

SECRET SURVIVORS

USING THEATER TO BREAK THE SILENCE

TOOLKIT AND DISCUSSION GUIDE + DOCUMENTARY

Creative Actions That Inspire Us

Here are a just a few examples of actions that we've heard of that inspired us to continue thinking creatively about how to break the taboos surrounding the silent epidemic of child sexual abuse. We hope they inspire you to take action!

A Creative Interventions Story: Maria Posters the Subway and Confronts Her Family

Creative Interventions is a national organization running STOP (the Story Telling & Organizing Project), a community project collecting and sharing stories about everyday people taking action to end interpersonal violence. Many people have been developing *community-based interventions to interpersonal violence*. By that we mean:

actions taken to stop, address or prevent interpersonal violence; community-based or collective action — involving family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, community members; and actions that do not rely on social services, police or child protective services.

Maria's story focuses on the issue of child sexual abuse: Maria finds out that her daughter had been sexually abused by her former partner, and takes public action to address his abuse, flyering about his violence against her daughter on the path from his door to his local subway station. When she finds out that her own brother also violated her daughter, his niece, she takes another course of action involving her whole family. Maria shares how her actions are part of her own accountability process and how this helped build trust between her and her daughter. To hear more of this story, visit: <http://www.stopviolenceeveryday.org/marias-story/>.

Demand the Change for Children's Celebration at Mall of the America

Demand the Change for Children is a grassroots and multidisciplinary collaboration of individuals and organizations working together from a preventative, solution-oriented, child-centered approach to end the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. One recent effort brought together 52 agencies at Mall of America for an interactive, arts filled, day-long celebration of children and a call to action to join together to end sexual abuse. To read more and see pictures from the event, visit:

<http://demandthechangeforchildren.wordpress.com/april-28/>.

Lucille Clifton ShapeShifter Survival School

In the summer of 2011, queer Black feminist scholar and activist Alexis Pauline Gumbs (based in Durham, NC) organized a Survival School, a series of intergenerational educational experiences based on research on the definitions and practices and survival developed by June Jordan, Audre Lorde and the members of the Combahee River Collective. It is designed for the whole family and is

an experiment in the sustainability of community based Black feminist education for diverse communities. In 2011, the school focused on the work of Lucille Clifton, an accomplished poet who was also a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, a mother, an artist and self-identified Amazon warrior through her poetry. The Lucille Clifton ShapeShifter Survival School is especially designed for families that are committed to ending childhood sexual abuse and all forms of gendered violence. Informed by Generation FIVE and the regional plan of the Atlanta Transformative Justice Collaborative, the ShapeShifter Survival School is part of a holistic process of ending child sexual abuse by creating healing community. Lesson plans and more information can be found at: <http://blackfeministmind.wordpress.com/survival-school/>

OAASIS (Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors In Service) Statewide March

OAASIS was formed because of one mother's desire to reform the civil statute of limitations in Oregon, where her daughter had been sexually abused as a child.

<http://oaasisoregon.org/2010/01/hb-2827-goes-into-effect/>

"It all started when a mother walked into the office of [Oregon] Rep. Andy Olson. She was frustrated and angry over her daughter's inability to seek justice for her sexual abuse as a child because the statute of limitations ran out before she even told anyone it had happened. Rep. Olson was so moved that he gathered the forces and wrote HB 2827 (extending Oregon's civil statute of limitations in cases of child sexual abuse until the victim reaches age 40). Not satisfied to quit there, the mother drove to Ashland and walked from one end of Oregon to the other. She wore a bright yellow t-shirt lettered in black that said "Stop Sexual Abuse of Children." Truckers honked. People stopped to talk to her. Newspapers and TV news interviewed her along the way. It took her a month and she did it all wearing a wig and using the alias Joan. She wanted her daughter to be able to remain anonymous and was afraid of reprisal by the perpetrator.

This woman's courage brought other victims forward to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Their personal stories of tragedy overshadowed the institutional objections to an extended period of liability. The final impetus that pushed this bill over the top came on the floor of the Senate where Senator Vickie Walker gave a courageous and impassioned speech describing her personal experience with child sex abuse...

Many of the victims and friends that gathered to help pass this bill have joined together to form a new non-profit called Oregon Abuse Advocates and Survivors in Service, OAASIS (www.oaasisoregon.org). They hope to help survivors, increase public awareness and advocate for stronger public policies and laws aimed at preventing child sexual abuse and protecting victims' rights."

-Randy Ellison, OAASIS Survivor & Board Director

(Randy is also featured in the *Secret Survivors* documentary)

Prevent Child Abuse America's Pinwheels for Prevention

<http://www.pinwheelsforprevention.org/index.php>

Prevent Child Abuse America has adopted the pinwheel as the symbol for child abuse and neglect prevention nationwide. As part of this initiative, in 2012 the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass partnered with the Kentucky Association of Children's Advocacy Centers to place 5,035 pinwheels on the lawn in front of the Kentucky state capitol in April, to draw legislators' attention to

National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Watch the video at:

<http://www.kentucky.com/2012/04/05/2141029/video-5035-pinwheels-at-the-state.html>

Sex Crimes Against Black Girls Art Exhibit

http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/02/from_the_color_purple_to.html

In 2011, Shantrelle P. Lewis, an African American incest survivor and artist, curated a multimedia exhibit called “Sex Crimes Against Black Girls” in heavily-traversed shopping area in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Lewis explains that she was molested between the ages of 7 and 9, but stayed silent for nearly twenty years, until the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina triggered her, prompting her to disclose to her mother. She created the exhibit as a way to focus public attention on the various forms of sexual violence that Black girls experience at epidemic rates, often from Black men in their communities.

To Kill A Kelpie

<http://tokillakelpie.com/>

To Kill A Kelpie is a Poorboy theatre production co-produced with Stop the Silence: Stop Child Sexual Abuse, Inc. and supported by Creative Scotland. When twin brothers Dougal and Fin reunite following the death of their uncle, they share the day they have always hoped would, and would never, happen. Retelling his gruesome tales of a child-devouring monster – The Kelpie – the men talk to the wee boys they once were, shedding stoicism and sobriety in an isolated Scottish croft. Stop the Silence uses *To Kill A Kelpie*, which was inspired by and written specifically to support their work, as a primary mechanism to reach wide communities with direct and powerful messages that open the heart and mind and allow for transmittal of information and a push for action to end child sexual abuse.

Toronto, Canada Rally and March to Stop Sexual Abuse

<http://activistmagazine.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=567&Itemid=143>

In May 2006, 100 survivors and allies marched from City Hall through the streets of Toronto in the first annual Walk to Stop the Silence, a march to end child sexual abuse. Participants included a group of 10th grade students who debate what should be done to end the epidemic of sexual abuse in their civics class, adult survivors carrying photos of themselves as children at the age they were being abused, a survivor who built an interactive Child Abuse Survivor Monument featuring handprints and quotes from survivors throughout Canada, and young survivors speaking out.