



Sharing Circles Bring Hope and Healing to Women of Repairers of the Breach

by Anique N. Ruiz, M.A., J.D., C.N.M.

On February 6, 2014, The Journey For Women, Inc. held its first *Sharing Circles* in the Women's Safe Haven at the Repairers of the Breach Center in Milwaukee.

Approximately twelve women attended the session that day—most of them homeless or displaced—and the discussion was intense. There, women openly confessed their despair over hurtful situations and health conditions, their need for love and acceptance, and their desire for meaningful change in their lives. They also shared their reluctance to discuss their challenges in other settings where men are present, for fear that these men will prey on their confessed vulnerabilities.

“When I listen to other women it helps me to cope with mine [problems] better. The group helped me to relate to my daughter better as she gets older. My daughter is doing better. This group has really helped me a whole lot, to be a better mom and a better listener.” —Margaret B.

“I love this [the *Sharing Circles*] so much because it makes me feel special inside in my heart. [I would encourage others to] come to the women's group to feel better [and] feel happy. [You need women to feel better, not putting you down.” —Katrina O.

“This group has been an inspiration to me since the group started. I have enjoyed every class I’ve come to, and I miss it now that I am in school. It has changed my thinking a lot. For example, now I can talk to people I couldn’t talk to and stand in a room with people I couldn’t stand. People should come to the group because it is a good place to get things off of your chest. It’s easier to talk in a group of just women versus women and men.” —Cossandra S.

After the first session, women were invited to join hands in prayer in the first of dozens of *Sharing Circles* to be held over the next several months. After the prayer, all of the women hugged, cried, and made assurances to return to the next session. And they did.

“To see the impact of these circles and the power of love, hope and faith in the lives of women with physical, mental, and spiritual challenges is such a rewarding experience for me. Having left my job at a large law firm to begin this effort, I am so grateful to God for giving me the opportunity to share what He has given me with the women of “the Breach.” It is an honor to lock arms with them and share in each of their journeys.” —Anique Ruiz, Founder, The Journey For Women, Inc. and facilitator of *Sharing Circles* at Repairers of the Breach

The Journey For Women, Inc. is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, whose mission is to provide women of all socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities with support to address their spiritual, physical, mental and emotional needs. This support is offered in a variety of ways, including collaborations with organizations such as Repairers of the Breach. In the end, the goal of the organization is to empower women to move forward from life’s challenges in order to fulfill their God-given purpose in life.

Women from all walks of life are welcome to attend *Sharing Circles* at the Repairers of the Breach Center, 1335 W. Vliet Street in Milwaukee. They are held every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Those interested can also follow The Journey For Women, Inc. on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or through its blog site at thejourneyforwomen.wordpress.com.