



We See

What We See Changes Who We Are

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Capoey and Kaieteur Trip

By WITNESS Youth Staff

My Capoey trip was simply amazing. It was my first trip to Capoey and the people there were really friendly. They are ruled by a Touchau, who is the chief of the village. In Capoey there are people of all races, like Africans, Portuguese, Amerindians, and they are very talented. They draw, sing, act etc. What was interesting is that they have all the latest music, songs and fashion. I was looking to see people with arrows and bows, wearing straw clothing. They even lived in homes with solar panels for electricity. They have a Capoey Village Office, a library, an all-purpose hall, a health centre and a wonderful lake. The lake is good for swimming. I really enjoyed

going to Capoey.

Kaieteur Falls was the best! It was the first time I have travelled in a plane and especially around Guyana. There's an Amerindian family living next to the Kaieteur Falls and they own an amazing owl which had many colours that blended perfectly. It's very rare to see one in my city. I saw a yellow frog, a plant that attracts mosquitoes and differently coloured butterflies. I would like to thank Trans Guyana Airways and Miss Margaret and others for taking me and bringing me back safely, and especially to Miss Margaret for allowing me to join the WITNESS Project.

My Recollection

By WITNESS Youth Staff

I have been a witness of an abusive relationship. It is very personal when you are a witness to such an act that no one deserves, not even your enemy. One would not wish to be the victim of such an inhuman behaviour.

In today's society abuse seems like something common or part of our daily lifestyle because our minds have been shaped that way, either by a victim or by an outsider who says, "It's none of my business." But I think abuse is everyone's business. By helping others who are victims we prove we are not selfish and we are all human beings and we don't deserve to be treated in such ways that are totally uncalled for and unfit for humans.

Witnessing an abusive relationship in my home was quite devastating, but I thank God for bringing my family and me through. I was at a tender age when my dad was intoxicated most of the time and would hit my mom and say bad things to her in public or within the neighbours' hearing.

Most times mom cried and would have marks of violence on her, and would be embarrassed about the situation. This

continued for a long time, and led to her being on pills that made her drowsy and irresponsible as a parent. She later fell into a state of depression where she attempted to end her life. More than once she slashed her left wrist, then her right, a couple of days later. Her last attempt was drinking poison.

There was a change in her life after she recovered and gave my dad a second or third chance, but she later saw he would never change. She came to the point where she thought about us (the children) and realized that we were growing up in an environment that was unhealthy.

My mother was a victim and a conqueror of something that is monstrous and consuming of one's mind and ability to function. I've looked on for years helplessly, but today I am amazed by the outstanding character that she has become: an overcomer of circumstances in her life. Nobody made it their business to help my mom at that time, so this is a woman and a victim who has come from a long journey and from a battlefield to be a survivor.

As a young woman today, I think she is the greatest woman in the world because

we still have a relationship with our dad. This is because she taught us forgiveness.

At first, I couldn't understand why mom would stay in a relationship like that. In later days, I came to understand why my mom stayed in a relationship like that. It's because she was a victim, and when you are a victim you don't really see further than your nose. A victim suffers a lot and imagines things the way he/she wants them, and not the way they are happening at the time. Victims blame themselves and find themselves at fault in the relationship. They can't think outside the box because in most cases they see abuse as love, and maybe a form of correction. They blame themselves, thinking I can do it better if I try harder, or if I love the person more (the perpetrator), he/she can change. It's just a habit and everyone has habits that keep them inside the box. Their mindset changes the longer they stay and keep hoping that someday things will change.

I believe that's not so. Once you are in and you continue to be in that relationship it will never change. Every individual has a mind and they make free choices. When

you tread on paths that consist of evil, you can never find righteousness.

Victims need to be supported by outsiders and perpetrators need to be punished for their acts, whether they abuse verbally, physically or sexually, etc. We need to reach in the box and help make it our business. We also need one of the greatest tools in an endeavour like this: love. Most victims need that and we as one can stop this disease from spreading. We have the power as one people to stand as an army. We can be victorious conquerors.

I believe in changing our society today, not in a tomorrow that is not guaranteed to anyone of us. Let us change the society of today and make it a better, brighter one for tomorrow's generation.

I would be honoured should I be given an opportunity to build such a garden of peace and love and to remove thorns of abuse. Love leads to joy that can spread in everyone's heart and is not to be taken for granted.

WITNESS Project Youth Reporters

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- Nakasi Noel
- Marcel Persaud
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- Devi Sankar
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Her Unending Faith

By WITNESS Youth Staff

"God, if you love me, I know it's right, Please let us make love tonight," She asked Him with a pleading voice, Thinking she had made the right choice.

She put on music that seemed best, Knowing he would get right to the rest. She didn't exactly know why she felt, A cold hollow feeling as he undid his belt.

Her parents found them before it got worse, She kicked and screamed and hit and cursed, But ceased when she heard their news. Many girls had been in her shoes.

They didn't stop him, he caused their strife, And soon AIDS would take away his life. See, God really loved her and kept her safe, And now she has complete and total faith.

"What we see changes who we are." – JR

Are you a witness or victim of violence? You are not alone. Make your anonymous call to Help & Shelter today and speak with a live counselor on 227-3454 or 225-4731.