

A Breeze Of Hope



A BREEZE OF HOPE

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



WHAT WE DO

Prevent sexual violence against children

Restore the lives of child survivors of sexual violence

Promote healthy childhood development

Dear Friends,

2020 has been a difficult year for the entire world, and Bolivia is no exception. We've faced intense political instability, turbulent regime change, an ever-worsening COVID-19 pandemic, and skyrocketing rates of sexual violence against children. In fact, since the Bolivian Government began enforcing restrictions in March to curb the spread of COVID-19, authorities have registered more than 50 infanticides, 500 rapes, and 35,000 teenage pregnancies. Bolivian health experts suspect that nearly all of these teenage pregnancies are the result of incestuous rape and that the cited figures are gross underestimates. Put succinctly, COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing social problems in Bolivia and has provoked widespread economic hardship.

Yet we hold fast to hope. Amid the chaos, humanity is still coming together to forge paths of solidarity and reciprocity. We remain strong and undeterred in our mission to serve child survivors of sexual violence. To meet the additional demands during these hard times, we've taken the following actions:

- **WHO Guidelines and PPE:** We are adhering to the WHO's health recommendations and we're providing our staff and the families we serve with masks, gloves, and other PPE to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- **Mobile/Text Friendly Hotline:** In April 2020, we launched Bolivia's first dedicated hotlines for childhood sexual violence. Our aim was to connect with children and adolescents trapped with aggressors at home during Bolivia's strict quarantine. We connected with many women and girls who needed life-saving responses and who are now receiving support at our center.
- **Rapid Response Team:** Also, during the height of Bolivia's Covid-19 lockdown, we strengthened our relationship with special forces police and prosecutors to coordinate rapid interventions in high-risk situations. We were able to respond to urgent circumstances even during strict quarantine.
- **Food, and Hygiene supplies for families in need:** In partnership with UNICEF and Global Fund for Women we have provided food and essential supplies to more than 300 families at our center who are facing extreme economic hardships and poverty as a result of COVID-19. These provisions are preventing many women and girls from re-entering oppressive economic relationships.
- **Virtual Healing Communities:** We have transitioned nearly all of our work to online platforms, and we've been providing families with online individual and group therapy, as well as attending trials and hearings online.
- **Online Education Support:** Also, because Bolivia canceled the 2020 academic year, we've been providing online education support to ensure the children in our programs don't fall behind. When school starts in 2021, they'll be bumped up a grade, and we want them to be ready!

The strength of compassion shines brightest in difficult times. We thank you for being part of A Breeze of Hope and its efforts to nurture healing and justice.

With gratitude and hope,

Brisa & Parker
Co-founders



MISSION

1. **Restore** the lives of those who've suffered childhood sexual violence by providing free, holistic support.
2. **Prevent** sexual violence through trans-disciplinary prevention strategies.
3. **Promote** healthy comprehensive childhood development.

VISION

We envision a world in which children grow up in loving and richly nurturing environments where they experience the fullness of life.

AWARDS





Esther's Story



July 2016 seemed like a new beginning for me, my mother, and my siblings. My mom remarried, and my new stepdad seemed to be a decent man. He was very sweet to my mom and worked hard to make sure our needs were met. He helped around the house every evening and ensured we had time to do family activities.

Eight months after the marriage, my new stepdad suddenly changed from a gentle and humble man into a brutal, heartless criminal. He bloodied my mom's face and choked her until she collapsed to the floor. Just before the beating, my mom asked him how much the groceries cost. I watched it all.

A few weeks later he beat my mom until she lost consciousness. He broke her jaw and said he would kill us if we told the police. After that, we had to have his permission to leave home.

My life was engulfed by ever increasing violence and constant fear. Just when I thought things couldn't get worse, they did. My stepfather raped me and then raped my little brother.

Over the next three years, my stepfather's routine became beating my mother and raping me. Every time he raped me, I felt more helpless and more trapped and saw fewer avenues of escape. I hated my body and wanted nothing more than to die. As I sank deeper into silence, I started cutting my forearms to numb the ache in my soul.

At some point I just avoided going home after school. My days consisted of crying alone in parks and walking aimlessly in markets. I tried living with my older sister to help care for her baby, but she said I was too broken to be helpful. My pain paralyzed me. I was voiceless in an endless cycle of violence.

A ray of light entered this dungeon when my older brother defended me and my mom from one of my stepfather's fits of rage. My mom and I were nearly dead from the beating when my older brother walked in. He nearly lost his life forcing my stepfather out of the home. The moment my mom regained consciousness, we went to the police to file a complaint against my stepfather.

The sudden relief and shock I felt were overwhelming. Feelings of joy and unbearable helplessness mixed within

me. I could barely look at my mother's deteriorating face without being triggered into a state of immense suffering. I could no longer hide that my little brother and I had been sexually assaulted by our stepfather.

It was then that I decided to share this horrible reality with my mom. What happened afterward is a blur. I just remember going from place to place, telling all these psychologists and doctors the horrible things that happened to me. My hope faded quickly before their indifference.

Then we heard about ABH, and after that our lives changed. The first time my mother took me and my little brother to A Breeze of Hope, we felt supported and calm. We were heard and understood. A Breeze of Hope's teams helped us share our feelings and overcome our fears. Just knowing that someone cared made me feel better. We were no longer alone.

Ever since my mom, little brother, and I have been going to therapy together, I've stopped cutting my forearms. ABH is helping us dream again. Our social worker is helping us rebuild emotional bonds and safety within our family. ABH's legal team is working tirelessly to keep my stepfather in pretrial incarceration while we

await trial. I'm also sleeping well and feeling safe again. After nearly four years of incessant abuse and torture, my family is recovering. My little brother is doing much better, too. He's smiling again.

Today, I'm a Junior in high school. I graduate next year! My goal is to study Business Administration and Finance at the University of San Simon in Cochabamba. I want to run my own business when I graduate from college. My big dream is to give a better life to my mom and little brother. I want to buy my mom a house with a little bit of land to garden.

Recently, for the first time, my mom and I each opened our own bank accounts. Also, I am working as the manager of ABH's new coffee shop program, "Café Velitas." This is giving me great practice and experience for my future business.

Things have changed so much! I remember thinking only of death. Now I have goals to work toward. For example, I am part of the Children & Adolescents' National Network against sexual violence. Along with my fellow survivors, I share my story to shatter the conspiracy of silence and let others know they're not alone and that it's possible to break the cycle of violence. I'm grateful for every social worker, psychologist, lawyer, and fellow survivor at A Breeze of Hope for helping us find ourselves again.

We were no longer alone. 🦋



PREVENTION

OUR APPROACH:

A Breeze of Hope works to prevent Sexual Violence Against Children and restore the lives of those who have been impacted by it. Our approach is multisectoral, transdisciplinary, and holistic. Moreover, all of our services are in-house, which creates therapeutic continuity, specialization, and strict confidentiality.



SINCE 2004:

- Successfully advocated the repeal of discriminatory laws and the passage of more protective laws for child survivors of sexual violence
- Trained: **137,495** government officials, professionals, students and the educators
 - 118,042 educated and trained in Sexual Violence Prevention and Management
 - 19,453 trained in early childhood development
- Published **29** books on trauma healing, sexual violence prevention, and early childhood development.
- Advocated before the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights
- Created Bolivia's National Day Against Childhood Sexual Violence and In Solidarity Survivors

RESTORATION



SINCE 2004:

2,011

Child survivors have received free, holistic healing services, including legal, social, psychological, education, and medical support

7,950

Non-offending family members have received direct support services

95%

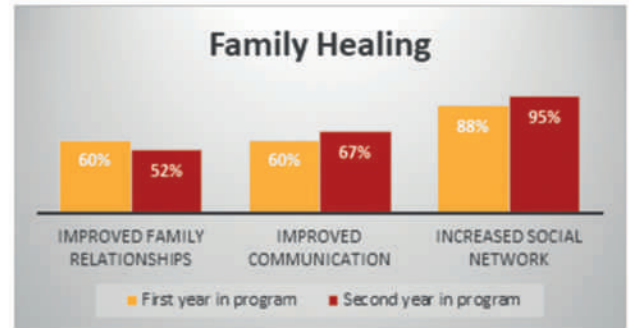
Of our trials have resulted in conviction of the aggressors.

RESTORATION DURING 2020

Personal Healing **833** child survivors of sexual violence participated in a wide range of healing activities, including yoga, art, family systems therapy, group therapy, TFCBT, dance, music, play therapy, and much more.



Non-offending Family Healing **2,003** supportive, non-offending family members participated in Family Systems Therapy and received regular home visits, welfare and health services navigation, and community-based therapy.



Justice **148** child survivors continued their pursuit of justice with our expert legal team. Despite all the challenges this year, we achieved a **100%** conviction rate: 25 trials, 25 convictions.



Unfortunately, 82 trials were postponed, and those children will have to wait until next year to have their day in court.

Economic Independence



169 adolescents participated in our Economic Independence Program and **75** graduated. **42** of the graduates secured meaningful part time jobs in local businesses. The

income from these jobs has been a vital resource during the COVID-19 pandemic. **94** adolescents opened their own bank accounts.

Education **14** adolescents graduated from high school, and **40** survivors from prior years enrolled in the university. One survivor graduated from college!



Political Participation/Activism



25% of the children and adolescents at our center this year were involved in social activism and political participation. This included participating in ABH's advisory board, board of directors, Youth to Youth training program, and the Children and Youth National Network Against Sexual Violence. **196** children and youth received training on human rights and survivor advocacy.





Book for
Mandala
Mandala Design
Relaxation

MantraCraft

PREVENTION DURING 2020

Comprehensive Early Childhood Development



200 pregnant mothers and their partners received prenatal care and home visits, formed support groups, and engaged in parental skills enrichment programs. We supported the parents of **525** infants as they provided care in five critical domains (emotional wellnes, physical wellnes, cognitive wellnes, self-agency, and safe environments).

Social Activism



69,178 people participated in our outreach and social activism activities, including forums, town hall meetings, and our celebration of Bolivia's national day against sexual violence and in solidarity with survivors.

International Advocacy



After 18 years of seeking justice, our founder's individual petition has finally reached the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. As part of the litigation, we are requesting legal and policy reforms that have potential to improve protection and access to justice for child survivors of sexual violence throughout the Americas.

Public Policy & Legal Reform



Our advocacy led to the passing of county and municipal laws on Comprehensive Early Childhood Development. We also drafted reformed legislation for cases of childhood sexual violence that is scheduled for congressional consideration in early 2021. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Bolivian government began releasing indicted criminals, including sex offenders, from pretrial incarceration to quarantine at home (i.e. with their victims). Our advocacy successfully pressured the government to classify as ineligible for release those indicted for heinous crimes.

Research & Publications



We published a new manual, *Awakening and Reinventing Myself: Navigating the World of Trauma and Healing*.

Training Government Officials, Professionals & Students



We trained **4,554** people, including judges, prosecutors, police officers, professionals, parents, and children in sexual violence prevention, trauma-informed response to disclosure, and early childhood development.





2020 AWARDS

The Elevate Prize



Distinguished Partners for Women, Peace & Security Award



2020 NEW PROGRAM

Thanks to GNU Foundation, we expanded our Economic Independence program by opening Café Velitas (Eng. Little Candle Café). Our new coffee shop helps impoverished youth and families affected by childhood sexual violence develop the job skills and financial literacy they need to improve their quality of life.



Thanks to our supporters!

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As survivors of childhood sexual violence, Brisa De Angulo and Parker Palmer created A Breeze of Hope to build a world in which all children grow up in safe, loving environments and to help other survivors regain the joy of living.

Support our work! Your donations to A Breeze of Hope Foundation are tax deductible.

DONATE TODAY at:
www.abreezeofhope.org/donate



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