

COMMENTS

SHARE

EMAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

ENLARGE TEXT

Recommend 0

Tweet 1

f t in g+ COMMENTS

Author visits Mainstay to share story of hope

Elle Poston: Remember that October is domestic violence awareness month



Mainstay Executive Director Tanya Blackford, right, talks with author Elle Poston on Friday. Poston held a book signing and discussion of domestic violence at the Dandelion eatery on Saturday.

Mike Dirks / Times-News

By Renee Bindewald
Times-News Staff Writer
Published: Sunday, October 27, 2013 at 4:30 a.m.
Last Modified: Saturday, October 26, 2013 at 8:37 p.m.

After finding herself in an abusive relationship, Flat Rock native Elle Poston found comfort in writing about domestic violence.

Poston's novel, "The Fall: An Autobiography of an Alter Ego," was published in mid-July.

"I tried to write a book about how somebody who has plenty of choices in life would stay with someone who is abusive," Poston said. "It sort of came to life on its own; I felt like I had a story that went to those deep, dark places and answers those questions of why somebody would stay in that."

Now living in Los Angeles, Poston returned to Henderson County this weekend to raise awareness for domestic violence in the community.

October is a shared awareness month for both breast cancer and domestic violence.

"Everyone knows that October is national breast cancer awareness month, and my family has been affected by that as well and I applaud the coverage," Poston said. "But I was always really upset that the domestic violence platform gets overshadowed."

Poston held a book signing and open discussion of domestic violence at the Dandelion eatery on Saturday, through a partnership she has recently formed with Mainstay.

"Any proceeds from any of the books I sell will go directly to Mainstay," Poston said.

Mainstay is a local nonprofit serving victims of domestic violence.

"We know families leave seven times before they leave for good and that 80 to 90 percent of homeless women and children are homeless because of domestic violence," Mainstay Executive Director Tanya Blackford said. "If all we did was crisis services, then those would be the type of numbers that we would see here."

Blackford said Mainstay's goal is to help make victims' lives entirely different. Consequently, the nonprofit offers more than counseling and crisis services. It has a partnership with the Housing Assistance Corp. of Hendersonville to offer affordable, safe housing for clients during times of transition. And Mainstay recently began a job training program through the new eatery, Dandelion.

"An abused woman usually comes stripped of everything, including self-esteem," Mainstay case manager Teresa Thomas said. "So to get them out there in the workplace is a big deal."

Other case managers said many abused women have been isolated and often have not worked in several years.

"Most of them have never had a resume," case manager Mindy Denney said. "They have to learn work ethic."

Starting a job training program with a restaurant, Blackford said, was very intentional.

"We began looking at where the jobs in the community were and what programs Blue Ridge (Community College) had to offer, and we started adding those components together," Blackford said.

Since the skill levels of Mainstay's clients vary so much, Blackford said, a restaurant was the perfect balance.

"We had to create a program that equally offered that kind of span, and there's always restaurant jobs," Blackford said. "We're a tourist community. If nothing else, we have restaurants, we have country clubs, we have all kinds of food service programs."

At the Dandelion, Mainstay program graduates work side by side with those still in the shelter.

"When I first went to Mainstay, I was very scared and felt alone, and then time went by and I got the internship here and then you start to feel more confident," said a former client now working as a mentor at Dandelion. "You start to feel more relaxed."

The former client, who asked not to be identified by name, said Mainstay reached out to her and encouraged her to enter the organization's internship program and remain active with Mainstay.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but I had to do something and they really helped me and encouraged me to get a job here and start out here," she said. "Even though I don't stay at Mainstay anymore, I am still doing my counseling, and it really does help and give you somebody to talk to."

At the event on Saturday, Poston left a few signed copies of her book at Mainstay, which she said is something she usually does not do. Mainstay will now be carrying her book on their shelves at Dandelion.

"I am overjoyed by how supportive the whole community has been," Poston said. "I think what Mainstay is doing has the ability to effect great change in the community."

Reader comments posted to this article may be published in our print edition. All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be re-published without permission. Links are encouraged.

f t in g+ COMMENTS

MOST READ **MOST EMAILED** **MOST RECENT**

- Ridge Lines: Memorial in the Blue Ridge Mall
- What's haunting Hendersonville?
- Stories of the Land: Conservation of Youngs Mountain
- Art Notes for Oct. 27
- Mountains to Molehills: 'Look at history'

PHOTOS

EVENTS CALENDAR MORE EVENTS

27 SUN	28 MON	29 TUE	30 WED	31 THU
--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Enter event type or date

FIND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Keyword(s):

Location: Hendersonville, NC

POPULAR SEARCHES