

"BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST." GALATIANS 6:2

Emily Cope

RESIDENT TESTIMONY

My name is Emily Cope, and I'm 39 years old. I'm the mother of two beautiful girls, Zoe and Wren. I was born the only daughter of my parents' five children together. My father had three children from a previous marriage, giving me two more half-brothers and a half-sister. I was born and raised in a small country town called Glennville, Georgia. Early on in my life, I began to experience sexual abuse that would progress off and on throughout a large part of my life. I was so young when it started, I didn't even realize it wasn't normal at first. Once I did, I began to question, to wonder, what was wrong with me. Why me? Had I done something to warrant this, to attract it? I would ask myself these questions both consciously and subconsciously for many years. I felt desperately alone and was deeply damaged. I longed for companionship, friendship, and acceptance. I wasted most of my life seeking a love only my Savior could provide and the inclusion you only get from being a child of God. I made many wrong turns on my path to Him, many of which included arrests and drug abuse.

My toxic lifestyle eventually culminated in a tragic car accident where two people lost their lives. I was hospitalized for nearly amputating my foot in the accident. I was destroyed by the cost of the devastation of that day. My darkness was about to be its darkest. I had spiraled into a place I didn't see a way out of. I had fallen so far beyond what I believed I could survive or come back from. In my pain, I hurt those who loved me most. I lashed out at those who only wanted to help me. I was miserable, not only did I not want to live, I longed for death. I actually begged for it. But God had a different plan for me. He is so unbelievably good. He gives us exactly what we need. I was soon arrested and would spend twenty-seven months in jail where I read the Bible and began to get an understanding of God. In November 2022, I came to the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia. This is where I would come to know my Savior, Jesus Christ.

Here at the Rescue Mission, I have come to a full comprehension of who my God is! I have come to know Him as the all-encompassing, unconditional loving Father that He is. I have come to know the extent of that love through the precious gift of

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Jesus. I have found freedom, forgiveness, and purpose in this new life found only in Him. At the Rescue Mission, I have been given an opportunity to grow in this new life. I've learned my worth is established in who I am in my Savior and not what I've done in this world. Which in no way negates the cost or consequences of my actions. It simply means my past mistakes don't define me, my Savior does.

At the Rescue Mission, I've learned what real unconditional love is, how to truly love others, and mostly how to love myself. I've learned a lot about my hurts, my habits, and my hang-ups since being at the Mission. I've learned about my behaviors and why I have made some of the choices I have. I've learned healthy ways to manage and work through these situations I experience.

I am so grateful for the experience of my time here, and the importance of love and support in my sisterhood and community. I will forever be thankful for my time at the Rescue Mission. I have come to know the love of my sisters, my community, and most importantly my Savior, my God. I am learning to live in accordance with who God has called me to be, as a mother, a daughter, a sister, a woman, and His child.



Georgia Domestic Violence Statistics

In 2022, there were **18** deaths in Central Georgia as a result of Domestic Violence.

9 in Bibb Co.
6 in Houston Co.
1 in Jones Co.
1 in Monroe Co.
1 in Peach Co.
and 193 total for Georgia.

Georgia was recently ranked **10th** in the nation for its rate of men killing women.

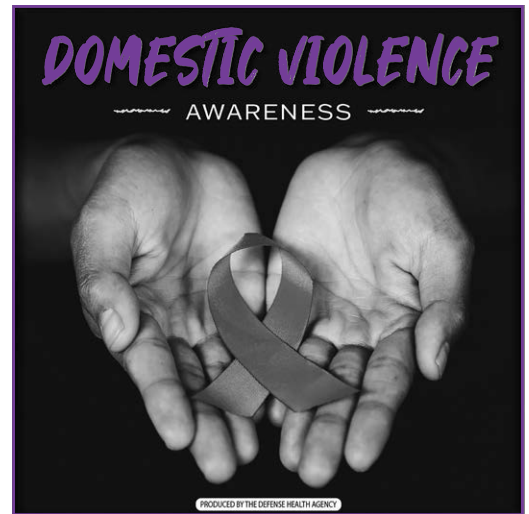
Firearms were the cause of death in **73%** of recorded domestic violence fatalities in 2019.

49% of victims in cases studied by Georgia's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project began their relationship with the person who eventually killed them when they were between the ages of 13-24.

In **37%** of the cases studied by Georgia's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, children witnessed the domestic violence homicide.

In 2019, **7,530** victims made a request for shelter, but their request was not met due to lack of space.

— OCTOBER IS — DOMESTIC VIOLENce AWARENESS MONTH



Domestic Violence Awareness Month

was launched nationwide in October 1987 to connect individuals and organizations working on domestic violence issues while raising awareness for those issues. Over the past 30 years, much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors and to hold abusers accountable.

Domestic violence is a serious problem that affects everyone and causes damage to families and communities that can last for generations. **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** is an opportunity to engage our community in conversations about this issue, show our support for those whose lives have been affected, and share resources in our local community.

To raise awareness and help prevent abuse, the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia has the following events planned during the month of October. We believe that it is our responsibility to Stand Up, Step Up, and Speak Up against domestic violence.

Candlelight Vigil

Join us to honor victims of domestic violence and their families, celebrate the successes of survivors, and take a stand against abuse in our community.

October 24, 2023
6-7:30 pm
Rosa Parks Square
701 Poplar Street
Macon, Georgia

Purple Pinwheels

We are partnering again with the Shoppes at River Crossing to display pinwheels that represent a person who died during a domestic violence incident in the state of Georgia. We will have a table set up on October 10th and 28th and invite you to stop by and see us.

October 1 – 31, 2023
the Shoppes at River Crossing
5080 Riverside Drive
Macon, Georgia

Thrift Ministry Sale

We will have special savings at both thrift store locations. Notifications of sales will be posted on Facebook.

October 1 – 31, 2023
Bargain Center
3375 Napier Avenue & Barn Center
6601 Zebulon Rd
Macon, Georgia

Why Do Victims Stay?

When it is a viable option, it is best for victims to do what they can to escape their abusers. However, this is not the case in all situations. Abusers repeatedly go to extremes to prevent the victim from leaving. In fact, leaving an abuser is the most dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence. One study found in interviews with men who have killed their wives that either threats of separation by their partner or actual separations were most often the precipitating events that led to the murder.

A victim's reasons for staying with their abusers are extremely complex and, in most cases, are based on the reality that their abuser will follow through with the threats they have used to keep them trapped:

- the abuser will hurt or kill them
- they will hurt or kill the kids
- they will win custody of the children
- they will harm or kill pets or others
- they will ruin their victim financially

The victim in violent relationships know their abuser best and fully know the extent to which they will go to make sure they have and can maintain control over the victim. The victim literally may not be able to safely escape or protect those they love.

Domestic violence can affect anyone



1 in 4 women



1 in 7 men

will experience domestic violence.



Domestic Violence National Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia
Women's Life-Recovery Program
478-743-5445 ext. 308

Complete the enclosed reply card or donate online at
rescuemissionga.com/newsletters



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dawn@rescuemissionga.com



478-743-5445



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3375 Napier Avenue, Macon
478-743-5445 ext. 317

Barn Center
6601 Zebulon Road, Macon
478-743-5445 ext. 406

Donation Pick-Up
Steve Floyd, 478-743-5445 ext. 314