

A New Leaf: Telling Untold Stories, Sarah

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by Candy Thompson

Sarah is a survivor, and she has faced life's obstacles and overcome them with determination. But nothing prepared her for her biggest obstacle: facing physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband.

Like any predator, Sarah's ex-husband fought to control his victim, isolating her from her family and friends, demanding to look at her cell phone at all times, and, worse, punching and hitting her to beat her into submission.

Through all this, Sarah was most fearful of what he might do to her children. He was constantly yelling at them, shutting them in their room for long hours and bullying them. Her twin children, Joshua and Josiah, would see their mother crying and in pain.

"I couldn't believe this was happening to me," Sarah remembers. "You hear stories about abused women but you never think it can happen to you. When I first met my husband he was attentive and seemed like a generous person, and I thought his controlling behavior would go away after a while. But things only escalated - it was my worst nightmare."

Finally, Sarah realized that his physical abuse might extend to her kids, and she fled one night with only her children in her arms and the clothes on her back. Initially, she stayed with a friend, but her friend said they couldn't stay long. Her mother and family were many miles away on the East Coast, so she had no family or relatives to rely on. It was a desperate struggle. Sarah prayed for a miracle.

Then another friend told her about [A New Leaf](#). Sarah and her children were accepted into A New Leaf's program, and at once found safety, peace and security. She made friends with the other mothers in the program and her children were welcomed with open arms. She was able to take advantage of the campus activities, and has enrolled in financial classes and workforce support.

Sarah now has a permanent home, and she is grateful for A New Leaf being there when no one else was. Today, she and her children are free from abuse and are thriving. "My life changed drastically for the better when I found A New Leaf," she says. "The gift A New Leaf gave me was the blessing of knowing my children were safe. I will always be grateful."

For more information about A New Leaf programs including tours and how you can help, please contact 480-464-4648 or visit us at www.TurnaNewLeaf.org.

Arizona Foothills Magazine and Azfoothills.com have partnered with the comprehensive, non-profit, and human service agency, [A New Leaf](#), for an incredibly special series; one that is very near and dear to our organization's heart. **"Telling Untold Stories"** will illustrate multi-dimensional and raw stories of real men, women, and families within our communities who have been dealt a tricky hand of cards. These stories are ones of despair - ones of defeat - and, ones of fear. However, these stories become ones of faith - ones of determination - and, ones of hope.

When someone is in an abusive relationship or homeless, they often find themselves struggling to find help, not aware of the community resources available to them. A New Leaf is one of those critical resources. The agency has been a beacon of hope, supporting women and men who experience domestic violence and homelessness.

The mission of A New Leaf is Helping Families . . . Changing Lives. A New Leaf inspires and supports individuals and families in their journey to lifelong independence. The agency operates Autumn House, a domestic violence facility in the East Valley, as well as Faith House, a domestic violence shelter and transitional housing resource in the West Valley as well as a number of homeless shelters for those in crisis.

Last year, A New Leaf served nearly 21,943 individuals with resources, from immediate shelter, transitional housing, basic needs, job assistance, counseling and after school programs. Victims of domestic violence are able to start a new life due to the care and support of A New Leaf's staff and volunteers. Founded in 1971, A New Leaf is dedicated to making lives better and fighting against domestic violence and homelessness in our state.