SPECIAL EDITION

# THE GATEPOST

THE NEWSLETTER OF SHEPHERD'S GATE

MAY 2022



## *Trapped in a Nightmare*

Maddie's* abuser wouldn't allow her to leave the small, one bedroom house where they lived. Some people might even call it a backyard shack with dirt floors. She wasn't allow to leave the backyard. She wasn't allowed to have a cell phone or any sort of technology. She wasn't allowed to take her toddler to the doctor when he started missing developmental milestones.

In fact, the second time her son ever rode in a car was when they were escaping in the Shepherd's Gate van. Our team was ready to pick her up when she said it was safe to come.

Maddie wasn't allowed to do any of these things because she was trapped in an abusive relationship. It didn't start out that way.

(*Continued inside*)

*"I would have black eyes, busted lips. Straight punches to my face, even while I was pregnant. I have to wear a wrist brace every night because it never healed properly."*
**– Maddie**

*Name and images changed for privacy

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Shepherd's Gate

# *Trapped in a Nightmare* (*Continued from cover*)

But then he started pushing her into things.

"*He would push me into the door, and my arm would be all bruised. But he would say he didn't do it, it was my fault I fell into the door. Then he started hitting me on the arms and legs, and all of a sudden it was straight punches to the face.*"

But physical abuse wasn't the only way he hurt her.

His controlling behavior isolated Maddie from her family and friends and dictated what she could do. He would even get mad if she was asleep whenever he was home and would punch her to keep her awake. His friends would watch their house and report to him if she left, even just to go to the store.

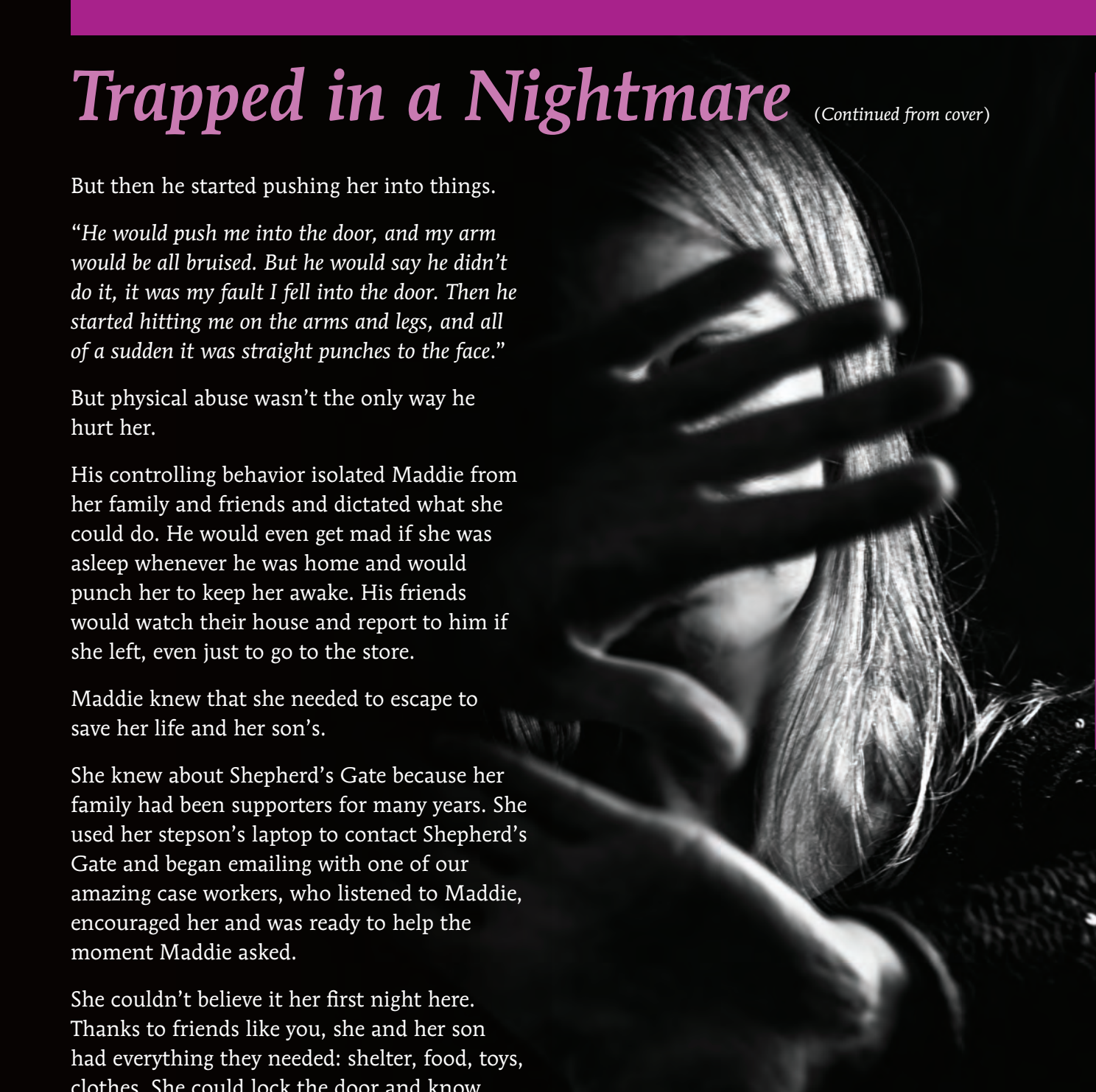
Maddie knew that she needed to escape to save her life and her son's.

She knew about Shepherd's Gate because her family had been supporters for many years. She used her stepson's laptop to contact Shepherd's Gate and began emailing with one of our amazing case workers, who listened to Maddie, encouraged her and was ready to help the moment Maddie asked.

She couldn't believe it her first night here. Thanks to friends like you, she and her son had everything they needed: shelter, food, toys, clothes. She could lock the door and know there were security cameras to keep them safe.

Now they are healing and Maddie is busy planning her future. She hopes to finish college and become a special-ed teacher after she graduates from Shepherd's Gate.

"*I feel so loved and I just feel like everyone genuinely cares,*" Maddie says.



**Your gift today will help more women like Maddie escape abuse!**

*"It was such an amazing feeling to have someone I just met give me that unconditional hope."* – **Maddie**

*"Turn to me and have mercy, for I*

# *Myths About Domestic Violence*

There are many common misconceptions about domestic abuse, but here are a few that we hear most often.



1) **Myth: *"I don't know anyone who's experienced abuse."***

   **Truth:** 1 in 3 women have experienced some sort of physical abuse by a partner, and 1 in 4 have experienced severe abuse. Because of the pandemic, experts are predicting an increase in the number of people seeking help.

2) **Myth: *"Abuse only looks like _____."***

   **Truth:** While most people think domestic abuse is only about physical violence, abuse can take many forms. Besides physical, it can also be emotional or financial. An abuser will often isolate their victim and be very controlling of finances so their victim can't leave.

3) **Myth: *"She should just leave, it's not that hard."***

   **Truth:** Leaving a terrible situation sounds simple. But it's often far from it. A woman who's been abused is often scared and has been threatened worse abuse if she leaves. She often has no money or resources, and is afraid of where to go or what will happen to her and her kids if they leave.

   That's why the Shepherd's Gate caseworkers spend time talking with women who contact us. We know it can take weeks, even months for a woman to feel ready to leave.

   Our teams are ready to drive to their location and rescue them. Many times our teams are putting their own lives at risk but they know that God is watching over them.

*am alone and in deep distress."* – Psalm 25:16



# *Reach Out, Get Help*

Domestic violence can happen to anyone — a sister, a friend, a coworker, a neighbor. Often they are silent about their abuse.

If you suspect someone is being abused, please visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline at www.thehotline.org or call **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**.

Or visit us at www.shepherdsgate.org. The most important thing is a safe escape plan for everyone.

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# From My Heart

## The Hidden Impact

One of the scariest impacts of the pandemic isn't one that's talked about much on the news. But here at Shepherd's Gate, we see it every day. During restrictions and lockdowns, domestic violence increased.

Women in forced lockdowns with their abuser. Increased economic worries and stress. It's been a frightening time for women who were already in a scary situation.

Our intake-phone lines are getting flooded with calls. Over the past month, we've seen an increase in women who are looking for help now that restrictions are easing up.

Will you please pray for them?

Pray for the women who are reaching out and looking for help. Pray for the volunteers and staff at Shepherd's Gate so that we can best serve the women and children here, as well as those who are yet to come.

Thank you for partnering with us to share God's love.

Carol

Shepherd's Gate

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# *Help Her Escape*



Each $32.82 you give will provide safe shelter, meals and more for a woman escaping abuse.

Somewhere in the Bay Area, a woman like Maddie is afraid. She's trying to protect her children from the abuse she endures. She's scared of what will happen the next time her abuser gets mad. She's trying to gather the strength and courage to leave.

You can help provide the safe shelter and life-changing care she and her children need. Each $32.82 you give helps women like Maddie have access to case management, life- and job-skills classes, recovery programs and more.

No one deserves to be beaten. **But your prayers and support can give the women and children at Shepherd's Gate what they do deserve: safety, love and a chance to start a new life.**

Will you help them?

You can also give securely online at: shepherdsgate.org/give

NO POSTAGE

## *Help Women Escape Abuse*

Yes, Carol, I will help more women and children escape abuse! I'm sending a gift of:

❑ $_____

From:
A Caring Friend

Each $32.82 you gives provides a day of safe shelter and life-changing care!




Please write your prayer request on the back of this form. **See back for credit card gifts.**
Please enclose this form with your gift in the envelope provided. To give securely online, please go to **shepherdsgate.org.** Thank you.

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Shepherd's Gate

For over 35 years, Shepherd's Gate has served women and children trapped in abuse, addiction and homelessness.
Our mission is to provide safe refuge, restore hope and dignity, and rebuild lives through the transforming power of Jesus Christ.