



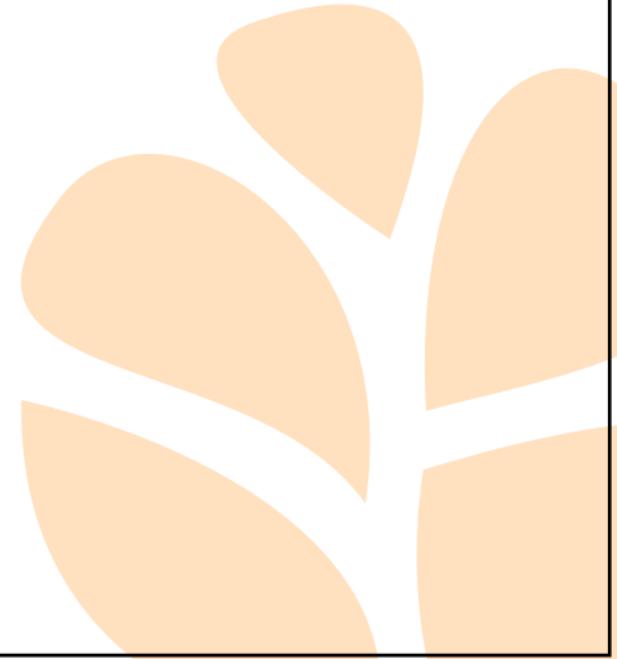
moving victims of violence from crisis to confidence

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José Raúl Pérez
Safe Horizon Board of Directors

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José Raúl Pérez
Safe Horizon Board of Directors

Dear Friend of Safe Horizon,

I'm writing to you today about an evil that I know all too well. It is one that haunted my life for many years.

My name is José Pérez, and I'm a member of the Safe Horizon Board of Directors.

Gordon Campbell, our CEO, asked me to send you this letter because of my personal experience with this evil — and to ask you to help us empower others who are caught in its grip.

**These many years later, one day remains
painfully vivid in my memory ...**

I stood in the kitchen of our small apartment, still as a statue, my heart pounding in terror, with my stepfather towering over me.

Andy glared at me in a blinding rage. At a massive 240 pounds his presence alone was intimidating. But his anger shook me to my core. He shouted at me, *stand up straight like a real man, you son of a bitch!*

I knew what would happen next.

It was morning, and my mother had left for work. Andy worked the night shift and was home during the day. I tried to stay out of his way, but I always managed to do something that set off his hair-trigger temper.

This time was no exception. In a fury, he reared back and hit me. It felt

(over please)

like an explosion in my gut as it sent me sprawling and gasping for breath. Then he picked me up and threw me like a rag doll across the room. I hit the floor with a dull thud. Andy walked over and picked me up again and slammed me against the wall before dropping me in a heap.

I begged Andy to stop. The punishment was relentless, the pain was unbearable. But he didn't stop. He kicked me with his heavy work boots again and again. I kept thinking that this time he would beat me to death.

Finally, Andy pulled me to my feet and told me that, if anyone asks, I should say that I was tackled by a bunch of boys playing football.

Then Andy repeated his familiar threat. *Don't tell anyone, faggot, or I'll kill you and your mother.*

I was only eight years old. Where could I go? What could I do? My mother was lost in her own denial, believing the excuses about my supposed clumsiness and bad luck.

So I did the only thing I could do. I survived — even though I spent weeks in intensive care and almost died after that beating. My mother took this photo of me in the hospital. And whenever I look at it, I feel even more strongly about the need to tell the truth about what happened to me ... and get people involved in stopping child abuse.

Four children die in this country each day from child abuse in the home. And in New York City, 68,000 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported in 2006 — a 30 percent increase over 2005. And typically, we see as much as a 78 percent increase in reports of child abuse in May and June. With summer now upon us, more children than ever will be at risk.

Children spend more time at home during the summer, closer to their abusers and more vulnerable. Temperatures soar. Tensions rise.



José at age 8, in intensive care.

(continued)

Tempers flare. And family life too often explodes into violence.

Thankfully, Safe Horizon's Child Advocacy Centers are there to help. Last year, more than 5,000 abused children and their families found compassionate, expert services to help heal and rebuild their lives.

At Safe Horizon's Child Advocacy Centers, victims of child physical and sexual abuse find the help they need — fast and in one location. The police (including a fully operational police precinct), Assistant District Attorneys, medical professionals, counselors, and child protective caseworkers are all working together under one roof in a child-friendly environment that minimizes the trauma and begins the healing process from the moment the families step through the door.

But with the increase in child abuse cases, and even greater numbers of children at risk during the summer, there is so much more that must be done.

That is why we urgently need to add more expert staff, extend staff hours, and build new Safe Horizon Child Advocacy Centers in Manhattan and the Bronx.

As I'm sure you can imagine, our costs for these increased and ongoing abuse prevention and response efforts are substantial — especially in this era of ever-tighter government funding. This is why we must increasingly rely on the support of individuals like you.

In fact, during these three months of summer we must raise \$94,652 from caring individuals like you to make up the difference between government funding and our actual costs.

It's imperative for us to bridge this funding gap in order to reach out to abused children and other victims of violence, so they can find the empowerment they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

Because we have such generous friends like you, I am confident we

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can raise these funds. We must! Please — I urge you to help with a special gift today.

At Safe Horizon, we firmly believe that every child is entitled to a childhood filled with possibilities and free from violence.

It is crucial that we continue providing the practical tools, emotional support, education, and advocacy for these children and for the more than 350,000 victims of violence and abuse who are empowered by Safe Horizon each year.

For so many victims of violence Safe Horizon is the sanctuary, the oasis of hope, help, and healing, and often the last chance for a safe, secure future.

Please mail your gift today. Thousands of abused children, battered wives, teenagers trapped in violence, and vulnerable young adults count on your compassion and on Safe Horizon as we take action, lead change, and raise awareness about violence and its victims. I hope my story will move you to mail your gift today. Please, support Safe Horizon. Thank you.

Sincerely,



José Raúl Pérez

Safe Horizon Board of Directors

P.S. With summer upon us, children are at greater risk of child abuse. That's why I ask you to please help us raise \$94,652 to do more to reach out to abused children and other victims of violence. Without Safe Horizon's innovative, expert services, victims of violence will remain trapped in fear, despair, and hopelessness. *Please* — help Safe Horizon be there for them. Mail your gift today. Thank you so much.

To download our tip card *10 Signs of Child Abuse*, visit www.safehorizon.org.

▼ I CARE ABOUT ABUSED CHILDREN ▼



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Yes! I want to help Safe Horizon in these crucial summer months so abused children and other victims of violence can move from crisis to confidence.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of:

\$XX \$XX \$XX Other: \$_____

Enclosed is my check payable to Safe Horizon.

Please charge my credit card, see back of form.

Put your compassion to work even faster by making a secure donation online now at www.safehorizon.org/Jose

PLEASE CHARGE MY:



Please print.

Card number:

One-time charge \$ Exp. date: /

Name: *(as it appears on card)*

Address: Apt. #:

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State: Zip Code:

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Our mission is to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities.

To make a donation by phone, call 212.577.5084

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Any gifts received above our current need will be used for Safe Horizon programs throughout the year.



Safe Horizon is a proud member of the BBB Charity Seal Program, which indicates a commitment to the 20 Standards for Charity Accountability. Safe Horizon meets all the Standards, which assess our organization's finances, governance and oversight, effectiveness measures, and

Please send me periodic updates; my email address is: