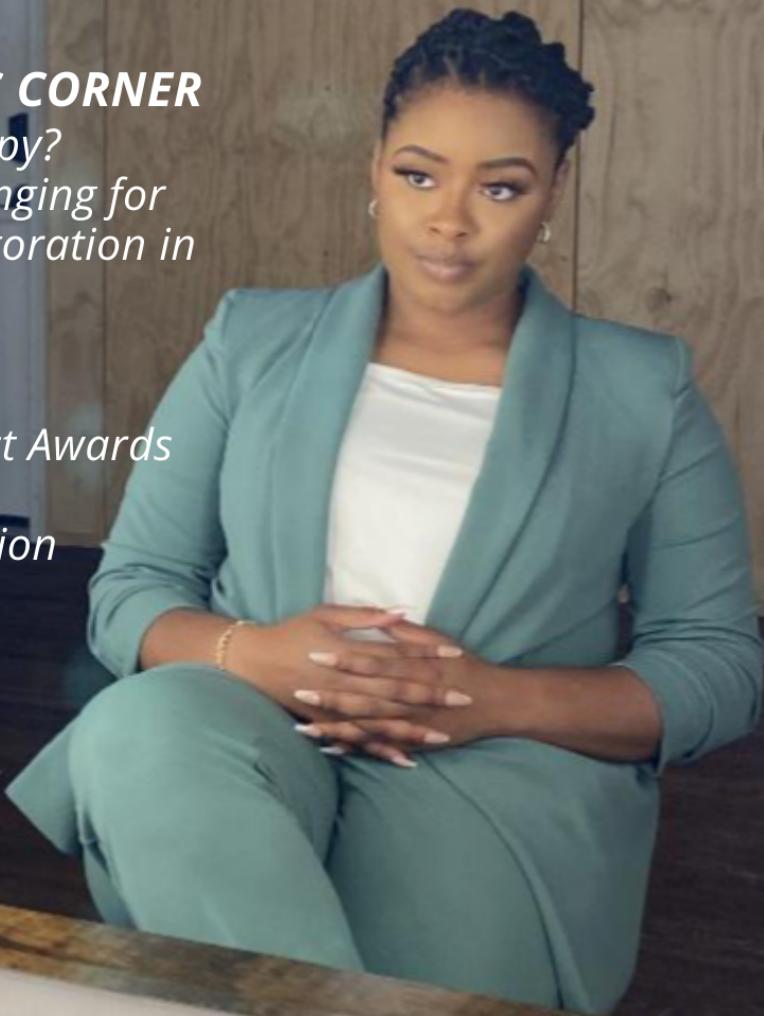
*Jesus and Therapy?  
Do you feel a longing for  
healing and restoration in  
your life?*

#### **SPOTLIGHT**

*Educator Impact Awards  
hosted by  
Titus 2 Foundation*

#### **FASHION**

#### **BEAUTY**



# RESTORATION

## RENISSA DAVIS



INFORM ENCOURAGE EMPOWER



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**VOSAS**  
VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

**AUGUST 2022**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**  
Jesus and Therapy?  
Do you feel a longing for  
healing and restoration in  
your life?

**SPOTLIGHT**  
Educator Impact Awards  
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**FASHION**  
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**RENISHA DAVIS**

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**VOSAS**  
VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

**JUNE 2022**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**Spotlight**  
Pretty Little Candle Co.

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**  
You Deserve Support

**TIPS & SAFETY**

**FASHION**  
Authentically You

**BEAUTY**

INFORM•ENCOURAGE•EMPOWER

**VOSAS**  
VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

**MAY 2022**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

**SPECIAL FASHION EDITION**  
Healing from the  
inside out

**Spotlight**  
Life After Advocacy Crew

**May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

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**VOSAS**  
VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

**APRIL 2022**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

**HEALTHY LIVING**

**Spotlight**  
The Power of Faith Foundation

**APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

# CONTENTS

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(314) 329-0277

## On The Cover

4. Letter From the Editor

6. SURVIVOR'S STORY

10. The Counselor's Corner

14. Tips & Safety

16. Spotlight

18. Beauty & Fashion



**Renisha Davis**

## **COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

## ***SPOTLIGHT***

*Beauty*



# Letter from...

# The Editor

## Time Of Reflecting

It's my favorite time of year! If you know me then you know this is what I call "Birthday Season!" Without going into all of the details, this is the time when several members of my immediate family have birthdays back to back. I enjoy celebrating all of us and the accomplishments we've made throughout the past year, but I also see it as a time of reflecting.

Every beginning of each year we have New Year's resolutions, but there's something about turning a year older and realizing some things that should've been accomplished by now, unfortunately are not. How do we handle that kind of disappointment? Glad you asked. Instead of always focusing on what you should have done, take time to reflect on the positive things you have done. Also, begin to make realistic goals of things you want to accomplish going forward. Will there be things that you may not ever accomplish? Possibly! And you know what? It's okay! One thing I have learned in my healing process, is that it's okay to make adjustments. I challenge you to reflect, forgive yourself if you need to, adjust, set realistic goals, and move forward. We got this!

*Dee Marie*

Chief Editor  
President/CEO

A community support group for parents/caregivers of adult children who suffer with mental illness.



\*Free to the public! Stop the stigma, stop feeling ashamed, and get your loved one the help they need!

Clergy, please pass the information to your congregants. Yes, pray about it but don't forget to apply action behind it.. Faith without works is dead!



**Gleam of Hope Community is facilitating monthly support groups for parents or caregivers for adult children who experiencing mental illness.**

**Date: Every 2nd Wednesday**

**Location: New Awakening UMC**

**8000 Natural Bridge**

**St. Louis MO 63121**

**6pm - 8pm**

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**Resources will be shared.**

# Survivor's Story



# RESTORATION...

**VOSAS:** First of all, thank you for your courage to allow us to interview you as our featured story. Sexual abuse has been a taboo topic in our society and communities for many years, and has been difficult for survivors to come forward with their truth, understandably. As we begin this interview, please feel free to start by telling us your story.

**RENISHA:** I remember being a praying child. Not knowing why this was happening to me or how I would get out but I had the courage to pray. Even when I didn't speak out, my tears were seen & my prayers were being heard. It was a summertime filled with Barbecue and fireworks. This was my last time feeling like a child. My mother's boyfriend raped me for the first time that summer. I didn't yet understand what he did to me and why he continued to do it in the absence of my mother. Now, I have little to no recollection of my life before that moment. Before what felt like a lifetime of abuse, control, and powerlessness.

It went on for about 3 and a half years before he was finally out of my life. The memories lingered. The damage was done. Grief settled in and my mouth was still shut. I promised not to tell anyone. I was obedient to him because I thought he loved me sometimes despite the perverted acts. We once had a bond. A father-daughter relationship that took a wicked turn. I was convinced that he was the only person in this world who loved me and I had to protect him even at the cost of myself. I was also fearful of what he would do if I did mention it to anyone. He told me this was something we'd take to the grave. I knew where he kept his gun, I knew about his old life, and I knew what he was capable of.

A silent war went on inside of me. My mental health declined as I kept all those secrets. Throughout middle and high school, I struggled with suicidal thoughts, anxiety, self esteem issues, depression, and more. I could not find a reason to live. I begged God not to wake me up in the morning but for some reason, I kept waking up. Thankfully, some of those secrets came out and I got the help I needed for so long.

Looking back, I am deeply saddened by what that little girl had to endure but I am so glad she was able to. I had a purpose then and I have one now. God is and will restore everything I've lost. Nothing can come against a powerful God, a praying child, and her destiny.



**VOSAS:** How were you able to overcome the trauma of your past?

**RENISHA:** It's an ongoing process. At first, I was just a teenager winging it and attempting to figure it out alone. I didn't know or understand the full impact that it had on me until I went to see a therapist. Therapy and community was a huge support to me. I also continue to trust God to heal and hold me through it.

**VOSAS:** As a survivor, what do you feel was the most important benefit of seeking your personal healing journey?

**RENISHA:** The greatest benefit has been recreating and imagining a life worth living outside of what happened to me. I am a woman who deserves an abundant life. Seeking my own personal healing journey has reminded me that I am worthy. I am worth the work it'll take to live a life outside of what happened to me.

**VOSAS:** Telling the truth about sexual abuse can allow survivors to begin to walk in freedom, but at the same time cause issues with family members, or others that may not believe the truth. How important was it for you to have a support system?

**RENISHA:** It is extremely important. I was intentional about having a community of people who know where I am in my journey. Telling the truth can sometimes shake tables (that's ok!) and it can cause people around you to react negatively so having trusted individuals surrounding you is necessary. I couldn't do this without them.

**VOSAS:** What would you say to other survivors that want to speak up, but just not sure how?

**RENISHA:** Go at your own pace. Your story is yours. Don't feel pressured to release anything before its time. You'll know if and when you are ready. Trust yourself. Until then, do the work.

**VOSAS:** Self-Care is also a very important as it relates to healing from any trauma. What are some things you do for self care.

**RENISHA:** I indulge in aromatherapy and lots of quiet time. I travel both mentally and physically. I write, I work out, I read, I cook. I enjoy watching my favorite tv shows or I simply do nothing. Anything that feels replenishing and regulating to me. Self care can truly be anything that promotes and maintains wellness.

**VOSAS:** Although we use the language "survivor" when describing those who are recovering and has overcome the past trauma sexual abuse, we here at VOSAS Magazine believe that we are not made to only survive, but to thrive. Tell us what thriving feels like to you.

**RENISHA:** Thriving looks like me functioning as the woman God designed me to be. It is directly connected to me feeling safe and free in my mind, body and spirit. Smiling more. Feeling more. Connecting with others. Trusting myself and walking in my purpose.

**VOSAS:** How do you use your artistry to help other survivors, or encourage yourself.

**RENISHA:** My art helps me bring everything to the surface and it gives me the opportunity to invite others in on that. My poetry helps me say the things I'm afraid of out loud. This has been both healing for me and other survivors.

**VOSAS:** Lastly, what are some future projects you are working on, so we can support you?

**RENISHA:** The Black Girl Project is out now! BGP is a collaborative album of Black female voices curated to tell the stories of African American girls and women. Check it out on all streaming platforms.



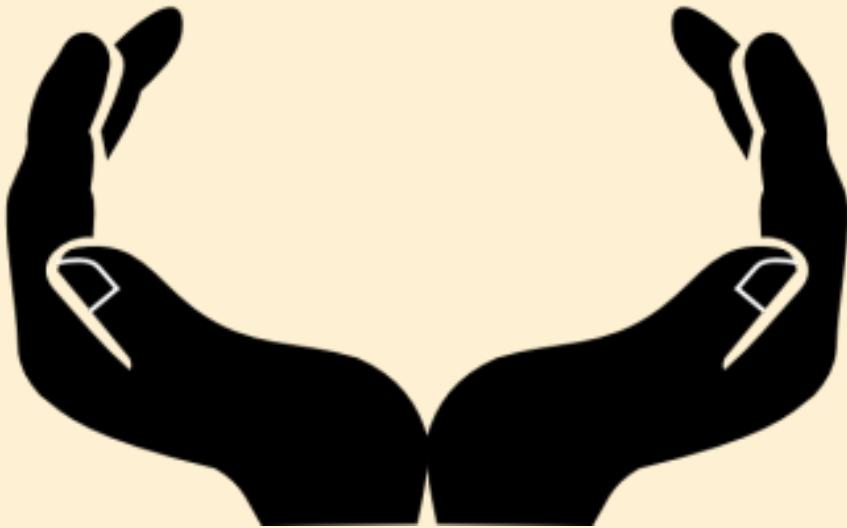
Be sure to check out The Black Girl Project - Agents of Change. The link below will take you to Apple Music, but it is available on all streaming platforms!

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-black-girl-project/1573932388>

A screenshot of the Apple Music album page for "The Black Girl Project - Agents Of Change". The album cover features a black and white photograph of several Black women's legs and feet in various styles of clothing. Below the cover, the title "The Black Girl Project" and the album name "Agents Of Change" are displayed in pink text. The release information "HIP-HOP/RAP · 2021" is shown in smaller text. A "Lossless" audio format indicator is also present. At the bottom, there are "Play" and "Shuffle" buttons. The tracklist is as follows:

★ 1	Affirmations (intro) (feat. Black Women of Lexington)	1:21	...
★ 2	Black Girl Anthem (feat. LeLowe, Renisha Lashay, Brittany R...)	3:22	...
3	16 Bars For Breonna (feat. Devine Carama, Renisha Lashay...)	3:34	...
4	Need You Now (feat. Renisha Lashay, LeLowe, DeZyia, Devi...)	3:19	...
5	The Invisible Girls (feat. Renisha Lashay & Devine Carama)	2:12	...
6	Rapture (feat. LeLowe, Javin & Renisha Lashay)	3:03	...
7	We Be the Light (feat. Ollice Spaulding & Brittany Renee)	3:05	...

# COUNSELOR'S CORNER



## **Andrea Jackson, CIT , contributor**

*Supervised by: Jean Moretto, PhD, LPC*

Andrea completed her Master of Arts degree in Professional Counseling May 2017 from Lindenwood University. Andrea believes that a primary means of change lies in developing a strong therapeutic and collaborative relationship. She utilizes a strengths based approach in working with clients to develop a unique fit to their personal needs and draws from several modalities including, but not limited to, cognitive behavioral therapy and solution based work.

Andrea has worked with clients of all ages and has dealt extensively with depression, anxiety, sexual abuse and behavioral issues. When requested by the client, Andrea finds that seeking God authentically in session results in healing and can lead to life forming changes.

Andrea is a member and also on the board at Moving4ward Ministries, a 501c3 organization created to provide the community of St. Louis and St. Charles counties of Missouri, a place where adult survivors of sexual abuse ages 18 and older, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, can feel safe sharing experiences that has caused lasting effects on professional resources so healing can begin. Andrea is Youth Mental Health First Aid Certified. Andrea is also a member of the International Honor Society of Counseling Professionals, Chi Sigma Iota.



# IT'S OKAY TO HAVE JESUS AND A THERAPIST

## **Jesus and Therapy: You can have both**

It is entirely possible to love Jesus and have a therapist too.

Therapy plus Jesus is a powerful commitment to spiritual, mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

"I thought the biggest taboo in culture was HIV/ AIDS. However, I now believe it's mental illness. As ministers, we have to assure people that it's not a sin to be sick. Your chemistry is not your character, and your illness is not your identity. If you have heart or kidney issues, we tell people to take a pill for that, so why is it a problem when it comes to mental illness?" ~ Rick Warren

I believe that faith and therapy are not mutually exclusive but there are many Christians that believe they are. They believe that if they have Jesus then they don't need anything else including therapy.

When we share that we are going to a doctor for something bothering us physically, or a pastor for a spiritual concern, there doesn't seem to be much hesitation. However for many Christians, there often seems to be a stigma when it comes to seeing a counselor in regards to a mental health issue.

When attempting to find mental healing; joining a support group or seeking a private therapist could totally be seen as a gift straight from God.

Support groups and private counseling are designed to help people discover who they are and can also possibly help to open your eyes to God's beautiful creation.

Therapy can assist in learning different ways of coping with pain. It typically provides a format that includes specific steps to follow, and tools to use for recovery. Once the guidelines given are practiced participants seeking therapy begin to feel stronger, and once they let their guards down they can also begin to have hope and faith that God wants nothing more for them to become WHOLE and HEALTHY people.

If you feel a longing for healing and restoration in your life, first begin with prayer. Pray powerful, breakthrough prayers for Jesus to bring wholeness into your body, mind and heart. Pray with an open mind, and be willing to seek out counseling, medication, and/or a support group for the help you need. The people He has placed in these fields are His vessels, to be relied on for your recovery and healing. Getting help from them is not a sign of weak faith, but takes a lot of strength and courage.

May you allow Him to guide your pathway to your wholeness.

"Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick..." ~ Mark 2:17

# TIPS & SAFETY

Click on the picture below to download this guide to help you as a family member or friend support a survivor of Sexual Abuse.

A Guide for Friends and  
Family of Sexual  
Violence Survivors



## Immediate concerns

The period following a sexual assault is emotionally charged, confusing, and frightening. If you know someone who has been sexually assaulted, it is important to address the following topics:

### Physical Safety

Make sure the person is in a safe place. Be there emotionally for them and encourage reaching out for additional support. Contact your local rape crisis center for free and confidential counseling and support or call the **National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE)**.

### Medical Attention

A medical exam can reveal injuries that may not be visible. Hospital staff can also provide treatment for possible sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), medication to prevent pregnancy (emergency contraception), and perform an exam to collect evidence if the assault happened within five days. Hospitals may have different policies around the time frame for an exam.



**COMING THIS FALL**

**"LET'S HEAL A COMMUNITY!"**

**Host: DEE MARIE**

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**PODCAST**



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# Pretty Little Candle Co

**Unique** ✨

**Bold** ✨

**Extravagant** ✨



## About Us

Pretty Little Candle Co. started as a vision December 2021. In January 2022 our creator Tia Latimer started her strive for PLCC. Our motto here at Pretty Little Candle Co. is Unique, Bold & Extravagant. PLCC makes handmade Beverage, Food, Scented, Themed & etc candles. "My uniqueness is because of my boldness, and my boldness is unique because of my extravagance" -Tia. Thank you so much for your support and always remember to be you!

[www.prettylittlecandlec.com](http://www.prettylittlecandlec.com)

# SPOTLIGHT

*SAVE* *The* *DATE*

 **TITUS 2 FOUNDATION**  
presents  
**2nd ANNUAL EDUCATOR IMPACT AWARDS & Scholarship Fundraiser Brunch**

**AUGUST 6, 2022**

Early bird Tickets on Sale beginning June 13

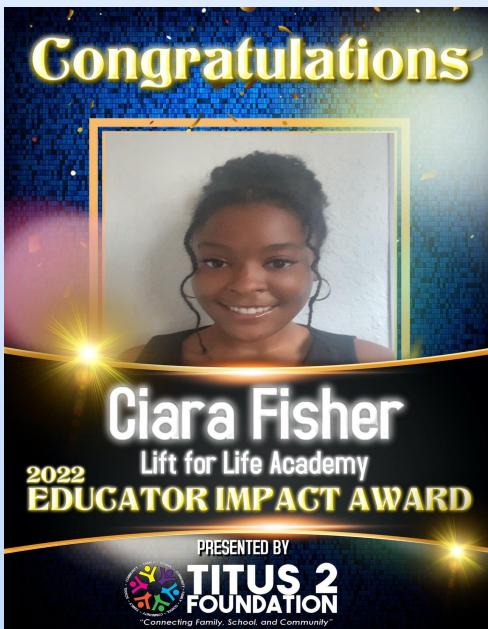
[www.titus2foundation.org](http://www.titus2foundation.org)



# EDUCATOR IMPACT AWARDS & Scholarship Fundraiser Brunch

This is the 2nd annual Educator Impact Awards & Scholarship Fundraiser. This year Titus 2 Foundation will recognize 5 phenomenal educators & award 4 scholarships. There will be food, prizes, inspiration, & fun! Visit <https://www.titus2foundation.org> for more information.

The Titus 2 Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to help students from non-traditional families navigate their high school careers and make informed decisions regarding their post-secondary options. We service students in school districts located in North St. Louis County.





BEAUTY  
&  
FASHION

# LOVE THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

When it comes to fashion and beauty, society has trends or what is thought of as the norm. And we as consumers follow the trends and style ourselves to what we think is in style for the season. I know I will google outfits to see what is new, or what I like that I feel is acceptable. It's just a part of wanting to look good, fit in with today's fashion, and keeping up with the latest hairstyles. That's all great and fine, but what is truly your style?

As of lately, I have been truly getting into what I really love. I am a natural hair chic. I absolutely love all types of natural hair, but my favorite is kinky/curly. I have 4C hair, and I used to hate everything about it. When I was a little girl, I would pretend to have long straight hair, and this is because society taught us that fine long hair was beautiful and short course hair was ugly. My thoughts have definitely changed since that time. I have found that 4C hair is so versatile! There are so many different looks that you can have. If you want to take a break from styling it, you can wear protective styles such as twists, braids, sew-ins, or wigs. But whatever you decide, still love the skin you're in, or should I say the texture you have. It's okay to find your own lane, even if it don't always go with the latest ideas of beauty and fashion. We are all unique and have different vibes. That is what makes us all so special. God make no mistakes when He created each one of us.

So rock that fro, wear your thrifted attire, or wear your sew-in and strut in those red bottoms. All of it is good. You are beautiful however you style yourself. Girl, keep loving the skin you're in!



## MAKING YOUR DREAM HOME A REALITY

Are you a buyer, seller, and/or investor? I can help. Contact me for your real estate needs!

[MonicaHenry@kw.com](mailto:MonicaHenry@kw.com)

314.324.8786

Monica Henry

REAL ESTATE