

# VOSAS

## VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

*Spotlight*  
**PLC** 

Pretty Little  
Candle Co.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

*You Deserve  
Support*

**TIPS & SAFETY**

**FASHION**  
*Authentically  
You*

**BEAUTY**

Releasing My Hurt  
**SHAKEITA  
ANDERSON**



INFORM ENCOURAGE EMPOWER



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

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JUNE 2022

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**JANUARY 2022**

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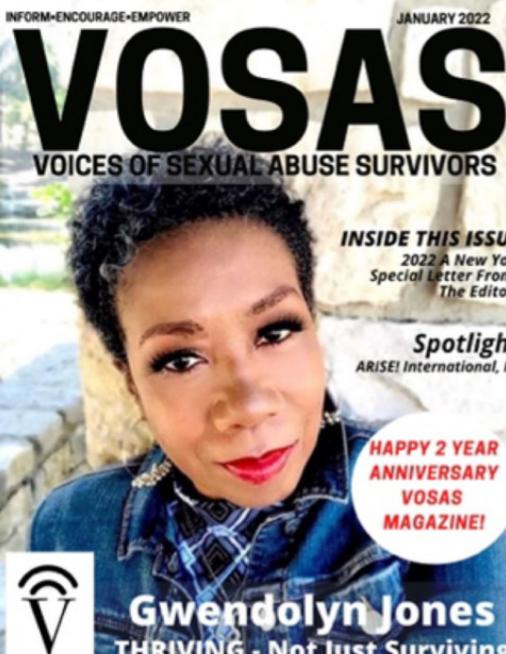
VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**  
2022 A New You  
Special Letter From The Editor

**Spotlight**  
**ARISE! International, Inc.**

**HAPPY 2 YEAR ANNIVERSARY VOSAS MAGAZINE!**



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MAY 2022

# VOSAS

VOICES OF SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

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

**Spotlight**  
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**Seeing Beyond The Shattered Glass**

**DR. KETRA L. DAVENPORT-KING**

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**APRIL 2022**

# VOSAS

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The Power of Faith Foundation

**APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

**DR. SANDRA MICHAEL-JOHNSON**  
The Power of The Mask



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JANUARY 2022

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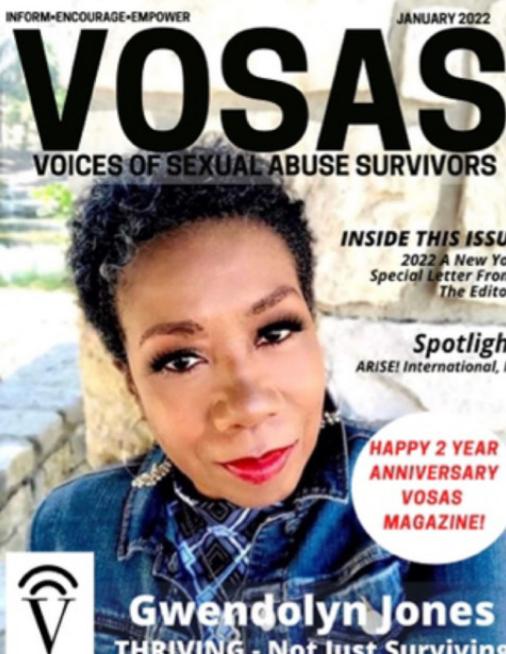
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**Spotlight**  
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**HAPPY 2 YEAR ANNIVERSARY VOSAS MAGAZINE!**

**Gwendolyn Jones**  
THRIVING - Not Just Surviving



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(314) 329-0277

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## On The Cover



Shakeita Anderson

## SPOTLIGHT



## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Beauty



Letter from...

# The Editor

## Small Steps Lead To Big Victories

**VOSAS Magazine is truly near and dear to my heart for many reasons, but there is one thing in particular that stands out to me. And that is the courage of the survivors that allow their face to be on the cover of this magazine to show the readers that they have decided to take a step and speak their truth.**

**Speaking up about sexual abuse is truly one of the most difficult things for any survivor to do. Speaking from my own experience, it wasn't just one day I decided to tell the world my story. There were so many steps that had to be accomplished first.**

**The agony alone of wanting to tell and finding the words can keep you stuck for years. I applaud every last survivor that has shared their stories with the country. Believe me when I say that is not where it started, but look at them now!**

**If you are a survivor and reading this, we believe you, and will always be your voice. Please don't beat yourself up for feeling like you should have done so much more by now. Every little step you take will move you closer to healing. Each small step will lead to a big victory. Don't give up!**

*Dee Marie*

Chief Editor  
President/CEO

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

*Gleam of Hope*

COMMUNITY



# NAMI (National Alliance Mental Illness)



**1st Meeting:**  
**Wednesday May 4th 6-8 PM**  
**Overland Community Center**  
**9225 Lackland Road**  
**St Louis MO 63114**

## Mental Illness In our Community

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in four people will struggle with a mental illness at some point during their lives.



## Statistics in Black communities

One study showed 63% of black people believe that mental health condition is a sign of personal weakness. As a result, people may experience shame about having a mental illness and worry that they may be discriminated against due to their condition. they live in right at the coast of the Semantics.

## Resources-Places for People

A Gleam of Hope Community will be a group where people can share freely about their loved ones and the struggles they are facing, without judgement.

## ◆ Types of Disorders

Learn about several types of disorders as it relates to mental health conditions.

## ◆ Types of Medications

Learn about different medications that are used to assist those with mental illness have a better quality of life. Let's end the stigma, especially in our communities.

## ◆ Side effects

It is very important to be educated on side effects that could occur with taking medication for mental illness.

# Survivor's Story



SHAKEITA  
ANDERSON

Mentally life was a blur; I never envisioned myself making it thus far. I lost myself to myself. My reality, my beginning, my innocence was stolen from me. I consoled suicide more than my own family. Grandfather, predator, an animal that naturally preys on others or, in my case, a person that ruthlessly exploits others; this was my truth. He was my truth and an ugly one at that. I've grown to believe that God won't put you through anything that you cannot handle.

-Anonymous Woman

Behind my smile is a broken heart  
Behind my laugh I have fallen apart  
Take a close look at me and you are destined to see  
That the girl I am isn't really me!  
Beyond my words there's a story to tell  
Every moment grows great detail  
Living everyday teaches me to tell you  
That the girl I am isn't really me!

My name is Shakieta Anderson, mother of five, multi-business owner, creator, poet, and published author. In my autobiography, "Releasing my Hurt," I illustrate the traumas of my early life that I call my undisputed truth; this is me, Shakieta Anderson. From ten to the age of thirteen, my grandfather raped me. My mother didn't believe my cries; I felt paralyzed inside my own body. I was terrorized by my grandfather's presence and shunned by my mother's protection. Here, became a synonym for prison and my sentence was silence.

I write because I believe that certain people are in positions to help others without them going through said traumas or situations. In this world, strength is more than just having muscles or masculinity, true strength is held within the mind. I've developed a mindset around the phrase, mental toughness, a foundation as a motivational tool because I believe that I'm chosen for greater things to come. I remember crying out sitting on the side of the bed with my gun, "I knew I need help!" "Lord, I need you, Lord, I need you," is all I could say. My guy at the time didn't allow me to give up. That following Sunday I went to church and got re-baptized.

# *Releasing*

## *My*

## *Hurt*



Giving my life to the Lord is how I overcame my past trauma. I had to trust the Lord and the process of being down at my lowest in order to receive the excitement and joy of the lessons I had to learn. Although my inner me has doubts and concerns my mind resisted the urge to break down emotionally. I worry about my success, but my circumstances tear me through the toughness and allow me to excel in all my goals and achievements. I make routines based on my past so that I can discipline my actions and control most outcomes. Order brings peace as I accept myself.

With self-acceptance, I am aware of my worth and happiness, leaving me with the assurance to know that my life matters. Learning me I now know that failure to control sets great disappointments because I feel invalid or as though I let myself down. I began to recall, recollect, and make the necessary changes to begin to heal. I'm still healing. My children also play a part in overcoming the past. I worry and shelter them from harm. No, I can't always protect them, but I do my best to make sure they don't have to experience the trauma I have been through. I found that healing also comes with forgiveness as well, I wrote a short poem titled 'Forgiveness,' talking about shedding our pain and forgiving ourselves. It takes a lot to forgive. I forgave myself first for allowing certain things to happen and accepted the things I had no control over.

-Forgiveness  
My hold is strong  
That anger is too far gone  
My presence has grown  
But you keep using me as a steppingstone  
Look at me through these tears you see  
With that pity as you keep punishing me  
Naw naw that attitude has you thinking you're grown  
No mercy is shown but how could u judge me with all you've shown  
Hurt and pain you ran through  
But anxiety and depression you give high fives to  
Resentment and grudges are your go-to  
But healing and peace you turn your back to  
When being open to forgiveness is all you have to do  
See my god is awesome and he forgives me  
Just as I forgive you  
Now as you see I'm on my knees praying to God for a great change in me  
Lend me your hand so we can mend this change that's about to begin  
Forgive me for I have sin  
But this is the very beginning of that power we can command

***“I forgave myself first for allowing certain things to happen and accepted the things I had no control over.”***

For me, the truth tore my family apart. Putting me in a bad place with them, I lost people I thought would be in my corner. Having the freedom to make and follow my own decisions is living in my truth, my support system was shaky. Thankfully, through my perseverance, I was able to meet new friends and make a new family with people who push and motivate me. I owe my growth to the lord and the people he has placed in my life because they played a major part in my healing process as well.

To any survivors that want to heal but don't know how to you I say find peace within yourself. With whatever or whoever you believe trust in it and the process. Having faith takes courage and will take more than just sight alone. Understand that not everybody is against you and that there are some safe places for you. Writing is a great place to start if you are not ready to talk to others. There are many different groups that can relate to your situation. Believe in yourself. I write poetry, books, novels, and anything that I can get my hands on because I believe it's a great start to talking about things without actually talking about them aloud.

Self-care is one of the most important assets we have. I vent through pen and paper and perform these different pieces across the country on different stages in front of people. In this new world, I created my identity as Shy the Poet. I've competed in state-wide contests and featured across the St. Louis area; poetry is one of those things that I've come to learn that once it's out of your head it's gone. I can release it. I also skate and dance, giving myself my own form of physical therapy.

I thank VOSAS Magazine for giving me a chance to voice my truth through this platform. Being able to show my children that giving up is not an option is one of my great's achievements. Talking to others who have been through pain as well allows me to be able to make a difference in someone else's life.

With this new world, I've created, managed, and sustained as an artist, I have always had a dream of standing in front of a crowd speaking to save the lives of others. Being Shy the Poet allows me to be able to speak to many different people on different levels and it feels amazing. I and a very great organization call Whois LLC, go out into community centers, and group homes and have writing sessions to encourage the youth to express themselves in other ways. I always make sure I talk about "Releasing My Hurt" because I know many of them can relate and to make sure they know they are not alone, and they can do anything they put their minds to out in this world. I pray it will touch the lives of others.

Being a woman of many hats, I never sit still. I am currently working on part two of "Releasing my Hurt". I thought after writing this book I was done but then there came "***And Then There Were Beauty Marks***". I will be doing a book signing so be sure to follow me and stay updated on the events to come. Be looking for "Gorgeous Touch" at many different pop-up shops. I customize tumblers, mugs, plates, necklaces, wood, leather, proposals, business card, brochures, T-shirts, and much more. I'm a Mobile Notary, I have a cleaning company "Superior Sista's Cleaning services" (Currently hiring). I specialize in hair as well. Feel free to follow me on social media. I along with my co-host, Host Pen up or Shut up poetry battles and Who's that on the Mic open mic's do please follow me for more information.

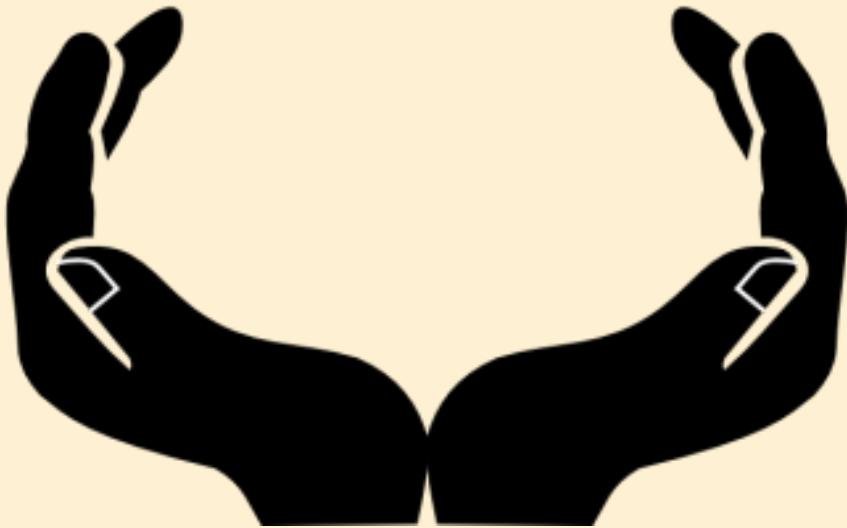


Facebook: shakeitaanderson

Instagram: Shythepoet\_lovingmyself4life

Photos By: Kamrahouse on FB & IG

# 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.





# NORMALIZE THERAPY

## WHY IS THERAPY SO TABOO?

There's a lot of fear that therapy, especially needing it, will communicate to others that we aren't "normal." In other words, a lot of people think that going to therapy means that they're "crazy", and they fear that others will think that as well.

Why is there this stigma about people going to see a therapist? There isn't a stigma for going to a medical doctor or to physical therapy so why are people so scared to talk about what goes on in their head?

I would like to provide a few statistics as well as some definitions that will hopefully shed some light on the subject of therapy and what people all across the world are experiencing.

Forty million adults suffer through an anxiety disorder and 75% of them experience their first episode of anxiety by the age of 22, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. That is a lot. That is a lot of young people suffering in silence who may not be able to talk to someone because they might be labeled as "crazy." They also may experience older adults telling them that they made it through their own trials without going to therapy so they do not need to go. Unfortunately, this is horrible advice and it is keeping millions from seeking the help they may desperately need.

One in five American adults has a mental health condition. Research has shown that these mental health conditions can be treated effectively. While mental health professionals are constantly trying to disprove the stigmas surrounding mental health, more people have acknowledged the value of modern therapy. Insurance companies are now required to cover and treat mental health conditions which means more Americans than ever can access the true benefit of therapy but even if you don't have medical insurance to cover this type of treatment there are different communities across this country and have places that can help those without medical coverage.

WHOIS LLC & PEOPLE'S CHOICE MEDIA

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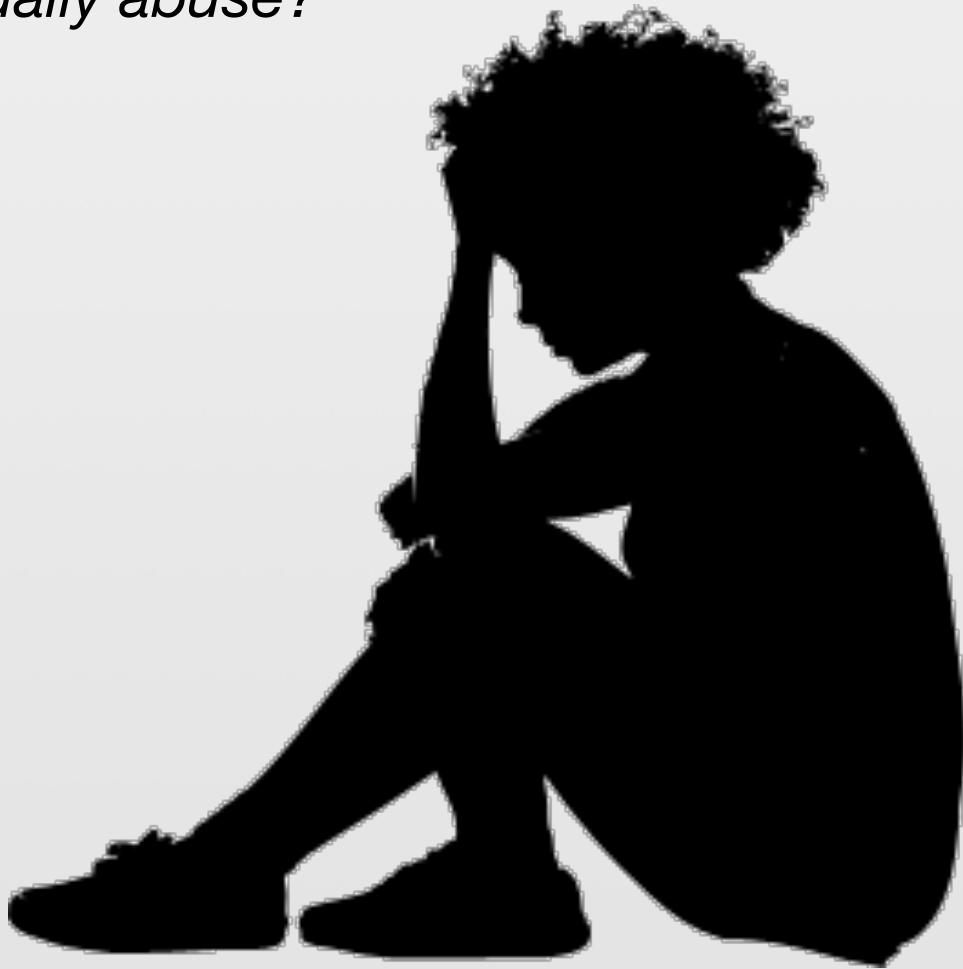
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# TIPS & SAFETY

*What do you do if someone discloses to you that they have been or are currently being sexually abuse?*



Most of the time, loved ones of survivors want to do anything they can to help— but aren't sure what to do. Whether someone you love has disclosed to you already, or you just want to be prepared for the moment someone does, taking the time to proactively learn how to support a survivor as they disclose can make all the difference. When the time comes to support a survivor in your life, remember this important acronym about how to TALK. Learn more from [RAINN's Family and Friends Toolkit](#).

# HOW TO 'TALK' WITH A LOVED ONE ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

When someone you love discloses that they have experienced sexual violence, you may not know what to say. RAINN's 'TALK' method can help you remember how to respond with empathy.

T

THANK THEM FOR TELLING YOU

A

ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

L

LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGMENT

K

KEEP SUPPORTING

[rainn.org/TALK](http://rainn.org/TALK)

# VOSAS MAGAZINE CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH

## WHAT IS JUNETEENTH?

JUNETEENTH IS THE OLDEST NATIONALLY CELEBRATED  
COMMEMORATION OF THE ENDING OF SLAVERY IN THE  
UNITED STATES. DATING BACK TO 1865, IT WAS ON JUNE 19TH  
THAT THE UNION SOLDIERS, LED BY MAJOR GENERAL  
GORDON GRANGER, LANDED AT GALVESTON, TEXAS WITH  
NEWS THAT THE WAR HAD ENDED AND THAT THE ENSLAVED  
WERE NOW FREE, TWO AND A HALF YEARS AFTER PRESIDENT  
LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

HOWIEHAWKINS.US

SOURCE: JUNETEENTH.COM

# JUNETEENTH

## FREEDOM SINCE 1865

June 19th



# SPOTLIGHT



Unique ✨ Bold ✨ Extravagant ✨

## 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!

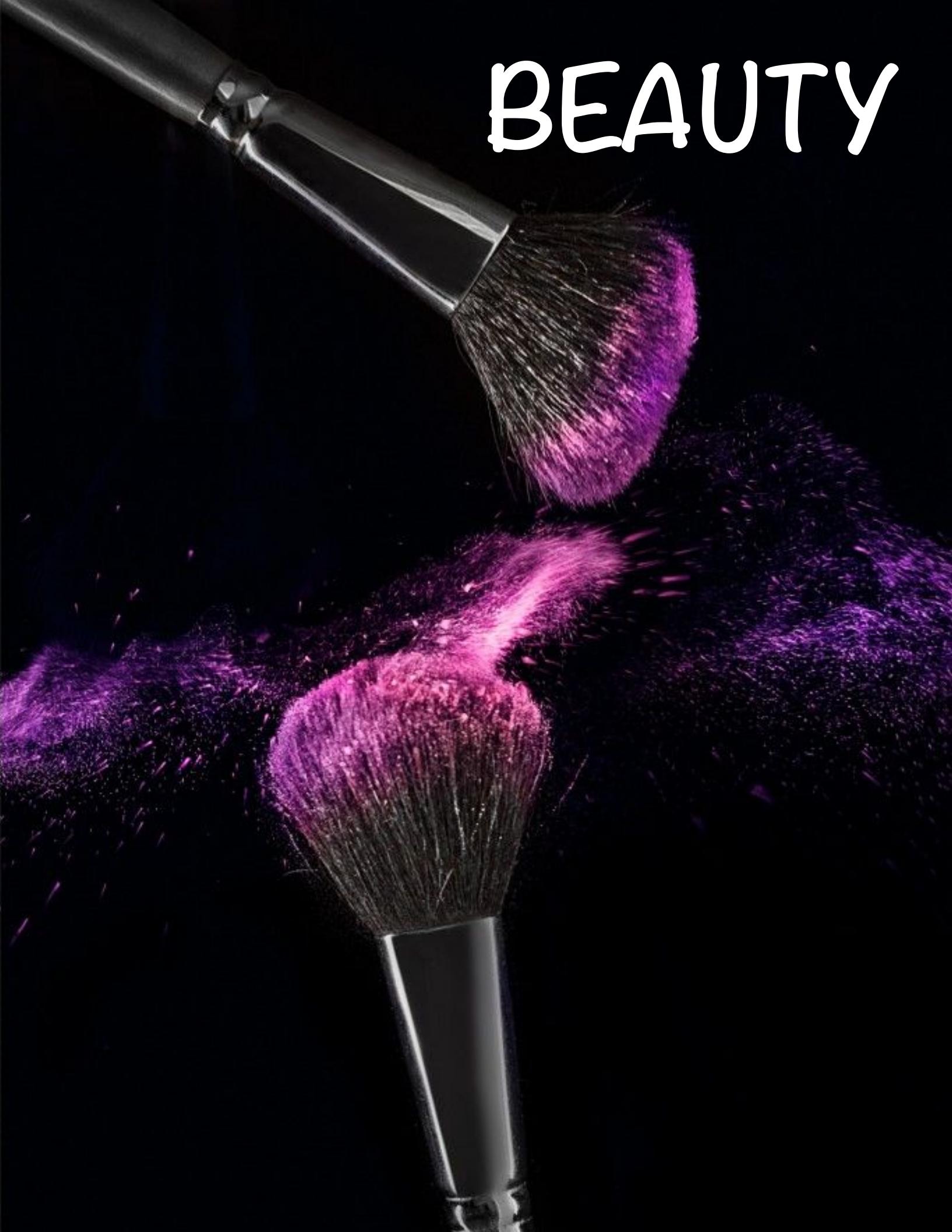
A native of Saint Louis, MO Tia Latimer, is the creator of Pretty Little Candle Co. Tia has always enjoyed the method of how candles worked and the amazing aroma they give off. She had a vision to design scented candles that were very creative and different from your traditional candle. Tia put her thought into action and that thought then became a reality when she launched PLCC. "I want people all over to know that it's ok to be their true authentic and unique selves, regardless of others' opinions as to what they may think is normal. PLCC embodies the unique personal of boldness that I wish for all everyone near and far to feel within themselves."



Owner: Tia Latimer  
[www.prettylittlecandlec.com](http://www.prettylittlecandlec.com)



# BEAUTY



# Loving The Skin You're In

It can be daunting trying to find that perfect foundation, figuring out the perfect shade of lipstick, or getting those eyebrows just right. But when you do, it's almost as if you won the lottery! I'm sure we can look in your makeup case and find so many products, some of which you don't even use. Trust me, I probably need to throw some of those products in the trash. But when we get the products that work for us, sometimes you don't want to take the makeup off! I've like a look so much, it hurt my soul to grab the makeup cloth to remove it, because I know it'll never look exactly like that again. But the truth is, it doesn't have to. Although I love an amazing make over, sometimes it's nice to enjoy a natural look.

Some women use makeup to cover up blemishes, scars from acne, or even emotional scars that we've carried from trauma. The truth is you are beautiful no matter if you cover up or not. Learn to love you in every state. God made you, and He makes no mistakes. He formed every inch of your body, and called it His creation. As we go about our daily lives remember you are God's masterpiece. Love the skin you're in!



You are God's  
MASTERPIECE  
Ephesians 2:10



STYLE  
&

FASHION

# Where Are You Going?

Business Suits, casual sundress, frayed jeans, or black slacks and button down blouse, all are fine as long as you know where you're going. One thing I've learned is that as healing takes place on the inside, it will begin to manifest on the outside as well. Feeling good about life, the situation, and things around you will cause a change to the outer appearance. I've heard a saying that says if a woman cuts her hair she is about to change her life. Usually that happens because there was a mindset change.

As the healing journey continues, and you're at the point of changing your look, be authentically you. Know who you are and dress where you want to go. Every journey is different and there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to deciding to have an everyday casual look, or a corporate business attire look. Whatever you decide, know where you're going. And not just going for that moment, but where you want to be in your life. What is the vision for your life? What goals are you trying to obtain? Do you look like where you're going? There's nothing wrong with seeking a fashion professional, or even a friend that has a gift of knowing how to put outfits together. Whatever your style develops into, or wherever you go in life, do it with grace and authenticity.

*Dee Marie*



# SAVE THE DATE

First class beginning June 17th  
-more info to come

## CANDLE MAKING Workshops

Wedding Parties  
Birthday Parties  
Girls Night Out  
Friends Gathering  
Family Bonding

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