

Chandler woman's book helps domestic violence victims

SANTAN SUN NEWS STAFF

When she started a foundation dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence, Tahirah Ogletree of Chandler knew firsthand what the women she wanted to help were suffering.

The filmmaker and author said she was “entangled inside a marriage that was plagued with mental and physical torment for five years.”

A mother of two who runs her own film production company, O’Tahirah Films, she also has written an award-winning book, “Survivors: Celebrating Life Beyond Domestic Violence,” which she “dedicated to advocating for current victims, and bringing together other survivors” and that “book proves that no matter what you might be facing, everyone can heal and move forward with faith, forgiveness, strength and perseverance.”

She worked for 13 years in the finance industry, moving from Ohio to Phoenix and eventually retiring in 2013 to pursue her passion for filmmaking.

Tahirah talked about her foundation, book and her work in an interview with the SanTan Sun News.

How did you break the cycle of domestic violence in your life?

“I broke my cycle by making up my mind that I had enough. It’s my belief that when a person’s mind is made up, that inner strength will outweigh any of their current circumstances. I knew I was placed on this earth to be more than



Special to SanTan Sun News

Tahirah Ogletree of Chandler uses her own experience to help domestic abuse victims.

someone’s slave for abuse. Once I made up my mind, I prayed to God for strength and had faith in Him for deliverance.”

“After my retirement, I used all that I had learned from my past and wanted to explore a completely different path. A path that I had not trotted down during my corporate journey, but a path that was a part of my DNA since my inception. My creative genes wanted to give birth to the other missing half of my

warning signs of domestic violence.

Those needing assistance will find a wealth of resources, including a comprehensive breakdown on staying safe and thriving, a health and wellness detox plan and back-on-your-feet budgeting sheet, as well as a list of domestic violence hotlines with 24/7 access to highly trained

life. With my retirement funds I invested in the birthing of my future. I boldly explored uncharted territories. From acting, writing, producing, filmmaking to becoming an entrepreneur who started my own production company.

“I took a break from acting and filming and dove into something even greater...I wanted to share my own experiences of how I survived and the importance of not ignoring the red flags of domestic violence. I wanted to create something so profound that would help women and men realize there was life after being in an abusive relationship or marriage.”

Why a book?

“I believed if we stood together in solidarity as survivors telling our stories how we survived the hellish nightmares of domestic violence. I presented them in an attractive book, laced with encouragement, uplifting quotes, helpful information, resources for women, children, men, the LGBTQ community and offenders seeking help.”

What does your foundation do?

“The O’Tahirah Foundation’s purpose is to assist individuals in achieving personal restoration through providing hope, educating on healthy relationships and a renewal of mindsets through our programs. We are driven to help transform victims of domestic violence to become empowered survivors who thrive in their self-worth. We intend to communicate this through our book tours, survivors’ healing conferences,

advocates for immediate support.

It’s a reminder to everyone that there is life beyond the deadly grips of domestic violence, and is filled with inspiring quotes, importance of forgiveness, tips on how to detect the early warning signs of domestic violence, tear-jerking testimonials from survivors

community events, film documentaries, PSAs, signature survivors’ retreats and batterers-changing-their-behavior retreats. We want to help each person embrace healthy lifestyles and relationships. Where each person can discover their untapped gifts and abilities thereby ultimately embarking upon thriving futures.

How is this different from similar groups?

“As a survivor, I also use my own experience and journey to create ways to help victims and their families. Example: the Survivors’ Emergency Bag and The Simone Pollard Memorial Fund, a program that provides a victim’s family financial support to assist with funeral expenses, cremation and or floral arrangements in memory of my sister who was slain due to domestic violence. Giving them peace of mind, comfort, and support during their difficult time.

I believe domestic violence is a growing problem because many people ignore the initial warning signs. Failure to learn of a person or their past can cause a world of surprises after the honeymoon phase.”

Tell us about your book.

“I empowered 13 other courageous survivors to break their silence. These tear-jerking stories from around the world take you on an in-depth journey of unwavering courage and strength,

See **TAHIRAH** on page 52

TAHIRAH from page 51

interlaced with inspiring quotes, a survivor’s declaration, facts about stalking, beautiful portraits and a comprehensive breakdown of early

around the world, a list of domestic violence hotlines with 24/7 access to highly trained advocates for immediate support and much more. **STN**

Information: The book can be purchased through The O’Tahirah Foundation, Inc otahirah.org and amazon.com. info@otahirah.org. 1866-960-1268, ext.1.